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EXCAVATIONS ON A MEDIEVAL SITE AT WATER NEWTON, IN THE COUNTY OF HUNTINGDON, IN 1958

CHARLES GREEN

I. INTRODUCTION

In the spring of 1958, the Water Newton Excavation Committee, an ad hoc body set up by the Council for British Archaeology with the support of the Ministry of Works, carried out test excavations at various points along the projected line of the reconstructed Great North Road (A1) in the parishes of Chesterton, Water Newton and Sibson-cum-Stibbington, all in Huntingdonshire. In the western part of the field immediately to the south of Water Newton House, Mr Graham Webster, who directed the work in the eastern sector of the Committee's area, revealed the foundations of stone walls, ditches, pits and some evidence of a timber structure, all of which appeared to belong to the early medieval period. His test trenches were necessarily somewhat scattered and so, as they seemed to provide evidence of an early deserted village, the writer was asked by the Ministry of Works to continue the excavation in this field after the Committee's work had come to an end.

For the earlier excavations, a 'road-zone', 200 ft. wide, through which the new 150 ft. wide road would eventually run in a slight curve, had been pegged across the field in 50 ft. squares. For the more intensive digging of the second phase, this was felt to be insufficient and the pegs of a smaller grid of 20 ft. squares were inserted, based on the westernmost peg-line of the earlier grid. The cuttings shown on the plan, therefore, can be seen in part to be 'at random', made to test the productivity of the site, and in part so placed that, in the available time, the structures of the postulated village could be isolated. To this end, those of Mr Webster's trenches which contained foundations were left open and the writer's further cuttings were sometimes detached and sometimes an extension of a pre-existing one.

The later excavations began on 28 April 1958, and were completed by 22 May. Though the work was somewhat impeded by rainy weather, it proved possible to identify and date the later structures and to obtain sufficient evidence of the earlier occupation of the site to form provisional theories of its nature and date—theories to be tested, it is hoped, by extended work on the site in the future.

My thanks are due to Mr Graham Webster and Miss Joan Jeffery, his assistant, for their ready and thorough collaboration in the handing over of their records and finds, to the Chairman and Members of the Huntingdonshire County Council and to their Surveyor at the time, Mr T. H. Longstaff, and to the local members of the
EXCAVATIONS ON A MEDIEVAL SITE AT WATER NEWTON IN 1958

Water Newton Excavation Committee, Messrs E. Standen, F. Dakin and S. O. G. Wilson, for help given in various ways. To Dr C. Hart of Yaxley I am especially grateful for the help he gave in providing information on the early record-history of the parish and for the appendix he has written for this report. The difficulties inherent in taking over a partly completed excavation were greatly eased by my chargehand, Mr S. Vincent, who had previously worked with Mr Webster in that capacity, and who is well acquainted with my methods from previous excavations we have done together.

It should be noted that G. W.'s cuttings are numbered, e.g. D 17.1, C 16.3, and C.G.'s with Roman numerals and letters, e.g. BII, CIV.

All the finds are now in the Norris Museum, St Ives, Huntingdon.

II. THE TOPOGRAPHY OF THE SITE

The parish of Water Newton is bounded on the north by the river Nene, which here forms the boundary between Huntingdonshire and Northamptonshire, on the east by the Billing Brook, on the south by a tributary of the brook and on the west by a common boundary with Sibson-cum-Stibbington, a boundary not marked by outstanding topographical features. From east to west, close to the river Nene, runs the Great North Road and southward from this through the middle of the parish runs the Elton road (Fig. 1).

The village is small and, apart from a few houses on the south side of the main road, is clustered between that road and a ford crossing the Nene to the Northamptonshire parishes of Ailsworth and Castor. By the ford stands a watermill and close by to the west is the church. The Great North Road itself, which from near Huntingdon has followed the line of the Roman road, Ermine Street, leaves that line in Chesterton parish to the east, at the south-eastern gate of DVROBRIvAE, and follows roughly the right bank of the Nene to the crossing at Wansford, some 3 miles to the north-west.

The field forming the site of the excavations is divided from the main road to the north by the gardens of Water Newton House, which fronts the road; on the west it is bounded by the Elton road. The underlying 'solid' rocks belong to the Jurassic 'Lower Oolite' series, but in this field a layer of boulder clay shrouds them, to form the subsoil. In the south-eastern part of the same field, Artis (1828) marked the site of a Romano-British villa, but this lay slightly downhill, some 700 ft. distant from the centre of the medieval site here described. This building was doubtless the source of the very occasional Romano-British tile and pottery fragments which were found. At the time of the excavations the field was in use as a sheep-pasture, and the very shallow topsoil, together with the absence of a clearly defined plough-soil, suggested that this, indeed, had been its use for centuries. The present-day surface level of the excavated area lies between 62 and 65 ft. O.D., as measured from a bench mark on the Great North Road.
III. THE OCCUPATION OF THE SITE

Clear evidence was found of two main occupations, the one inferred to be in Late Saxon times, the other dated more precisely to the thirteenth century. Structural changes carried out during that century probably indicate that the second occupation began at a somewhat earlier date. As has already been said, the occasional occurrences of Roman pottery and tile fragments may be attributed to the presence of the building in another part of this large field, for no trace whatever of Roman foundations or floors was observed. In the following subsections the finds are summarized and discussed and the details of the exposures and finds are given in subsequent sections.

