

# A medieval tenement at Deene End, Weldon, Northamptonshire

by

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with contributions by

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## SUMMARY

*Excavation in advance of new housing on the southern street-frontage of Deene End, Weldon examined the remains of late twelfth century post-built structures and quarrying, and a medieval stone-built range, including a kitchen and bakehouse, dating to the thirteenth century. In the final phase iron smelting was being carried out within the tenement and the debris was deposited around the building range. The presence of a small quantity of imported pottery suggests that the occupants were of above average wealth. Extensive medieval quarrying and post-medieval and recent features were also recorded.*

## INTRODUCTION

An archaeological evaluation comprising desk-based study, geophysical survey and trial excavation was carried out in 2000 and 2001 by Northamptonshire Archaeology on land south-east of Deene End, Weldon, Northamptonshire (Fig 1; NGR SP 9303 8965; Atkins 2000, NA 2001 and Webster 2001).

This work identified the presence of medieval buildings, iron working and stone quarrying on the site. As a result, an open area excavation of new building plots and the associated access road was carried out later in 2001 prior to development. The work was commissioned by the new owner, John Howell of Kirkstone Properties Ltd and was undertaken by Northamptonshire Archaeology to meet the requirements of a Brief issued by Northamptonshire Heritage (now Northamptonshire County Council's Historic Environment Team) on 19 July 2000.

The objectives of the excavation were to determine the extent, date and character of the Saxon or medieval iron working and settlement, and the medieval or post-medieval stone quarrying or processing. The results were to be interpreted within the wider context of the archaeology and historical topography of Weldon village.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Northamptonshire Archaeology would like to thank John Howell for his helpful co-operation, and the site staff of Noralle Ltd., particularly Garry, Les and Malcolm for their friendly welcome, the use of their on-site facilities, and their interest.

Sean Steadman was fieldwork project manager and Alex Thorne directed the fieldwork with the assistance of Jacqueline Harding, Pat Kent, Dave Leigh, Danny McAree, Richard Swann and Ed Taylor. Pat Chapman organised the finds processing. The post-excavation analysis was by Alex Thorne, and Alex Thorne and Andy Chapman have prepared the final text. The illustrations are by Jacqueline Harding and Alex Thorne. The pottery has been analysed by Paul Blinkhorn, the small finds by Tora Hylton and the animal bone by Karen Deighton. Steve Critchley undertook the metal-detector survey over the site and provided much useful information about slag, iron smelting and the local geology. We are also very grateful for his short report on the geology, quoted within this report. Dr Diana Sutherland provided the geological identifications for stone finds. In this summary report the finds illustrations have been omitted, but they are in the full report, which is available in the Northamptonshire Sites and Monuments Record.

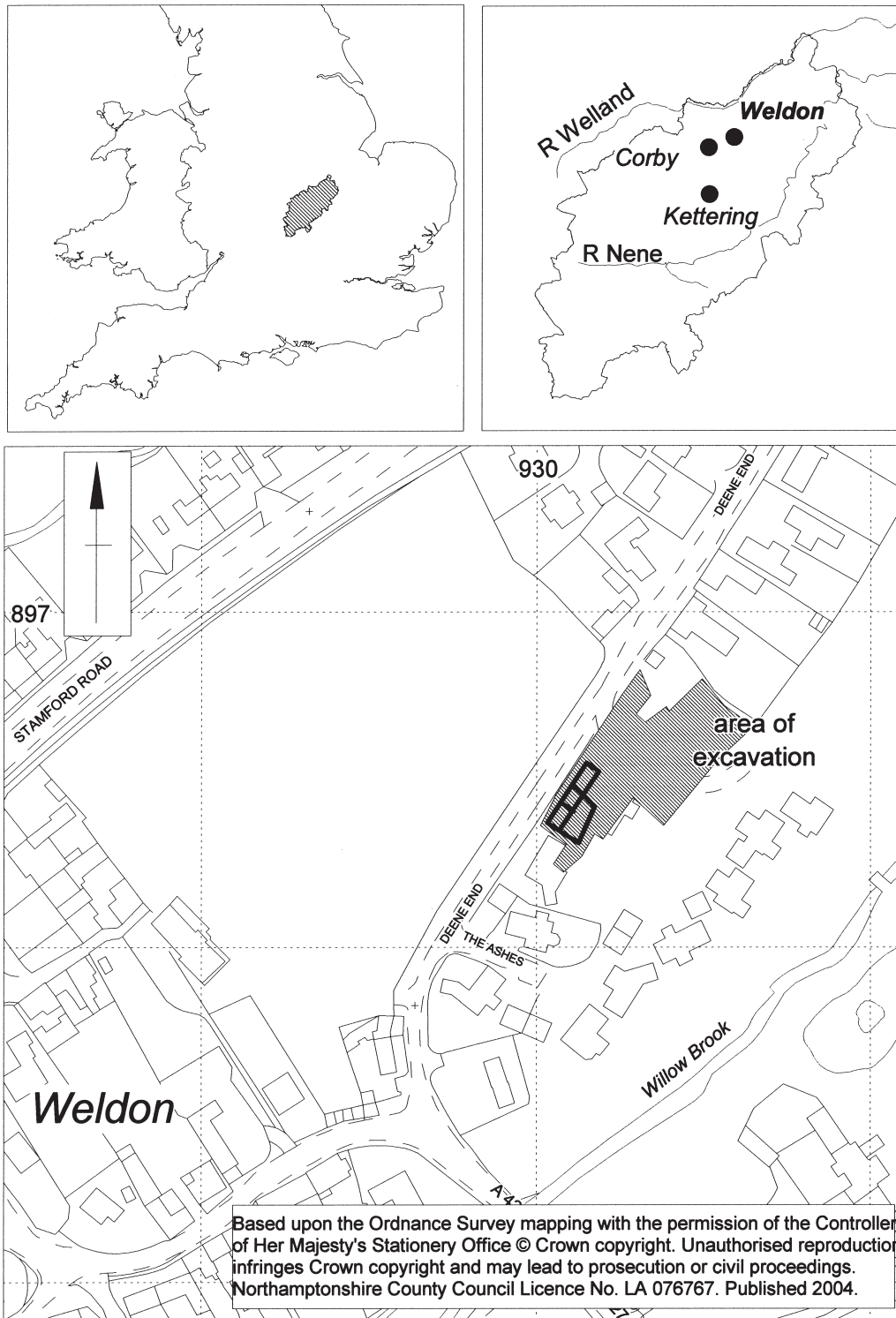


Fig 1 Location of site

## HISTORIC AND ARCHAEOLOGICAL CONTEXT

The earliest surviving cartographic evidence for the site is an estate map of 1587 (NRO 4495/8: Hatton Estate Map). This shows houses fronting onto Deene End and lying within plots set at right angles to both the Deene End road and the stream towards the south-east.

The Weldon manor was owned by the wealthy Ridol/Basset family from 1163 and included profitable stone quarries in 1276 (Atkins 2000), but in 1409 the ownership of the manor was split. The reunited manor was later resold to London Alderman Henry Colet in 1476, before Henry VIII took over the manor in 1540. The Hattons received the manor from Queen Elizabeth, the period in which the site was regenerated with new dwellings erected within plots, as shown on the map of 1587. Although it may be postulated that one of the manor holders sold, gave or leased part of the land to the Abbey at Peterborough, (which could also explain the connection of Henry VIII with Weldon at the time of the Dissolution) there is no record of this having taken place.

Four of the nine evaluation trial trenches were positioned to examine the possible medieval tenement plots, with the remainder covering the wider development area. It was concluded that whilst other buildings had spread into the development area between the sixteenth and nineteenth centuries, there had been little significant post-medieval disturbance of the medieval remains located along the Deene End frontage.

## TOPOGRAPHY AND GEOLOGY

Deene End lies on the north-eastern side of the village of Weldon. It lies to the south of the Stamford Road and north of the A427 to Oundle, which form the major access roads to the village from the east. The site occupies part of a level plateau at 82.5m OD with the ground dropping towards streams to both the north and south. South of the frontage onto Deene End the ground slopes steeply to the south-east towards the Willow Brook at 76.5m OD. Willow Brook runs northward from Weldon before turning eastward to feed into the River Nene. The site is mapped as being on Upper Lincolnshire Limestone (British Geological Survey, Sheet 171).

## EXCAVATION METHODOLOGY

The excavation examined an area 70m long by up to 35m wide, *c* 2500m<sup>2</sup> in extent, and covering the entire street frontage plot, which had been occupied in 1587 by parts of three tenement plots.

