

# The Delapré Roman kiln field, Northampton

by

PAUL WOODFIELD

## SUMMARY

*A series of eight Roman pottery kilns, dated to the late 1st and early 2nd-centuries, were found unexpectedly during the formation of a defensive bank on the western side of Delapré Park, Northampton near the entrance from the London Road. The material recovered suggests that their production followed that of the Hardingstone kilns, the potters moving closer to a suggested road, a Roman period predecessor of the Northampton to Towcester road. The products are remarkably standardised, but show a very high level of competence in their throwing and firing, and certain characteristics suggesting that pottery production may have been translocated here to facilitate distribution, perhaps to the civil or other official authorities.*

## INTRODUCTION

A series of eight Roman pottery kilns, dated to the late 1st and early 2nd centuries, were found unexpectedly during soil stripping for the formation of a defensive bank on the western side of Delapré Park, Northampton near the entrance off the London Road, running south from the town centre (NGR SP 755 591, Fig 1).

Given the circumstances of the discovery, it was agreed with the County Archaeological Service, the Groundworks Contractor and Jack Barker's Golf that construction work should be halted and diverted elsewhere to allow the site to be cleaned, sampled, and recorded (Figs 2 & 3). As the whole site was to be buried under the defensive bunding for the park, it was not considered necessary to excavate

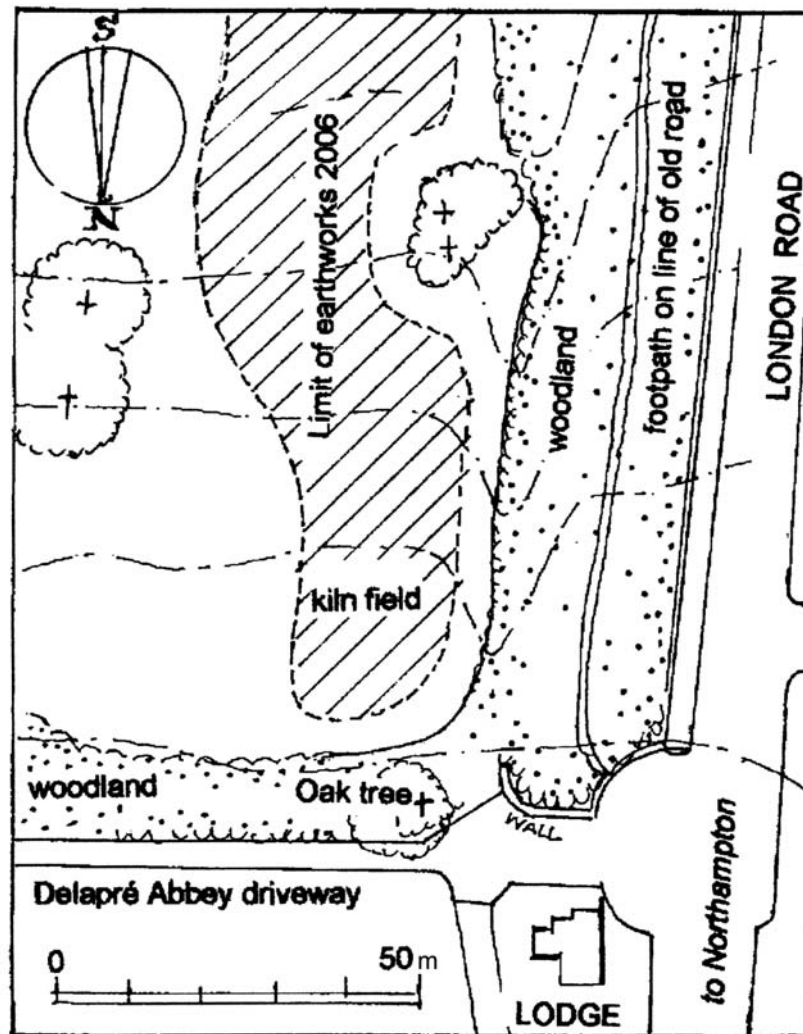


Fig 1 Site location



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Fig 2 General view of site, looking north-west, with entrance gates in the background

more than was absolutely necessary to establish the date and type of pottery produced, and to establish whether the western ditch was related to the medieval road, as seemed likely, or to the kiln field itself.

To carry out these essential minimal tasks, the site was recorded to the scale of 1:50, the oven of Kiln F5 was half-sectioned and the pottery recovered, and a 1.0m section of the western ditch was completely excavated. Later, one small kiln, F1, at the entrance to the site, was also completely excavated as it was being damaged by joy riders. This proved to be a small and simple oven or clamp kiln. The site was set out with a 2m grid, and work was carried out over four days, 21-24 January 2006, and on completion the features were covered with a geotextile and a 300mm pad of earth, for their long term protection.

Although the groundworks for the bunding consisted of removing the topsoil down to the subsoil, averaging some 400-500mm, and its return to cover the newly constructed bank, it was also considered, in the best interest of archaeology, not to remove any more of the topsoil profile along the circuit of the bunding, so as to safeguard any further undiscovered archaeological features.

As far as could be ascertained from the limited area exposed, the kilns are irregularly placed in a rough line extending from the Abbey driveway to the south-south-east with their firing positions at no consistent cardinal points (Fig 3).

#### ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Two diggers, Rob Smith and Mark Spalding, were kindly provided by Mr Stephen Parry of Northamptonshire Archaeology, Northamptonshire County Council, for two days, 23-24 January 2006, to help out in the emergency.

All the pottery was washed and marked by Mrs Charmian Woodfield, who assisted with the description and identifications, and undertook some reconstruction sufficient to allow the forms to be drawn.

The two Samian chips were kindly identified and dated by Mr Geoff Danell.

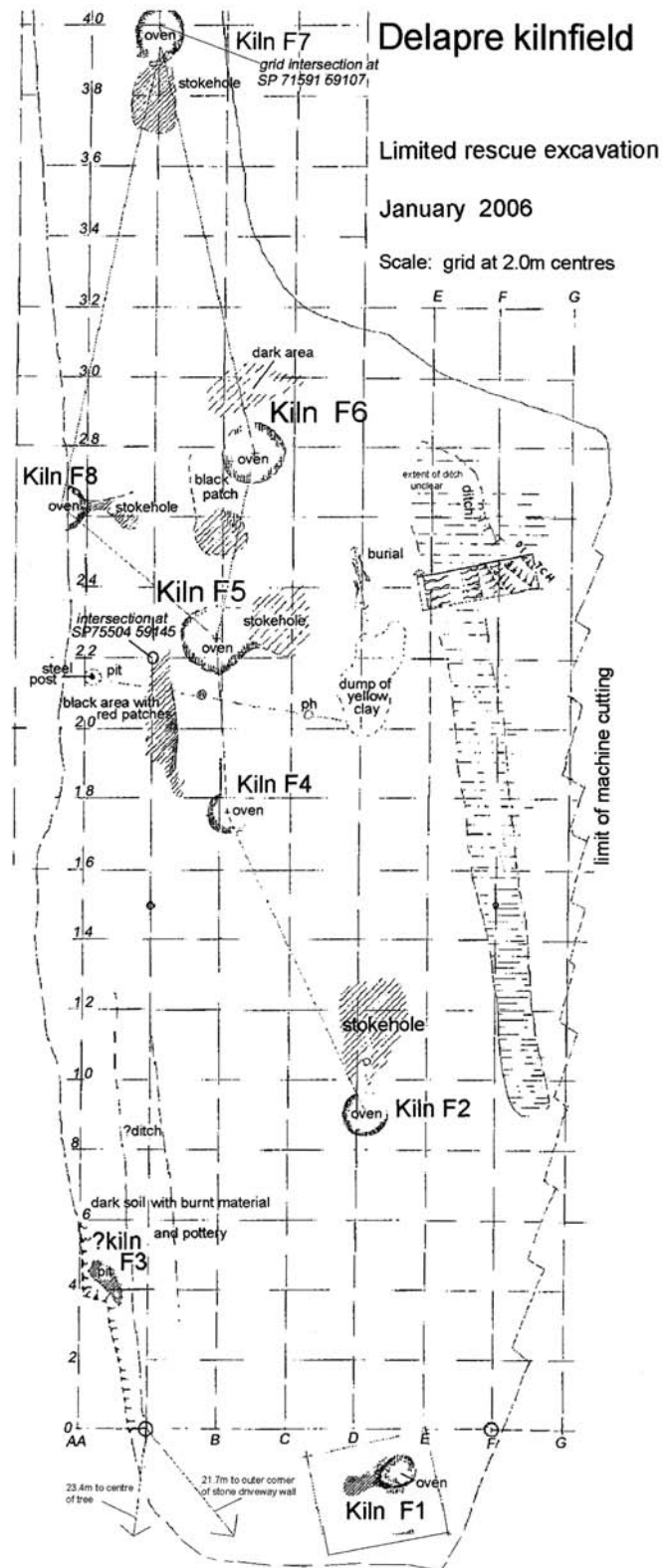


Fig 3 Plan of the site



## BACKGROUND

The location is close to the junction of the Upper Lias clay and the overlying drift deposits of sands and gravels on which the Abbey itself sits. This position, beside a road and convenient to raw material sources - wood and clay, probably dictated the siting, as the group as a whole cannot be claimed to be so placed as to make use of any specific wind direction. The kilns are not the only ones in Hardingstone parish, a further kiln was located 1km away to the east-south-east immediately north of Hunsbury hill-fort, and another lay in Martin's Lane, just south of Hardingstone village itself (Woods 1969). Both these appear to be earlier in date, and did not continue production beyond the end of the later 1st century AD, raising the question whether pottery production was moved nearer to a road into a Roman settlement in Northampton. As far as is known these other two are isolated kilns, although given the limitation of each excavation, may both be part of kiln groups, for it seems very unlikely that a potter would only build and operate one solitary kiln.