(a) The Late Saxon occupation

To the Late Saxon period are attributed the sleeper-beam structure with its clay packing and the contemporary broad ditch. The purpose of this heavy structure is not very clear. Its width and the absence of any recognizable internal floor make it fairly certain that it cannot be the wall of a house or other building. The presence of
post-holes which cut slightly into the beam-line, the occasional patches of stone packing and the very rough timbers used as sleeper beams, as well as the very irregular width of the structure, combine to suggest that it represents the base of the north-western part of a stockade, most of which lay to the south of the excavation area. It may be inferred to have comprised a central clay wall packed between two timber revetments keyed into the sleeper beams. Outside the stockade and a narrow berm at its foot, there would seem to have been a defensive ditch, though its apparent absence from the cuttings on its north side leaves this at present uncertain.

The close dating of this 'stockade' from the archaeological evidence is impossible, but there are indications which, when combined with the available record evidence, enable a provisional date to be suggested. As will be shown below, the wall overlying the inner beam-slot can be dated to the thirteenth century, a dating confirmed by much associated material from the site. And, as will also be seen, the beam itself must have decayed before the wall was built. The ditch on the west side had been completely filled before the smaller wall, exposed in D17.1, was built and this wall is certainly earlier than the adjacent one to the west, which cannot be later than the thirteenth century. From the basal filling of the ditch and from the beam-slot levels, as well as from the contained clay packing, came sherds of Stamford and St Neots wares which, on our present knowledge, can be attributed to the period A.D. 900–1100, the 'developed' St Neots ware of later date occurring only in higher levels. Not a single sherd of Middle Saxon ware was found on the site. As Middle Saxon 'Ipswich ware' has now been shown to be not uncommon at Castor, across the river Nene, it seems likely that some fragment of this ware would have been found here had the site been closely occupied during the seventh–ninth centuries.

It is here that the record evidence proves of value. The parish name 'Newton' indicates that it was not that of an early Saxon settlement and, in fact, most 'Newton' names can be attributed to the tenth century. But in our first mention of the name in 937, at the time when a grant of crown land was made to a subject, the thegn Sigulf, the phrase used in the charter, terram v. manentium ubi ab incolis nominatur Niwuntun, rather suggests that the name was already in use at that time. However this may be, Sigulf's ownership may perhaps mark the first residential occupation of this land by a man of consequence, though the possibility of its occupation by a Danish lord between Alfred's treaty with Guthrum and the reconquest of the Danelaw cannot be altogether overlooked. But as, before about 970, the land had come into the possession of a much greater man, the thegn Ælfric, for two years (983–5) Ealdorman of Mercia (Garmonsway, 1953, 124–5), and after 973 belonged to the Abbey of Thorney until the Dissolution, a tenth-century stronghold may with more confidence be attributed to Ælfric.

If, then, further work can demonstrate more certainly that this clay and timber

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1 Fragments of at least nine vessels of this ware were found by the writer in 1958, in the filling of two small pits, while excavating in the extension to the parish churchyard.
2 See Appendix.
3 This suggestion was made to me by Dr Hart in litt. dated 14 December 1958.
structure is a stockade surrounding a thegn’s hall and the archaeological dating is not contravened by later finds, this structure may be attributed to a tenth-century thegn of Newton and, most probably, to Ælfric himself, before the day of his elevation to Ealdorman’s rank.

It seems probable that the 6 ft. wide ditch running north from the ‘Stockade’ may also belong to this period, but its purpose is not clear. It may have served as a drainage ditch, the forerunner of the broader ditch on the western edge of the site which belonged to the later occupation.

(b) The thirteenth-century occupation

The most significant evidences of this period were the remains of drystone walling found in various parts of the site. At first thought perhaps to be remains of houses or other domestic buildings, it became clear when they were traced across the area, that they were in fact field enclosures, built in the fashion of drystone walling so characteristic of ‘Oolite’ country, best seen today in the Cotswolds. No trace of internal flooring was discovered and, at the north-eastern corner of the enclosure, a worn hollow reinforced in part with gravel and cobbles and flanked by post-holes, appeared to be the site of a gateway.