In May 2001 the topsoil, which was up to 360mm thick, was removed by machine under archaeological supervision. The site was subsequently left open, and on commencement of the excavation in October 2001 the additional overburden around building remains at the southern end of the site was removed by hand. The remainder of the site was subsequently machine stripped of the brown sandy silt subsoil and/or buried soil, which was *c* 100-250mm thick, to expose archaeological deposits and the natural geology. The surviving medieval building range, which was the main focus for excavation, lay in the south-western part of the site (Fig 3).

## SUMMARY OF SITE DEVELOPMENT

### ORIGINS

A single sherd of residual Bronze Age pottery was recovered from within the rubble (22) from the demolished medieval buildings. Several residual finds of Roman pottery and metalwork were found during the evaluation (Webster 2001, 9 and 13), but no contemporary features were uncovered during the main excavation.

### MEDIEVAL TIMBER STRUCTURES AND QUARRYING, LATE 12TH TO EARLY 13TH CENTURY

A dense cluster of postholes defined a probable timber building, and a smaller cluster of postholes lay further to the east (Fig 2). The main building lacked both the proportions of a timber hall and the occupational debris that might be expected in a domestic context, although there was a limited amount of bone refuse. A series of irregular, shallow quarry pits that lay around these structures appear to have been dug to exploit the soft sandy naturals, and not the underlying limestone. As the features were aligned with the Deene End road, it is likely that the road was present in the twelfth century.

### THE MEDIEVAL STONE BUILDING RANGE, 13TH CENTURY

The remains were very fragmentary, but the building appears to have comprised a three-roomed

range with a walled yard to the rear (Fig 3). Part of the central room functioned as a kitchen, and a large oven in the southern room indicates its use as a bakehouse. There was one further room to the north, which was possibly a later addition. This might indicate increasing wealth, but a practical consideration, such as adding a new domestic hall when the southern room was converted to a bakehouse could provide an alternative explanation. On the available evidence there is no reason why this was not a single self-contained tenement, although another possibility is that it could have been a detached kitchen/bakehouse range serving a domestic range that has not been located. There was a large volume of tap slag around the southern end of the building, and a run of in situ tap slag indicated the presence of an iron smelting furnace immediately west of the building, but beyond the excavated area. It is unclear whether the iron smelting was directly contemporary with the main period of occupation or whether it represents only a final stage of industrial use, perhaps occurring after at least the partial abandonment of the domestic range.

The extent of the plot occupied by this tenement was not defined. The southern boundary may have been a ditch to the immediate south retained from the preceding phase. However, no boundary ditches lay within the 66m length of the excavated area to the north. Two of the plot boundaries shown on the map of 1587 crossed this area, but no traces were evident on the ground. This suggests either that these are late or post-medieval subdivisions of a larger medieval plot, or that the medieval boundaries were formed by walls or hedges that have left no below ground traces.

#### LATE MEDIEVAL AND POST-MEDIEVAL ACTIVITY

The lack of later medieval pottery indicates that the building range had been quite rapidly levelled by demolition and stone robbing. Quarrying continued into the post-medieval period, but the largest quarry clearly respected the former building plot, closely approaching it but not cutting across it. Other activity was indicated by scattered small pits and postholes, which are dated to the fifteenth to eighteenth centuries, but no other evidence had survived for any of the buildings shown on the map of 1587.

### THE EXCAVATED EVIDENCE

#### PHASE 1: MEDIEVAL TIMBER STRUCTURES AND QUARRYING (LATE 12TH TO EARLY 13TH CENTURY)

At the northern end of the site (not illustrated), close to the street frontage, six small postholes recorded within trial trench

1 appeared to indicate the presence of a timber building dated by a single sherd of Stamford ware pottery to the eleventh century. No further features of this group were located within this excavation.

The first phase of medieval activity to the south comprised two clusters of postholes and a number of large, but shallow quarry pits (Fig 2). A small quantity, just over 100 sherds, of twelfth century pottery was recovered from the site. Otherwise, the postholes and quarry pits all produced thirteenth century material (ceramic phase 2/0, *c* AD 1200-1275), although some of this was a result of later contamination. As the later building complex was also in use through the thirteenth century, it seems most likely that this first phase had its origin in the later twelfth century and went out of use in the earlier part of the thirteenth century.

A shallow, V-shaped ditch (125), 0.27m deep, ran east to west across the southern end of site and probably formed a primary plot boundary. It produced a single sherd of pottery dating from 1100-1150. This ditch lay 15m south of the southern boundary of a plot depicted in 1587, suggesting that there was a later revision of the plot boundaries.

A roughly square posthole structure fronted onto the Deene End road. It measured at least 5.0m across and may represent a small outbuilding. It comprised eighteen small postholes, and a further eleven small pits, postholes and a slot lay within it or close by. The structure seems to have been standing long enough for rotten posts to be replaced, since several pairs of postholes were intercut. The pottery assemblage includes a lamp fragment from pit (97). There were no other associated finds or evidence for the nature or function of the structure.

All the constituent features were shallow, no more than 0.30m deep, and filled with dark brown sandy silt. Several contained medium-sized or very large limestones, perhaps the remains of former post-packing. All features cut the natural and the majority had been sealed by the rubbly buried soil (24).

To the immediate south of the timber structure there was a large natural hollow. In a section cut through the hollow a series of fairly regular east-west ard-marks were observed, which had gouged through the soft fill and into the underlying natural. This showed that the site had been ploughed, but there was no stratigraphic relationship with the timber building.

The western quarry pit (157) was filled with dark brown sandy silt containing *c* 40% discarded limestone pieces (156). It was only 0.45m deep, with steep sides and a flat base that cut into the sandy natural. A second smaller quarry pit (155) lay to the east. Although its orange-brown clayey fill (115) contained frequent limestone fragments, there was no natural limestone in either the sides or base of the cut. Pit (155) cut the northern edge of another shallow rectangular feature (30), which had a very irregular base that followed the contours of the underlying limestone.

A possible third quarry pit was triangular in plan (126), and up to 0.65m deep. Its northern end had been cut away by the construction of the later stone-lined pit. A pair of small undated pits, (112) and (114), north of the boundary ditch, contained backfilled natural and silt. They may represent the boles of uprooted trees or shrubs, perhaps cleared when the tenement plots were established. To the north-east there was a small cluster of 11 postholes, that may be the remnants of a second timber structure. A small pit to the north (233) was a shallow feature, up to 0.3m deep, filled with mixed pale brown silt and yellowish sand.

The small animal bone assemblage from the earlier features comprises mainly cow and sheep.

