

# The Raunds Area Project: First Interim Report

by GLENN FOARD and TERRY PEARSON

## SUMMARY

*This report is the first of a series which will appear annually in Northamptonshire Archaeology and which will provide an outline and summary of the progress of the Raunds Area Project. The present report is in two parts, the first introduces the Project, setting out the objectives and scope of the various fieldwork components, while the second part is a preliminary account of the results of the Saxon and Medieval ceramic research.*

## AN INTRODUCTION TO THE RAUNDS AREA PROJECT

by Glenn Foard

The Raunds Area Project combines large scale rescue excavation with field survey and environmental and documentary research in an examination of the evolution of the landscape in an area of 40 km<sup>2</sup> of the Nene Valley in Northamptonshire. The study area comprises the Medieval parishes of Raunds, Ringstead, Hargrave and Stanwick which, in the Saxon period, may have comprised a single estate (FIG 1). The area stretches from floodplain

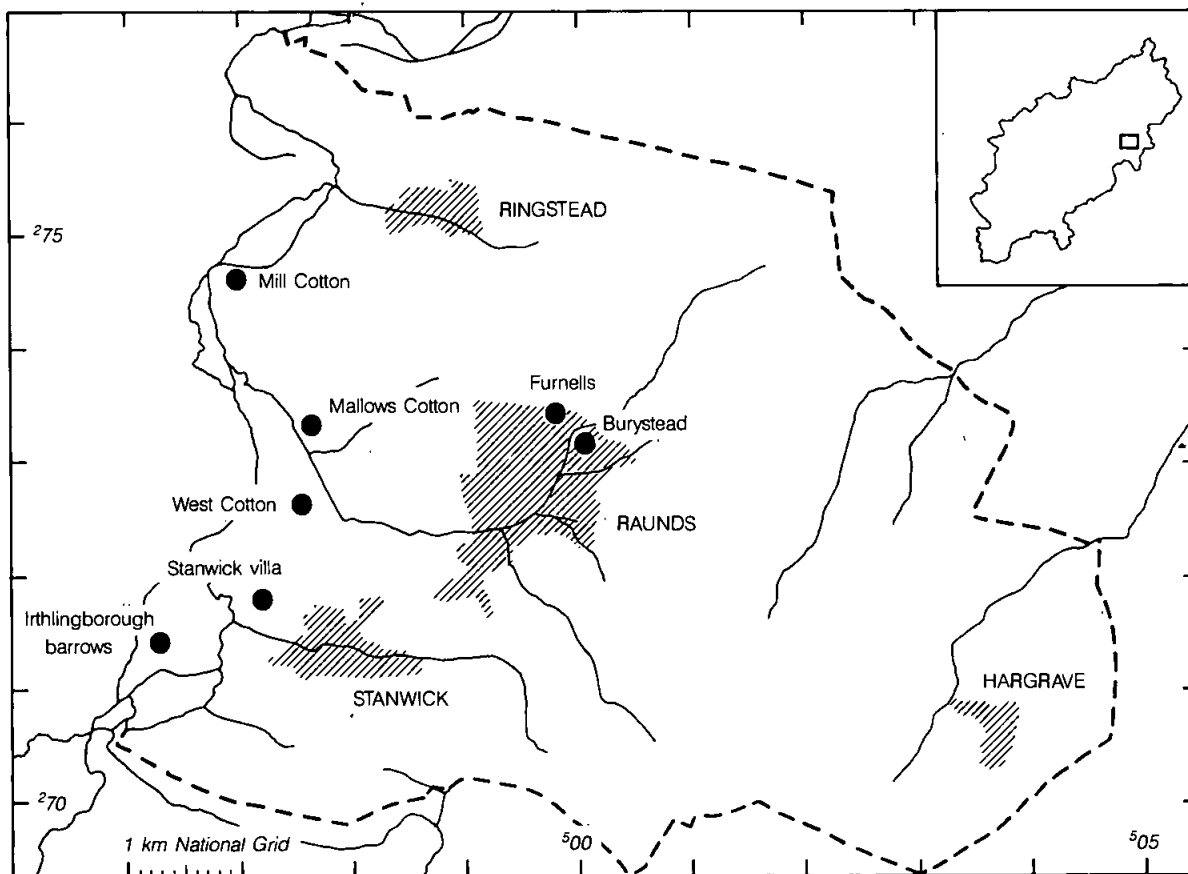


Fig 1 Key sites in the Raunds Area

meadows, through terrace gravels and the mainly permeable geologies of the valley sides, up onto the boulder clay plateau which was part of the Saxon 'forest' of Bromswold. In the Medieval period Raunds lay within a typical Midland open field landscape with nucleated villages and occasional hamlets. This project is examining whether the origins of that type of landscape lie only in the later Saxon period, or if its distinctive character has roots earlier in the Saxon, Roman, or even Iron Age periods.

The project has developed out of the excavation of Furnells manor in Raunds which took place between 1977 and 1982 (Cadman 1983), and stems from a detailed examination of the priorities for rescue archaeology in Northamptonshire. That study (Foard 1979) showed Raunds to be the most intact area of historic landscape in the upper Nene valley, containing an exceptionally well preserved grouping of key sites of prehistoric, Roman, Saxon and Medieval date, many of which were likely to be destroyed during the 1980s by extensive gravel extraction, road construction and housing development. The project is not simply a series of large scale rescue excavations but has a single conceptual framework within which specific fieldwork is being used to answer particular questions. Sites are being examined in a single landscape context in order that interaction between contemporary and successive settlements can be investigated. The search for synchronicity in developments on different sites can thus be pursued without the confusion of regional variation. Environmental sampling, both on excavations and within the wider landscape, is intended to provide a framework of environmental change within which the archaeological evidence can be placed.

#### THE EARLIER PREHISTORIC PERIOD

Initially the prehistoric component of the Raunds Area Project has focused on the investigation of ritual monuments. The area is exceptional in the region for the survival of at least seven upstanding Bronze Age barrows. These lie on the east side of the River Nene on low gravel terraces surrounded by floodplain and can be divided into two rather different groups *c* 1.7 km apart: a dispersed group of five barrows at Irthlingborough, and another bar-

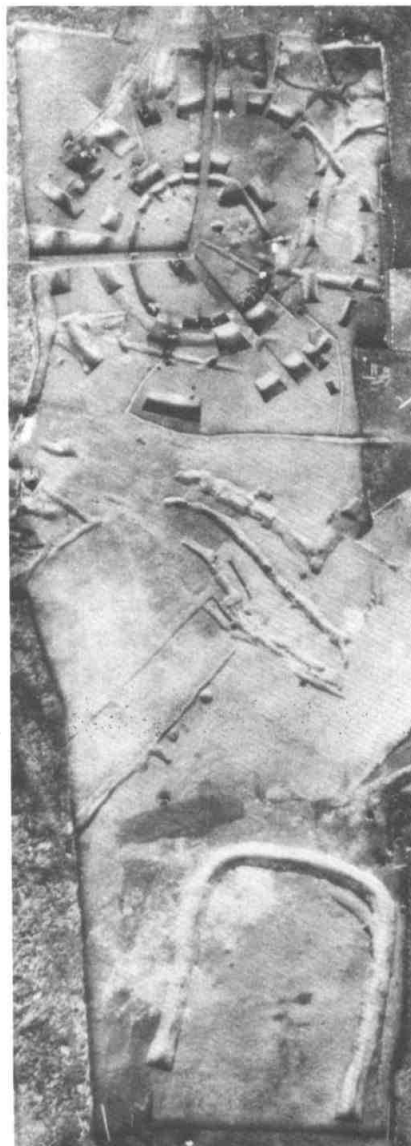


Plate 1 West Cotton: the Neolithic long enclosure (RAF copyright reserved)

row and three ring ditches at West Cotton. The area of *c* 150 ha in which the barrows are situated is subject to either gravel extraction or road construction. By means of large scale excavation of all the known monuments and an evaluation of the archaeological potential of the areas within and around the barrow groups, it will be possible to compare the two areas. The



