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NOTES

¹ C. D. Morris, C. E. Batey and D. J. Rackham, 'Excavation and Survey of the Cliff Side Trenches and Eroding Deposits at Freswick Links, Caithness', *Glasgow Archaeol. J.*, forthcoming.

² The bell was found by Bryan Alvey in 1982.

³ D. Freke, *Peel Castle Excavations- Interim Report 1984* (St Patrick's Isle (Isle of Man) Archaeological Trust, 1984); David Freke pers. comm.

⁴ S. M. Youngs, J. Clark and T. Barry, 'Medieval Britain and Ireland in 1984', *Medieval Archaeol.*, xxix (1985), 209; L. Garrard, Manx Museum, pers. comm.

⁵ T. C. Lethbridge, *Merlin's Island. Essays on Britain in the Dark Ages* (London, 1948).

⁶ K. Eldjárn, *Kuml og Haugfé* (Akureyri, 1956), 62-63.

⁷ *Ibid.*, 95-97.

⁸ T. Magnússon, 'Bátkumlid í Vatnsdal í Patreksfirði', *Árbók hins íslenska fornleifafélags*, 19-20 (1966), 5-32: see fig. 12, 21.

⁹ R. Reece, *Excavations in Iona 1964-1974* (London, Inst. Archaeol. Occ. Pub. 5, 1981), 23-24.

¹⁰ J. D. Bu'Lock, 'The Celtic, Saxon and Scandinavian Settlement at Meols in Wirral', *Trans. Hist. Soc. Lancashire and Cheshire*, 112 (1960), 11, 14 and fig. 4m.

¹¹ The assemblage as a whole is currently under study by David Griffiths, Department of Archaeology, University of Durham.

¹² Pers. comm. Jenny Mann, Trust for Lincolnshire Archaeology.

¹³ Pers. comm. Dominic Tweddle, York Archaeological Trust.

¹⁴ D. N. Marshall, 'Report on Excavations at Little Dunagoil', *Trans. Buteshire Nat. Hist. Soc.*, xvi (1964), 48, 52 and pl. 18.

¹⁵ A. R. Goodall, 'Objects of Copper Alloy and Lead', 171-76 in G. Beresford, *Goltho: the development of an early medieval manor c. 850-1150* (London, English Heritage Archaeol. Rep. 4, ed. J. Geddes).

¹⁶ A. King, 'Gauber High Pasture, Ribbleshead- an interim report', 21-25 in R. A. Hall (ed.), *Viking Age York and the North* (London, Counc. Brit. Archaeol. Rep. 27, 1978).

¹⁷ Eldjárn, op. cit. in note 6, 330-32.

¹⁸ K. Eldjárn, *Bjöllurnar frá Kornsá og Brú*, *Árbók hins Íslensk Fornleifafélags 1966* (Reykjavik, 1967), 70.

¹⁹ K. Eldjárn, 'Skriftlige og arkaeologiske vidnesbyrd om Islands ældste bebyggelse', *Nyt fra Odense Universitet, August 1974*, 11.

²⁰ Eldjárn, op. cit. in note 6, 332.

²¹ A. P. Smyth, *Warlords and Holy Men. Scotland AD 80-1000* (London, 1984), 163.

²² E122: 12955 and E122: 15938, pers. comm. Pat Wallace, National Museum of Ireland.

²³ Pers. comm. E. P. Kelly, National Museum of Ireland.

²⁴ H. Arbman, *Birka I. Die Gräber*, 2 Vols. (Uppsala, 1940), 10-18 and Taf 93.

²⁵ C. E. Batey, *Freswick Links, Caithness: A Re-appraisal of the Late Norse Site in its Context* (Oxford, Brit. Archaeol. Rep. Brit. Ser. 179, 1987), 48-49.

²⁶ C. E. Batey, 'Viking and Late Norse Caithness: The Archaeological Evidence', *Tenth Viking Congress* (Oslo, 1987), 131-48.

²⁷ Batey, op. cit. in note 25, chapter 9.

AN INSCRIBED STONE FROM BURTON DASSETT, WARWICKSHIRE (Fig. 4; Pl. VI, A)

Among the finds from excavations in 1987 on the deserted settlement of Dassett Southend, Burton Dassett, Warwickshire (SP 387 520) was a section of ironstone door jamb inscribed with the name Gormand.¹

Dassett Southend was the largest medieval settlement in the parish of Burton Dassett (called Great Dassett in the Middle Ages). Southend grew rapidly in the later 13th century with the establishment there of a market in 1267, becoming known as Chipping Dassett.