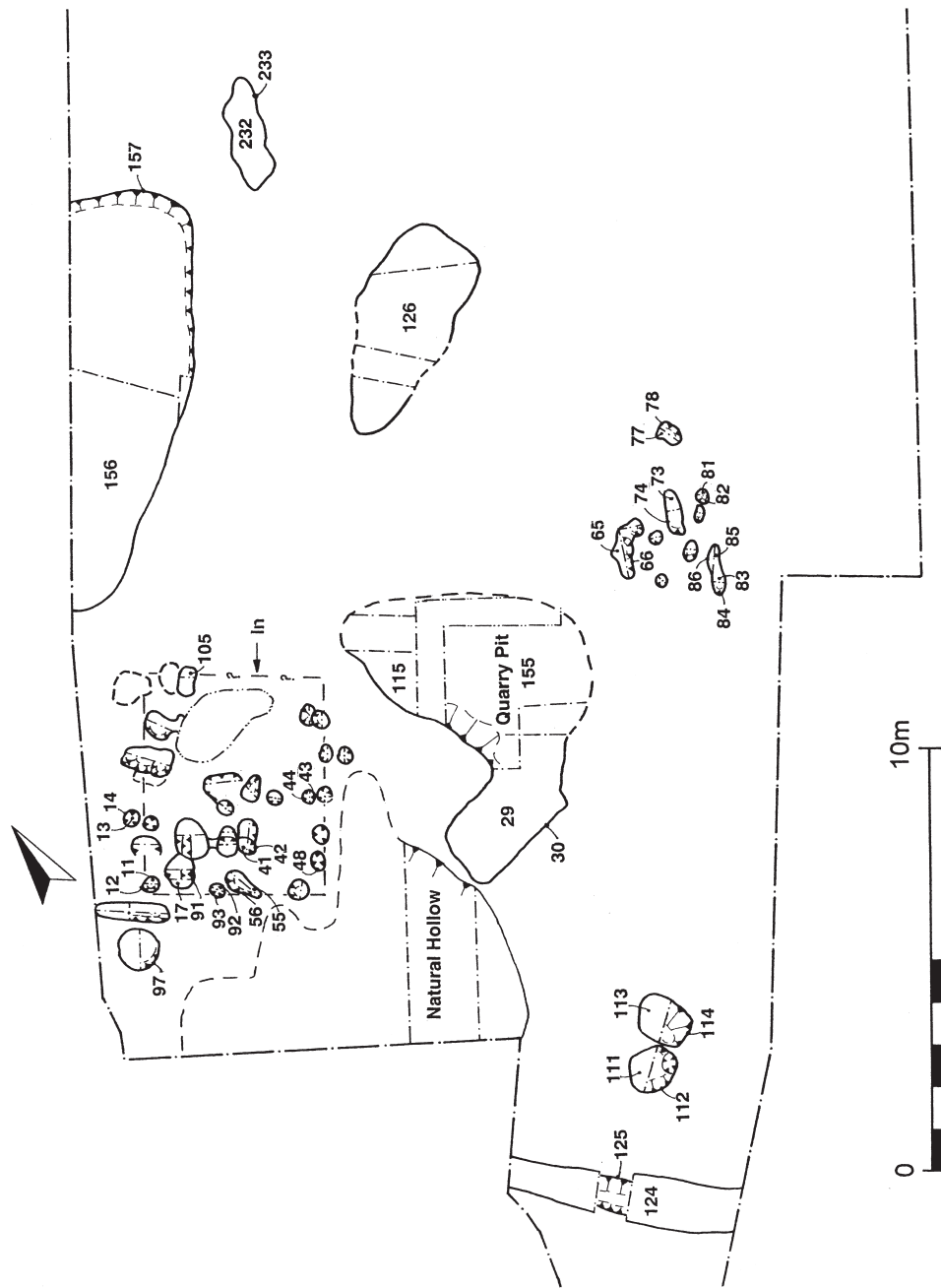


Fig 2 12th-13th century timber structures and quarrying

## PHASES 2-5: THE MEDIEVAL BUILDINGS (13TH CENTURY)

*THE DOMESTIC RANGE*

In the thirteenth century the site was occupied by a stone-built range of three rooms set along the frontage, with a small walled yard to the rear (Fig 3). The building was 14.5m long by 4.3m wide in its probable original, two-roomed form, with the addition of the northern room extending it to a length of 21.20m. The yard to the rear measured up to 13m long by up to 6.30m wide, with a trapezoidal plan. Pottery associated with the use of the building is securely dated to the thirteenth century (ceramic phase 2/0, c AD 1200-1275). The demolition rubble also contained Potterspurty Ware, indicating that the final use of the building ran through to the end of the thirteenth century (ceramic phase 2/2, c AD 1275-1300) or into the early fourteenth century.

The building and yard walls were represented by isolated surviving lengths, often poorly preserved. The remainder had been fully robbed, making it difficult to interpret the full sequence of development, although the extent of the demolition rubble, and linear breaks within it, provided some indication of former wall lines.

An initial interpretation of a three-fold sequence of building development (phases 2-5) has been revised and simplified following further analysis. The entire structure can be best viewed as a single-phase development as the extensive robbing makes it impossible to confirm a more complex sequence. The oblique alignment and substantial nature of the northern wall of the central room (159) suggests that this may have been the original northern wall of the building, set in line with the end of the walled yard. The northern room may therefore be a later addition, but there is no other evidence to confirm this. The

construction of the stone-lined pit (154) pre-dated the building of the northern room, although the pit itself could clearly have continued in use throughout the life of the building. Similarly, a small paved chamber (33) must post-date the building of the northern room, but perhaps only in terms of the necessary construction sequence rather than its use.

The eastern wall of the main building was represented by a 6.75m length of better preserved wall (5/6). The southern end was very poorly preserved, and comprised disordered rubble that may have been displaced debris from robbing rather than in-situ wall core (3). The neatly coursed, limestone wall foundations to the north (5/6) were c 0.50m wide and survived up five courses, 0.38m, high. Several of the limited number of larger blocks in the wall had been re-used from another structure, and pockets of a reddish-brown clay bonding material had survived.

The western wall had survived along part of the central room only (158). It was 0.50m wide surviving up to three courses, 0.35m, high, constructed with fairly large limestone blocks which retained some traces of clay bonding. The wall could also be traced in part from a ghost-line within the demolition rubble, which correlated with a slight depression in the natural below.

The southern wall of the building (23) had well-built foundations, 0.90m wide, with both larger limestone blocks and smaller slabs bonded with clay throughout. Only two courses survived, so the standing wall may well have been narrower and consistent with the other walls. The northern wall (159) was 0.60m wide and survived up to four or five courses high, 0.33m. It was built mainly of small limestone slabs and was set within a slight cut into the natural. Some evidence of clay bonding was seen.

The central room was the best preserved and contained a range of internal features indicating that it was used as a kitchen.



Plate 1 Central room, showing stone hearth bases and partition wall, looking south

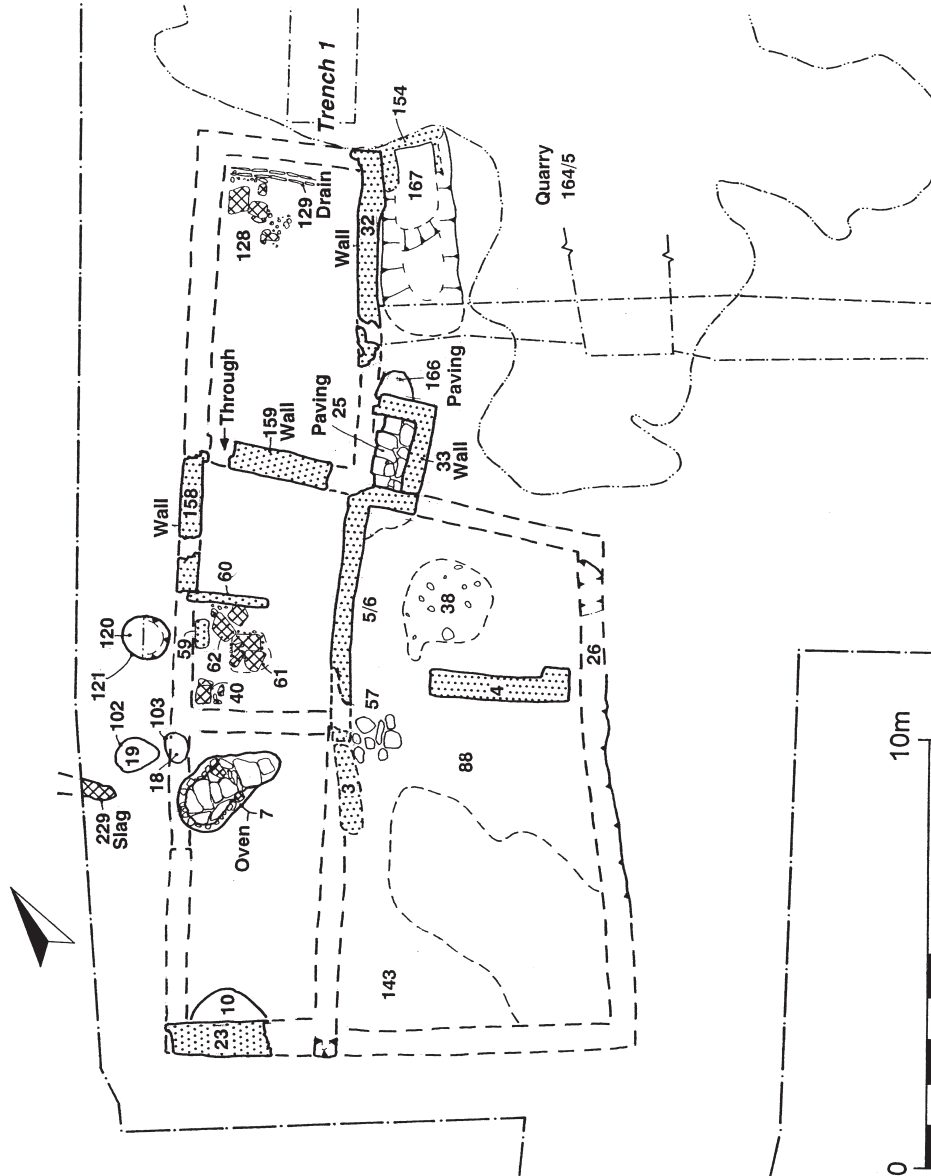


Fig.3 13th century building range



Plate 2 Southern room, the circular oven, with chamfered stones at flue opening

Internally it measured *c* 3.20m wide by 5.50m long, but was divided in two by a narrow partition wall (60). A single course of foundations comprising small limestone and sandstone nodules was 0.20m wide, suggesting that it may have been only a dwarf wall, perhaps supporting a timber panel. The foundations for this partition ran into the line of the main wall, suggesting that its construction was probably part of the original building plan.