Plate 2 Irthlingborough: the south-western Bronze Age barrow

project is designed to reveal the structure of the barrow groups, to establish the date range of the monuments, to compare burial practices, and to determine whether the barrows represent discrete cemeteries. The project presents a rare opportunity for excavation and survey and has important implications for Bronze Age cemetery studies in Northamptonshire and elsewhere in the country. In 1986 a Neolithic long enclosure and a Bronze Age barrow at West Cotton, and the southernmost barrow of the Irthlingborough group, were excavated (PLS 1 and 2).

The most extensive aspect of this part of the project involves survey and sampling of the gravel terrace and floodplain around the barrow groups. Recent survey work has shown that the terraces were ploughed in the late Iron Age and Roman periods and that, as a result, a Bronze Age land surface beyond the barrows is not preserved. However, the ploughing did not extend very far on to the floodplain where a buried land surface is preserved and archaeological features are likely to be well preserved. No tangible evidence of prehistoric settlement has yet been identified although it may be anticipated.

#### THE LATE IRON AGE AND ROMAN PERIODS

The main thrust of the project is towards the investigation of landscape development from the later Iron Age onwards and a series of well-preserved sites from each successive period is being extensively examined. From the late

Iron Age and Roman periods the principal excavation is that of an entire nucleated rural settlement at Stanwick, which covers up to 10 ha and contains at its south-west end the Stanwick villa. Small scale excavation is also in progress on the periphery of what might prove to be a similar site which extends beneath and to the east of Mallows Cotton DMV. Such nucleated settlements appear to be smaller than, and very different in character from, the unwallled small towns. They represent an important element of the Roman settlement pattern which has not been extensively examined. Excavation has already demonstrated that the Stanwick settlement is not simply a grouping of dependent labourers working on the villa farm. It is composed, at least in part, of a number of separate and substantial stone buildings laid out in a regular fashion along a series of trackways radiating north-eastwards from the villa (PL 3). Indeed, the planned character and extensive nature of the settlement raise many questions about the function of this site. In view of the discovery, 1 km from the villa, of an Iron Age hillfort, which was also occupied in the Saxon period and may represent the early/middle Saxon 'burh' of Irthlingborough, belonging to the royal 'tun' at Finedon, one might ask whether the Stanwick site had some administrative functions within the local *pagus* (Foard 1985).

Survey and small-scale excavation is providing a picture of the development of the wider Iron Age and Roman settlement pattern, enabling questions to be asked about the interaction of the nucleated and dispersed settlement forms. For example, it may be possible to determine if the nucleation of settlement at the Stanwick site was accompanied by the desertion of some of the widely dispersed farmsteads which are more typical of Iron Age and Roman Northamptonshire (RCHM 1980). It may also be possible to determine how the evolution of these nucleated sites, which are founded during the Iron Age, correlates with the expansion of settlement across much of the adjacent clayland, which appears almost devoid of early prehistoric settlement. On these clays aerial photography has revealed extensive linear enclosure groups, some of which are regularly aligned and perhaps indicate some form of

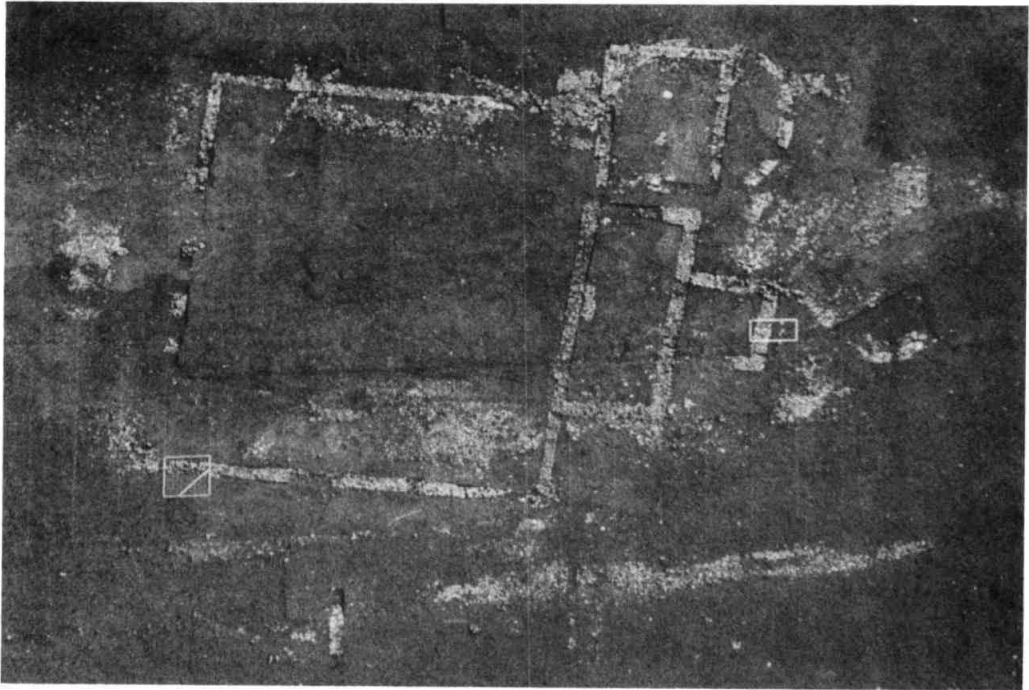


Plate 3 Stanwick: a courtyard 'farm' in the Roman villa settlement

planned land division in the Iron Age or Roman periods. Comparison of the density and character of activity on the claylands with that in the river valley will be an important aspect of the overall study.

#### THE SAXON AND MEDIEVAL PERIODS

The central core of the project is from the later Roman to the Medieval periods. The timing and process of decay of the Roman settlement pattern and its transformation into the Saxon is one of the major problems which the project is examining. Important advances in the classification of Saxon pottery in the region, including the recognition of distinctive 5th century ceramics (see below), provides the opportunity to understand the development of settlement between the 4th and 6th centuries. The Stanwick settlement was apparently deserted in the late 4th century or earlier, and only two Saxon sites have so far produced evidence of 5th century activity. However, several sites, including the settlement at Mallows Cotton, have yielded material of both Roman and Saxon date. It is already clear that there was no simple

development from Roman villa to the primary Saxon manor sites, which were first occupied in the mid-6th century. If any direct transfer of authority did occur at this level, rather than higher in the administrative hierarchy, then one must postulate an as yet unidentified class of status settlements which were only occupied during the 5th and earlier 6th centuries.