First in time came the more northerly of the west side enclosures. This was bounded on the south by the earlier east–west wall. Probably contemporary, but not certainly so, was the smaller southern enclosure bounded on its west side by the slighter north–south wall overlying the Late Saxon ditch. At a later date, this east–west partition and the slighter north–south wall were demolished and a new north–south wall, to the west of the earlier one, was built with its northern end abutting on the southern end of the original structure. At a later date again, the area of the enclosure was once more reduced. The southern north–south wall was demolished and a new east–west wall was erected. This, at its western end, did not exactly overlie its forerunner. At the same time the ditch-side paving to the south of this new line was reinforced and the new paving rested in part on the top of the residual wall-stump.

The date of this second east–west wall was established with fair certainty, for it contained, as described below, sherds of ‘developed’ St Neots ware, including a decorated jug. This dates the wall as not earlier than the thirteenth century and as so much of the associated pottery in the various cuttings dates the general occupation to this century, the wall may be accepted as belonging to this time. As, however, comparable pottery was also found in the layer immediately overlying the destroyed ‘stockade’, it seems probable that the first walls were built about the beginning of the century or perhaps late in the twelfth.

The somewhat restricted size of some of the enclosures, the trodden and reinforced gateway and the inference drawn from the depth and appearance of the topsoil, all point to the enclosures having been sheepfolds. The Domesday entry for Newton (Stenton, 1926) has no mention of sheep. If then this inference as to their use is correct, this land which, in 1086, may have formed a part of the ‘land for eight ploughs’, was converted to sheep-pasture about the end of the twelfth century.
The line of the broad shallow ditch to the west of the walled area is still marked by a hollow in the field's surface. Running northward, it lies parallel to the Elton road and ends in a deep hollow, still water-filled, in the angle between that road and the Great North Road. Doubtless excavated to serve as a drainage ditch, it may also have served for watering the flocks penned in these adjoining sheepfolds.

IV. DETAILS OF THE EXCAVATIONS

The first north–south (west side) wall

This was exposed in the trenches G III, B17.1, DII, C17.3, C17.1 and BII (Fig. 2, and sections E–F and M–N in Fig. 3). In all of them it appeared as a simple drystone wall with a very shallow footings trench and no indication whatever of an internal floor. On its west side there were remains of a gravelled or cobbled paving which varied somewhat in density from exposure to exposure. This was apparently—as shown below—the paving lying between the wall and a drainage ditch.

Trench G III also showed the north-west angle of the enclosure, where the wall, here reduced to its lowest course, turned roughly east. The external paving did not extend to the east along the outside of the north wall, thus confirming its use as a ditch-side pathway. No internal paving or prepared floor could be discerned in this north-west corner, though the spill from the north wall still covered the surface and had therefore protected it from later disturbance.

The southernmost of these cuttings, BII, showed the remnants of the original south-west angle, though the first south-side wall running east from this point had been reduced to its lowest course and was partly overlapped by its successor (section E–F–G).

The second north–south (west side) wall

This was exposed in the trenches BII and D17.1 which bordered the excavation area. This wall, though of similar construction to the original west-side wall to the north, was not in exact alignment with the latter and was partly butted against it. From this joint it continued southward, bordered on the west as before by the cobble paving, which in AII–D17.1 was shown to slope down to the ditch-lip. Its lower margin was actually lower than the present-day water level and, as is seen in section A–B, it was slightly overlapped by a band of water-deposited silt. This silt was present only in the northern half of this trench and appeared to be the remains of a shallow pool in the underlying denser clay filling. Above this silty layer, the filling contained, in addition to earlier pottery, sherds of seventeenth-century black manganese and yellow glazed wares and a sherd of English delft ware.

The ditch-side paving in D17.1 was seen to have been overlaid by further cobbling which slightly overlapped the remains of the wall. Some of this overlapping stone may have been spill from the disintegrating wall, but sufficient cobbling was present to make it clear that the path had been reinforced and used
after the wall had been destroyed. A somewhat similar condition was also recorded by Mr Webster further north (section M–N), though here the evidence of true paving over the wall is less certain.

D 17.1 also showed that this wall had replaced an earlier, not quite parallel, wall of slighter construction, lying a little to the east, for its footings trench, somewhat
deeper here than farther north, had cut into the clay packing over the more easterly wall-base (section $A-B$). The latter, in turn, had its footings laid in the mixed clay filling of a considerable ditch running in the same direction (section $K-L$).

**The intermediate east–west wall**

Exposed in cuttings BII, BIII–IV, BCIV, BV and BVI, this was shown, as has already been stated, to have been of two periods (sections $F-G$, $O-P$). That running continuously through the trenches was the later wall and, in the more easterly cuttings, there was no evidence of a double build as was shown in BII to exist. But the odd contraction in the structure, shown in BCIV, gave some indication of such a double build and this is doubtless the point where the later wall came to coincide exactly with the line of its forerunner.

It was in the substance of this later wall, removed in BV, that sherds of 'developed' St Neots ware were found. These included a glazed jug fragment, with oval reticulated stamps on slip roundles, clear evidence of the wall's not ante-dating the thirteenth century. Here, too, the footings trench of the wall (section $O-P$) was seen to have cut into the underlying beam slot and its mixed carbonized filling.

