

St John's: Selected Features and Discussion of the Pottery

The selected features are arranged by phase and then by plot.

Phase 2

F2492 Pit Phase 2 Plot B/C *Figure CD01.1-4*

Like pit 1328 (below) this pit seems to contain a substantial part of a single Chilvers Coton A vessel *Figure CD01.1-4*. Base, rim and body sherds were present but it was not possible to stick these together to form a continuous profile. A small hole near the base of the vessel, made before firing, was noted with a possible indication that the aperture had been originally surrounded by some form of applied decoration. The exterior of the pot was generally somewhat battered (see *Figure CD01.2-3*) and in certain places there appeared to have been riveted repair holes or possibly holes made before firing, now only partly detectable *Figure CD01.4*. The glaze on the exterior appeared bright green in colour whilst on the interior the glaze tended towards clear with bright green mottles and speckles. The jar has been decorated with applied strips and combing, possibly representing a stylised plant motif. There is no exact parallel for this in Mayes and Scott (1984) although examples of decoration in a similar vein were found in Kiln32a-b (*ibid.*, Fig. 105). One sherd decorated with incisions and comb impressions, very similar to Mayes and Scott (1984) Fig. 105, 216 may have formed another element of the decorative scheme on the jar or have come from a separate vessel. However, the combination of several disparate decorative elements seen on the Mayes and Scott example may favour the former.

The vessel would have had a large capacity. The rim diameter of 25cm and the hole near the base suggest that this was not a jug or pitcher and the hole seems too small to indicate a cistern, which in any case would be too late a form for the date suggested by the fabric, glaze and decoration. Another possibility, although one seldom encountered, is a plant pot. Examples are known from Beverley, Yorkshire (see McCarthy and Brooks 1988, 118-19), although the form is very different from the St John's vessel. The applied plant motif and the very battered nature of the sherds, possibly an indication of long exposure outdoors, are consistent with a plant pot, although the constricted neck of the vessel perhaps less so. If the vessel did indeed serve as a flowerpot then that would suggest some type of formal garden in the area of Plots B or C and would imply a high status establishment in the vicinity, and just as importantly the absence of industry if only for a brief time.

F 2418 Pit , Phase 2, Plot D backfilled c 1300 *Figure CD11.1*

The pottery from this feature seems to indicate a deposition date towards the end of the 13th century or at the beginning of the 14th century. Sherds size was variable but most individual sherds seemed to represent single vessels indicating secondary deposition. The pottery is therefore most likely to have come from surface scatter material or middens.

Chilvers Coton C fabric was entirely absent although four vessels (two bowls and two jugs) were in an iron-poor fabric somewhere between the Chilvers Coton A and C wares. In terms of function the group was of interest since it was made up primarily of jug and bowl sherds. A maximum of 12 jugs and eight or nine bowls were represented, so bowls formed a higher than average percentage of the group. Most of the bowl sherds had external sooting and given the paucity of other ceramic cooking pots would seem to have been the cooking vessel of choice.

Base sherds from two Coventry ware cooking pots were recorded and a body sherd possibly from a reduced Deritend ware cooking pot. Five sherds from a possible splash glazed pitcher decorated with applied thumbed strips would seem to be residual here. A number of less commonly recorded fabrics were also recorded in the group, including an early Oxford ware sherd and a shelly ware jug sherd (*Figure CD11.1*) both of which may also be residual. A sherd from fill 2419 was identified as

Potterspurry ware but if so must be intrusive or incorrectly identified.

A substantial base sherd from a jug with spaced, double thumb prints on the external base angle joined with three further and larger sherds from pit 2503 and together formed the entire base. Over 200 sherds were noted during assessment from pit 2503 and a spot date of c 1300 suggested. It is clear that like pit 2418, pit 2503 contained a variety of fabrics including sherds from Deritend ware jugs, one with a parallel from Weoley Castle and reduced Deritend ware cooking pots. It seems likely that both pits went out of use and were backfilled more or less contemporaneously.