Work within the project is furthest advanced on the 6th to 14th centuries AD. Excavations in Raunds village, at Furnells manor and more recently to the south of Furnells and around Burystead manor, have shown that a later 6th and 7th century settlement, in the form of an irregularly organised loose agglomeration, extended over perhaps 10 ha. Within this settlement the character and density of activity varies considerably. The focus of the settlement may have lain 150 m to the south of Furnells on the Langham Road site, which has the densest concentration of post-built structures and an exceptional quantity of Ipswich-type pottery, possibly suggesting a higher status. Another extensive contemporary settlement may exist around Mallows Cotton where a very sparse

scatter of Saxon sherds, with several slight concentrations, has been revealed by field-walking. Trial excavation has failed to identify any settlement activity between the minor concentrations, and this site may merely represent a scatter of activity similar to that seen for example at New Wintles farm, Oxfordshire (Gray 1974). It is however clear that the early Saxon settlement pattern is not fully dispersed as has been suggested previously. It may be necessary to reinterpret previously published settlement evidence, such as that from Brixworth (Hall and Martin 1979) and Great Doddington (Foard 1978) which is associated with later Medieval settlements, as they could represent loose agglomerations similar to that being revealed in Raunds village.

In the later 7th century there was a dramatic replanning of the Raunds settlement. This involved the contraction of settlement into a very restricted area, with the laying out of a rectangular ditched enclosure containing four substantial timber buildings on the Furnells site. While this may represent the direct transfer of higher status occupation from Langham Road, it will only become clear when comparative contemporary evidence of settlement form has been collected elsewhere in the Raunds Area. Occupation of an as yet undefined character does continue on the Burystead site during the 8th century and this may provide the necessary comparison. At around the same time the dispersed element of the settlement pattern is disappearing, though more work is required

on the dating of these desertions within the Raunds Area to confirm this synchronicity. Hence, at a time when village formation was thought to be occurring, at Raunds there is an apparent contraction in the extent of the settlement beneath the later village.

The next major phase of settlement development occurs in the later 9th or early 10th centuries, perhaps significantly during the period of the Danelaw, when the rectilinear form of the later village is determined. The first stages in the laying out of at least three regular tenement rows of the Medieval village appears to have occurred at this time. The alignment of two rows close to Furnells respects the layout of Furnells, which was established in the late 7th century. This major phase of replanning apparently coincides with the construction of the first church and the large timber hall on the Furnells manor. At about the same time the first boundaries of the tenements on the hamlet of West Cotton were also apparently laid out, though in this case it would seem on a new site. The possibility exists that a standard unit of measure was employed to create identically sized plots within each row. Future research excavation could examine the deserted hamlets of Mallows and Mill Cotton and the township village of Hargrave to determine whether in those settlements, several of which lie in separate townships, such regular planning occurred at the same time. We may be seeing here the process of manorialisation, with the creation of a true manor and the appearance of



Plate 4 West Cotton: the Medieval stone buildings

dependent virgate and cottage tenures as represented by the regular rectilinear tenement rows.

The latest stage in the evolution of the Medieval settlements was the establishment in the 11th century of the classic pattern of toft and croft with the concentration of stone structures into a clearly defined frontage (PL 4). Within Raunds village itself, excavation on Burystead manor will examine whether manorialisation occurred there at this time or if, as documents suggest, the manor itself and perhaps also its church were not created until the post-Conquest period. In 1086 the Burystead land was merely a member and sokeland of the manor of Higham, 5 km to the south-west (Foard 1985).

Detailed environmental sampling within the excavated sites is producing promising results and it is hoped that developments in the Saxon and Medieval settlement patterns and in the character of the tenements themselves may correlate with changes in the agricultural economy. The later developments of the manors and peasant settlement are also being examined on the same sites, and it is hoped that independently funded research excavation on the Mallows and Mill Cotton sites may examine the timing of the process of post-Conquest subinfeudation which is assumed to underlie the existence of a number of the lesser manor sites within the Raunds Area. The examination of the late Medieval and Post-Medieval desertions of hamlets, with the temporary decline of settlement in the main villages including the disappearance of several of the manors, will provide an important postscript to the whole study.

#### THE FIELDWORK PROJECTS

The Raunds Area Project is a joint venture between the Northamptonshire County Council and English Heritage, with the support of the Manpower Services Commission and the Amey Roadstone Corporation, and also involving several universities. We acknowledge the cooperation of the East Northants District Council and a number of developers including Ideal Homes (Thames) Ltd and PJ Developments. The rescue fieldwork will continue until at least 1991.

The main projects are:

**Raunds village: Furnells Manor.** Early/middle Saxon settlement and Saxon/Medieval manor, church and cemetery. Excavated 1977-82 by A Boddington and G Cadman (Cadman 1983). Previous survey and trial excavation by D N Hall and Northants Field Group 1975-6. Subsequent small-scale excavation 1982-4 by S Power, M Audouy, and D Windell in the surrounding areas.

**Raunds village: Langham Road.** Early/middle Saxon settlement and late Saxon/Medieval tenement row. Excavated 1984-6 by M Audouy.

**Raunds village: Burystead.** Early/middle Saxon settlement, late Saxon tenement row, and Medieval manor. Excavation began 1984 by M Audouy. Previous trial excavations by S Power, D Windell and G Foard.

**Raunds village: Brook Street.** Late Saxon tenement row. Minor excavation 1986 by S Parry.

**Raunds: West Cotton.** Late Saxon and Medieval hamlet with underlying Bronze Age barrows and Neolithic long enclosure. Excavation began 1985 by D Windell.

**Raunds: Mallows Cotton settlement.** Late Iron Age to Medieval settlement. Excavation of small area of Roman occupation in 1986 by D Windell.

**Stanwick: Stanwick villa settlement.** Later Iron Age settlement and Roman villa and settlement. Excavation began 1984 by D S Neal.

**Irthlingborough: Irthlingborough barrows.** Four Bronze Age barrows. Trial excavation 1985 by P Garwood. Full-scale excavation began 1986 by C Halpin.

**Raunds Area Survey.** A programme of field-walking and other survey work together with trial excavation. Began 1985 by S Parry.

**Environmental research.** Dr M Robinson (Oxford) and Dr A Brown (Leicester University).

**Pottery research.** Saxon and Medieval by T Pearson; Roman by A Crowdy and E MacRobert.

Previous modern excavations in the Raunds Area:

**Ringstead: Mill Cotton.** Medieval hamlet. Excavations on manor site in 1974 by R A H Williams and D N Hall (*Northamptonshire Archaeol*, 10 (1975), 170; *Counc Brit Archaeol*



*Group 9 Newsl*, 6 (1976), 22).

**Ringstead: Ringstead villa settlement.** Excavation in 1971-2 by D Jackson (Jackson 1980).

**SAXON AND MEDIEVAL POTTERY:  
AN OUTLINE OF THE EVIDENCE FROM  
RAUNDS, FURNELLS**

by Terry Pearson

The study of the Saxon and Medieval pottery within the Raunds Area is yielding valuable results of regional significance in addition to providing a basis of comparison between local sites. The characterisation of the major pottery assemblage from Raunds, Furnells, with its continuous sequence from the 6th to the 15th centuries, adds substantially to the understanding of contemporary pottery in Northamptonshire and in particular, the groups of Saxon pottery greatly increase the evidence of ceramic development in the middle Saxon period.

Reference is made in this paper to sites at both Raunds, Furnells and Langham Road. The initial excavations at Raunds, Furnells were concerned with a church, cemetery and manorial buildings (Cadman 1983). These structures were situated above an extensive Saxon occupation which has been found to extend to the south in more recent excavations at Langham Road.