The eight kilns at Delapré appear to be confined behind a contemporary ditch running north-south, parallel and at a slight angle to the old London Road. There is a suggestion, not explored further due to site constraints, that there was a parallel ditch, much less clearly definable, running parallel to the first on the east side of the kiln row. Beyond Kiln F7 the row of kilns ran into Delapré Parkland, as now defined, thus it seems that the kilns, always a noxious trade, were located in a strip of waste land, parallel to the predecessor of the London Road. This road was certainly already well established in the medieval period, and may well have earlier precedents using the same fording or bridging place over the River Nene, to join the east-west road, suggested by John Williams, running between Duston and Irchester (RCHME 1985, 38-40). A significant number of Roman finds in the Northampton town area suggest that there may be a settlement of sorts on the north side of the River Nene.

## THE KILN FIELD

It was noted that the site to the south, up to the Hardingstone Cross, had been used for medieval agriculture, with some fine ridge and furrow surviving on the Golf Course. It was probably the agriculture that had in the past reduced the original surface, so that the original Roman ground level could not now be established. This may account for why Kiln F1 and Kiln F7 appeared to be so shallow. The depth of the oven of the part-excavated Kiln F5 (over 900 mm) suggests that the kiln did not have a *permanent* floor and firing chamber in the conventional sense, and that this had not been removed by agriculture. Kilns F1 and F7 are of a different ilk, being more like ovens or clamp kilns, although the sole piece of portable kiln bar was recovered from Kiln F1.

The pottery produced here was remarkable uniform in form. Two consecutive firings for Kiln F5 consisted of large skilfully thrown jars of thin plain body and out-turned rims, but some with applied wavy neck burnished lines, superseding a firing of rilled jars with lid seated

rims. The firing process was done with consummate skill, with little wasted burning or vitrification of the kiln structure.

Other than the products, a few vessels had been clearly brought in for use in the manufacture. Notable was a coarse strainer pot with a perforated base; others probably held water for the throwing, or to hold the finishing tools.

## KILN 5

After removing the topsoil by machine to a depth of approx. 600mm, the kiln presented as an irregular red-fired outline some 1.9m in diameter, with an adjacent blackened area to the west-south-west (Figs 4 & 5). It was decided to excavate half the red-outlined area assumed to be the firing chamber, in order that its date and produce could be established. The remaining half, together with the blackened area assumed to be its stokehole, was later covered with a geotextile and backfilled.

Unlike Kiln F1 and Kiln F7, the firing chamber proved to be an open cylinder in shape cut down into the clay/loam, to a total depth of 920mm, at which depth it was 850mm in diameter. The sides were hard burnt at the top, less discoloured below, and at the bottom, which lead directly into intense reddening around the stokehole tunnel mouth. Four layers of fill were differentiated: a darker deposit, with much pottery, at the bottom; a yellow clayey layer also with much pottery below a rubbly layer, perhaps an attempt at backfilling; and mixed gravelly clay at the top. There was no indication whatsoever of a constructional floor, nor could the firing arch to the stokehole be precisely defined, although this was not fully explored.

A large quantity of burnt clay pads or 'plates' were found. They suggest that the kiln was closed off after loading with clay plates alternating with layers of grass or straw, and the kiln top finished with plates of clay luted together to complete the seal. A few larger pieces have an ogee shape hinting that the kiln sealing may have been brought up to a central flue. It is equally possible that some of these pads may have served as kiln furniture inside the firing chamber, but there was no indication of preliminary firing where the first firing would have made them rigid enough to act as rigid supports as 'kiln furniture' for the pottery. This low technology in the firing process contrasts dramatically with the competence with which the pottery was made, but speaks loudly of the skill, the assurance and economy of effort of the potters themselves.

Of the large quantity (*c*700) of burnt clay 'plates', 400 were from Kiln F5 (Fig 6). These had obviously been pressed into beds of cut vegetation, and covered with the same, as deep impressions survive on both sides (Fig 7). The plates are generally about hand-size, ie *c*120mm, irregular in shape, 10mm- 12mm thick, and often equally burnt on both sides to a red or grey colour, with a minority yellowish buff, the grass and straw having burnt out. The largest piece was 205mm. The fabric of these plates does not seem to have contained the grass/straw, but the pads were clearly laid on the vegetation when wet and very freshly made. There were no impressions to suggest they had been used as kiln furniture inside the kiln.



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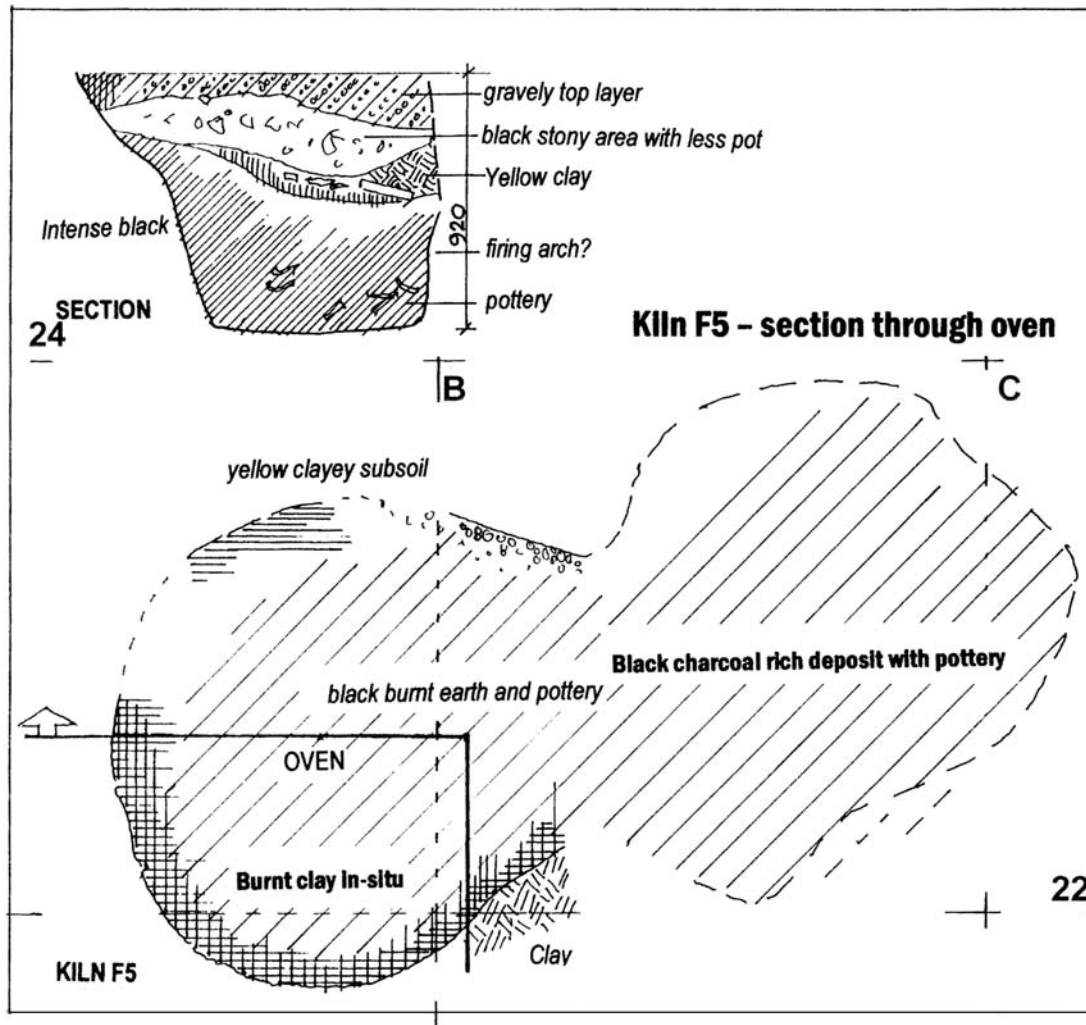


Fig 4 Plan and section of kiln F5

Assuming that most originate from Kiln F5, it suggests that the kiln was closed after loading with a layer or layers of straw/grass and clay plates, which were luted together to complete the top seal.