The floor level was a dirty natural, but whether there may have been more extensive areas of limestone flagstones, other than the areas of burnt stone, that had been robbed cannot be established. The room was significantly lower than the floor level of the northern room, and there was a steep step down from the southern edge of wall (159). This may reflect a later construction

date for the northern room. Access between the central and northern rooms is most likely to have been via a doorway at the western end of wall (159).

The function of the partition wall was presumably to separate the activity in the south-western corner of the room from the remainder. In this area there were three surviving groups of large, flat-laid burnt flagstones (Plate 1). Two large slabs adjacent to the partition wall may have been the original open hearth (62), probably replaced by a more central group (61) that had been set into a shallow hollow, and were almost flush to the surrounding natural. A further two large burnt slabs (40) were set into the south-western corner of the room. In addition, there was a short stone-built base adjacent to the western wall, 0.80m long



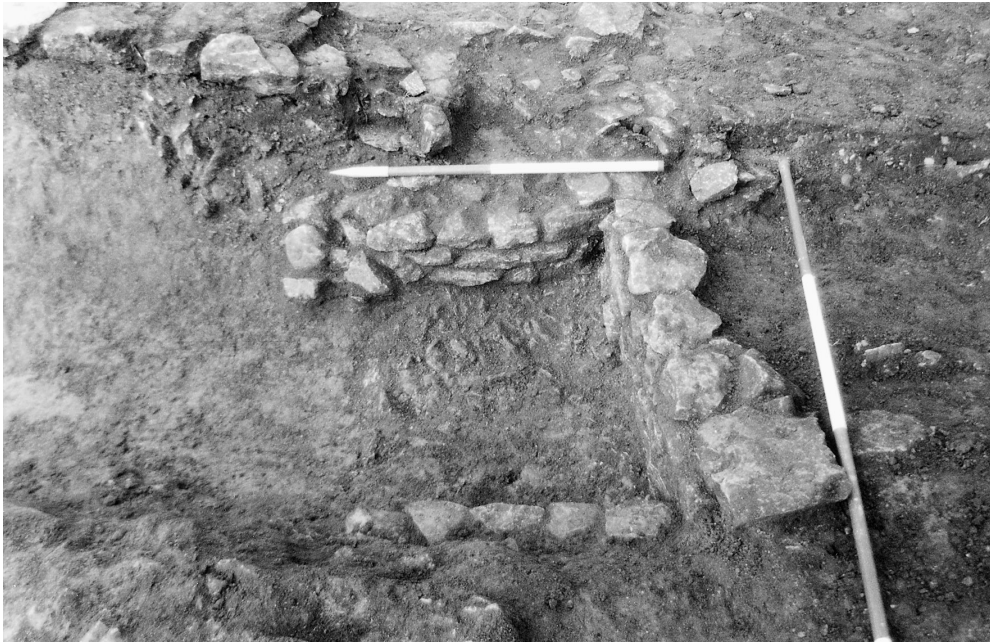


Plate 3 Stone-lined pit, looking north

by 0.30m wide and only surviving two courses, 0.12m, high, which may have been an internal bench (59). These features are consistent with at least half of the room functioning as a kitchen range containing a sequence of open hearths, corner hearths or ovens and stone-built 'benches', as well evidenced in the excavation of several medieval tenements at West Cotton, Raunds (A Chapman forthcoming).

No trace of a partition wall between the central and southern rooms was found, but a break in the overlying rubble suggests its former presence. Access between these two rooms must have been on the eastern side, given the presence of the oven to the south and the hearths to the north. This pattern of diametrically opposed internal doors and a possible absence of external doors is also characteristic of such medieval kitchens.

The southern room was *c.* 6.60m long. A very thin layer of reddish clay (10) immediately inside the surviving length of wall to the south, was probably a remnant of a former floor level. The rest of the interior area was sealed by a buried soil (24) that contained a modicum of rubble, burnt stones and fragments of ironworking slag.

The only internal feature was a substantial circular oven (7), which falls within the standard form of sunken, circular baking oven (Plate 2). The stone lining ran under the probable line of the inner face of the adjacent wall, but as the wall had not survived the relative relationships cannot be established. However, it is possible that the oven had been built into the wall, either as an original feature or a later addition.

The oven construction pit was up to 0.37m deep. The chamber was 1.00m in diameter and was lined with two or three mixed courses of irregularly shaped and squarer pieces of limestone that had been fitted together to leave few gaps. The sides were near

vertical although at the western end there was an indication that the structure may have continued upwards in a beehive-shaped profile. Each side of the 0.50m wide flue opening was flanked by a single, large well-squared sandstone block, up to 0.40 wide and 0.35m high, perhaps re-used from a door surround. Both the chamber and the stokehole were floored with several large limestone slabs. Most of the floor and walls of the oven had been scorched a bright pink or blackened through use. However, no deposits of burnt debris survived within the stokehole or oven, indicating that it had been cleaned out after its final use. The chamber was filled with a mixture of rubble, stone slates and fairly sterile dark brown silt.

Of the northern room only part of the eastern wall survived (32). There was a single course comprising fairly substantial limestone blocks, some of which traversed the whole 0.60m thickness of the wall, but no bonding matrix was in evidence. A few stones survived at the northern end to show the location of the northern wall.

A short length of stone-lined drain (129) within the northern room was formed of limestone pieces placed on the base of a narrow cut into the natural, with upright slabs, up to 150mm high, lining the sides. The feature drained down to the east, following the contour of the natural surface, and it is possible that it pre-dated the room and drained into a stone-lined pit (154). The drain was partially sealed by the remains of at least four burnt flagstones (128), which may have formed a hearth base. Elsewhere in the room the floor level was a dirty natural.

The stone-lined pit (154) stood immediately adjacent to the northern room (Plate 3). The construction pit pre-dated the adjacent wall, indicating either that the pit pre-dated this room or had been constructed as a pre-planned build. The lining of neatly



Plate 4 Small, stone-paved chamber to the east of the northern room

coursed limestone blocks only survived on three sides and later robbing leaves it uncertain whether there had been a lining on the southern side. The lining survived up to four courses high, and the pit was up to 0.60m deep. There was a shallower pit to the immediate south, suggesting that there was a sloping or stepped access into the pit from the south, perhaps to aid periodic cleaning out.

The base of the cut was filled with homogeneous pale-brown silt, which gradually merged to dark-brown silt at the surface, which was rich in occupational debris. The form of the pit and the presence of the drain to the west, suggest that this was either purely a sump for drainage or that it also served as a cess pit. If

it was a cess pit this would imply a relatively high status for the occupants of the building, as stone-lined cess pits are not usually associated with village tenements, but do occur at rural manorial sites. However, the absence of any evident cess-like deposits within the pit leaves the interpretation uncertain.

To the east of the northern room, wall (33) butted onto the corner of the yard wall to form a small rectangular chamber, 1.70m long by 1.10m wide (Plate 4). The foundations were 0.40-0.50m thick and survived up to four courses, 0.15m, high, constructed of small flat limestone bonded with reddish-brown clay. The interior of the chamber was paved with flat limestone slabs (25). Similar paved chambers have been recorded at

Brackley (Atkins et al 1998/9, 13) and West Cotton, Raunds (A Chapman forthcoming), where they typically have a narrow external door and were presumably used for storage. Beyond the northern side of the chamber, a small surviving area of neatly placed small limestone cobbling (166) may represent the threshold for a doorway.

Roofing slates of Collyweston-type were recovered from the demolition rubble and suggest that the building was stone-roofed, and the volume of demolition rubble indicates that the walls were fully stone-built in limestone. The high percentages of pottery jugs, jars and bowls, but few cooking pots is an unusual combination for normal domestic cooking activities, and the presence of some imported pottery indicates that the occupiers were of above average status or had some limited access to high status goods. The stone-lined pit, if used as a cess pit would also be an indicator of higher status. However, there is no further evidence to determine the status of the building, or to support the suggestion that it may have had a monastic connection, as proposed in the pottery report.

#### *IRON SMELTING*

There was a large volume of tap slag within soils and rubble over and around the southern end of the building. At the western edge of excavation and adjacent to the southern room, a thin run of in situ tap slag sloped down towards the east (229), over a length of almost 0.80m. On retrieval it was found that there were at least four separate overlying runs, in a combined depth of at least 100mm. The slag had run out from a source beyond the limit of excavation, and this is likely to have been an iron-smelting furnace with the tap slag being run off into an adjacent pit.