F1251 Pit Phase 2 Plot J backfilled ?14th c at the earliest *Figure CD05.5*

Although Chilvers Coton A ware is present including an attractive green glazed jug with combed decoration (*Figure CD05.5*) and indeterminate Chilvers Coton A/C including a highly abraded, large vessel with applied thumbed strips, standard Chilvers Coton C sherds are also present, amongst which is a jug. The latest sherd however appears to be a Midlands Purple sherd. It is possible that this is an overfired Chilvers Coton C fabric but it would be hard to believe that it could pre-date the 15th century. The pottery in the fill material is earlier than layer 1006 which overlies it and which looks to date to the late 15th or 16th centuries. It is possible that the late sherd in pit 1251 is intrusive from 1006, in which case the a deposition date in the 14th century could be given for the pottery. The heavy abrasion on some of the sherds suggests a date towards the middle of the 14th century.

Phase 3

F1328 Pit, Phase 3, Plot J – backfill date c 1300 *Figure CD02..1-3*

This pit is noticeable for containing only a substantial section of a large jug in Chilvers Coton A/C fabric, which had been broken into many sherds (*Figure CD02..1-3*). Large sections of the rim, base and all the handle survived, although most of the neck section was missing, so the sherds could not be joined to form a complete profile. However the pottery must represent something very close to a primary deposition. The jug was decorated with rows of incised wavy lines. There is no exact parallel for the jug in the Chilvers Coton report (Mayes and Scott 1984) although rows of incised wavy line decoration can be seen on one vessel (*ibid* Fig. 97, 69) from the kiln site. The relative absence of highly decorated jugs there may indicate that more elaborately decorated items were placed in the prime position in the kiln during firing and hence were less likely to misfire. That said, the jug from feature 1328 showed a remarkable range of surface and glaze colour. This ranged from a dark green around the rim and neck to a glossy olive green on the shoulder to a thin yellowish glaze with dark green speckles and mottling (caused by the addition of copper filings) towards the base. Clearly the glaze was at its best on the opposite side of the pot to the handle. Around the handle the surface was a matt purplish colour, where the glaze was so thin that it had burnt away. It is possible that the jug was dipped into the glaze medium whilst being held by the handle, which could explain the inconsistencies in the glaze colour. The pit is unusual in having a single pot in its fill, instead of the usual mixture of several broken vessels and residual material seen in many of the other features on the site. A deposition date in the early 14th century is likely for the jug, although the late 13th century is not impossible.

Phase 4

F2249, Pit, Phase 4, Plot F backfilled by c 1475? *Figure CD03.1-3*

The backfill material from this pit is very similar to that from the other Phase 4 pits (see below). There is a mix of clearly residual material and pottery of 15th and/or 16th century date. Of the Phase 4 pits examined, this one contained the highest proportion of Midlands Purple ware and the

highest proportion of Chilvers Coton C with a red fabric (just over 37%). An unattractive, burnt, Midlands Purple faceted jug base was found in this feature (**Figure CD03.3**) – in fact many of the Midlands Purple vessels from the site as a whole were crude. A substantial section of a Chilvers Coton C bowl (red fabric, **Figure CD03.1**) was recorded and also a lid (fabric WCTS SLM13, **Figure CD03.2**). In terms of function the group comprised chiefly cistern and cup sherds, including a lobed Tudor Green cup, and to a lesser extent bowls.

The absence of cistercian ware would suggest a backfill date before c. 1475. However a cup sherd was initially recorded as a reduced yellow ware and a bowl sherd as post-medieval coarseware. On balance it seems more likely that the cup sherd was an imitation Tudor Green and the bowl sherd may have been a variant of the red Chilvers Coton C fabric.

Feature 2010 Pit with industrial waste, Phase 4, Plot F/G backfilled 1450-75? Figure CD03.4-6

The pottery from this feature was a rather mixed group and contained features which are largely suggestive of secondary deposition, although the sherds were not noticeably small nor abraded. Unlike Feature 2338 (below) there were very few large sections from individual pots. The notable exceptions to this were a finger impressed base from a baluster jug (?late Chilvers Coton C, **Figure CD03.6**) which can be paralleled in Mayes and Scott (1985 Fig 59, 490, from a 15th century kiln), although there in a Midlands Purple fabric, and a substantial portion of a cooking pot/jar (**Figure CD03.4**) in a mudstone tempered fabric from fill 2007. It seems unlikely that this is a 15th century vessel so its relative completeness, which would suggest a primary or near primary deposition, is difficult to explain. It was difficult to ascertain how much of the material from the pit was contemporary and how much residual.