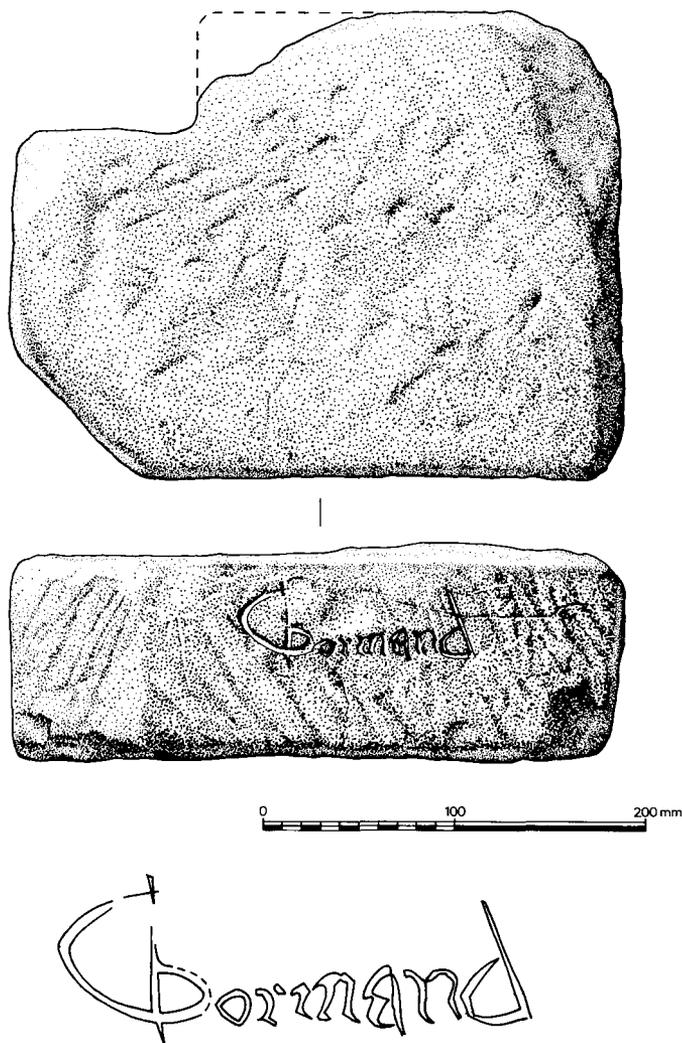


FIG. 4

Burton Dassett Southend, Warwickshire. Inscribed door jamb section. Scale 1:4, lettering scale 1:2

Decline set in during the later 14th and 15th centuries and the settlement was depopulated for sheep pasture in *c.* 1497. The excavations, by Warwickshire Museum, are in advance of the M40 Oxford–Birmingham motorway. They cover the frontages of five of a block of six regular strip properties (each half an acre in area, four perches wide) which seem to have been laid out along a street called ‘Newland’ in the late 13th century, possibly in association with the development of the market. The inscribed stone came from within the house on the frontage of the third of these from the W. The house was probably stone-walled; it was extended in length from 11 m to 19.5 m × 4.2 m wide and remained in occupation until the depopulation. The stone was not *in situ* but had been reused in a rubble surface (Context 1229/1) which was probably laid as a threshold inside the rear (N.) door of the house. A

preliminary examination of the pottery from the house suggests that the rubble surface 1229/1 may date to the mid 15th century.

The stone (SF 1073), which measures 320 mm × 243 mm × 97 mm, appears to have been a section of right door jamb. It is chamfered on the outside and there is a damaged recess on the inside 90 mm × 55 mm deep. The stone is local ironstone and would have come from quarries a few hundred metres E. of the site. The top and left side have been stained red by burning, presumably after removal from its original position. The inscription, 120 mm long, runs horizontally and reads 'Gormand' in upper and lower case late medieval lettering. The position of the inscription makes it likely that it was meant to act as a name plate on the right side of a doorway. The lettering itself is difficult to date precisely, given that the medium is unsuitable for showing the finer changes in writing styles, but it is likely to fall between the mid 14th and the late 15th century. Allowing for the date of its (secondary) context the stone seems to date to the late 14th or early 15th century.

A family called Gormand (spelled in various ways, often as Goremund) appears regularly in the records of Great Dasset from the 13th to the 15th century. Great Dasset was a large manor and parish containing five villages; the Gormands are recorded as holding land in the two northern settlements of Northend and Knightcote. They seem to have been quite well-endowed freemen, judging from the joint tenancy in 1½ yardlands held by Thomas Gormand in 1280, and the appearance of William Gormand as a witness to a deed of the lady of the manor of Knightcote in 1311. John Gormand was involved in the transfer of a large holding of four carucates (about 400 acres) in 1348, but he was probably acting as feoffee for another landowner.² All of the other evidence suggests that they were no more than prosperous peasants. It is quite feasible that a member of the Gormand family acquired a holding in the village of Southend where the inscribed stone was found. The row of excavated properties may have been freeholdings, some held by absentees who sublet them. One of the Gormands could have had a house there while continuing to occupy the main family holding at Knightcote, or a younger son or other relative of the Knightcote family may have migrated to Southend, which as a market village offered opportunities for traders and craftsmen.