At the north-western corner of the southern room, the fills of three pits (102, 103 and 121) all contained quantities of slag and large pieces of limestone, much of it burnt. One of these pits (103) lay on the line of the western wall, suggesting that it had been dug at a late stage, and at least after the levelling of the southern room. This indicates that the smelting represented a final phase of use after the building had fallen out of use as a kitchen/bakehouse, and after at least its partial demolition.

The smelting furnace lay below and beyond the modern site boundary wall, making it inaccessible for excavation. As it must have lain within the medieval tenement and adjacent to the medieval road, the present location indicates that the modern road is wider than its medieval predecessor.

#### *THE WALLED YARD*

To the east of the building there was a walled yard with a trapezoidal plan, measuring 12m north to south by 5.0 to 6.5m east-west. Little of the boundary walls had survived the process of later robbing. To the north-west there was a short length of wall preserved adjacent to the small paved chamber. However, the only indication of the presence of an eastern wall was a shallow cut into the natural limestone (26), which was traced over a 6.0m length, and a stretch of robber trench that continued further south. The southern wall is presumed to have lain in line with the end wall of the adjacent range.

Within the yard there was a well-built length of wall (4), whose function is not understood. It had large limestone block foundations 0.70m wide, while the standing wall was 0.60m wide and survived four courses, 0.45m, high and was bonded with reddish-brown clay. The wall was visibly skewed to the north

as though it had collapsed outwards, and there was a remnant of a return or buttress at the eastern end. No function can be assigned to this isolated length of wall, which seems to have no relationship to the rest of the range.

Across much of the central part of the yard there was a layer (88) of compact dark brown sandy silt. The upper 10-20mm was very gritty and slightly mineralised. Many small fragments of animal bone and sherds of pottery were pressed into this surface. The equivalent layer (143) at the south-western corner of the yard was a mixed gritty reddish-brown clay and dark brown silt. Both layers were sealed by a layer of sterile dark-brown silt that had probably accumulated during the period of disuse following abandonment. To the west, a small area of disordered limestone flagstones (57) abutted the building wall. Within the northern part of the yard a small area of uneven cobbling (38) had survived as it had sunk into an underlying quarry pit.

Several extensive quarry pits of assorted shapes and sizes within the northern end of the site (not illustrated) contained thirteenth century pottery and may have been worked during this phase. They varied from 0.20m to 0.70m deep and their fills were typically rich in small and slabby pieces of limestone, although some was of better quality than that used within the building foundations.

#### PHASE 6: LATE MEDIEVAL TO RECENT ACTIVITY

The absence of later pottery within the demolition rubble indicates that the building range was demolished soon after abandonment, probably no later than the early fourteenth century. The thoroughness of the robbing is evident in the short lengths of surviving wall. However, while the better quality stone was probably taken away for reuse, the smaller material was left behind to form extensive spreads of dense limestone rubble in brown sandy loam, which were from 0.10-0.35m thick. Only two worked stones were recognised within these deposits, a chamfered stone and a block with one squared face. The breaks within the rubble layer helped to show the former imprint of the building even where all traces of the underlying standing walls had been lost.

Quarrying may have continued into the post-medieval period. A large quarry (Fig 3, 164/5) flanked the north-eastern corner of the building range, as if respecting its former extent. It was filled with a mixture of redeposited limestone and dark brown sandy silt to a depth of around 0.40m.

There were a number of postholes in the northern part of the site (not illustrated), and a few still contained remains of the wooden posts. Of these, and a scatter of small pits, two produced fifteenth century pottery and a further two contained eighteenth century pottery.

A large pit with a limestone lining had a fill that contained modern brick rubble, some glass and one sherd of post-medieval pottery. Remains of a recent cobbled floor-surface was probably still in use up to 1960 when the modern buildings were demolished, and brick rubble from these covered the central part of the site in a layer 0.3m thick. This was removed by machine in order to expose earlier features.

A possible hollow way at the northern end of the site was found to be very shallow and to comprise two separate pits. One of these contained modern scrap ironwork and twentieth century pottery. They appear to be on the line of a boundary shown on the 1587 estate map, while the current property boundary lies a further 4m to the north.

## THE FINDS

## THE POTTERY

by Paul Blinkhorn

The pottery assemblage comprised 1878 sherds with a total weight of 37,282g. The estimated vessel equivalent (EVE), by summation of surviving rimsherd circumference was 11.06. A total of 316 sherds (5,002g, EVE = 2.27) were retrieved during the evaluation, the rest (1562 sherds, 32,280g, EVE = 8.79) came from the main excavation. The range of pottery types present suggests that the site was relatively short-lived, with the main phase of occupation largely limited to the thirteenth century. The assemblage is notable primarily for the first early medieval Rhenish imports to have been found on a rural site in Northamptonshire. There is also a slightly unusual range of local vessel forms, all of which suggests that the inhabitants were of a higher than average status.

## FABRICS

The late Saxon and medieval pottery was quantified using the chronology and coding system of the Northamptonshire County Ceramic Type-Series (CTS), as follows:

F110: Rhenish Greyware, 12-13th century	1 sherd, 7g,	EVE = 0.16
F111: Pingsdorf Ware, 11th -13th century	1 sherd, 6g,	EVE = 0
F205: Stamford ware, AD850-1250	9 sherds, 38g,	EVE = 0
F209: ?South Lincs Oolitic ware, AD1100-1300	334 sherds, 4,205g	EVE = 2.13
F200: T1 (2) type St. Neots Ware, AD1000-1200	1 sherd, 3g,	EVE = 0
F330: Shelly Coarseware, AD1100-1400	12 sherds, 144g,	EVE = 0.14
F319: Lyveden/Stanian 'A' ware, AD1150-1400.	669 sherds, 11,281g	EVE = 4.95
F331: Developed Stamford ware, mid 12th-early 13th century	1 sherd, 2g,	EVE = 0
F320: Lyveden/Stanian 'B' ware, AD1225-1400	760 sherds, 20,071g,	EVE = 3.41
F329: Potterspury ware, AD1250-1600	2 sherds, 129g	EVE = 0
F322: Lyveden/Stanian 'D' ware, AD1400-?1500	3 sherds, 29g,	EVE = 0
F365: Late Medieval Reduced ware, AD1400-?1500	1 sherd, 159g,	EVE = 0.27
F401: Late Medieval Oxidized ware, ?AD1450-?1500	5 sherds, 99g,	EVE = 0
F403: Midland Purple ware, AD1450-1600	12 sherds, 258g,	EVE = 0
F404: Cistercian ware, AD1470-1550	1 sherd, 11g,	EVE = 0
F407: Red Earthenwares, AD1400+	1 sherd, 72g,	EVE = 0
F408: Rhenish Stonewares, AD1450+	1 sherd, 19g,	EVE = 0
F409: Staffordshire Slipwares, AD1680-1750	4 sherds, 108g,	EVE = 0
F411: Midland Blackwares, AD1550-1700	25 sherds, 321g	
F417: Nottingham salt-glazed stoneware, 1700-1800	3 sherds, 16g	
F438: Lambeth stoneware 18th century	1 sherd, 130g	
F1000: Miscellaneous 19th/20th century wares	7 sherds, 35g	

While most of the wares from this site are common in the county of Northamptonshire, the two sherds of early medieval Rhenish wares, specifically the rim of a 'Paffrath' ladle and a bodysherd from a Pingsdorf-type vessel are certainly worthy of comment. Both these imported wares are rare finds in Northamptonshire, and at inland, rural sites generally. The only finds of Pingsdorf ware in the county are from Northampton itself (eg Blinkhorn 2002), where a handful of sherds are known, and Paffrath ladles are limited to Northampton and the Castle Lane site in Brackley (Blinkhorn in archive). The last-named is thought to have been tenements occupied by relatively wealthy wool-merchants, and located, as the name suggests, near the medieval Castle in the

town. The pottery itself cannot be regarded as high-status, but it is a reflection of relative wealth (see Brown 1997 for a general discussion on the status of imported medieval pottery). In the case of the Paffrath ladles, there is a strong case for linking them with the wine trade, and the same may be true of Pingsdorf ware. Their presence at this site, despite there being few obvious signs of it being anything other than a domestic tenement, shows that the inhabitants were of above average wealth, indulging in trade and perhaps consuming luxury goods such as wine.

## CHRONOLOGY

Each context-specific assemblage was given a seriated phase-date (RSP) based on the methodology defined in the Northamptonshire County Ceramic Type-Series (Table 1, p. 117).

Of the site phase 1 features, one produced a small assemblage of Ph0 material, the timber building produced Lyveden/Stanian 'B' ware from a number of its components, and the early quarry pits were of the same date, ceramic phase Ph2/0. The Ph1 features all appear to be later groups which lack the defining wares; many of these are from constructional features of the buildings which have no stratigraphic links to other contexts, but, as noted above, the earliest of these features produced Lyveden/Stanian 'B' ware, indicating a construction date of Ph2/0.