A number of the Delapré plates appear to have been made with the palm and heel of the hand. In experimental kiln firings (as at Shotley, Suffolk in 2002) the covering was formed by a series of similar overlapping plates, each of about hand size, and pushed and luted together. However, little evidence of luting was observed at Delapré.

The plates recovered show no obvious signs of holes being made in the dome to draw the heat through the kiln, and a few plates show an ogee curve, suggesting the covering may have been brought up at one point to act as a flue.

The vegetable impressions were submitted to a professional ecologist, Dominic Woodfield of Bioscan, Oxford, for identification (Fig 7). In summary, the bulk of the vegetation appears to be Reed Sweet Grass (*Glyceria maxima*). Only one flowering head was seen, suggesting the vegetation was cut in the months of May to August, and

from a stand which on the whole was almost species free of other herbs. This species prefers a damp/wet situation, like a riverside marsh, but is tolerant of a nutrient-rich environment such as might be found in a roadside ditch where the passing of animals would increase the nutrients in the run-off. Two further impressions were identified, one which might just be *Stellaria graminea* although this is far from certain, and a third species, an impression of a young bracken frond. Although the chickweed could be a contaminant of a stand of *Glyceria*, the bracken clearly comes from somewhere else. This reinforces the picture that, perhaps in early June, the Reed Grass was carried in and dumped on the kiln site, where it picked up a frond of bracken growing there.

Kiln plates are well attested in the Upper Nene pottery region, and have appeared further away in Milton Keynes, and at Stowe.

In addition there was one large lump of kiln structure, faced up with small finger marks on one side. It is not clear what this functioned as, but it may be facing to the firing tunnel. There was also one heavily burnt stone recovered from the site. Again, it might be guessed that



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Fig 5 Intact pot recovered from kiln 5



Fig 6 Kiln plates showing varying degrees of firing



Fig 7 Kiln plate showing imprint of the plant *Glyceria maxima*

this was once a bridge over the firing tunnel. One globular heavily burnt flint was, if we pursue this flight of fancy, for throwing at dogs around the drying shed.

Altogether the lasting impression is that this low, but extremely effective, technology contrasts dramatically with the sheer competence of the finished products.

THE POTTERY FROM KILN F5

The pottery is generally remarkably well thrown, the body being extraordinarily thin (down to 2mm thick) in places, suggesting long-experienced potters. As far as could be ascertained, there were very few distortions of the vessels due to mishandling after their removal from the wheel. The burnishing is generally confined to the residual shoulder cordon, although this is not always present. The wavy line around the neck seems to be fairly general for the necked vessels, applied at the end of the throw when the wheel was running slowly, and is so faint in many examples that it raised the question whether this was just habit, hard to break, or whether, suggested here, that it defined the wares made to special order of some official customer, perhaps the civil or even the military authority.

A characteristic of this kiln's products is the rough and irregular finish of the underside of the base – suggesting that they were removed from the wheel with a knife, rather than using a draw wire or thong.

The pottery fabric

The pottery fabric from Kiln F5 contains sub-angular clear and white quartz, 0.35-0.40mm, occasional pink feldspar, soft iron oxide pellets, and ironstone grains up to and occasionally exceeding 1mm in diameter. Also, there was a sparse distribution of limestone fragments, which calcined in the firing process.

After initial heating, the firing appears to be an initial flaring of the kiln, presumably to reach the necessary temperature, producing a red-pink core in some instances, followed by a shut down to create a reducing atmosphere. Thus a grey, grey-blue, and sometimes an intense black finish to the pottery, was achieved.

The kiln was fired, as was apparent from the top of the stokehole fill, with brushwood and small timbers, and it seems the firing was carried out with the same high degree of experience and practice as the throwing of the vessels, as there was no vitrification around the stokehole, indicative of unnecessarily high temperatures being reached.



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Kiln F5: Container jars with necks and flared rims (Fig 8)

Grey fabric, and grey finishes both internally and externally. Shoulder cordon where present sometimes burnished, and the neck often has a burnished wavy line, although barely perceptible in some. The specimens illustrated in Figure 8 give the range of sizes and character of the products of this kiln. The last firing of this kiln seems to be almost solely of flared rim jars.

- 1 Large Jar
- 2 Large Jar
- 3 Jar
- 4 Large Jar. Grey fabric, with a grey finish internally and externally. Neck cordon not burnished. This pot has sagged before drying, but presumably was insufficiently distorted for it to be discarded.
- 5 Jar. Grey fabric and finishes, disfigured by blow holes from contained lime fragments.

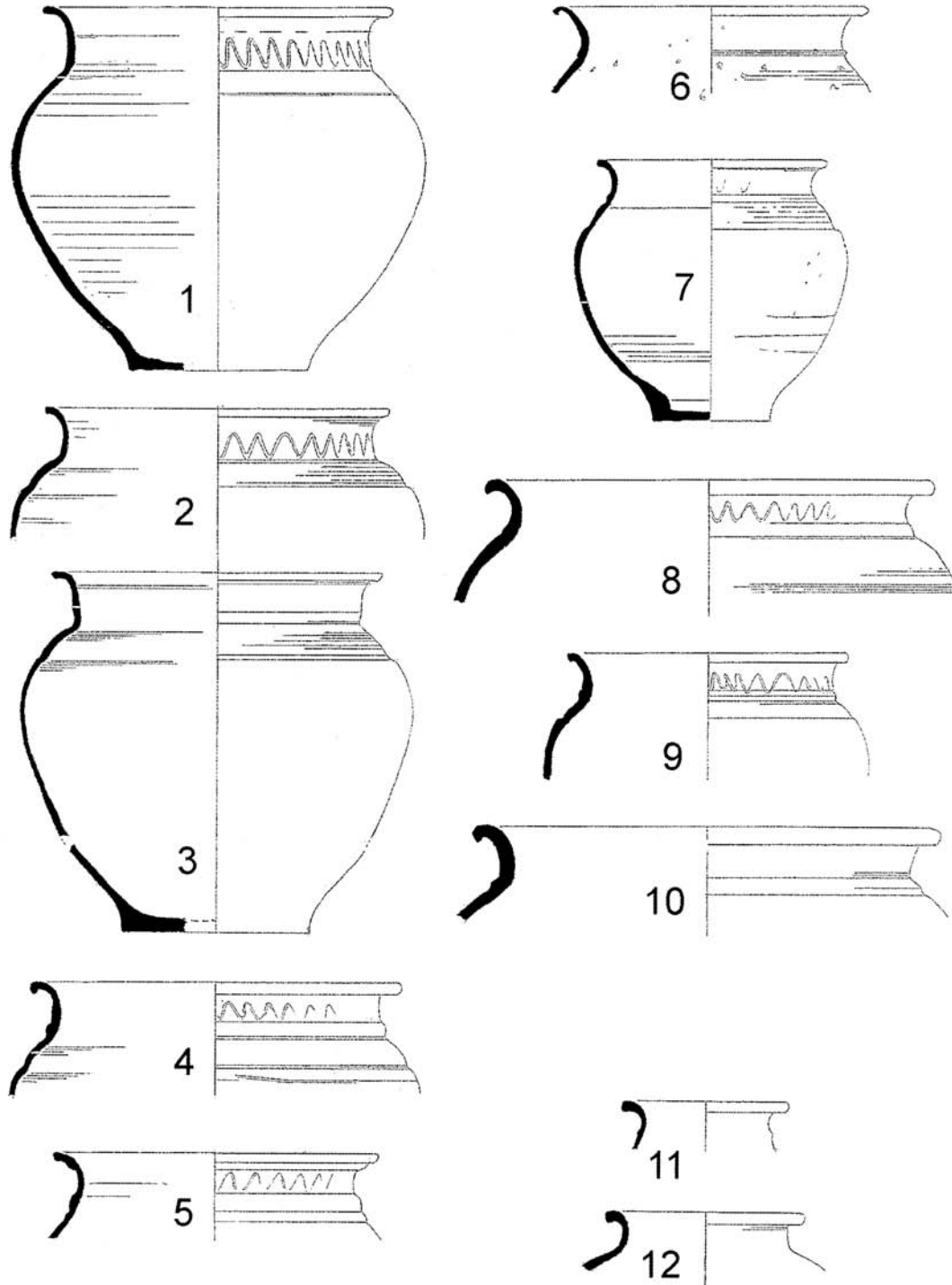


Fig 8 Pottery from kiln F5, jars with necks and flared rims (1-12)