The earliest pottery included the mudstone tempered cooking pot (**Figure CD03.4**) and a jug sherd in a ware with clay pellets and an underglaze white slip. This ware has been found further west in the county in Stratford (Rátkai 1992 b) and more recently on the M6 Toll (Rátkai 2008). Both vessels are unlikely to be later than the 13th century and may even belong to the first half of the 13th century. There was also also a 'classic' Chilvers Coton B cooking pot with square rim, again of 13th century date.

The pottery was dominated by Chilvers Coton wares (A, B and C). The C fabrics spanned a range of colours from yellow to pink to orange and red. However, the lighter or less iron-rich fabrics predominated. A relatively small proportion of the Chilvers Coton C sherds had a red or salmon pink fabric, colours which seem to be most common in the 15th and 16th centuries. A variant of Chilvers Coton C fabric with a poorly mixed streaky matrix appears to be late on the analogy of a similar fabric found on the M6 Toll (Rátkai 2008).

The latest pottery consisted of an unglazed handle, which could be North French Beauvais stoneware with a date range of 1450-1550, three Tudor Green cup sherds, representing three separate vessels, and late oxidised fabrics WCTS SLM13, SLM15 and SLM14. The absence of cistercian ware would suggest a date before the end of the 15th century.

The pottery was made up mainly of jug sherds with some bowls and cooking pots, although some of the latter are clearly residual. Other forms represented were a pipkin (Chilvers Coton C, red fabric, with a square rim, not illustrated) part of a roof finial (Chilvers Coton A/C) and a vessel of unknown function (Chilvers Coton A **Figure CD03.5**).

Feature 2004 Recut Pit, Phase 4, Plot F/G backfilled 1525-50 Figures CD14.4; 14.8; CD15.7

The fill material was broadly similar to that from Cesspit 2338, although the pottery was more fragmentary and is unlikely to contain much that represents primary deposition. The pottery dates mainly to the 15th and/or 16th centuries. There was no blackware in this group which may indicate that the fill date for the feature is a little earlier than that for Cesspit 2338. A small tin-glazed earthenware sherd, blue-coloured on the exterior but with a plain white tin glaze on the interior

came from a small rounded form. It is possible that this may have been a South Netherlands maiolica flower vase. This form is sometimes known in the literature as an 'altar vase' (Hurst *et al* 1986 117-118). Just such a vase was found at the Whitefriars Coventry (Woodfield 1981). Unfortunately the flower vase form no longer seems to be closely datable (Hurst *et al* 1987,119). However, on balance it seems most likely that 2004 was backfilled by *c* 1550 and probably by *c* 1525.

The more decorative wares were made up of cistercian ware cups, one with applied white clay pellets, another with a flower formed from white clay pads. A similar flower motif found at the Austin Friars, Leicester can be seen in Woodland (1981 Fig 41, 209 and Fig 42, 231) and was also found in Stafford (Ford 1995, Fig.22 195). The motif was not recorded at Chilvers Coton and the cup, from 2004, probably came, like the jar with the thumbed neck cordon (see below) from a less local source. Part of a cistercian ware pedestal salt, decorated with a white clay band (**Figure CD14.8**) was found in fill 2002 along with the decorated cistercian ware cups. The rim from a Tudor Green cup was also found in fill 2002.

A minimum of four bowl were represented by base sherds (three in Chilvers Coton C fabric and one in WCTS SLM13). Chilvers Coton C sherds came mainly from bowls and only three sherds came from jugs. Two of the bowl bases were sooted and a third was burnt. Sooting on bowl sherds is relatively common in the region and seems to indicate that some were used as cooking vessels. Only one other vessel was associated with cooking and this was a small diameter (13cm) pipkin in a (Chilvers Coton) Midlands Purple fabric. Two small jug bases were present (WCTS SLM13 not illustrated and MP **Figure CD15.7**)

Cisterns were only found in Midlands Purple ware. Two vessels were represented by rim sherds (the same forms as those represented by **Figure CD07.2-3**) but the remaining body sherds seem to represent another three cisterns. Six cistercian ware cups were present.