The succeeding phase of stone building produced pottery of Ph2/0 date, with Ph2/2 (post-late thirteenth century) material coming from the rubble of the building, specifically contexts 20, 22, 36 and 39. It seems likely that a large part of the assemblage from this rubble was originally part of a yard midden deposit (see 'Cross-Fits', below) indicating that occupation probably lasted until the end of the thirteenth century. It cannot have lasted much longer than the earliest years of the fourteenth century, as Raunds-type Reduced ware, the defining ware for the fourteenth century in this area of the county, is entirely absent.

The data in Table 3 shows just how completely the products of the nearby Lyveden and Stanion industries dominate the pottery

A MEDIEVAL TENEMENT AT DEENE END, WELDON, NORTHAMPTONSHIRE

Table 1: Phases and Major Defining Wares for the Medieval Ceramics of Northamptonshire

RSP Phase	Defining Wares	Chronology
Ph0	Shelly Coarsewares, Sandy Coarsewares	c. AD1100-1150
Ph1	Lyveden/Stanion 'A' Ware	c. AD1150-1200
Ph2/0	Lyveden/Stanion 'B', Brill/Boarstall ware	c. AD1200-1275
Ph2/2	Potterspury Ware	c. AD1275-1300
Ph3/2	Raunds-type Reduced Ware	c. AD1300-1400
Ph4	Lyveden/Stanion 'D' Ware	c. AD1400-1450
Ph5	Late Medieval Oxidized Ware	c. AD1450-1500

Table 2: Pottery occurrence per ceramic phase by number and weight of sherds and Estimated Vessel Equivalents (EVE) per medieval ceramic phase

Phase	No	Wt (g)	EVE
Ph0	53	492	0.33
Ph1	54	399	0.18
Ph2/0	898	19622	7.14
Ph2/2	623	12759	3.07
Ph3/2	0	0	0
Ph4	5	80	0
Ph5	72	1351	0.34
Total	1705	34703	11.06

Table 3: Pottery occurrence by weight of sherds per ceramic phase, by fabric type, expressed as a percentage of each phase total

Phase	F209	F319	F320	F329	Other	Total
Ph0	94.5%	-	-	-	5.5%	492
Ph1	18.6%	80.9%	-	-	0.5%	429
Ph2/0	10.3%	32.3%	57.2%	-	0.2%	19612
Ph2/2	7.9%	31.0%	59.4%	1.0%	0.6%	12759
Ph5	7.7%	9.5%	55.3%	0	27.5%	1351

assemblage. What is also of interest is the fact that the Ph0, pre-Lyveden/Stanion groups, comprise almost entirely F209, the ?South Lincs Oolitic ware. On most other sites in the north of Northamptonshire, Ph0 is dominated by shelly Coarsewares (F330), the products of the pottery industries located on the Jurassic ridge which runs along the Northamptonshire/Bedfordshire border. Such wares represent just 5% of the Ph0 assemblage, and Stamford ware, which is usually plentiful on Saxo-Norman sites in the area, is similarly scarce.

The lack of Stamford ware (F205) in the earliest medieval phases is also worthy of comment. This material is usually commonplace on sites in this area of the county on sites of eleventh and twelfth century date. For example, at Warmington (Blinkhorn forthcoming a), Stamford ware comprised 59% of the LS4 (11th century) assemblages, with F209 only making up 4.9% of the group, and in Ph0 groups, Stamford again dominated, comprising 62.7% of the assemblage, with F209 making up the rest. Even during Ph1, when the Lyveden and Stanion industries began to dominate, and the Stamford potteries were in decline, the material still made up 17% of the phase assemblage. This was

clearly not the case here. The only feature that can be said to be of Ph0 date produced only sherds of F209, and only nine sherds of Stamford ware were noted from the whole site. Stamford ware was also common at West Cotton, Raunds (Blinkhorn forthcoming b), so the lack of it at this site is a little curious, with the most likely explanation being that there was little activity here before Ph2/0, by which time the material had largely ceased to be made.

The location of the production centre(s) for F209 is unknown, but vessels with similar forms and fabrics have been noted in Peterborough (Spoerry and Hinman 1998). A kiln producing medieval pottery with an oolitic fabric is known from Colne in Cambridgeshire (Healey et al 1998), and wasters with fabric with a similar oolitic component have been noted at Ely in Cambridgeshire (ibid). However, the forms of the products of those industries appear different from these oolitic wares. This would suggest that there were strong links to Peterborough during the early part of this site's existence, and that these were maintained throughout the early part of the life of the Lyveden and Stanion industries.

*FRAGMENTATION ANALYSIS*

The data in Table 4 show the mean sherd weight per phase for the major fabrics. The pattern is very much what would be expected, with perhaps the exception being the results for the Ph0 and, particularly, the Ph1 groups. In the case of the Ph0 assemblages, some of these are very small and from features which cannot be linked stratigraphically to others, suggesting that it is likely that they are later features which lack the defining wares. This also appears the case for most, if not all of the Ph1 groups, as noted above.

Table 4: Mean pottery sherd weight (g) per ceramic phase, major fabrics only

Phase	F209	F319	F320	F329
Ph0	9.7	-	-	-
Ph1	4.7	10.5	-	-
Ph2/0	13.6	18.7	27.9	-
Ph2/2	12.4	16.3	26.3	64.5
Ph5	10.4	7.5	22.0	0

*VESSEL USE*

The pattern of vessel use at the site during the period covered by ceramic phases Ph0 – P2/2 is typical of medieval sites in the region. Jars dominate the earlier assemblages, and jugs gradually become more common over time. Examination of the trends of each individual fabric type does show patterns that are worthy of discussion.

*Ceramic Phase 0*

The most striking feature of this assemblage is that jugs are entirely absent from the range of vessels of this type in use at the site. There are no Oolitic ware (F209) jugs from this site, and although this was also the case at a contemporary site at Warmington, Northamptonshire (Blinkhorn forthcoming a), fragments of a few jugs in this fabric were noted at West Cotton (Blinkhorn forthcoming b). In the case of the former site, the early medieval jug assemblage comprised entirely Stamford ware (over 50% of the vessels from the Ph0 contexts). This was not the case here, and raises some interesting questions about early medieval vessel use and, as discussed above, the pottery trade during the early years of occupation here.

*Ceramic Phase 1*

As noted above, most, if not all the Ph1 assemblages appear to date to Ph2/0, and simply lack the defining wares for features of that date due to the small assemblage sizes. The fragment of the rouletted shelly ware (F330) lamp stem was noted from a context of this date. These are a little unusual in the rural context, although relatively large numbers of them are known from medieval towns in the region, such as Northampton (eg McCarthy 1979, 156-7). Vessels of this type were completely absent from the West Cotton and Warmington assemblages, although each site produced an earlier, late Saxon Stamford ware example.

*Ceramic Phase 2/0*

This assemblage is very typical of others of the period in the region in that it is dominated by the products of the Lyveden and Stanion kilns, but the range of vessel types is rather unusual. Jugs

are present, and all are glazed Lyveden/Stanion 'B' types. The jar assemblage is dominated by the unglazed wares, F209 and F319, but glazed Lyveden jars and bowls are also present. Such vessels are usually very rare, but at this site, rims from seven jars and three bowls were noted. At Warmington, only a single jar and no bowls were present, and at West Cotton, two vessels of each type were present. The fragment of the possible crucible in F320 is also unusual. This identification is based entirely on the fact that the vessel is small and of a closed form, and similar to Stamford ware crucibles of the preceding century (cf. Kilmurry 1980). The vessel shows no evidence of having been used for metalworking, although it is sooted on the outer surface, so this interpretation must remain tentative. The Lyveden/Stanion candlestick base was from a context dating to this phase. This object appears to be unique.

*Ceramic Phase 2/2*

The range of vessel types in this phase, and their proportions, shows a very similar to the preceding phase. Jugs increase at the expense of bowls, and a single Lyveden/Stanion 'A' ware jug is present, but otherwise there is little difference. Some of the more exotic forms, not always represented by bodysherds, were noted from assemblages dated to this phase. The Paffrath ladle fragment was noted in a context of this date, as was the Pingsdorf bodysherd. The base of the Potterspurty bottle was from this phase. Such vessels are rather unusual, although similar vessels, products of the Brill/Boarstall kilns, were found in quantity at Eynsham Abbey in Oxfordshire (Blinkhorn in print), and relatively large numbers of them are known from the city of Oxford (Mellor 1994). Their exact function is unknown, but there does seem to be a connection between these vessels and sites of higher than normal status.