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| <p>6 Large Jar. Grey fabric and finishes. No burnishing or wavy line.</p> <p>7 Small Jar. Found at the bottom of the firing chamber, inverted, and complete. There are the faintest of indications of a wavy neck line: - Capacity: Liquid, 1.54 litres, 50 fl oz, or 2.5 pints, or<br/>Dry measure: 1.43 litres, 2.5 lbs of corn (modern wheat)<br/>Due to the degree of porosity of the body, the pot was probably a dry goods container. Based on the famous Cavoran example, this, in regional Roman terms, would be 2.2 <i>sextarii</i> (0.72 <i>modius</i>). Being not a whole figure, either they were using a local measure in Roman Northampton, or, less likely, an early use of the British <i>libra</i>, or, more likely, they weren't bothered what it held.</p> <p>8 Jar. Heavy fabric, with a red core and pale grey external finish, buff internally. Lightly burnished over a residual neck cordon, and very faint wavy neck line.</p> <p>9 Small Jar. Red fabric with an attractive brown finish internally and externally. Neck cordon burnished and a distinct but erratic wavy neck line.</p> <p>10 Heavy Jar. Coarse pinky grey fabric with larger limestone inclusions, blown. Grey external finish, pink internally. No burnishing.</p> <p>11 Narrow necked jar. No wavy line. Grey fabric, with sandy finish and occasional lime flecks.</p> <p>12 Narrow necked jar. Diam 115mm. Pink core, buff external finish and light grey internally.</p> | <p>16 Narrow-mouthed jar. Flared rim. Fine grey-pink body and smooth intense black finish. Diam 120mm. It seems the clay was further refined for this vessel. Two similar vessels represented.</p> <p>17 Narrow-mouthed jar sherd. Diam 85mm. Refined grey fabric with pale grey finish. Neck slightly burnished.</p> <p>18 Widely flared hooked rim, perhaps a platter, or less likely, a lid. Diam 220mm. Unusually thin fabric. Refined clay giving a grey sandy finish.</p> <p>19 Shoulder of a large thin-walled jar, with two incised lines defining a residual cordon. Pink fabric, coarse oatmealy finish. The vessel probably had the neck and flared rim of the earlier pots. Diameter uncertain.</p> <p>20 Shoulder sherd of a vessel with burnished cross-hatching between cordon lines. Pink fabric, brownish-grey surfaces.</p> |
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Bases are generally straight sided and of uniform wall thickness. The surface seems to be generally rilled. The underside of the base is rough.

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| <p>21 Base of heavily potted jar, pink-grey body with nodules and spalling externally. Diam 120mm. Fired to a light grey internally, brown/grey externally. No rilling.</p> <p>22 Base. Diam 90mm, pink fabric, fired to buff both internally and externally. Rilled.</p> <p>23 Base. Coarse fabric firing pink, grey externally. Slight rilling. Stained.</p> <p>24 Large base. Diam 125mm. Pink fabric with pink finish both internally and externally. Rilled. Underside of the base rough.</p> |
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Kiln F5: Globular cooking pots with rilled body and lid-seated rims (Fig 9)

Coarse fabric, often lumpy internally, generally grey, with a slight pink core in places, the external surface often blown by very small bits of calcined limestone. The surface seems to be generally rilled from the neck downwards externally with a comb, perhaps to tighten the surface to prevent cracking before firing, or more usefully, to provide a better grip of the vessel in use.

A number of variations in the precise rim section are illustrated. The number of pots present suggests that this was a major product of this kiln, perhaps from the immediately preceding firing.

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| <p>13 Cooking pot. Coarse fabric, often lumpy internally, with rilling from the neck downwards externally. Diam 155mm. Generally grey, with a slight pink core in places, the externally surface often blown by very small bits of calcined limestone. A number of variations in the precise rim section are illustrated, the diameters ranging from 170-190mm.</p> <p>14 Cooking pot. Pink core fired to a sandy brown internally, with a coarse brownish-grey external finish, almost 'porridgy' probably due to mis-firing, the surface rilled. Some spalling. Cross join of the rim to vessel D22 in Ditch D2.</p> <p>15 Narrow mounted jar with flaring roll rim. Diam 90mm. Coarse pink fabric, pink internally, grey externally, with a porridgy finish, blown in places.</p> |
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**KILN F1**

This kiln lay close to the driveway into Delapré Abbey, and was the first feature to be uncovered after the topsoil removal (Figs 10 & 11). It was defined and resolved into a burnt clay oval shape, attached at one end to a blackened area of indistinct shape. After recording, it was left for two days until material damage to it occurred at the weekend due to joyriding, so it was decided to investigate further.

On investigation, the kiln oven proved to be a shallow bowl, the lining clay burnt hard at both sides of the stokehole. A large flat stone, heavily burnt, was rescued from the stokehole area. The presence of large stones is unusual, and being fired, it was thought it may have formed part of a bridge over the stokehole tunnel into the kiln.

THE POTTERY FROM KILN F1 (FIG 12)

All the pottery recovered from this area was very heavily overburnt, producing a ringing quality when struck, and all with a very rough lumpy pale grey finish. Although it was all found over the kiln oven and its stoke pit, it appears to be contemporary with the other site products, and it seems that a firing disaster overtook this particular kiln.



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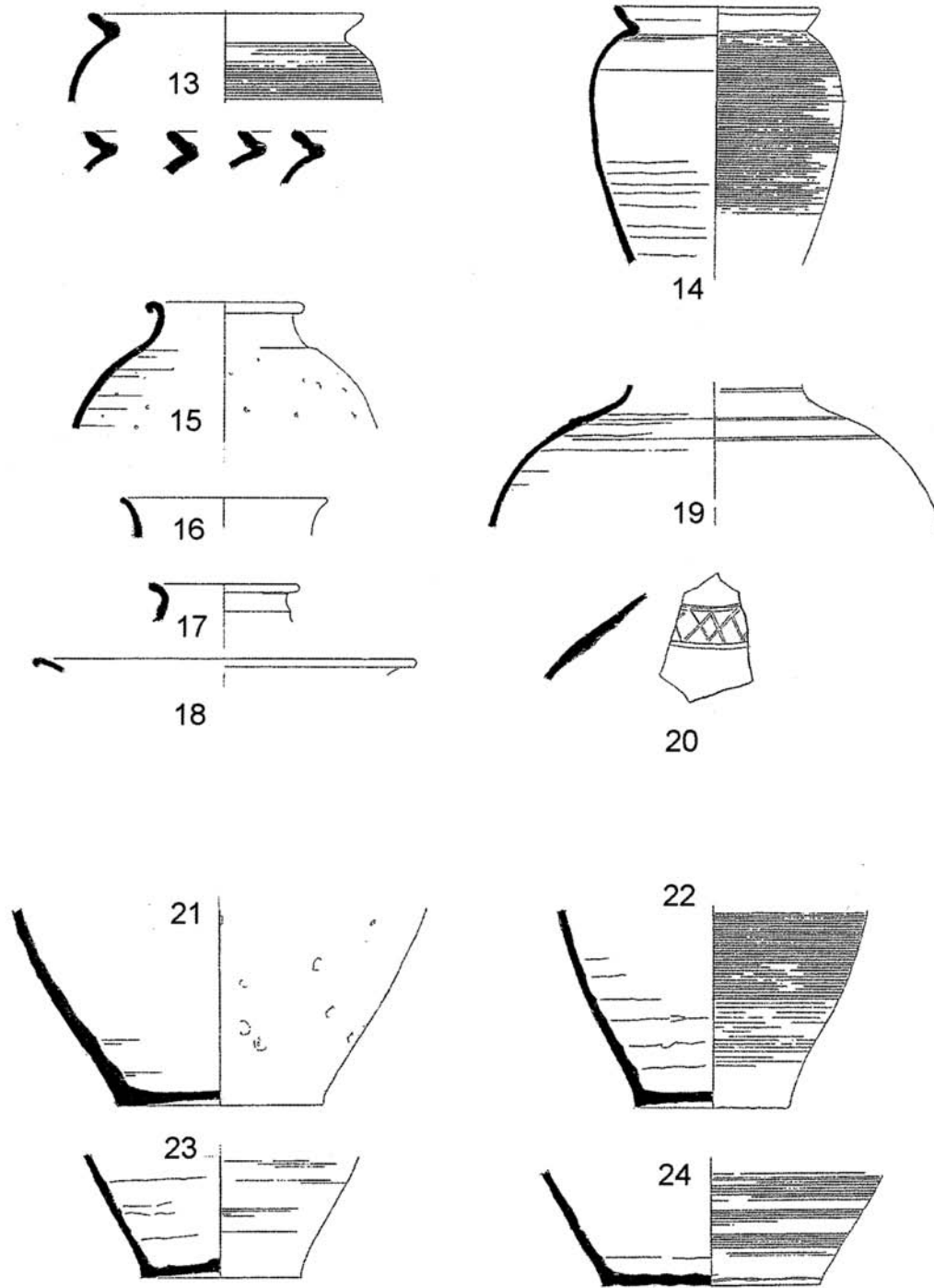


Fig 9 Pottery from kiln F5, rilled cooking pots (13-20) and bases (21-24)

- 25 Very large bowl with a rolled rim.
- 26 Smaller bowl, with rather more refined rim.
- 27 Lid-seated jar, the profile distorted due to overfiring.
- 28 A small delicate rim sherd of a tapered sided bowl of the same sandy grey fabric. At 2mm thickness, it is unlikely to be the neck of a large vessel.
- 29 Part of a clay hand-made tapered kiln bar of square section. These are well known from other

Northamptonshire kilns, eg Wellingborough (Foster *et al*, 1977), and Rushton (Woods 1969 and 1974), and discussed in Swan (1984, 64). This is tapered down to a 30mm x 30mm base, broken at the thicker end. The clay is similar in colour and texture to the pottery, but appears to have a coarse black rough interior structure, probably the result of it having been formed around a stick. There are impressions of grass on the surface.