The most unusual form was a jar (WCTS code SLM13?) with a neck-shoulder cordon which had deep thumb or finger impressions (**Figure CD14.4**), found in fill 2002. Two joining base sherds from the same fill may have been part of the same vessel. Late medieval jars with thumbed cordons are typically more common further west. They were produced by the Malvern Chase potters (Vince 1985), and jars with a stamped cordon were made at Wednesbury (Ford 1995, Rátkai 2007; 2009). They are not illustrated in Mayes and Scott (1985) and seem therefore not to have been made at Chilvers Coton. The likelihood is that the jar from 2004 represents a non-local pot, probably made in South Staffordshire (see Ford 1995, Fig. 20. 158).

The jar was also of interest because a second rim sherd from this vessel was found in 2125, the fill of the Phase 4 pit 2122 in Plot F. Feature 2122 contained a small amount of 16th century material, such as cistercian ware and oxidised late medieval sandy wares (WCTS code SLM). A possible coarseware sherd came from the same fill as the jar sherd. Pits 2004 and 2122, were some 5 metres apart.

Three green-glazed Chilvers Coton A sherds may have come from roof furniture, such as a louver or finial and presumably represent a small amount of demolition material incorporated into the fill of 2004.

Feature 2104 large pit, Phase 4, Plot G/H, backfilled 1450-75? *Figure CD03.7-8*

A rather mixed group of pottery with some vessels found split between the fills. There was a Tudor Green-type cup with a internal yellow glaze and an external green glaze **Figure CD03.8**. A third sherd, possibly also from a cup does not have the characteristic internal yellow glaze but is instead green with darker cu mottling; the exterior is a yellowish green with cu mottles. There is nothing very special about the group, although there were perhaps a rather greater number of sooted sherds than seen in other features, amongst which are sooted bowl sherds. A Chilvers Coton A/C sherd was

fired almost to the point of vitrification and may be proof of the late production of the whiteware (see above). The fabric contained a large, dense rounded white inclusion. A lid-seated jar **Figure CD03.7** was heavily sooted on the internal face of the rim. Many of the Chilvers Coton C sherds were borderline Midlands Purple ware. Most of the pottery probably dates to the 15th century and the absence of cistercian ware may indicate a deposition date before c 1480.

F1347 Industrial pit, Phase 4, plot H backfilled c 1425-1450? Figure CD03.9-12

A relatively large number of sherds were recorded from the fills of this feature the greater part of which were Chilvers Coton C. The presence of a few sherds of Midlands Purple ware occurring throughout the fills suggests a 15th century deposition date, possibly like pit 1341 (below) in the first half of the 15th century. Unlike some of the other 15th century groups there was no Tudor Green ware present although a small Chilvers Coton A fabric sherd could have been from an imitation Tudor Green vessel.

Vessel function was dominated by jugs in Chilvers Coton A and C fabrics (eg **Figure CD03.12**), and bowls were the second most frequent form type. Cooking pots and pipkins (**Figure CD03.9-11**) were found in Chilvers Coton C. Indeterminate jugs or cisterns were again found in Chilvers Coton C and in Midlands Purple ware. A granitic tempered sherd from a cooking pot was clearly residual in this group.

The majority of the Chilvers Coton sherds had fired to yellowish and pale orange hues much the same as the material from 1341 (below) and 2010 (above). The evidence from Coventry and from Burton Dasset tends to suggest that these paler colours are much more typical of Chilvers Coton C than the red sandy fabric described by Mayes and Scott (1984). Also of interest are some hard-fired iron-poor Chilvers Coton fabrics with purplish glazes, in effect another variant of Midlands Purple ware, which more commonly has an iron-rich fabric. The fabric divisions proposed by Mayes and Scott (1984) and their relative dating is in need of some revision as larger and better dated urban groups have been excavated. For example, **Figure CD 21** shows four Chilvers Coton jug handles, which stylistically look contemporary but, following Mayes and Scott (*ibid*) the handles should be divided into Chilvers Coton A, Chilvers Coton C, and Midlands Purple ware with an additional iron-poor Midlands Purple type not recorded in Mayes and Scott. It therefore becomes increasingly difficult to maintain a purely 13th century date for Chilvers Coton A (on fabric alone) and there is a strong suspicion that the whiteware bowls, for example continue to be made in the 14th century as indeed is the case with whiteware bowls from South Staffordshire. Taking the long view it becomes difficult to tell whether any occurrence of Chilvers Coton A, after about 1300/1325, marks the sherds out as residual. That there is residual material, however, is indicated by the presence of the granitic tempered sherd.