This article provides an outline of the pottery sequence in advance of final publication and illustrates the chronological succession of vessel-types as three-dimensional groups based on material excavated at Raunds, Furnells. The pottery was drawn by Christopher Addison-Jones and I am additionally grateful to my colleagues Graham Cadman, Andy Boddington, Liz Ward, Christine Addison-Jones, and Richard Coleman-Smith for their considerable help. I must also thank Alan Hannan, Brian Dix, and Glenn Foard for reading and commenting on drafts of this paper.

**THE POTTERY SEQUENCE FROM RAUNDS,  
FURNELLS**

The intensive occupation of the site and its careful excavation led to the recovery of a well-stratified sequence of pottery groups, producing a pre-seriated sequence of types. The identification of the residual material within

this sequence was seen as an important aspect of the analysis. In many instances, particularly in respect of the earlier Saxon pottery-types, the standard approaches of typological and decorative analysis were insufficient to describe the visible differences in the material. The identification of the way pottery was made and the classification of the techniques used in the manufacture of different types have advanced their definition and characterisation. Study of the technology has given an insight into pottery traditions and their evolution during the Saxon period; in addition, the potential for isolating the domestic products from an individual potter or workshop may now be realised. A significant contribution is the recognition of the globular storage jar as a new Middle Saxon form in the area (see p 12).

The assemblage from Furnells has been fully quantified. A model of the sequence was developed and refined as further stratified groups were analysed. A type-series defined by fabric and technology has been established and an illustrated catalogue of forms prepared. A full petrological analysis of the fabrics is currently being undertaken by Pascale Brunier.

**EARLY SAXON POTTERY (c 450-650)**

Over 10,000 sherds of Saxon pottery have been recovered from the excavations at Furnells and the adjacent site of Langham Road. This wealth of material has permitted the full characterisation of types and the documentation of associated groups within the stratified series. The potential of this work is that the sequence can be applied outside the study area by comparison between sherds. Comparison with other assemblages from Northamptonshire has been an important aspect of understanding the Furnells sequence, particularly concerning the Early Saxon pottery. It would appear, for example, that there was a fairly extensive trade in pottery along the River Nene which resulted in many sites having the same pottery-types, matching in both fabric and form. The present work suggests that a co-ordinated regional approach to the study of this material would be both informative and rewarding.

An important aim of the Raunds Area Project is to examine the degree of continuity between the late Roman and early Saxon

settlement (p 6). One approach to the problem is through the identification of pottery which can be securely attributed to this period. There are two pottery-types which may be important in this respect, but both have so far only been found in residual contexts. These types probably originated in the 5th century and could indicate activity during this period in the Raunds Area. Both have been identified outside the study area at Bancroft, Milton Keynes and at Oundle, in north-east Northants and are provisionally named after their type-sites.

Saxon pottery from the excavations of the Roman villa and mausoleum at Bancroft (Williams 1986, 47) comprises plain domestic vessels exhibiting techniques of manufacture and form which correspond with early Anglo-Saxon traditions. The context of this pottery suggests that it belongs in the 5th century and represents continued activity following the Roman phases of occupation. Petrologically, the fabric is distinct from Anglo-Saxon and late Roman types in the region. Sherds of this type have been found during fieldwalking over the Mallows Cotton Roman settlement in the Raunds Area. It is notably absent from other Roman sites in Northamptonshire including Stanwick (p 5) and Ashton (B Dix, pers comm) as well as from the Early Saxon assemblages from north Raunds (Furnells, Langham Road and Burystead) and the Milton Keynes area (Pennylands). It may tentatively be suggested that this type represents the work of a 5th century Anglo-Saxon potter whose products were reaching some settlements occupying late Roman sites.

The 'Oundle-type' was first identified in the excavation of a sunken featured building at Stoke Doyle Road, Oundle (*Northamptonshire Archaeol*, 15 (1980), 169-70). Jars of this predominantly coarse oolitic limestone-tempered fabric copy Roman jar and Anglo-Saxon biconical shapes but manufacturing techniques differ. The methods of manufacture of late Roman and Anglo-Saxon pottery are well established in earlier traditions whereas the techniques used in the production of the 'Oundle-type' consist of hand-coiling with some surface-smoothing, the coils are pinched together and the coil thickness in any one vessel varies from 3-20mm. The firing technique also

differs. The inefficiency of the kiln environment is reflected in a wide colour range (from orange to black on a single vessel) and is likely to have been a poorly controlled bonfire- or clamp-kiln. The source of the late Roman vessels copied by this workshop is not hard to establish with the site of Ashton Roman town and other settlements nearby. The prototypes for the typical Anglo-Saxon biconical forms were imported into the area and have been found in assemblages at Stoke Doyle Road and a cemetery at Wakerley (*Northamptonshire Archaeol*, forthcoming).

While a sub-Roman context for this type is difficult to establish, there is good evidence for its production in the later 5th to early 6th centuries. The group from Stoke Doyle Road, Oundle contained sherds from two vessels which were decorated and of an Anglo-Saxon tradition of manufacture. The decoration, comprising thumbled facets around the biconical waist of the vessel with incised horizontal lines above, can be compared to the *Schalenurnen* series which suggests a date in the second half of the 5th century (Myres 1977, 1, 18-19). The early dominance of the 'Oundle-type' can be seen at the Wakerley cemetery where it forms the major group of pottery. The same assemblage contained a small proportion of regionally imported Anglo-Saxon vessels, the broken sherds of which in some cases had been intentionally placed in grave furnishings. Current evidence therefore suggests that a pottery workshop in the Oundle region was operating in the later 5th and early 6th centuries in a tradition which was not related to either those of the late Roman or the Anglo-Saxon. However, that the potters were aware of these other types is shown by their attempts to copy them. At the same time as the production of this type, Anglo-Saxon vessels were being introduced into the area in increasing numbers. The dating provided by the imported *Schalenurnen* types from Stoke Doyle Road and the associated metalwork in the graves at Wakerley confirm a period of production from at least the second half of the 5th into the first half of the 6th centuries. The excavation of a site at Black Pot Lane, Oundle yielded an assemblage of Anglo-Saxon pottery which can be dated to the second half of the 6th century and is paralleled at



Raunds and Nassington (Leeds and Atkinson 1944). The absence of the 'Oundle-type' from this group, apart from a few residual sherds, suggests that by this time it was out of production.

The identification of 'Oundle-type' sherds in a residual, eroded soil-horizon at Raunds, Furnells suggests that activity began there during this period. A date in the first half of the 6th century at the site is reinforced by the discovery of stamp decorated 'Anglo-Saxon' sherds which on stylistic grounds would belong then (Cadman *et al* 1983).

*Late sixth to early seventh centuries*

The first large groups of pottery and associated metalwork from Raunds, Furnells and Langham Road can be dated to the late 6th or early 7th centuries on general typological grounds and by parallels with material from cemetery sites at Nassington, Northants, and Woodston, Peterborough (Myres 1977, nos 428-33, 3326-30, 3769). At Furnells the pottery of this period came from a general phase of occupation and structures (Cadman *et al* 1983, 9-10); it has been found elsewhere in Raunds at the adjacent site of Langham Road. While the pottery falls into the general 'Anglian' traditions of manufacture, a variety of individual techniques are visible both in the methods of coiling and the forms produced. The group includes biconical jars, globular or squat jar forms, and a small 'thumb-pot' lamp as shown in FIG 2.