The large Lyveden/Stanion 'A' ware vessel with the upright handle on the rim is very unusual, although a few bowls of this type are known from the Lyveden kiln site (eg Steane and Bryant 1975, fig 23.104).

*Ceramic Phase 5*

The pottery from Ph5 context is largely typical of contemporary sites in the region, and there is also a considerable degree of residuality (72.5% by weight – Table 3). While most of the contemporary pottery is typical of the period, one vessel worthy of comment is the base of the Cistercian ware (F404) sherd with the applied anthropomorphic leg. It seems likely that the original pot would have had three of these, and the vessel, probably a cup, would have been supported on them, with the main body of the object remaining clear of the surface on which it was placed. This vessel also appears to be unique.

*CROSS-FITS*

Most of these cross-fits were made between demolition rubble contexts. However, a number of joining sherds from several different vessels were noted between these contexts and those from the upper fill (115) of a quarry pit (155) within the walled yard to the east of the building. This suggests that the material may have been within midden deposits in the yard that had contaminated the upper fills of the quarry pit and been incorporated into the demolition rubble.

The relatively large number of cross-fits from the rubble suggests that the pottery may be from a yard midden that became mixed with the rubble after the demolition of the building. Certainly, middening seems to have been a common

method of primary refuse disposal at medieval sites in the region, and several were noted at West Cotton. This suggests that the Potterspurty ware found in these groups was used by the inhabitants of the building rather than having been introduced to the site after abandonment.

#### DISCUSSION

This assemblage, despite its relatively small size, is quite curious, with the range of fabric and vessel types present showing some significant differences from what can be regarded as the norm for rural sites in the region, and thus worthy of further discussion. These can be summarized as follows:

1. The presence of sherds from two imported early medieval vessels, specifically a Paffrath ladle and a Pingsdorf jug
2. Some unusual vessel forms for a rural site, such as the Lyveden/Stanion 'B' ware candlestick, the shelly ware lamp and the Cistercian ware cup with the anthropomorphic leg
3. The preponderance of South Lincs. Oolitic ware and the lack of Stamford ware and shelly ware in the earliest medieval features
4. The presence of relatively large numbers of glazed Lyveden 'B' jars and bowls from the high medieval contexts
5. The presence of a Potterspurty bottle, a vessel type that is very rare in the rural context, but a common found at monastic sites and some of the cities of the south midlands.

All this evidence indicates that at least some of the occupants of this site enjoyed a lifestyle that was somewhat more sophisticated than that of the average person in rural Northamptonshire during the thirteenth century. The assemblage has traits that are quite unlike those encountered on rural sites in the region, but very similar to those used at higher-status establishments. The closest parallels appear to be from monastic sites. The pottery assemblage from Eynsham Abbey in Oxfordshire (Blinkhorn in print) has many similarities in terms of the range of vessels noted. Pottery bottles were common, and medieval imports were noted. In the case of Eynsham, these were French rather than Rhenish, but are similarly likely to have been the by-products of the wine trade rather than desirable objects in themselves. Such pottery is as rare in Oxfordshire as it is in Northamptonshire; only two sites in the county, the city of Oxford and Chalgrove Manor, have produced imported French pottery (M Mellor pers comm). One of the Oxford finds is from the house of an extremely wealthy individual, one Roger de Cumnor. Oxford has also only produced three sherds of Pingsdorf ware, and Northampton only eight.

One explanation would be that the ironworks at the site were under the control of a monastic house. Ironworking and production in the later twelfth and thirteenth centuries seems to have been very closely linked to monastic houses. Many establishments in Yorkshire were very actively involved in the mining and working of iron (Miller and Hatcher 1995, 61). It is also worthy of note that there is some evidence to suggest that the industry declined in some areas after 1300 as a result of competition from abroad. (ibid 63), which may explain the abandonment of this site around that time.

Relatively little is known about the structure of monastic iron working in the thirteenth century, although the historical record is

clearer in relation to the fourteenth century. Glyn Coppack (pers comm) has indicated that Cistercian ironworks would have been manned by lay brothers until the early fourteenth century, and that they would have enjoyed the same lifestyle as monks who spent their days in a monastery proper. It also seems that most monastic ironworks, like those of the laity, were rented out during the fourteenth century, although the larger ones may have had an on-site office for the monastery steward to oversee proceedings. Either of these scenarios is, on the basis of the pottery, feasible for this site. However, other explanations are, of course, possible. The tenement and the iron smelting furnace may merely have been owned by a wealthy individual who while not perhaps living on the site, liked to occasionally oversee the proceedings.

#### OTHER FINDS

by Tora Hylton

The excavations produced a small group of medieval and post-medieval finds. The assemblage comprises structural debris, together with a small group of tools and portable items that may have been casually lost. The majority of finds came from late medieval and post-medieval rubble deposits, while five objects were retrieved from earlier phases and three are unstratified.

In total there are 28 individually recorded finds in four material types; copper alloy, iron, lead and stone. Each object has been described and measured, a descriptive catalogue of all the finds is retained in the archive. Finds recorded under the bulk finds system include fragments of limestone roof slates.

The five stratified finds from medieval deposits include; a bolt from a barrel padlock, a shackle fitting, two nails and a lead weight. The padlock bolt is T-shaped with a circular closing plate, and from beneath the plate two spines protrude with vestiges of double leaf springs attached. This type of bolt would have been for use with a Goodall's Type D barrel padlock, and may have been used to secure animal limbs (Goodall 1991, 1001ff). They were in use from before the conquest until the post-medieval period. A shackle fitting, formed from a series of individually linked objects was found within the upper fill of the stone-lined pit associated with the main building range. A U-shaped strap-hinge was secured to a one inch (25mm) thick wooden board by rivets and was connected to a hasp, bar and other iron fittings. It is possible that it was a cart fitting.

Other objects worthy of note include a pear-shaped lead weight, perforated for suspension and found associated with a hearth within the building. In addition, there are two unstratified metal detector finds that are also of medieval date, a fragment from a pilgrims badge and a straphook. The pilgrims badge depicts a kneeling figure, 'angel', draped in cloth, with something clasped in the left hand. The strap-hook is part of a fitting for attaching a spur to a leather strap, see Clark 1995 (fig 324, 325).

The nature of some of the objects from the demolition rubble suggests that they formed part of, or had been attached to, the structure of the building. These include limestone roof slates, a hinge pivot for a door or shutter, a strap hinge and three nails. The roof slates are manufactured from sandy micaceous limestone. They do not appear to be Collyweston types, but it is possible that they may have derived from the same horizon as the Collyweston at the base of the Lincolnshire Limestone. This is possibly a poorer quality Collyweston and perhaps came from the quarries near Kirby Hall (Dr D. Sutherland, University of Leicester, pers comm). Two types are represented, all with a single perforation, which has been drilled from both sides; triangular slates (c 223 x

160mm) and rectangular slates in two sizes (c 280 x 150mm and 334 x 260mm).

There is a small group of tools from the rubble: A drill-bit, a draw-knife, a whittle tang knife and two large and unperforated, micaceous schist (Norwegian Ragstone) whetstones. Other objects worthy of note include; a sixteenth-seventeenth century trading token from Germany (Barnard 1916, plate 33, 84), a toe clip horseshoe which dates to the nineteenth/twentieth century and a fragment of decorative lead strip furnished with a foliate motif.

#### METALWORKING DEBRIS

by Andy Chapman

A total of 69kg of slag was recovered. This represents full recovery from the excavated contexts. It also includes residual material from the hand excavation of the remnants of a buried soil sealing the archaeological deposits. Further quantities of residual material were probably lost in the machine removal of the bulk of this buried soil.

The vast bulk of the material comprises fragments of tap slag from a nearby iron smelting furnace or furnaces. It has the characteristic lava flow appearance and is dark grey to black in colour with moderate voids, sometimes of quite large size. It ranges in size from small fragments as little as 10mm square up to large plates as much as 300mm long. In thickness they vary from as little as 6-10mm thick at original edges up to 20-40mm nearer the centre of the larger plates. The material includes 10.5kg of tap slag recovered in-situ filling a shallow linear hollow at the northern edge of the excavation (Fig 3, 229). This has come from a smelting furnace situated immediately beyond the excavated area. In excavation, there appeared to be up to four successive superimposed flows filling the hollow. The fragmented material was widely scattered across the site, although decreasing in quantity away from the in-situ deposit. However, no tap slag was present within the rooms of the adjacent contemporary building, although it was present in the rubble over the southern room.