**The north wall**

This was exposed in GIII and GIV. It had disintegrated to its footings level which was concealed by its debris. It was seen to turn south again in GIV, where its
line was lost and, with occasional bald patches, the trench showed a spread of scattered stone. After the more obvious wall-spill had been removed, the lower layer was seen to be mixed cobbbling and some broad, flat slabs, resting in part on a spread of fine reddish gravel, mixed and partly covered with a thin layer of dark 'muddy' earth. At each of two points near the western edge of this spread, a post-hole was defined, though the more northerly was somewhat uncertain.

The complex was interpreted as a gateway, the entrance, perhaps closed by hurdles, to the walled enclosure lying to the west. The broad slabs in line along the north side were worn and smoothed and probably formed a narrow pathway along the side of the animal-churned gateway approach.

**The central walls**

Exposed in cuttings DIIIb, DIVa, C16.1, 5, DIVc, C16.6 and EIV, the first indication of this complex was seen by Mr Webster and thought to be a hut wall. However, no flooring traces or other evidence of internal occupation, or any evidence of a roof, could be found. When followed through the later cuttings, it was seen in EIV to turn and branch again. In DIIIb–IVa the east–west wall turned north and ended abruptly at a break, beyond which no further trace of it could be found. Construction-method and disposition alike point to these walls being a part of the enclosure-system already described.

In C16.2, the base of a stone-built oven was exposed. There was, however, no other evidence here to suggest the interior of a building, and the oven rested on the same clay level which formed the internal surface of the whole enclosure.

The western part of this central complex was seen to be built on the silty clay filling of a 6 ft. wide ditch (sections Q–R, S–T, U–V). In this clay filling were sundry sherd s of Romano-British wares and a few small sherds of Stamford and St Neots wares.

**Early ‘stockade’ and ditch**

These features were seen in D17.1, AIII, AIII–IV, D17.2, BIII–IV, BCIV, BV, D16.2 and BVI (sections H–I, O–P). In D17.2, where the structure was first noted, it appeared as two roughly parallel sleeper-beam slots filled with carbonized wood and clay, and with the base of a heavy boulder clay packing between the beams, reinforced with occasional stones. What appeared to be two post-holes, each cutting somewhat into its adjacent beam-line, were also noted. Followed in AIII–IV to the southern edge of the excavation area, the beams continued and a curious overlapping junction in the western beam-line gave evidence that they were roughly laid split logs. To the north, they were seen to turn (BIII–IV) roughly through a right angle to the east and here the more southerly (in BCIV, BV and BVI) approximately underlay the later east–west medieval wall. The section exposed in BV (section O–P) also made clear that the wood in the sleeper-slot must have been completely carbonized before the later footings trench was dug, for the latter was dug into the beam-slot in such a way as to show that the timber had given no resistance. In
places there were also remnants of stone packing against the outer sides of the structure, and the internal filling was everywhere heavy boulder clay. In AIII–IV this boulder clay contained a few sherds of glazed Stamford ware and, in both BV and BVIa, sherds of both Stamford and St Neots wares.

In D17.1 and AIII an early broad ditch was shown to lie parallel with this timber and clay structure, with a 4 ft. berm between. The exposure in AIII sug-

![Fig. 4. Scale 8.](image)
gested that this ditch would curve round to the east, parallel to the timbering, but no clear evidence of this could be seen in BCIV. In BIII–IV, where it might have been exposed at the west end, the surface at the level of the ditch-lip and its filling was obscured by the presence of the remnants of a hearth on the clay, which was reddened by fire and blackened by ash, and the time available did not permit further excavation at this point. No other direct evidence of this ditch was observed either to the north or east. In BCIV, however, the north end of the trench showed a slightly down-sloping boulder clay surface braided with small 'channels'. Here in the silty clay on this natural surface were sherds of Stamford ware, one with rouletted rim, and a butt-beaker base of Romano-British Castor ware. A somewhat similar surface was again noted in BV (section O–P) below similar silty clay, but the latter here was archaeologically sterile. The early silting in the ditch, exposed in AIII, contained sherds of both Stamford and St Neots wares.
Other ditches were noted in C16.4 and D16.2, but these were not seen in adjacent trenches.

Further to the north and east, more widely scattered test trenches, A14.1, 14.2, 14.3, A15.1, 15.2, A16.1, B15.1, 15.2, C15.1, 15.2 and D15.1, were made by Mr Webster. All these proved to be archaeologically sterile.

THE FINDS

(1) Objects of iron (Fig. 4)

1. Knife blade (C16.7, below fallen stones). A tanged blade of triangular section with slight shoulder and simple unriveted tang. This blade has no unusual features and is an ordinary example of the twelfth–thirteenth-century knife. Cf. LMC (1940), 51–2, pl. xi, 2.