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**KILN F1**

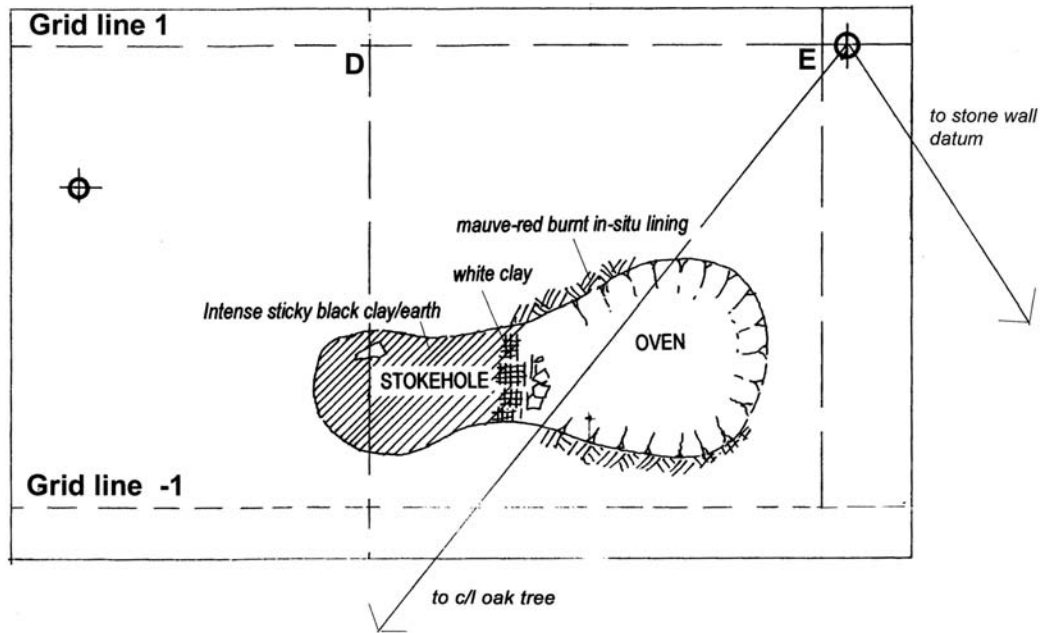


Fig 10 Plan of kiln F1



Fig 11 View of kiln 1, looking west

**KILN F4**

This was defined, but not excavated.

Chip of Samian vessel, form Dr 33, late Flavian (identified by G Dannel)

**KILN F7**

This kiln was the most southerly known of the group, and lay aligned north-south, with the stoke pit at the north end. The centre of the oven was measured by hand-held GPS at SP 7159 5911.

As Kiln F1, it had an oval ring of clay burnt red *in situ*, encircling a dark mixed earth and pottery area at the centre. Again as Kiln F1, the blackened area of the stoke pit was not clearly definable.

THE POTTERY FROM KILN F7 (FIG 12)

- 30 A small jug? with a simple flared rim. Buff fabric, giving a sandy buff finish.
- 31 Rim of a lid-seated vessel. Fabric not unlike black-burnished ware, sandy with occasional crushed flint and red clay inclusions, fired with a black core, reddish halo and black finish

**KILN F8**

This kiln lay on the eastern margin of the cleared area, partly under the edge baulk. It was aligned east-west, with the irregular and ill-defined stoke pit on the west. As the others, it was recognised by the usual ring of burnt clay and black fill.



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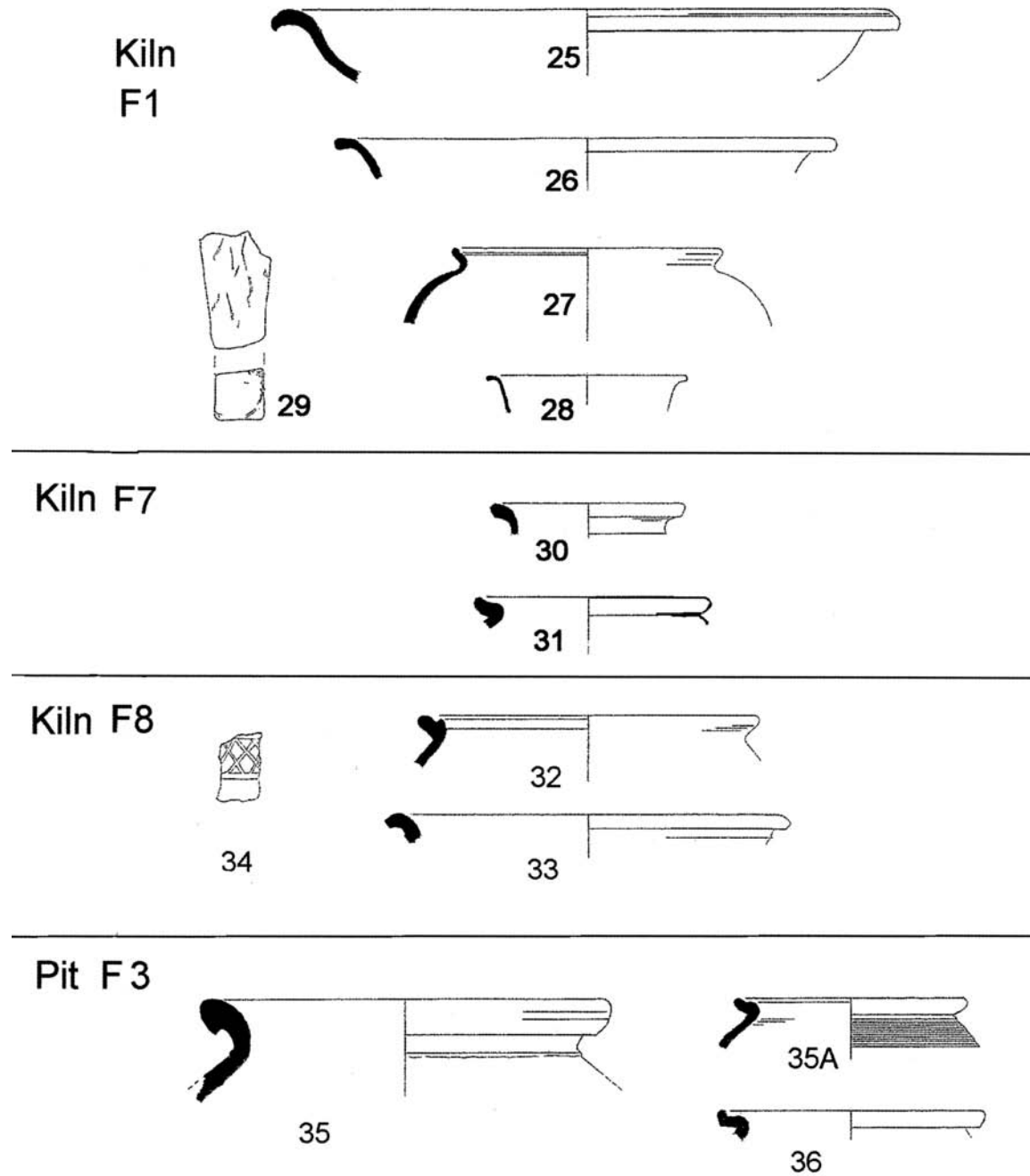


Fig 12 Pottery from kilns F1, F7 and F8 (25-34) and Pit 3 (35-36)

Other than pottery, the only find is a piece of heavily fired vitrified oven? floor or lining, 40mm thick, the vitrification glassy and restricted to one side. The top surface exhibits finger marks of a juvenile or of a woman. The body is like clinker, with pieces of ironstone. There is no certainty that this is not a fairly recent intrusion, as towards the south end of the site, there had been considerable dumping of ash and black material.