The range of fabrics and forms from Raunds, Furnells and Langham Road is unusual and indicates that pottery from a number of workshops was reaching the site. There are over 50 different fabrics in the assemblage of this period whereas the range from other sites in the region averages less than half of this. While this could be biased towards the greater amount of excavation at Raunds, the varied composition of individual groups is not reflected in comparable assemblages from other sites. During this period there appears to have been an increase in the number of production sites and consequently in the quantity of pottery on domestic sites in Northamptonshire. The number of fabric types and variations in manufacturing technique and form seen in the assemblages from Raunds suggest an extensive supply of pottery there. This is emphasised by the greater variety expressed in the Furnells/Langham Road assemblages than in groups from sites outside the Raunds Area. Petrological analysis shows that the inclusions in the Saxon fabrics from Raunds derive from a wide geological belt and suggests that the pottery could have originated from a number of areas in central Northamptonshire, south Lincolnshire and Mountsorrel, Leicestershire.

The greater quantity of pottery recovered from the second half of the 6th and first half of the 7th centuries provides a clear indication of a large scale of production. The industry was apparently in a dynamic state, with developments in manufacturing methods and variety



Fig 2 Late 6th to early 7th century pottery group, scale approx 1:10

expressed in the style and technique of the coarse domestic vessels. The association of Ipswich-type wares with 7th century local types at Langham Road, and to a lesser extent at Furnells, may be a further indication of the extent of trade and interaction at this time. Significantly, there is an absence of this regionally important and diagnostic type in the middle Saxon phases at both sites, possibly reflecting a decline/loss of status in the later 7th and 8th centuries. It is possible that north Raunds was itself an important place for the exchange of goods during the early Saxon period, thereby accounting for the variety and quantity of the domestic pottery which reached the site. The distribution of Ipswich-type wares at Furnells and Langham Road may support this since the sherds were not concentrated in any one part of the settlement.

#### MIDDLE SAXON POTTERY (750-850)

By the middle of the 7th century the techniques



Fig 3 Mid-7th century globular storage jars with pinched rims, scale approx 1:10

of manufacture had evolved to produce vessels with a standard internal volume: the globular jar (FIG 3). Such standardisation was achieved through the use of a convex mould over which the lower three-quarters of the vessel was built (FIG 4). In some cases sand was initially sprinkled over the mould to facilitate subse-

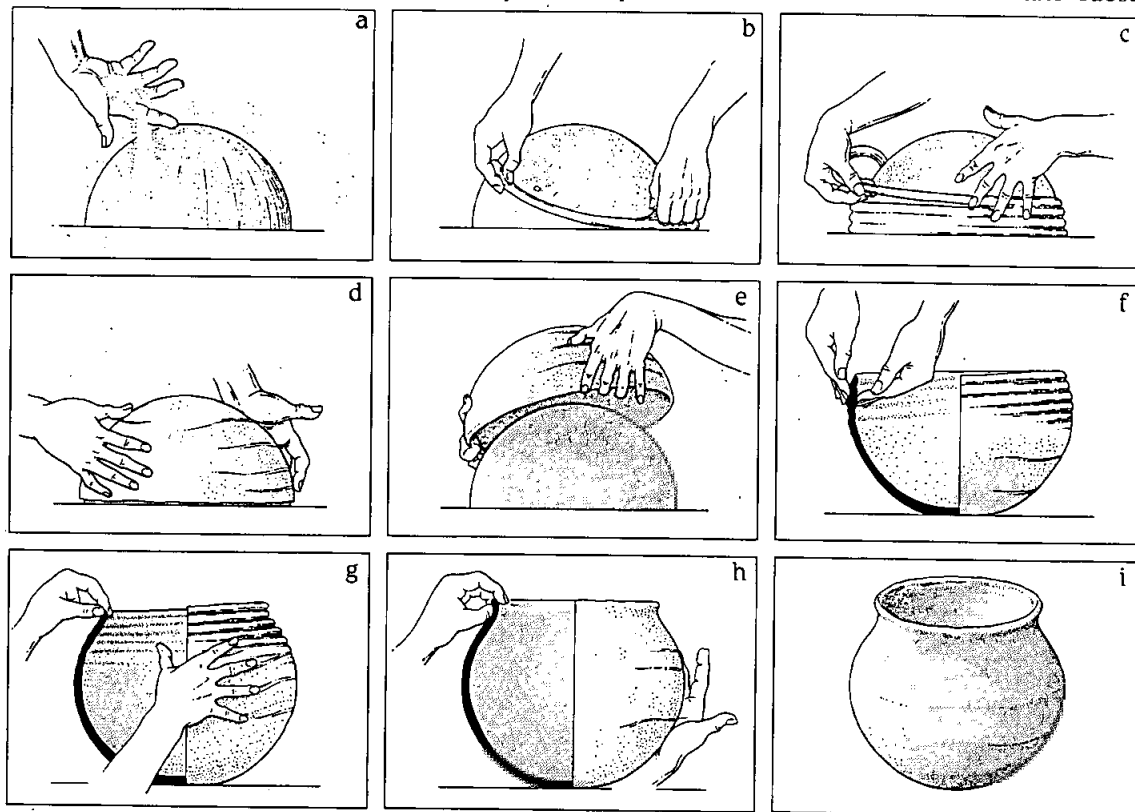


Fig 4 Method of construction of Middle Saxon storage jar

quent removal of the clay. Clay coils were then built up against the surface (*ibid*, *b*, *c*) and firmly pressed against it (*d*). The surface contours of the mould are frequently reflected on the interior of the vessel, while the outside shows finger-impressions and evidence of later smoothing. When the lower part of the vessel had been made, it was lifted off the mould (*e*) and turned upside down. The neck and rim were then built from coils and finger-pinned on both sides (*f*, *g*, *h*). The finished vessel was finally smoothed over (*i*).

In addition to the changes in manufacture, there appears to have been a tendency to use selected clays which contained fewer indigenous inclusions. It is generally accepted that during the 7th century changes were taking place in the repertoire of the Anglo-Saxon potter, initially with the phasing out of decorated biconical jars/urns. At Raunds production appears to have become reoriented towards the manufacture of storage vessels of standard shape and size. The importance of this new form is that it apparently continued to be made throughout the middle Saxon period and probably until the introduction of shell-tempered 'proto-St Neots type ware' in the 9th century. It may be significant that there is evidence for the production of globular jars at Furnells, while at other sites, such as Northampton (Williams *et al* 1985) the form is absent. The distribution of Middle Saxon pottery in the region is far from clear at present, but the emerging picture would seem to suggest that the storage jar form is found on some sites and not on others. While it is possible that its occurrence is related to specific functions at certain sites, and thereby indicative of status, the suggestion can only be tested by excavation of more sites of the period. The general paucity of other vessel-forms at Furnells may have occasioned the reuse of globular jar sherds after the storage vessel was broken. In one instance, a large sherd, which comprised about one-fifth of the vessel, had been reused as a frying-pan or griddle before further breakage occurred.

By the 8th century the quantity of pottery at Raunds had substantially decreased. The majority of previous local production centres either had been discontinued or were reduced to supplying extremely local needs, as the evidence

for the production of globular jars at Furnells suggests. The conservatism of the tradition is seen through the gradual debasement of potting techniques, and is demonstrated by the globular jar production at Furnells where, despite functional improvements in the strengthening and enlargement of the rim, individual vessels were badly finished and their firing was less well controlled than previously (FIG 5).