2. Shears (FIVy, topsoil). This broken pair of shears seems to be of early type as defined by the angle between blades and shafts. Those from pagan Anglo-Saxon graves always had a U-shaped head (e.g. Neville, 1852, 25, pl. 39), the ring-headed type not appearing until the eleventh century (LMC 1940, 153 ff.) and this pair doubtless belongs to the twelfth–thirteenth-century occupation of the site. Small shears of this type were apparently the forerunners of true scissors, used for a variety of domestic purposes.

3. Harness buckle (DIVa, south of east–west wall, over ditch-filling). This is an ordinary buckle with no unusual features, but is dated to the medieval period, as it was deposited on the early ditch-filling before the collapse of the stone-walling, in association with early pottery only.

4. Hinge pintle (DIVa, south of east–west wall, over early ditch filling). This is a normal smith-made gate-fitting. Found with no. 3 above, it antedates the collapse of the wall.

5. Loop, probably the head of a smith-made ‘split’ linch-pin (C17.2, in mixed earth over early ditch-filling). This layer was the surface-soil of the wall-structure period and contained only pottery of the period, so that this iron fragment is probably contemporary.

A few iron fragments, of uncertain use and date, which were found in topsoil, have not been described and illustrated.

(2) Objects of iron, bronze, stone and bone (Fig. 5)

6a, 6b. Horseshoe fragment and horseshoe nail (C16.1, below scatter of stones east of wall). The shoe fragment is the branch-end of a lobed horseshoe with a folded-over calkin. There remains some trace of the punched hollow, through the centre of which the nail-hole passed. The fragment is shown against the (broken) outline of a complete shoe, in excellent condition, taken from an early medieval layer in Westgate Street, Gloucester, in 1939 (Gloucester Museum Cat. no. 2733). Though commonly regarded as of Romano-British type, the lobed shoe appears to persist until after the Norman Conquest, though Ward is cautious in his acceptance of Murray’s admittedly provisional dating (Murray, 1936, 25 ff.; Ward, 1939, 147 ff.). But the Gloucester shoe was from a medieval deposit well above Romano-British levels and is rather larger and wider in the branch than shoes of certain Romano-British date from Gloucester. Ward Perkins (LMC 1940, 114 ff.) has since brought forward evidence to show that the type persisted into the thirteenth century, so that the almost certain medieval date of this fragment may be accepted. The fiddle-key nail is characteristic of the lobed shoe; the base of the head rested in the outer punched hollow. The Gloucester shoe had two of these nails, in excellent condition, still in the holes and the so-called T-shaped nail, mentioned by both Murray and Ward, appears to be merely a heavily worn nail of fiddle-key type.

7, 8. Bronze strap-ends with rivet holes and one with a central slot (A14.3, from mixed earth
in an otherwise sterile trench). These are roughly made strips from thin sheet bronze and were probably used to attach small buckles to leather straps.


10. Bronze 'horn-shaped' fragment of roughly circular section with a small rivet-hole (GIV, at base of topsoil). This was apparently a small projecting appendage which has been broken away from its matrix-object at the attaching rivet. Its use is unknown.

11. Whetstone fragment of grey mica-schist (A14.1, from topsoil). Hones of this type have commonly a hole for suspension bored at one end and the missing part was doubtless so pierced. Dunning (1937, 683-95 and LMC 1940, 293-4) has attributed these hones with near certainty to the twelfth century, which again is in agreement with the date of the later occupation of this site.

Two whetstone fragments of a hard sandstone, from the topsoil of B15.1 and FIVy respectively, appear to be of post-medieval date and are not illustrated.
12. Bone gamester’s die (C16.7, topsoil). Though dice of this general type are well-known throughout the historic period in this country, this specimen, though not closely dated, is probably not modern. It is somewhat irregularly cut and, as it seemed possible that it had a bias, 500 throws were made with it. The percentages recorded were: 1, 7%; 2, 10%; 3, 9%; 4, 7%; 5, 31% and 6, 36%. The die is clearly biased to give 5 or 6 and must indeed have been valuable to its owner for the old game of ‘Sevens and Elevens’.

Considerable quantities of pottery were found, mainly in small sherds. It comprised Romano-British wares, mainly colour-coated, Stamford ware, St Neots wares, Thetford ware and a few sherds of later medieval and post-medieval wares. The Romano-British fragments had no features of special interest and, as they have no stratigraphical value, they have not been illustrated or described in detail.

(a) Stamford ware (Fig. 6)

The sherds of this ware formed only a small proportion of the total number found, but it is of interest to note that the group comprised both glazed and unglazed jugs, cooking pots and bowls. As Stamford lies some 10 miles only from Water Newton, this parish falls within the area of the ‘home’ market which, as Dunning (1959, 37) has said, is normally the area where the whole
range of types is found. The glazes recorded from this site varied in colour from a pale clear green, through a greyish sage green to pale clear yellow. A selection of the rim-types is given below. The descriptive surveys by Dunning (1936) and Hurst (1958) make a multiplication of quoted parallels unnecessary.