F1185 industrial feature reused as midden? Phase 4 Plot H

Pottery from this feature was not recorded in detail because it appears to be a mixed group of ground scatter material incorporated into the fills and is unsuitable for analysis. A total of 27 sherds were recovered from nine fills. As with most of the features in the phase, there were Chilvers Coton A and C sherds but the presence of Midlands Purple ware and sandy, oxidised late medieval wares (WCTS code SLM) indicates a final deposition date in the 15th century, a date reinforced by the presence of a Tudor Green sherd and a Potterspury sherd. The group contained more evidence of bowls being used for cooking.

F1341 recut of pit 1465, Phase 4?, Plot I, backfilled c 1425-50 Figure CD 05-.1-10; Figure CD06.1-2

This is another pit notable for a selection of relatively complete pots and seems to represent a 15th century fill with very little obvious residual material (a shelly ware cooking pot sherd and a Chilvers Coton A jug sherd). The pit was a re-cut of pit 1465 which contained a small amount of 15th century material only, although apparently from different vessels from those found in 1341. The pottery appeared to have been in use before the introduction of cistercian ware in the late 15th

century and comprised Chilvers Coton C ware, some with a red fabric, but the majority with clays containing a lesser iron content and firing to yellowish and pale orange fabrics, Midlands Purple ware (a single sherd from a jug, jar or cistern) and Tudor Green ware. The paucity of Midlands Purple ware might suggest a date in the earlier part of the 15th century.

Two Tudor Green cups (unillustrated) and a lobed bowl (*Figure CD06.1-2*) were present. The fabric of the latter suggests that it may have been made at Chilvers Coton ie a local imitation of Tudor Green ware. Part of a Tudor Green lobed cup and a cup or mug base *Figure CD05.10* were found in pit 1465.

The remaining vessels represented were from utilitarian vessels. Storage vessels were represented by large jugs or cisterns (Midlands Purple, WCTS SLM13 *Figure CD05.1-3* and Chilvers Coton C). The example in fabric WCTS SLM13 had a ring and dot stamped neck cordon and orange glaze. Similar vessels but with a cross stamp (eg Ford 1995 , Fig. 19, 147-48; Rátkai 2009, Fig. 7.7, 149) are known to have been made at Wednesbury and this is the likely source for this vessel also. No similar vessels are recorded from Chilvers Coton. A handled jar *Figure CD05.7*, possibly in a Chilvers Coton C fabric was recorded, although, again, this form is not recorded by Mayes and Scott (1984). A lid (*Figure CD05.8*) was presumably designed for use with the storage jars or possibly for use with the two Chilvers Coton C pipkins (*Figure CD05.4-6*) also found in the pit. The remaining functional component was made up of Chilvers Coton C bowls one wide mouthed and one with heavy external soot and a WCTS SLM13 bowl. Wide-mouthed Chilvers Coton bowls eg *Figure CD05.9* were a marked feature of 15th century pottery groups from Burton Dassett in southern Warwickshire (Rátkai forthcoming a). There, they may have been associated with agricultural practices such as dairying, whereas at St John's they probably served as standard mixing bowls.

Phase 5

F1079, large pit, Phase 5a Plot H backfilled c. 1525-50 drgs 52-53, 55-56, *Figure CD10.1-4*

This appears to be a feature which went out of use in the 16th century. Like the Phase 4 groups Midlands Purple ware was well represented and together with the late medieval sandy wares form the majority of the pottery. There is a marked decrease in the amount of Chilvers Coton C ware. Cistercian ware in the fills probably indicates that the backfilling dates to c. 1500-1525. A tin-glazed earthenware bowl rim decorated on the interior with blue (unillustrated) may be South Netherlands maiolica, although the rim form is closer to Valencian forms (Hurst *et al* 1986) and may date to the first half of the 15th century. Pit 2004 with a similar suggested backfill date as F1079, also contained a possible South Netherlands maiolica sherd. A maiolica bowl sherd was also found in cess pit 2338 with a suggested backfill date of c 1550.