Fig 5 8th to 9th century globular storage jars with reinforced rims, scale approx 1:10

#### SAXO-NORMAN POTTERY (c 850-1150)

Saxo-Norman pottery-types in East Anglia occupy an important place in the development of English ceramics (Hurst 1956, 1957 and 1958). The main types that are found at Raunds are St Neots-type ware (Hurst 1956; 1958; 1976, 320-3; Addyman 1965; 1969; 1973), Thetford-type ware (Hurst 1957; 1958; 1976, 319-20) and Stamford-type ware (Hurst 1958; 1976, 323-6; Kilmurry 1980). As each was produced throughout the period, dating can sometimes be difficult and misleading; nevertheless, it is apparent that their introduction into the Raunds Area occurred in the second half of the 9th century and overlapped the period of the Danelaw. The stratified groups from Furnells provide a good relative series which represents continuous occupation from the 9th to the 12th centuries. Changes in the composition of these groups allow a number of aspects of the Saxo-Norman pottery supply to be investigated.

The transition from the Middle to the Late Saxon ceramic traditions is an important stage in the development of pottery both at Raunds and in a wider region. The marked differences in manufacture and form between the Middle Saxon hard-fired, quartz-tempered pottery and the softer fired, shell-tempered fabrics of the Late Saxon period suggest that there was a clear break of tradition. At present there is no archaeological evidence to show that the two types were at any stage contemporary. The globular storage jar of the earlier period (FIG 3) was replaced by a small jar form with only about one-third of the capacity (FIG 6). While the Middle Saxon form was primarily used for storage, the later jars were used for other functions including cooking. The emerging picture therefore indicates that there was a fundamental change in the manufacture, style and techniques of the pottery industry as well as in a new approach to its use in the

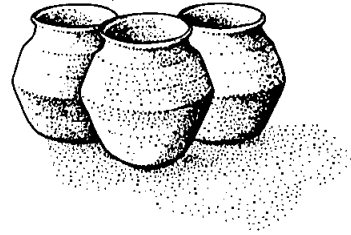


Fig 6 Late 9th century proto St Neots-type ware jars, scale approx 1:10

household. The wider application of Late Saxon pottery is reflected in the production of forms which were designed for specific functions.

Throughout the period the dominant pottery-type at Raunds is shell-tempered St Neots-type ware. Analysis of the potting techniques and technology represented by the collection suggests that separate industries can be identified. In addition, while there are marked

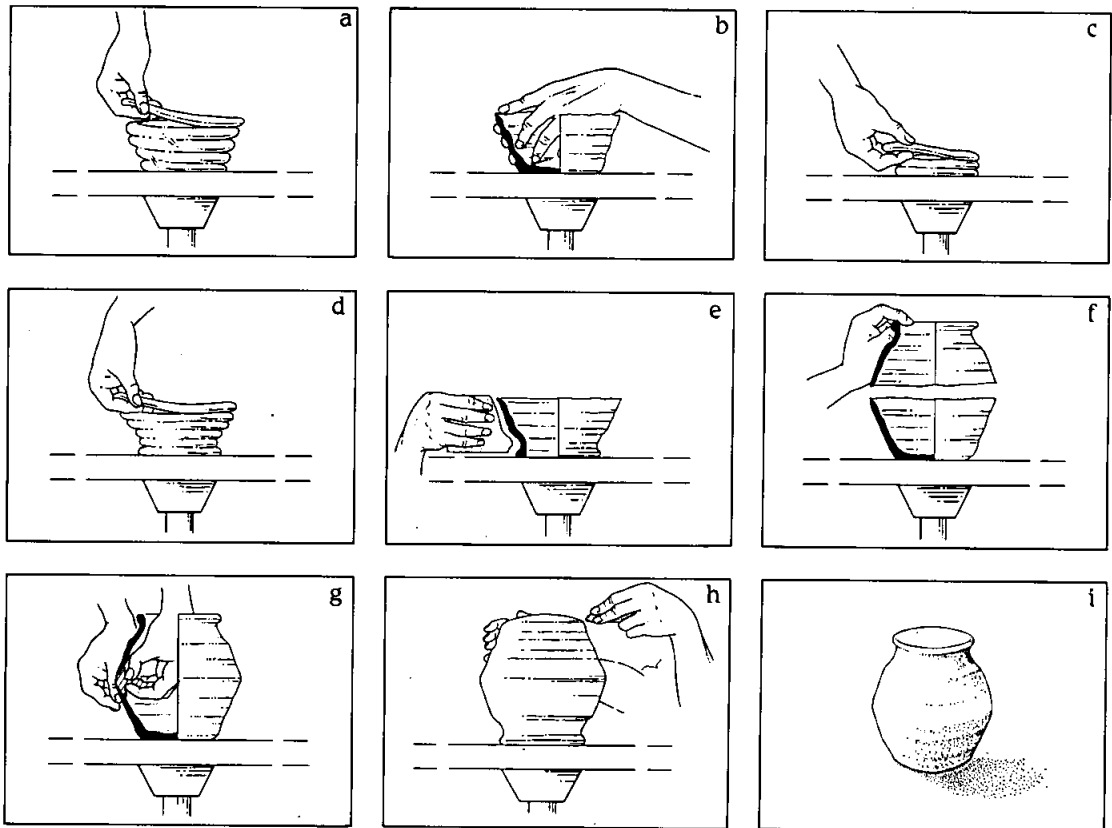


Fig 7 Method of construction of Late Saxon small jar

differences in the technology of the Middle and Late Saxon industries, the method of vessel construction, involving the manufacture of separate parts which were fitted together, continued into the earliest stage of St Neots-type ware production (FIG 7). It is unclear if this reflects a direct continuity of production or reintroduction of the potting tradition from Europe during the 9th century.

#### Late ninth century

The earliest Saxo-Norman groups from Furnells consist solely of proto-St Neots type ware small jars (FIG 6. Cf Addyman 1965; 1969). These vessels were hand-made on a turntable in two halves which were then fitted together (FIG 7). The lower half of the vessel was coiled (ibid, *a*) and finger-smoothed, often leaving rills on the inner surface (*b*). The top half of the vessel was made in a similar manner (*c, d*) and then formed with a template (*e*). The two halves were fitted together at the waist and in some cases a separate strip of clay was added to strengthen the joint (*f, g*). It is not yet clear how the bases were finally shaped, but in some cases the vessel was turned upside down and the base rounded (*h*); some examples had extra clay added to thicken the base before this was completed. The vessel was finally smoothed over externally and over the rim before firing (*i*). This reconstruction is based on the analysis of a complete vessel from Furnells. There were two variations of the rim form, the first with a convex internal face and the second with the internal face flattened presumably to allow the tight fit of a lid (FIG 8).