1. Pitcher (D17.1, upper ditch filling east of early wall). Fragment of neck and handle, of cream paste with a pale buff external surface. The base of the handle and adjoining parts of the neck have a thin, almost colourless glaze with a faint greenish tinge. Cf. Hurst (1958), fig. 1, 3.

2. Pitcher (D16.2, topsoil). Fragment of neck and handle-attachment, of cream paste with pale buff surface. The handle-base and outer side of neck show large patches of very pale yellowish-green glaze. Similar to no. 1.

3. Pitcher (A14.1, topsoil). Fragment of moulded rim only, of cream paste with a pale buff external surface. The external face shows patches of pale yellowish glaze. As above.

4. Pitcher (C17.2, below stone-spread at base of topsoil). Fragment of rim and handle-attachment, of cream paste with a buff surface. Externally the fragment has patches of pale green glaze. Cf. Hurst (1958), fig. 1, 2.

5. Cooking pot (D16.1, in clay below stone-spread). Fragment of moulded rim and neck, of cream paste with some smoke-blackening. Enough of the neck remains to show the constriction at its base and the outward curve of the shoulder. This fragment is unglazed. Cf. no. 4.

6. Pitcher (A14.2, in mixed clay). Fragment of moulded rim and neck, of cream paste, slightly smoke-blackened in places. The fragment is unglazed. Similar to nos. 4 and 5.

7. Pitcher (DIVc, in topsoil). Fragment of rim and handle-attachment, of creamy-buff paste with a deeper buff surface. The top of the rim is decorated with an applied thumbed strip. Externally there are traces of a thin green glaze.

8. Bowl (A15.1, topsoil). Fragment with broad flattened rim, of cream paste without decoration or glaze. The surface finish is a little less fine than that of the glazed jugs. Cf. Dunning (1936), fig. 4.

9. Bowl (D17.2, below stone-spread). Fragment with broad rim, flattened above but moulded and thickened below, of cream paste.

10. Bowl (BVb, topsoil). Fragment of hammer-head type rim, of cream paste covered with a clear yellow glaze. The top of the rim is decorated with a row of thumb-impressions. Cf. Hurst (1958), fig. 3, 16.

11. Bowl (BCIVb, in silty clay at north end). Fragment of rim of hammer-head type, of deep cream paste. The top of the rim is decorated with two rows of rouletting. Cf. Dunning (1936), fig. 5, 12.

12. Bowl (BIII–IVy, in packing of beam-slot). Fragment with broad projecting rim, trimmed on the outer edge and with defined carination below the neck. A somewhat similar bowl from Alstoe Mount has roulette decoration (Dunning, 1936, fig. 4, 20).


16. Cooking pot (BVIX, in basal mixed clay around beam-slot). Fragment with sharply everted rim, slightly concave on upper face, of cream paste with pale buff surface. Immediately below the rim on the outside is the remnant of a vertical thumbed strip. The external face and rim are coated with a pale greenish-yellow glaze. Cf. Hurst (1958), 40.
(b) St Neots wares (Fig. 7)

Sherds of the shell-filled red and brown wares of St Neots type formed by far the greater part of the total number found. Though the majority of these sherds possessed no value for typological dating in the series, most of them probably belonged to the later stages of the ware's history, many indeed being of that 'developed' type characteristic of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. It is probable, though not certain, that towards the end of the period the shell-content of the ware tends to be more comminuted and less frequent, so that the latest types are rather 'shell-speckled' than 'shell-filled' in appearance. No complete bases were found, but fragments of the characteristic bowls and cooking pots were of sagging-base type. It is also to be noted that the true small cooking pots of Saxo-Norman type (cf. Hurst, 1956, fig. 4) seem not to have been very common on the site. In the 'wall-structure' period they had in large part been replaced by the larger pots of 'early medieval' shape and of the 'developed' ware, which were certainly more common here.

The ware has been descriptively surveyed by Hurst (1956) with addenda (1958), so that references have not been multiplied. 'Developed' jugs have been discussed by Dunning in Kenyon (1948).

(17) Bowl (D 17.1, upper filling of 'stockade' ditch below early wall).
(18, 19) Bowls (A 14.1, topsoil).
(20, 21) Bowls (A 14.3, mixed clay).
(22) Bowl (B 16.1, topsoil).
(23, 24) Bowls (B V b, topsoil).

The above fragments are all of bowls with slightly or strongly lipped, inturned rims. Some are decorated externally with a row of finger-tip impressions and one has a row of small notches on the carination at the base of the rim. All are of shell-filled paste, burnt to a reddish-brown or dark chocolate brown, with usually a somewhat lighter grey core. All doubtless had sagging bases. They are well-matched by a series from Cambridge (Hurst, 1956, figs. 5 and 6). No. 17, from its position under the wall, can hardly be later than the first half of the twelfth century.