Vessel forms more or less contemporary with the proposed backfill date consisted of cups (Tudor Green and cistercian ware), bowls (WCTS SLM13, *Figure CD10.3-4*, and tin-glazed earthenware) and cisterns (Midlands Purple, WCTS SLM13 and SLM15). There was one lid (WCTS SLM13 *Figure CD10.2*). A small jug, possibly used as a drinking jug, was represented by two sherds in fabric WCTS SLM14. A Chilvers Coton C bowl, fired almost to Midlands Purple (*Figure CD10.1*) may also have been more or less contemporary with this group.

Two of the cistercian ware sherds had a lustrous metallic looking glaze (*Figure CD19.2*). This is sometimes a feature of cistercian ware and blackware sherds and can be caused by an excess of iron oxides in the glaze or firing conditions. However, in this instance the sherds appeared to have been 'coated' with this result in mind. In the somewhat dim interiors of 16th century domestic buildings the cup would have superficially resembled pewter. Looking at some of the cistercian ware cup forms, particularly those with a carination below the rim, are these in fact skeuomorphs of metal vessels. None such survive in the archaeological or documentary record and the interpretation must

therefore remain unproven.

Some intrusion was evidenced in the group by a sherd of 19th century industrial slipware from fill 1089.

Cess Pit 2338, Phase 5b, Plot D backfilled c 1550-1575 *Figure CD07.1-11; Figure CD08.1-11; Figure CD09.1-4; Figure CD15.8, Figure CD19.1; Figure CD20.1-2*

Several cisterns (or bung-hole jars) were found within the cesspit. Five vessels could be identified from the rim sherds and a further four from the base sherds. The vessels were mostly in Midlands Purple but one was in WCTS SLM14, one in WCTS SLM12 and two in Chilvers Coton C (one a red fabric). Three different rim forms were noted (*Figure CD07.2-5*) some with cut-outs on the rim. A further eight sherds may represent a further seven vessels, so there could be the remains of as many as 16 cisterns. Three of the bases had very heavy interior limescale as did a more complete vessel (not illustrated). Generally the sherds were not sooted although one cistern was, and had possibly served an industrial function. This vessel was crude and heavy and one of the base sherds has had holes drilled into it – the break is running through these – perhaps a repair, since the larger more complete section of the base has no holes. A shadow on the base exterior shows that it had been used as a saggar. It is possible that the cutouts in the cistern rim were made in order to improve its function as a saggar. A complete cistern base (not illustrated), another rather crude heavy vessel, had also been used as a saggar. There was glaze on the base exterior and a glaze run from firing another inverted vessel. Very heavy internal limescale on the interior of the base showed that the vessel had subsequently been used as a liquid container.

Evidence of wear on the external base edge of two cisterns indicates that they were repeatedly tipped or rotated during use.

An unusual ovoid storage jar (WCTS SLM14, *Figure CD07.7*) was found in fill 2309. Like some of the cisterns it had a very heavy deposit of limescale on the interior and wear on the external base edge. It is not a form recorded by Mayes and Scott (1984).

Eight cistercian cups were represented by rim sherds, a further seven by base sherds and possibly as many as ten more cups were represented by body or handle sherds. Two joining rim sherds were worn suggesting that they may have had some sort of metal mount although the form, similar to *Figure CD08.1* is perhaps not obviously suited to a mount. Cups with a one, two or three handles were recorded. There was evidence of both wired and unwired bases. Flecks of a light coloured inclusion, which show through the glaze as small lighter coloured spots, were noted on some vessels.

The base of cup *Figure CD08.5* was of interest because of a crack which ran across the base, visible on both the interior and exterior (*Figure CD20.1-2*), and which had formed during firing. Glaze had infiltrated the fissure binding the base together. The base exterior was also thickly encrusted with glaze and occasional small pottery fragment. A small pottery fragment was also adhering to the interior wall of the cup. In theory the cup would have been usable but can be classed as no better than a second and there is a possibility that that the vessel may have been waste. The base from a more ovoid vessel (*Figure CD08.6*) had similarly thick glaze on the exterior base and was heavily chipped around the base edge, presumably during removal from a saggar. Whether this vessel was also waste or sold as a second is open to debate (see discussion above). Heavy fuel ash slag adhesions were noted on the base of *Figure CD08.2* and other irregularities were found on *Figure CD08.7,10* A cistercian ware body sherd with a black over-fired glaze could also have been a waster or may have been burnt after breakage.