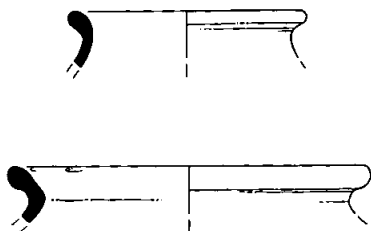


Fig 8 Rim variations of Late Saxon small jars, scale 1:4



Fig 9 10th century proto St Neots-type ware jars and inturned rimmed bowls and Northampton ware jar, scale approx 1:10

#### Early tenth century

During the early 10th century a wider range of pottery reached Raunds and demonstrates an increase in trade to the settlement. Pottery groups of this period contain St Neots ware types as well as Stamford and Northampton wares. The existing small jar form of St Neots-type ware continued alongside the introduction of the small bowl with an inturned rim (FIG 9). In size, the body of this new vessel was based on the lower half of the small jar (FIG 10). The construction of the wall and base is the same as for the small jar form (ibid, *a, b*; cf FIG 7). The rim was constructed of clay strips and then smoothed over (FIG 10, *j, k*); the outer surface was also smoothed over before firing (*m*). Other construction methods can be seen and the individual techniques can be used to isolate the products of different workshops.

The analysis of the techniques of manufacture of the St Neots-type ware isolated a number of sherds (1.05%) which had been made in a different way to the majority. They probably represent regional imports from more distant production centres. Stamford ware comprises 2.5% of the total and largely consists of unglazed small jar sherds with a small number of yellow-glazed body sherds. It had probably reached Raunds by *c* 900, on analogy with its suggested introduction elsewhere at Thetford and Oxford (Hurst 1976; Mellor 1980). Only a small proportion of Northampton ware was present in the group (1.25%, representing a maximum of four vessels). During this period the quantity of regionally imported pottery amounted to just under 5%.

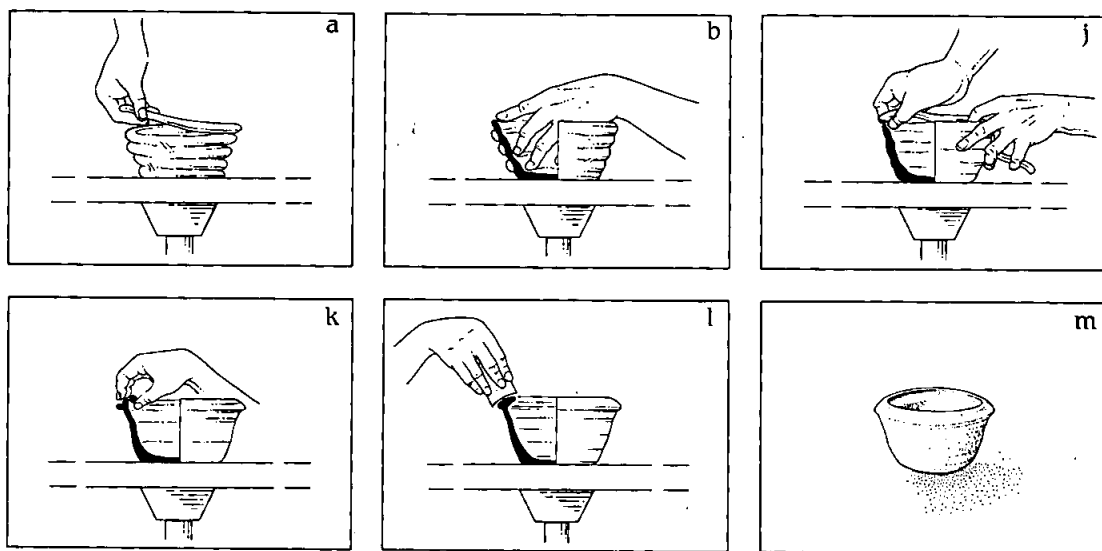


Fig 10 Method of construction of 10th century intumed rimmed bowls

*Late tenth to early eleventh centuries*

This group (FIG 11) shows a marked diversity in the forms in use at Raunds during the period. The range of jars and bowls of St Neots-type ware was more varied and included new shapes such as the cylindrical jar (*ibid, centre*). While two of the regionally imported St Neots-types in the earlier group were wheel-thrown, this technique of manufacture appears to have become more common in the Raunds Area by the late 10th to early 11th centuries. There is an

increase in the amount of pottery in groups of this period. Stamford wares were reaching the site in greater numbers (5–10% of the total) and a higher proportion was glazed. Forms include the spouted pitcher and glazed jar (FIG 11, *right*) as well as unglazed jars and small globular glazed vessels. This period also sees the introduction of Thetford-type ware, although it never reached the site in large quantities. The forms include a large storage jar with thumb- and applied strip decoration. The



Fig 11 Late 10th to early 11th century St Neots-type ware jars and bowls (*left and centre*), Stamford ware spouted pitcher and jar (*right*), scale approx 1:10

increased quantities of regional imports suggest that the scale of trade and contact had doubled.

*Late eleventh to early twelfth centuries*

Many of the forms of the previous period continued after the Norman Conquest and well into the 12th century. Changes can be seen in the method of manufacture and the condition of the sherds of the St Neots-type wares. Whilst the shell-tempered fabric of the earlier period continued, a higher proportion of oolitic inclusions in some fabrics suggests that there was a change in the supply of clays. The introduction of oolite and shelly oolite fabrics in new forms similar to those of the late 12th century illustrates the transition from Saxo-Norman to Early Medieval styles (FIG 12, *left*). While groups of this period were recovered from Furnells, they tended to be fragmentary and less numerous than in other periods with a paucity of regional imports such as Developed Stamford ware. They could represent a time when the manor was less intensively occupied.

MEDIEVAL POTTERY

The Medieval pottery sequence from Furnells extends from the late 12th to mid-15th centuries. The composition of the assemblage reflects the pattern of supply from local manufacturing sites as well as trade from distant regional centres. During the early Medieval period the majority of the pottery derived from manufacturing sites in the north-west of the county at Lyveden and Stanion (Steane 1967;

Bryant and Steane 1969; 1971; Steane and Bryant 1975). During the second half of the 13th century, however, there was an increased trade from the south from the production sites at Brill in Oxfordshire (Jope 1954; 1958). By the later 13th and throughout the 14th centuries pottery trade from the south of the county can be seen with increasing quantities of wares from Potterspury (Mynard 1970; 1972) and Olney Hyde. The dominant type which appears at Raunds during the early 15th century consists of a hard grey reduced ware known as 'Late Medieval Reduced Ware' (Moorhouse 1974); this was probably made at a production site at Higham Ferrers (Hall 1974). The absence from Furnells of types which are known to have been in circulation during the last quarter of the 15th century indicates the period when the site was deserted.