(26) Cooking pot (C 17.1, clayey earth inside wall).
(27) Cooking pot (D 17.2, below stone-spread).

These fragments with everted rims belong to the earlier type of small cooking pot, though no. 29, with its more upright rim, is perhaps an intermediate between this and the following group. They are of shell-filled paste, burnt to shades of dark brown on the surface, with grey cores; no. 29 only is a rather lighter red on the surface. Cf. Hurst (1956), fig. 4.

(30) Cooking pot (C 16.2, below stones).
(31) Cooking pot (D 16.1, among stones at west end).
(32) Cooking pot (D 17.2, topsoil).
(33) Cooking pot (D 16.1, clay below stones).
(34) Cooking pot (D IV a, surface of ditch-filling).
(35) Cooking pot (A III x, ditch-filling below stones).
(36) Cooking pot (D 17.2, below stones).

These fragments are made of a representative range of St Neots type shell-filled paste, but are sherds from large pots called by Dunning (1959, 44ff., Group 5) 'Early Medieval Ware'. The type is characterized both by the size and by the developed rims which tend to be more upright than those of the smaller pots. Nos. 30 and 35, with slightly everted short necks capped by sharply carinated vertical rims, flattened on top, are fairly common on this site. The shallowness of the
Fig. 7. Scale 1:4.
site, however, and the lack of closely dated stratification make it impossible to date the change from small pots to large ones. But the comparatively large number of these later types suggests that they were in common use during the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, the remnants of the smaller pots being the debris of an earlier period. This seems to be confirmed by no. 37 (below).

(37) Cooking pot (D17.1, top-filling of 'stockade' ditch below early wall). Many sherds forming a considerable part of a large cooking pot with thickened upright rim (cf. nos. 30 and 35), decorated on its edge with a row of finger-tip impressions. Of shell-filled paste burnt to a light red on the surface, with a grey core, and somewhat smoke-darkened in its lower part, it is a well-developed member of Dunning's Group 5 (supra). But its date must be similar to the bowl, no. 17, and so cannot be later than the first days of the post-Conquest 'wall-structure' occupation.

(38) (D17.1, upper ditch filling east of early wall). Fragment of neck and handle, of shell-filled paste (the shell being largely finely powdered), burnt to a bright red on the surface, with a grey core. The external surface is partly coated with transparent glaze, the body-colour showing as a bright red-brown. This vessel, though still of St Neots type paste, is certainly a 'developed' medieval-type jug and its stratification suggests a date possibly as early as the twelfth century.

(39) ? Jug (A14.1, topsoil). A body sherd, probably of a large jug of shell-filled paste, burnt to a bright red on the surface, with a grey core. It bears scored decoration in zones: (a) horizontal wavy lines between straight lines, and (b) a row of obliquely upright lines. It is unglazed. Apparently a fragment of another 'developed' jug.

(40) Jug (D16.1, clay below stones). Neck and handle fragment, of a paste with some shell-filling visible on the outer surface and in the core, but almost entirely burnt out on the inner surface, leaving tiny cavities. The neck and handle bear patches of green glaze and there are traces of applied decoration. This jug is of that 'developed' type discussed by Dunning (Kenyon, 1948). Small fragments of others, some with applied roundles of yellow glazed clay stamped with a reticulated pattern, were also found.

(c) Thetford ware (Fig. 8)

Very few sherds of Thetford ware were found on the site, but a few scraps enable the three main types of this ware, bowls, storage jars and cooking pots, to be represented here. Pending the issue of Group Captain Knocker's 'Thetford' report, the summary survey by Hurst (1957) used for comparison.

(41) Bowl (EIVy, topsoil). Several rim sherds of a large bowl with broad flattened rim, of dark grey hard sandy paste. A rather unusual type, but it may be compared with Hurst (1957), fig. 6, 10.

(42) Storage jar (AIII-IV balk, in the mixed carbonized filling of the beam-slot). Two body-sherds with an applied thumbed strip, apparently horizontal. The paste is the characteristic dark grey sandy mixture. Cf. Hurst (1957), fig. 6, 18.


(d) Medieval wares (Fig. 8)

(44) Jug (A14.1, topsoil). Fragment of neck and rim, of hard very sandy paste burnt to a light red on the surface, with a grey core. There are traces of a thin greenish glaze near the base of the neck.

(45) Jug (C16.7, topsoil). Fragment of rim and neck, of pale buff paste with a darker core, glazed somewhat patchily on the outer surface with a thin green glaze. The handle-attachment shows large thumbed flanges.

(46) Cooking pot (D17.2, below stone-spread). Fragment of rim and shoulder of large
cooking pot, of thin shell-filled paste burnt to a mottled dark brown on the outer surface and a smooth fawn internally, with a grey core. This fragment has only doubtfully been excluded from the St Neots group, but as its shape is unlike the characteristic ones of that group and as it bears a remarkable resemblance to a similar shell-filled pot found at Lydney Castle (Casey, 1931, 256, fig. 7, 18), it is treated separately.