THE POTTERY FROM KILN F8 (FIG 12)

Three sherds were recovered from cleaning over the kiln oven.

- 32 Lid-seated jar with a bulky rim. Pale grey fabric fired with darker grey external finishes.
- 33 Bowl with rolled rim. Pinky-grey ware fired to a brownish-grey finish.
- 34 Shoulder of a lattice decorated pot. Grey ware with a sandy finish, the lines burnished in. This is one of the only two lattice trellis sherds recovered on this site.



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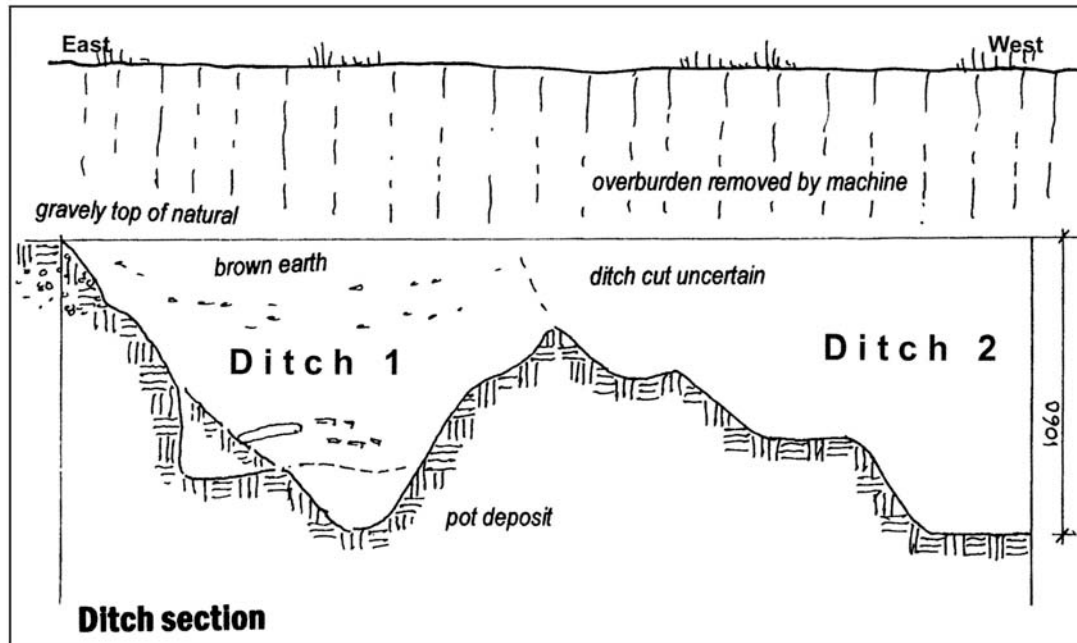


Fig 13 Section of ditches 1 and 2

**FEATURE F3, THE PIT**

This is the only feature noted outside the eastern? ditch boundary of the kiln field. Whether this was a ditch and a boundary must in both cases remain uncertain. It lay partly under the edge of the excavation and topsoil heap. On clearing, it was irregular and ill-defined in shape, and consisted of a heavy black earth fill with an admixture of some pottery. It was only some 250mm deep below the bottom of the topsoil.

**THE POTTERY FROM PIT F3 (FIG 12)**

- 35 Heavy rim of a storage pot, 245mm in outer diameter, and consisted of coarse clay.
- 35A Lid-seated jar, small, with a residual seating ledge. Grey ware with light grey finish. The occurrence of lid-seated jars in this pit suggests it is contemporary with the kilns.
- 36 Lid-seated jar. Fine pink clay with similar outer and inner surfaces. The lid ledge appears to have been sharpened with a 6mm tool pressed down on the rim. The angle of the body of the vessel is not clear.

**THE WESTERN DITCHES**

The cleaning of the site after the machine had removed the whole topsoil profile showed a linear grey area, which ran from the north end of the site south for some 20m, until it became confused. The edges were defined, and a section 1.0m wide was taken at what seemed the clearest point. This was in fact an unfortunate choice in that on excavation it proved to be a junction or intersection between two ditches (Fig 13).

The material thus far recovered was labelled D2 T(op), and new trays were opened for the main ditch to the east, Ditch 2, and the intersecting ditch to the west, Ditch 1. The intersection on section was very carefully cleaned in order to establish which came first, but later cultivation had blurred any high level indications of cut. P Woods suggests that the pottery indicates that Ditch 1 is the earlier.

**DITCH 2**

Ditch 2 had a number of distinct fillings, each with more or less pottery, until at the bottom there was a concentrated dump of pottery (Fig 14). The initial impression was that this was a basket of wasters, probably from Kiln F5, which is only 4-6m away, and proves that this ditch



Fig 14 Deposit of pottery at base of ditch 2



was open and clear at the time of the kiln's operation, and was not an element of the medieval or later road construction. One vessel from the kiln had one cross join to pottery from the ditch, although not necessarily from the primary deposit.

The pottery (Figs 15 & 16)

The bulk of the sherds recovered from this ditch are of rilled grey ware jars with out-turned rims, residually grooved to take a lid covering. The impression given

was that the dump at the bottom of the ditch was from an earlier firing of this class of vessel, and probably from Kiln F5.

37 Large channel-rimmed jar with fine rilling, from the bottom of the ditch. The full profile was reconstructed from some 30 sherds. Grey ware, finely potted. A major spalling took place on one side around a hole – perhaps this was an accidental perforation following firing, which destroyed the vessel.

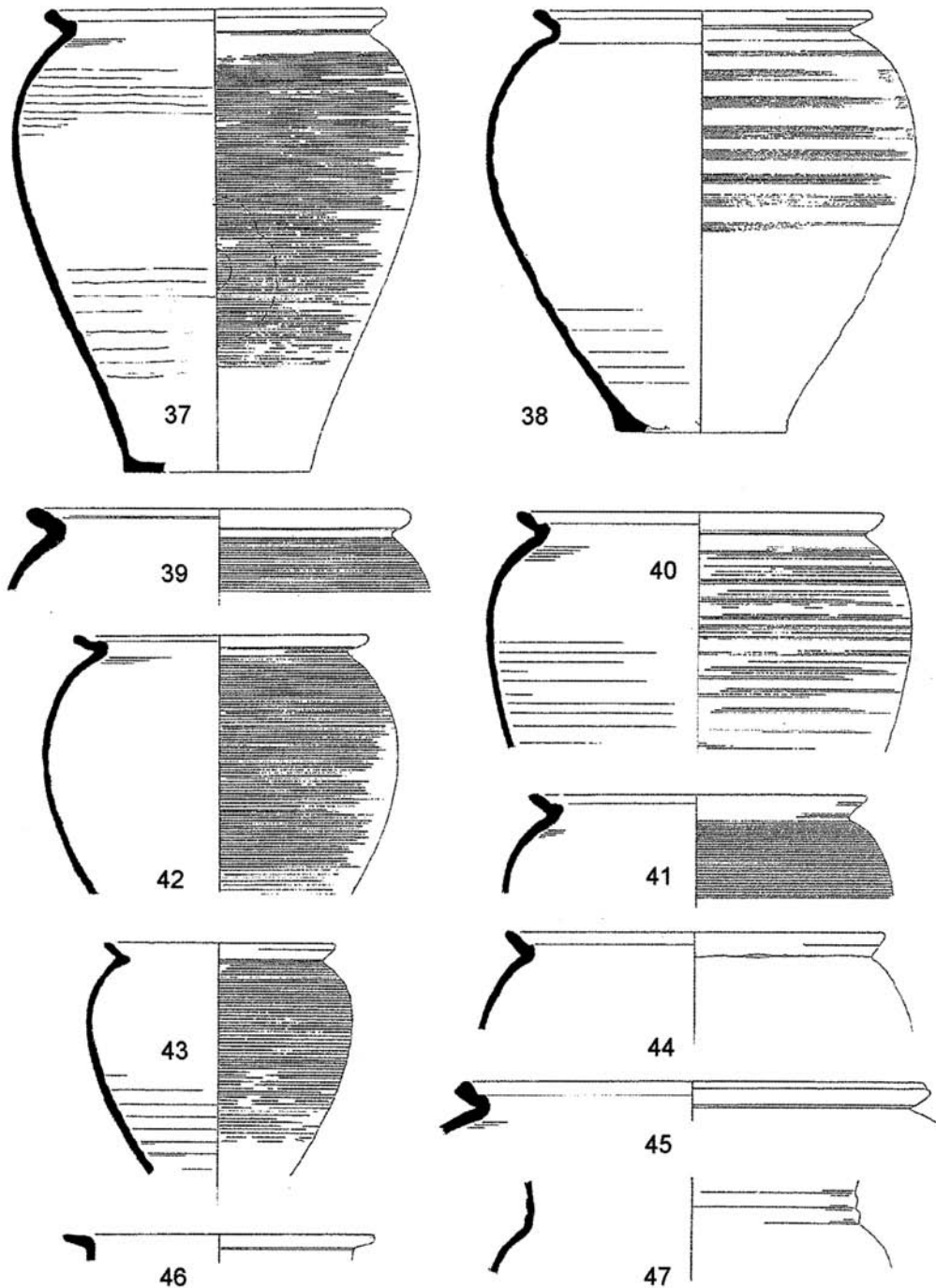


Fig 15 Pottery from the ditches 1 and 2 (37-47)