*Late twelfth century*

The late St Neots-type wares of the preceding period had almost disappeared from use at Raunds by the second half of the 12th century. The latest forms comprised large jars and bowls with straight-sided rims. At Northampton, the shell-tempered Saxo-Norman tradition apparently continued into the 13th to early 14th centuries with changes in form (Williams 1979, Type T2). In comparison, at Furnells the shelly oolite-tempered fabric of the post-Conquest baggy-shaped cooking pots and jars with thumb-impressed decoration had become dominant by this period (FIG 12). The style of these

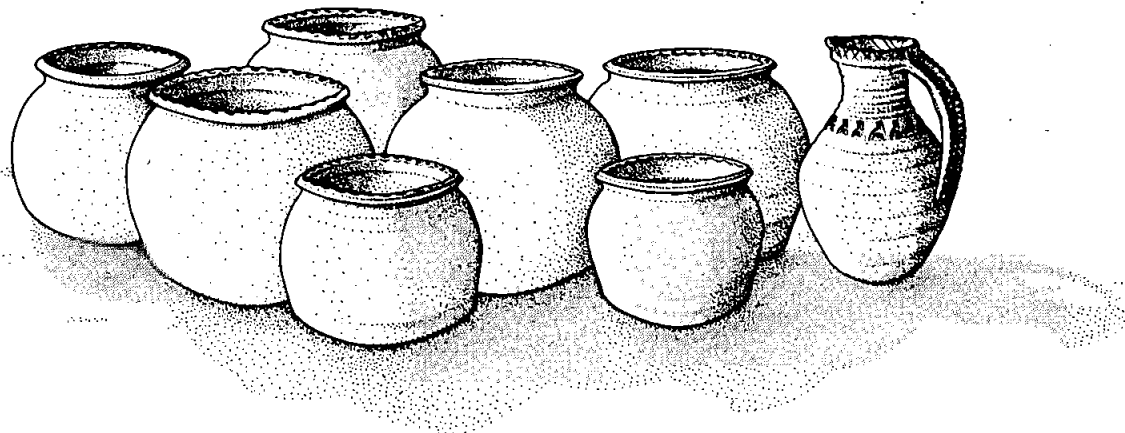


Fig 12 12th century oolite and shelly oolite-tempered pottery, scale approx 1:10





Fig 13 13th century cooking pots, jars, jugs and aquamanile in Lyveden/Stanon type ware, scale approx 1:10

vessels places them in the transitional phase between the regional Saxo-Norman and Early Medieval pottery traditions. Jugs were also produced in the same fabric and decorated with incised combed lines and thumb-impressed designs although they were unglazed (*ibid, right*). Few regional imports are present although sherds from Developed Stamford ware jugs could belong. The source of the shelly oolite-tempered pottery is unknown, but the production sites were probably situated in north Northamptonshire. Evidence from Lyveden suggests that pottery was being made during this period although it was in a shelly fabric (Lyveden A ware). Sherds of the shelly oolite fabric in the same forms as those from Furnells have been recovered from Stanon where it is possible that there was a production site. Similar types have been found at Stamford in a limestone-tempered fabric (Mahany *et al* 1982) and shelly oolite ware (information from P Miles).

#### *Thirteenth century*

The assemblage at Furnells was dominated by pottery from Lyveden and Stanon during the 13th century. The range of forms includes cooking pots, storage jars, and bowls as well as glazed jugs with applied grid-stamp decoration (FIG 13). Among more elaborate vessels are a well-made jug with small faces in white slip around the base of the neck and an aquamanile in the form of a ram with an unusual slip-trailed and stamped design on the body (*ibid, centre*). Sherds of a large jug standing almost

3ft in height were also recovered. These finds show that Furnells was receiving some of the more exotic products from the local industries in addition to their coarser wares. Regional imports included a few vessels of Brill- and Grimston-type wares.

#### *Late thirteenth to early fourteenth centuries*

During this period the products of the manufacturing sites at Lyveden and Stanon continued to dominate the Furnells assemblage. There was also an increase in the quantities of pottery of Brill-type (FIG 14, *centre*) and the first appearance of Potterspury-types.

The decorative style of the Lyveden/Stanon wares changed during the 13th century and by its close most of the decorative elements on the coarse wares had disappeared (*ibid, right*). Similarly, the decoration of the jugs had become plainer and was debased (*ibid, left*). The technique of manufacture employed at these production sites involved joining together different parts of the vessel which had been coil-built over moulds. This is commonly seen in the sherds, particularly at the junction of the neck and body and sometimes above the base and body. The types of pottery imported from Potterspury and Oxfordshire were all wheel-thrown.

#### *Fourteenth century*

The quantity of pottery from Lyveden/Stanon had substantially decreased by the 14th century (FIG 15, *second and third from right*) when there was a corresponding increase in the pottery



Fig 14 Late 13th to early 14th century pottery. From left to right, Lyveden/Stansion jugs, Brill (Oxfordshire) jug, and Lyveden/Stansion jars and bowls, scale approx 1:10



Fig 15 Mid-14th century pottery. From left to right, Potterspurty jugs, bowls and jar, Lyveden jugs and Potterspurty jug, scale approx 1:10

from the Potterspurty area (*ibid*, *left, centre and extreme right*). The decline in the pottery supply from Lyveden/Stansion appears to have occurred fairly suddenly in the middle of the 14th century, as reflected in the reuse of 'old' vessels. In some cases these were repaired by wiring and the practice has also been observed from assemblages at Faxton (J Richards, *pers comm*) and West Cotton, Raunds. It is possible that the hiatus of supply reflects a time when a number of the manufacturing sites stopped producing pottery.

At Furnells the western manor was demolished during the first quarter of the 14th century and replaced by a building on the east side of the site. The pottery assemblage associated with the demolition of the manor was dominated by storage jars, whereas the assemblage from the later building comprised large

open bowls with fewer jars (FIG 15, *foreground*). This could either reflect a change of use or the resiting of storage areas, although if containers were still required it might be expected that they would be retained rather than broken up.

#### *Late fourteenth to early fifteenth centuries*

During the late 14th century wheel-thrown jugs in a refined fabric were produced in the Lyveden area, probably for a short period only as indicated by their association with coins of 1390–1411 at Site E, Lyveden (Moorhouse 1974). At Furnells parts of several of these jugs (FIG 16, *left*) were associated with a new form of hand-made jar from Lyveden/Stansion (*ibid*, *fourth from left*) and jars, wide bowls and jugs from the Potterspurty area (*ibid*, *centre and right*):



Fig 16 Late 14th to early 15th century pottery. From left to right, Lyveden jugs, Lyveden/Stansion jar and Potterspurj jars, bowls and jugs, scale approx 1:10



Fig 17 15th century pottery. From left to right, Late Medieval Reduced Ware bowls and Potterspurj jugs, bowls and jars, scale approx 1:10

### *Fifteenth century*

The appearance of a new type of hard sandy, quartz-gritted pottery in central Northamptonshire during the first quarter of the 15th century defines a distinctive ceramic horizon. This type, designated 'Late Medieval Reduced Ware' (Moorhouse 1974), occurs at Furnells (FIG 17, *bowls at left*) in association with bowls, jugs and jars from the Potterspurj area (*ibid, centre and right*).

Although Late Medieval Reduced Wares

continued in production throughout the 15th and into the 16th centuries, they would appear to have been in use at Furnells for only a short period. During the last quarter of the 15th century the type is commonly associated with Cistercian wares and imported Raeren stone-wares. Both of the latter are absent from the assemblage, suggesting that the supply of pottery to Furnells had ceased at some time before their introduction, probably late in the third quarter of the 15th century.

## CONCLUSION

The analysis of the pottery from Furnells manor has produced an important sequence which can be tested by further work both within the project area and the county. The synthesis of its results with other local groups from Langham Road, Burystead and West Cotton, together with finds from fieldwalking, will also allow the ceramics to be compared with different types of site. Such work may provide an insight into the marketing and trade of pottery as well as indicating if specific types were brought to settlements as status objects or for particular functions.

The characterisation of the method of manufacture of Saxon pottery has added a new dimension to its study and suggests that the work of individual potters or workshops can be recognised. This is an important advance in the identification of Saxon domestic pottery and its dating through the analysis of stratified groups. In addition, the model of the Saxon pottery sequence has wider implications for the chronology and associations of contemporary settlement.

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