One cup sherd was decorated with applied white clay pads. A second 'fluted' sherd from a cup or possibly from a more elaborate table ware (*Figure CD19.1*) was decorated with applied white clay dots impressed with something like a ring and dot stamp. A small cistercian ware sherd was

decorated with an applied pinched strip.

Two further drinking vessels were represented by a 'frilled' base from a Siegburg drinking jug **Figure CD09.4** of rather ovoid form similar to Gaimster (1997 Fig. 3.48, 272, 281) and a fine Cologne stoneware drinking jug (**Figure CD09.1-3**), decorated with face masks around the neck and applied oak leaves and acorns and a portrait medallion on the body. The portrait medallions set round the neck are unusual in being set within rectangles rather than roundels. The neck portraits consist of repeated female and male busts, facing each other this is repeated three times. Opposite the handle is a medallion portrait bust of a man's head with moustache, facing left. There are no exact parallels in Gaimster (1997) for this vessel but a date range of 1520-1540/45 seems likely. The handle is missing from the Cologne stoneware drinking jug and may be reason for discard. There is indication of wear around the rim suggesting a metal mount as shown in Gaimster (1997, Nos. 30, 33).

A cup or mug base (**Figure CD08.10**) appeared to be an early blackware and may date to the mid 16th century. Two sherds, one a rim, from a possible blackware mug, the glaze of which which was incorrectly fired to a 'metallic' black with sickly brown mottles and a blackware 'elephant's trunk' handle again with a metallic black glaze, represent two further drinking vessels.

A small Midlands Purple jug (**Figure CD07.6, Figure CD15.8**), complete apart from a small hole at the shoulder was probably intended as a drinking vessel (see above). It is similar in form to a squat stoneware form see Gaimster 1997 No. 30?

The dominance of drinking vessels and cisterns is typical of many late medieval/early post-medieval urban sites in the West Midlands and seems genuinely to represent vessels in use by relatively prosperous urban dwellers. However, at Burton Dassett, what appears to have been the final occupation of the excavated area, a house in Area D2, was also characterised by a group of cisterns and cistercian ware cups. At the time of writing the pottery report some 20 years ago, when there was not the body of comparanda there is today it was suggested that the Burton Dassett group might indicate that the Area D2 house was used as a tavern. This explanation now seems unlikely and more probably points to the widespread adoption of these ceramic forms, particularly by persons of means in the later 15th and early 16th centuries. The reasons for this deserve further study and highlight the still imperfect knowledge we have of ceramic use in the medieval and early post-medieval periods.

The group contains other evidence of 'bourgeois' occupation. There were two dripping trays (Chilvers Coton C, **Figure CD07.10-11**; WCTS SLM20, **Figure CD07.8-9**), a blackware pedestal vessel (**Figure CD08.8**) possibly a pedestal salt, a possible chafing dish (WCTS SLM14, not illustrated) and a tin-glazed earthen ware bowl with internal blue painted decoration, The latter had a pinkish fabric with iron oxide inclusions which suggests that it is not an Anglo-Dutch ware but is probably Mediterranean in origin.

Plain utilitarian vessels, apart from the cisterns, were represented by two bowl base sherds (WCTS SLM15 and Midlands Purple).

Of the remaining pottery from the cesspit five blackware sherds may have come from small jugs. Residual material consisted of five Chilvers Coton A sherds all from jugs and a small diameter Coventry sandy ware cooking pot, which is possibly early (**Figure CD07.1**).