- 38 Large channel-rimmed jar of similar design, but with a higher shoulder. Pink core, sandy grey inner and outer surfaces. Faint rilling, but more visible in 10mm zones. Base rough underneath. Reconstructed from 24 sherds and looks like a Kiln F5 product. From the top of the ditch.
- 39 Channel-rimmed jar. Buff core, pale finishes. Thick coarsely shaped rim with just a token of the lid seating groove present. Rilled
- 40 Wide-mouthed jar with flared rim. Pink core with light grey surfaces. Thin body – well made. The residual neck cordon is burnished, and a burnished wavy line runs around the neck
- 41 A necked jar, similar and slightly smaller. Grey ware fired to a brownish finish externally and internally. Cordon less burnished, and wavy line erratic. [Not illustrated as the angle of the body is uncertain].
- 42 Smaller wide-mouthed jar. Grey fabric and finishes. Highly burnished. Slightest hint only of a wavy line. Similar to Friendship-Taylor (1999, fig 106, 3).
- 43 Small sized jar of the same design. Overfired, mottled brown finish internally. Few small blow holes, and rim distorted. This vessel has a cross join to Jar 14 of Kiln F5, indicating contemporaneity of these two features.
- 44 Channel rimmed jar. Grey body and finishes. Sandy. Sharp lid-seating. The usual rilling is absent although the zone is demarcated.
- 45 Channel-rimmed jar, the rim only survives. Pale grey oxidised to a pale pinky-grey, very slight rilling. An unusually large jar (280mm diam compared with the standard 220mm) with a distinct internal lid ledge, and thick rim with a medial groove, and neck cordon. Single sherd only.
- 46 Dish rim. Grey with darker surfaces, and an unusually slender wide flat rim with a neck cordon. Single sherd only.
- 47 Necked vessel. Pale grey ware oxidised to cream internally and externally, with two distinct neck cordons at the base of the long neck. One large sherd only. Unlike any other vessel on site.
- 48 Large (250mm at the girth x c490mm high) shouldered jar with a flared rim and slight neck cordon. 'the blue-line pot'. Pink core with light grey finish. Distinctive ?burnished lines creating a grey-blue decoration. No rilling.
- 49 Wide mouthed necked jar with pronounced wavy line around the neck and burnished shoulder cordons. Grey body, with lighter grey finishes. Well made.
- 50 Small necked vessel with no distinct change of angle for the lip. Pale grey core and finish. Sharp wavy line around the neck, barely visible. From the top of the ditch fill, so possibility of a confusion with Ditch 1.
- 51 Jar with out-turned square cut rim, flattened on top, and neck cordon. Intense black fabric and smooth internal, and sandy external finishes. Hint of a wavy neck line. From the undifferentiated top of the ditches.
- 52 Rim of wide-mouthed jar with very slight wavy line. Mid to dark grey fabric and finishes. Neck cordon.
- 53 Necked vessel. Profile very similar to Kiln F5, No 9, but here colour is grey sandy finish instead of brown. Grey core, with calcined lumps. Neck cordon, with purple groove on one sherd. From the upper layers of the ditch. The two sherds are perhaps from different vessels.
- 54 Smaller version of the standard wide-mouthed jar. Dark grey, grey surfaces, burnished over the neck cordon. See Friendship-Taylor 1999, fig 106, 3, a small rounded bowl.
- 55 Necked jar with flared rim, the neck short and without a wavy line. Grey core with orange/buff light grey finish internally and externally, and thicker than most kiln products. This stands out as an oddity. Groove demarcating a devolved cordon and two incised lines below. Post-throwing, a finger or thumb has been run around the top. This feature is noted on a number of sherds. Form resembles Friendship-Taylor 1999 fig 29, 21, but with the decoration. Possibly like his fig 30, 9, fig 3, 12, and fig 31, 12, all from Ashton. Also, from Overstone (Williams 1976, fig 9, 29). See Friendship-Taylor 1999, fig 90, 4 and fig 99, 15, from Rushden and Stanwick. No date is suggested for these.
- 56 Narrow mouthed jar with three neck grooves. Grey fabric, with smooth grey finish. From the top of the ditch. Parallels at Ise, c/f Foster 1977, fig 7, there dated to late 1st to early 2nd century.
- 57 Lower part of ?rilled wide-mouthed jar. Orange fabric fired to orange and grey externally, red internally. Spalled. Rilling not distinct. Base has the rough finish of Kiln F5 bases.
- 58 Shoulder? of a large vessel of uncertain diameter and form. Coarse black fabric, grey exterior, with an admixture of chalk lumps, spalling, and a soft vesiculated internal finish. There are two shallow grooves, between which it is decorated with nicks probably made with a wooden knife whilst still wet. As No 60 below, this is an alien vessel and may have been used as a container for use in the throwing sheds. Parallel at Ashton, Northants. c/f Friendship-Taylor 1999 fig 31, 2, there dated at not earlier than Flavian or early Neronian. Also a parallel at Rushden. Friendship-Taylor 1999 fig 82, 4, dated 1st century AD.
- 59 Single sherd of grey ware thinning from 7mm to 2mm, firing black internally. On the outside, a lattice of burnished lines confined by two parallel horizontal lines. One of only two lattice sherds from the site, the other from Kiln F8, No 34 above. Form probably as Friendship-Taylor 1999 fig 30, 6, there thought to be not earlier than late Claudian to early Neronian. [Note: Angle uncertain, and drawing may be upside down].
- 60 A totally alien base sherd of coarse black fabric containing an even mixture of finely crushed white flint. The bottom has been pierced after the vessel has completely dried, with 3mm holes to



PAUL WOODFIELD

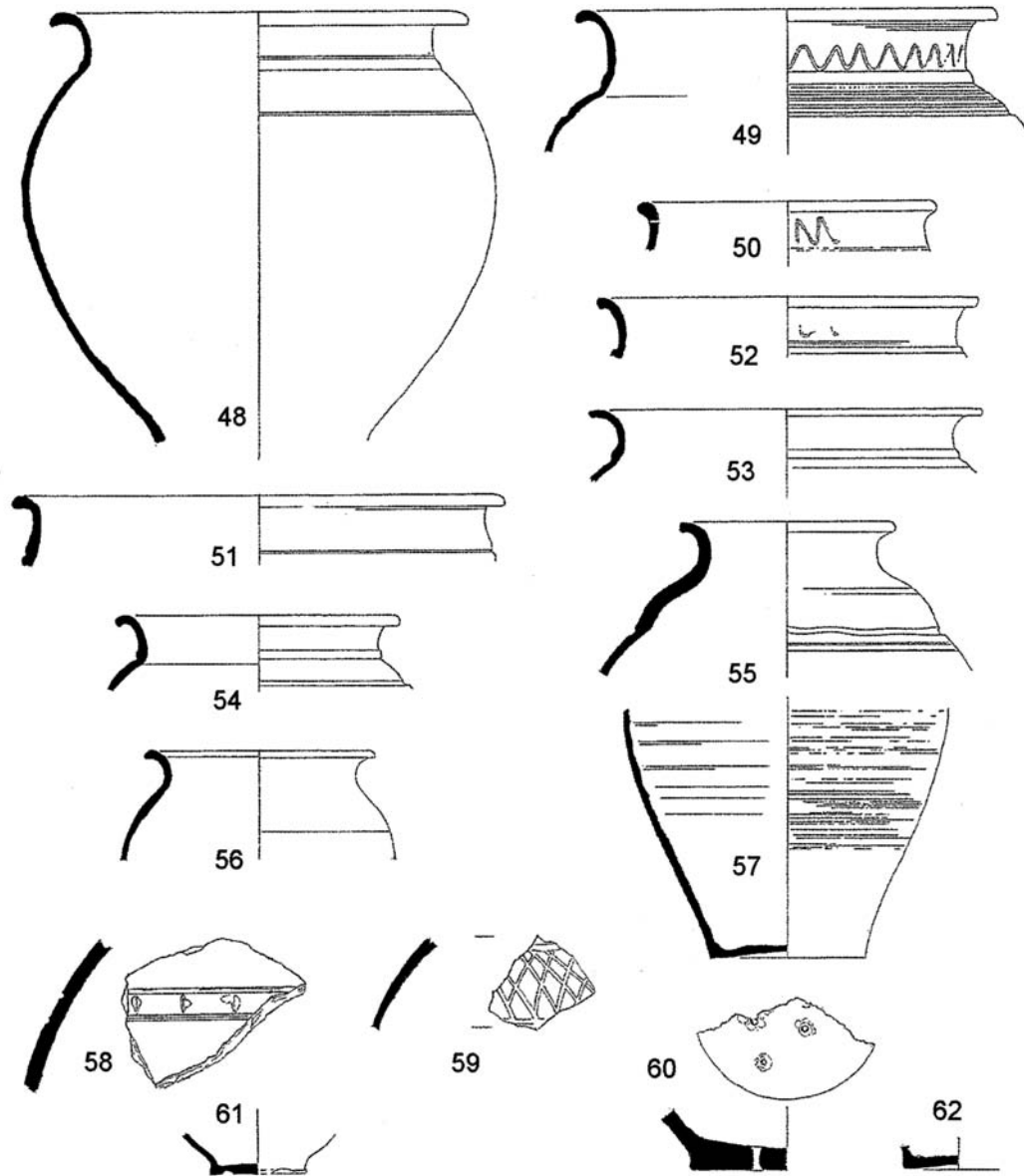


Fig 16 Pottery from ditch 2 (48-62)