The carving of the name is deeply and deliberately, if crudely, cut, so that it seems unlikely that it was a casual doodle, but rather marked the tenancy or occupancy of the house by someone called Gormand. It would serve no purpose unless it could be read, and this has implications for the literacy of those living in Southend, or visiting the place. It is commonly assumed that the mass of the rural population of late medieval England were completely ignorant of reading and writing, but this view is now being revised. It is recognized that alongside the relatively thin scatter of formally endowed grammar schools, there were many ephemeral elementary schools run by clerks and chaplains.³ In SE. Warwickshire well-documented schools functioned at Warwick and Stratford-upon-Avon, but also an unknown number of clergy taught basic reading skills. Perhaps the chaplains of the small Southend chapel which lay 250 m from the find-spot of the Gormand stone sometimes provided such a service. Peasants' sons certainly attended schools — servile parents are recorded as paying fines for their lords' permission for this — and some were able to embark on clerical careers.⁴ There must have been a greater number who picked up a little learning and then returned to the land. Estimates vary for the percentages of literate people. Few had a fluent knowledge of Latin, or were prepared to sign their names, but one researcher has suggested that in the early 16th century 15 per cent of the population as a whole, and perhaps a quarter of males, had attended schools, and Thomas More at that time believed that over half of the population could read English.⁵

Literacy was doubtless concentrated in towns, but better-off peasants throughout the 13th and 14th centuries accumulated a growing number of administrative roles, as reeves, beadles, sub-taxers and church wardens, which required them to handle documents such as accounts. These tasks must have increased their familiarity with the written word. By about 1400 most peasant families kept a small archive of documents, deeds in the case of freeholders, and copies of court roll in the case of customary tenants. Again, even if they were ignorant of the Latin in which the documents were written, the owners could have learnt to

recognize familiar names. At this time the use of the English language was expanding, as is shown not just by the great quantity of literature produced for aristocratic and clerical readers, but also by the distribution by the rebels of 1381 of rallying letters, and by the circulation among lower-class Lollard groups of illicit scriptures and books of edification.⁶

The Gormand stone is a further example of writing for public display, like the inscriptions found on church wall paintings or in stained glass, that were intended to be generally understood. It is surely significant that this example should come from a market village with inhabitants and passers-by who made their living in non-agricultural occupations, and who were therefore likely to have developed some degree of literacy.

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NOTES

¹ An interim report on the excavations is published in N. Palmer, *Burton Dassett Excavations* (Warwickshire Museum, 1987). For Burton Dassett see C. J. Bond, 'Deserted medieval villages in Warwickshire and Worcestershire', 157-60 in T. R. Slater and P. J. Jarvis (eds), *Field and Forest — An historical geography of Warwickshire and Worcestershire* (Norwich, 1982); N. W. Alcock, *Warwickshire Grazier and London Skinner 1532-1555* (British Academy, London, 1981), 27-37.

² Public Record Office, E 164/15; Shakespeare Birthplace Trust Record Office, Stratford-upon-Avon, DR98/154; L. Drucker (ed.), *Warwickshire Feet of Fines* (Dugdale Soc., xviii, 1943), 13.

³ N. Orme, *English Schools in the Middle Ages* (London, 1973); id., *Education in the West of England* (Exeter, 1976); H. M. Jewell, 'The bringing up of children in good learning and manners'; a Survey of Secular Educational Provision in the North of England, c. 1350-1530', *Northern Hist.*, 18 (1982), 1-25; J. A. H. Moran, *The Growth of English Schooling, 1340-1548* (Princeton, N.J., 1985).

⁴ E.g. P.R.O., SC 2 207/58 shows a serf of Oxhill (Warw.) paying 6s. 8d. for licence to tonsure his son in 1277; T. H. Aston, G. D. Duncan and T. A. R. Evans, 'The Medieval Alumni of the University of Cambridge', *Past and Present*, 86 (1980), 9-86.

⁵ Moran, op. cit. in note 2, 179-81; M. B. Parkes, 'The Literacy of the Laity', 555-77 in D. Daiches and A. Thorlby (eds), *The Mediaeval World* (London, 1973).

⁶ M. Aston, 'Lollardy and Literacy', *History*, LXII (1977), 347-71.

A PIECE OF 'SCARBOROUGH WARE' REASSESSED (Fig. 5)

In 1961 Mr J. G. Rutter published the medieval pottery in Scarborough Museum.¹ The pottery of the 13th and 14th centuries is divided into two sections: Section 1 lists the glazed wares, which are subdivided into 27 types. Type 7 has thirteen examples of which No. 7/3 (fig. 2, No. 7/3) is the subject of this note.

This vessel, which has striking visual characteristics, was inspected by the writer in 1987. It is reported to have been 'found on the Castle Road pottery site before 1854 and therefore there can be little doubt that it is the product of the kilns. [It] displays features that are alien to the other tubular-spouted jugs, and indeed are unknown in connection with other local types of medieval pitchers. The ware and glaze are unusual and the angular form of the vessel with its peculiar rim is unique. In contrast with the other local jugs, both exterior and interior are glazed, and the finger-impressions, which are normally found at both ends of the handle and around the basal angle are confined to a single impression situated at the base of the handle'.²

Footnotes to this report describe the details of the vessel. This is in some details at variance with the writer's observation, which is: dark red fabric. Covered all over (inside and outside) with white slip. Glazed all over with a copper wash in the glaze. The colour range is bright green, pale green and amber. Flared rim with inturned flange at the front. Round-sectioned tubular spout with (curving) strut connecting rim to spout. Round-sectioned