The cesspit seems to have contained a roughly contemporaneous group of pottery, which dated to the 16th century, with only a small amount of residual material. The large fragments of individual pots recovered are indicative of swift disposal of the broken pot into the cesspit, which probably occurred around the middle of the 16th century. Cross-joins between the fills may indicate a single disposal event but much of the fill was very glutinous and viscous and pot sherds may have sunk down through it. A Midlands Yellow ware cup base sherd in fill 2309 could indicate a date later in

the second half of the 16th century or could indicate evidence of use of this ware by the mid 16th century but the sherd, which was very abraded, could be intrusive into the upper backfill of the cesspit. However the small number of sherds identified as blackware may also push the backfill date into the third quarter of the 16th century, although the portable finds are more consistent with a mid-16th century date. However, Mould also notes leather which could date to the late 14th or early 15th century. If the former is correct there is no pottery which can confidently be ascribed to this date; if the latter then some of the pottery such as the cisterns and bowls could be contemporary and hence residual in the cesspit. We should perhaps look to some of the smaller sherds such as a transitional Chilvers Coton C/Midlands Purple jug or cistern sherd as representative of this material, perhaps remains from earlier fills which have been removed before the final backfilling.

Cess Pit 2402, Phase 5b, Plot C backfilled c 1550 *Figure CD10.5*

Although pottery in this feature was less frequent than in the Plot D cesspit 2338, the backfilling date seems to be broadly similar. A transitional cistercian/blackware sherd suggests a date around the mid-16th century and a bowl base which could be classed as a proto-coarseware is likely to date to c 1550 or later. Vessel function was consistent with this date and comprised five cups (cistercian ware and cistercian/blackware), four bowls (WCTS SLM13 and SLM15, proto-coarseware and Midlands Purple (*Figure CD10.5*) and a cistern (Midlands Purple) of the same form as those from cesspit 2338.

Phase 6

Feature 2339, Phase 6?, Plot B, backfilled c. 1650-75 *Figure CD17.1-3; Figure CD18.1*

This feature was notable for producing a good example of a tin-glazed earthenware, fluted, scalloped rim bowl, with blue chinoiserie painted decoration (*Figure CD18.1*) which was substantially complete. It dates on analogy with similar fluted bowls (see Jennings 1981, 202, Fig 90, 1437) to around the mid-17th century. Apart from this there were few sherds, representing three blackware mugs, a yellow ware vessel of unknown form and a residual Chilvers Coton A jug sherd, a Chilvers Coton C ?bowl sherd and an undiagnostic Chilvers Coton C sherd. Two of the blackware sherds came from cylindrical mugs, one 'corrugated'.

A second substantial vessel *Figure CD17.1-3* was a pipkin with a hollow, socket handle and internal olive glaze. This is clearly a late form and is probably more or less contemporary with the scalloped bowl. The fabric was very fine and may be a late Potterspurty product, it is certainly different from the coarseware fabrics used for pipkins (such as *Figure CD05.4-5* although this is earlier in date) and other utilitarian vessels such as jars and bowls found in the West Midlands. A group of tripod pipkins (pers inspection by author) with a brick red fabric and internal tan or brown glazes were found at Kenilworth, dumped in a culvert together with jar, bowl and pancheon rim sherds, which suggest a 17th century date. These were more typical of West Midlands groups of this date.

The pipkin was heavily sooted on the exterior. The sooting was especially heavy opposite the handle. The rim form suggests that the pipkin was designed to take a lid

Sherds from the yellow ware hollow ware, the corrugated blackware mug and the cylindrical blackware mug are probably contemporary with the pipkin and scalloped dish.

Quarry Pits

Quarry pit 2408, Phase 3, Plot C, backfilled in (?later) 14th c *Figure CD12.1-3*

An almost complete conical Chilvers Coton A ware jug (*Figure CD12.1-3*) was found in fill 2430.

It was elaborately decorated and probably dates to c. 1300. The vessel form has only one parallel in the Chilvers Coton report (Mayes and Scott (1984, Fig. 19, 13) and the decoration is unparalleled. The form is found in London-type ware jugs (Pearce et al 1985) where it dates to c 1270-1310, although the decorative scheme is vertical and linear rather than, as here, horizontal/linear. Like the Cologne drinking jug from F2338, the jug may have been discarded after the handle had broken.

The other fills each contained only Chilvers Coton C sherds, representing three jugs, a pipkin and a cooking pot (sooted). Two of the jug sherds appeared to be from a baluster or conical jug. The fill material appears to have been deposited in the 14th century and an attractive vessel such as the conical jug may have had quite a long life before breakage and discard..