It is striking that despite the large quantity of tap slag recovered, virtually none of the other waste products of iron smelting, such as furnace lining and undiagnostic slag were present within the excavated area. Only quarry pit (156) contained small pieces of tap slag, a couple of small pieces of irregular, undiagnostic slag, weighing 179g, and a single fragment of possible furnace lining, weighing 240g, with impressions of the charcoal fuel embedded in the lower surface. The overall indication is that the tap slag was deposited separately from furnace lining and undiagnostic slag, which must have been disposed of beyond the excavated area. Several irregular fragments of ironstone, weighing 1.2kg, were recovered from the robber trench (63) of wall (5/6) as possible iron ore. However, they have been neither crushed nor roasted and, given the widespread local occurrence of ironstone and its use as a building stone, it cannot be stated with certainty that they derive from unused iron ore.

#### ANIMAL BONE

by Karen Deighton

#### METHOD

A total of 282 fragments of animal bone weighing 12.78 kg, was recovered from 49 contexts and identified with the aid of Schmid (1972). Recording follows the method used by Halstead (1985) using minimum anatomical unit (MinA.U.).

Each bone was recorded to include: element, taxon, fusion, side, modification, butchery and fragmentation. Butchery descriptions are in accordance with Binford (1981). Tooth-ware analysis in ovicaprid specimens is after Payne (1973) and that for cattle is after Halstead (1985). Pathologies are described after Baker and Brothwell (1980).

#### RESULTS

A low incidence of butchery was noted, but included evidence for chopping and filleting. Examples of canid gnawing of bones was high at 37.6%, which may have introduced preservation biases (Payne and Munson 1985) for the smaller bones of small animal species. Only one burnt fragment was noted. Incidents of fragmentation were high with only 14.7% of bones surviving in a complete state. The material was concentrated in phase 6 (late medieval to recent activity).

Table 5: Fragments per phase by species

	Phase 1	Phase 2-5	Phase 6
<i>Equus</i>	3	2	11
<i>Bos</i>	23	10	109
<i>Ovicaprid</i>	33	19	127
<i>Sus</i>	5	9	45
<i>Cervid</i>		4	6
<i>Canid</i>	3		3
<i>Felis</i>	2		1
<i>Bos/Cervus</i>			2
identified	69	44	304
Unidentified	19	16	220

Table 6: Birds present by context

Context	Phase	Element	Species
10	4	Carpo-metacarpus	Anser
31	6	Humerus	<i>Gallus(juvenile)</i>
31	6	Indet limb-bone	Indet
31	6	Indet limb-bone	Indet
39	6	Carpo-metacarpus	Anser
120	5	1 <sup>st</sup> phalanx	Anser

Abbreviations used in tables: D =Distal, P=Proximal, PMT= Proximal metatarsal, DMT= Distal metatarsal, PmP =proximal metapodial, DmP =Distal metapodial

#### Neonates

The frequency of neonatal bone present was low with the only examples being two cattle tibia and a metacarpal, a pig radius and sheep/goat humerus and pelvis.

#### Pathologies

Two pathologies were observed: a horse ulna with pitting on the olecranon and an ovicaprid metacarpal with evidence of exostosis at the distal epiphysis.

#### CONCLUSIONS

Due to the thin distribution of the animal bone between all the



phases, detailed temporal comparisons are not possible, but little overall change between phases in species composition is apparent. The high concentration of bone in phase 6 (approximately 74% of the total bone present) suggests that quantities of midden material had been incorporated into the demolition rubble, as also indicated by the pottery. This would also account for the high fragmentation of the material. The presence of cat in medieval contexts could result from its presence for pest control or its exploitation for fur.

The assemblage is too small for the detailed consideration of bodypart representation from any phase. However, the fact that no evidence for industries such as tanning or hornworking is apparent suggests the assemblage was generated by food preparation.

Although some data for ageing the major domesticates is present, it does not provide conclusive evidence for the nature of any animal husbandry. However, it is interesting to note that tooth wear analysis of the ovicaprid specimens suggests most mandibles were from animals aged 8-10 years. This could suggest that mutton was consumed at the site. The low number of neonates within this fairly small assemblage is problematic. It could possibly be the result of preservation bias, as neonatal bone is easily destroyed by post-taphonomic processes. Alternatively, it could suggest the absence of any animal breeding at the site, indicating a consumer rather than a producer site.

## DISCUSSION

by Alex Thorne and Andy Chapman

There is no evidence for any early medieval occupation on the site, and the first activity, which appears to date to the later twelfth century, comprised shallow quarry pits for extracting sand, and some timber structures of uncertain form. Even the larger structure cannot be regarded as a substantial domestic house, so the area appears to be on the very margin of the village at this time, but evidently a village that was in the process of expansion beyond its earlier medieval core.

By the early thirteenth century the area was taken into settlement, and probably comprised a series of tenement plots, although no systematic pattern of contemporary ditched boundaries were located. The excavated site was occupied by a single substantial building range that fronted onto the Deene End Road and, in its fully developed form, it comprised three main rooms and an adjacent walled yard. The range contained a sub-divided central room that included a kitchen with open hearths and a probable stone-built bench, and a circular baking oven lay in the adjacent room.

Whether these were part of a single small tenement or merely the detached service range to a higher status domestic dwelling that has not been located cannot be definitively determined. In construction the building falls within the general

range of minor rural buildings, with relatively narrow walls bonded only with clayey loam, although it did have a Collyweston-type slate roof, but utilising an inferior quality stone. While the internal arrangements, including a kitchen and bakehouse, might indicate a specialised use for the building, such internal arrangements would not be out of place in a self-contained domestic tenement. However, the well-squared blocks forming the flue arch surrounds to the circular oven may have been reused from a door surround of some quality, as they seem too fine to have been cut purely for use in this oven. In addition, if the stone-lined pit adjacent to the northern room had been utilised as a cess pit this would also suggest a higher status, as such features are not typical of domestic tenements on rural sites. Unfortunately no evidence was recovered to demonstrate that the pit had certainly been used for this purpose and it may have been a sump associated with drainage.

The building evidence therefore provides very limited support to the suggestion that the site may have been of quite high status, based on various aspects of the pottery assemblage, including the presence of two rare imports certainly not normally occurring on rural sites, and probably associated with the wine trade. As a result, lacking any supporting documentary evidence, it can only be a matter of speculation that the site was of high status, perhaps even with a monastic connection relating to control of the iron working industry. It might be equally possible that it was a domestic tenement in which the occupants had perhaps a higher than average wealth and also connections that provided some access to higher status goods. The difference with other comparable sites, such as the excavated tenements at West Cotton, Raunds, may therefore have been only of the degree of wealth and not of actual status. This may have resulted from the location of the tenement in a village with an expanding and prosperous trade, while West Cotton in the thirteenth century was a minor hamlet that was at the beginning of a period of decline that would eventually result in its desertion. A comparison with material from other comparable tenements within Weldon, when available, may help to resolve these questions of wealth and status.

The large quantities of tap slag recovered indicate the presence of at least one iron smelting furnace, and the recovery of tap slag from several of the evaluation trenches also suggests that there were

other nearby furnaces, although perhaps on separate tenements. The relationship of the iron smelting to the occupation of the domestic range was difficult to determine, but it appears to have been a late introduction, towards the end of the thirteenth century, with the tenement falling into disuse by the end of the century. It may therefore have been quite a short-lived period of industrial use, and may even represent a change of use for the tenement at the very end of its life when it no longer served as a domestic dwelling.

It is difficult to suggest how this site related to the well-established local medieval industries of quarrying and iron working within Weldon as a whole. The nearest available outcrops of ironstone occur at a distance of some 500m to the north, but five iron working areas have been recorded, including furnaces, on both sides of the Willow Brook to the south-west of the site, despite not being ideally sited for access to raw materials. So it is evident that at least by the later thirteenth century the processing of the ore was occurring well away from the quarry sites, suggesting considerable expansion of exploitation. However, the subsequent abandonment of the excavated tenement might suggest that there was a contraction of the industry in the fourteenth century, although a relocation or more centralised concentration could also account for the abandonment of occupation on the margins of the village.

The thirteenth century tenements and the domestic ranges within them were abandoned, the buildings demolished, and the rubble picked over during the thirteenth to fifteenth centuries, while the site was also extensively quarried. The site was then abandoned and sealed by a buried soil. The dwellings shown on the estate map of 1587 must therefore have been new buildings, and their tenements appear to have been freshly laid out on what had become a wasteland pock-marked with abandoned and no doubt overgrown quarry pits. As a result, the land plots shown on the 1587 estate map have no direct relationship to any medieval tenement plots. Little physical evidence for the 1587 buildings was found, and this was probably as a result of the systematic building demolition that occurred on the site in the 1960s.

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