Fig. 8. Scale ¼.

(47) Cooking pot (D 17.2, below stone-spread). Fragment of rim of a large cooking pot, very similar to no. 46. Of shell-filled paste, it is burnt on the surface to a very dark brown and is decorated on the inner face with a scored wavy line; the outer surface has a series of irregular scars, probably accidental.

(48) Dish (A 14.3, mixed earth). Rim fragment of harsh gritty paste, burnt to a reddish-brown on the surface, with grey core. There are thin traces of a brownish glaze in the inner surface inside the thickened rim. Apparently an early Tudor vessel.

(49) Bowl (B 16.1 and B 17.2, topsoil).

(50) Pitcher (C 16.3, topsoil). Two conjoining fragments of the bowl and one of the pitcher are all of exactly similar hard sandy paste burnt to a bright red. The handle of the pitcher and the rim-surface of the bowl have a somewhat darker red-brown coating, flaked away in places, which appears to be a matt-surfaced colouring.
There is no clue in the place-name as to the precise date of settlement at Water Newton. O.E. *niwan tun*, ‘new tun’, from which the early forms are undoubtedly derived, is perhaps suggestive of a migratory settlement of inhabitants from a pre-existing nearby site, which may or may not have been abandoned in the process. The name, therefore, is unlikely to have originated in the earliest days of the English settlement, although ‘the period during which tun was an active name-forming element was very long, covering the whole O.E. period’ (Smith, 1956, 11, 161). On the other hand the phrase ‘terræm v. manentium ubi ab incolis nominatur Niwantun’ rather points to the place-name having become fixed before we first hear of it.

This earliest reference to Water Newton occurs in a charter dated 937, by which King Athelstan grants in perpetual inheritance an estate of five hides at *Niwantun* to one Siguif. Although this personal name does not happen to occur elsewhere in the surviving charters of Athelstan, it was a common one, and it would be hazardous to identify the recipient with the moneyer Siguif who struck coins in Athelstan’s reign. The bounds of the estate, which are recited in the charter, are virtually the same as the bounds of the modern civil and ecclesiastical parish of Water Newton.

We next hear of the estate some time in the period 963–73, when it was in the possession of a powerful thegn named ÆElfric Cild, who was later Ealdorman of Mercia. He was a prominent local landowner much interested in the contemporary monastic revival, and when he sold Water Newton to Bishop ÆEthelwold of Winchester for £20, ÆEthelwold used the estate as part of the foundation endowment of the great Fenland abbey which he re-established at Thorney, Cambs. Later, when ÆElfric successfully denied the validity of this transaction, ÆEthelwold purchased the estate from him a second time, paying for it a further £13, together with 2 hides *et Resnan* (possibly Market Rasen, Lincs), 2 at Irchester and one at Titchmarsh, both in Northants.

Water Newton remained in the possession of Thorney Abbey from this time until the dissolution of the monasteries some six and a half centuries later. Usually it was tenanted by a layman, the earliest known being ÆEthelferth, who held it early in the eleventh century; at this time the estate supported a fishing community, which was supplied with a boat by the abbey for use on the river Nene, by which access could be gained to the fishing grounds of Whittlesey Mere.

At the time of the Domesday survey (Stenton, 1926) it was a fully developed estate, still assessed at five hides, with arable, meadow and woodland, a church and two mills, shown by subsequent records to have been water-mills on the river Nene. A survey of 1279 shows the economy of the

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1 Preserved in a fourteenth-century cartulary called the Red Book of Thorney, Cambridge University Library MS. Add. 3020–1, f. 16v (old numbering, f. v.). For a description of this MS., see Davis, 1958, 119, no. 964. The editions of this charter by Kemble (1839–48, no. 1114) and Birch (1885–93, no. 712) are based on a secondary source, which omits a large part of the text and the whole of the witness list. A full edition by the present writer, including a discussion of its authenticity and the location of the land conveyed, will appear in *The Early Charters of Thorney Abbey*, to be published shortly.

2 For historiography, see Robertson, 1956, 369–70.

3 These transactions are recited in King Edgar’s foundation charter to Thorney Abbey (Kemble, 1839–48, no. 579; Birch, 1885–93, no. 1297), which will be re-edited in *The Early Charters of Thorney Abbey*. Although the surviving text is a spurious conflation, the information it contains as to the early land endowments of the abbey is almost certainly derived from authentic material.

4 Robertson, 1956, 253–5; on the date, see Ker, 1957, 126–7.
manor in somewhat greater detail (Simkins, 1936), but the general picture is much the same as that given in Domesday and earlier records; for instance, the inhabitants still had a common boat provided by the abbey for use on the Nene. The post-Conquest history will be greatly illuminated when the many unpublished Water Newton charters in the Red Book of Thorney find an editor.

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