allow the contents to drain. The impression is that this vessel was used in the manufactured of the more Romanised pottery, rather than in a domestic context, eg cheesemaking.

- 61 Base of a well-made narrow vessel, cream coloured body giving a light cream finish. The base is neatly finished. Probably a flagon brought into the site.
- 62 Base of a small vessel in a fine whitish fabric, firing pink externally, cream internally. The underside is finished off smoothly.

DITCH 1

This ditch was 1.0m deep, which appeared to be its full depth. The inner edge had been cut in a series of steps at an angle of  $c32^\circ$ , the steps possibly being a series of

re-cuts. The outer edge was not seen, thus the width of the ditch cannot be accurately projected to the original ground level. Pottery was not plentiful, and it included a number of pieces of burnt limestone.

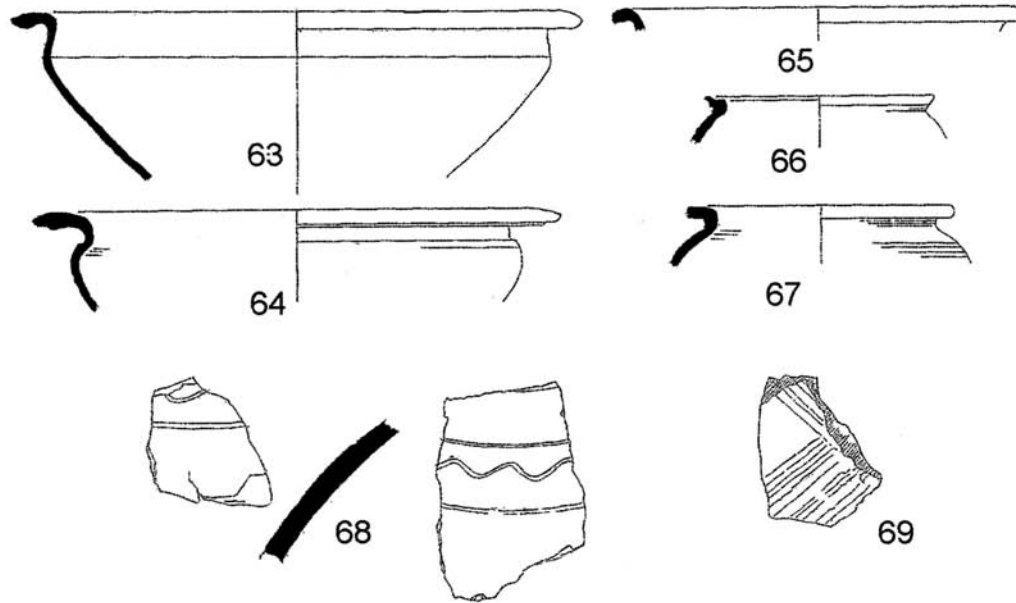
The pottery (Fig 17)

- 63 Flanged bowl of grey ware, an unusual form, but rilled externally as the jars.
- 64 Four sherds of a wide shallow flanged bowl, fine grey ware burnt to a smooth pinky-brown finish internally and externally. Similar in form to No 63.
- 65 Sherd of bowl with simple out-rolled rim. Pink core, fired sandy-cream.
- 66 Small devolved lid-seated pot, pink core and pale pink sandy finish.
- 67 Small reeded rim vessel. Smooth grey body and



THE DELAPRÉ ROMAN KILN FIELD, NORTHAMPTON

DITCH 1



UNSTRATIFIED

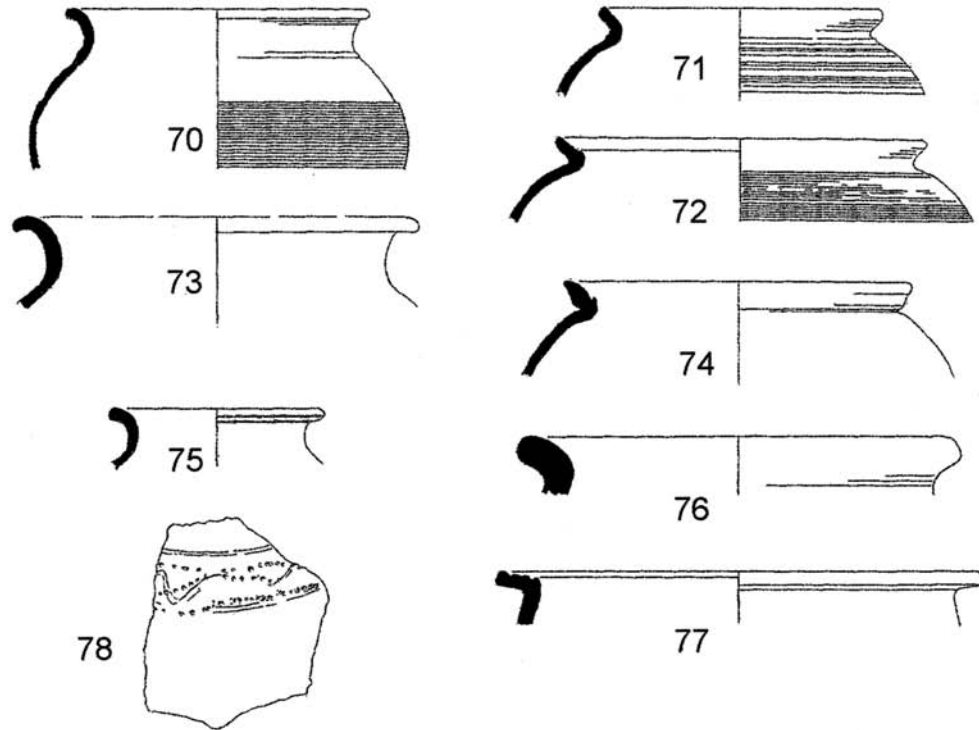


Fig 17 Pottery from ditch 1 (63-69) and unstratified pottery (70-78)

68 Two shoulder sherds from a large container, with a wavy line in a shoulder zone. Grey clay, oatmeal coloured finish, with occasional burnt nodules, and scarce fine ironstone sand grains.

69 Piece of a box-flue tile, 15mm thick, red clay, blackened by use internally. This is an unexpected find from over the ditch, suggesting that there was a substantial heated building not too far away in the late 1st century. From the top of the ditch fill.



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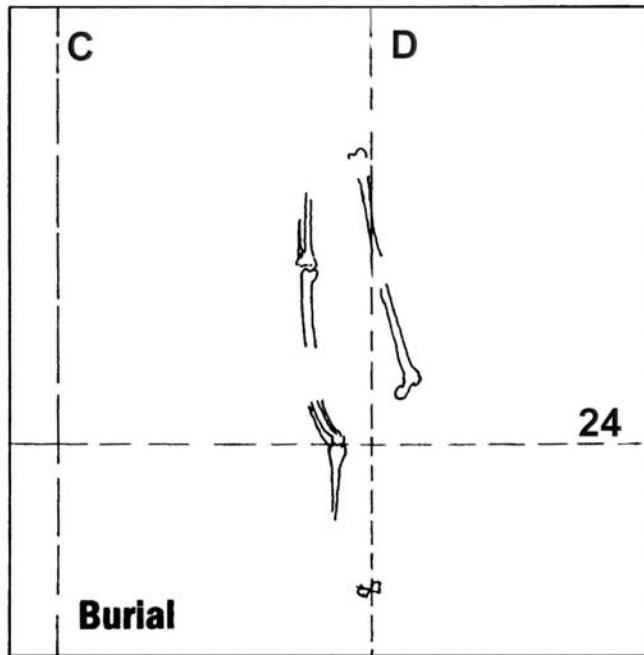


Fig 18 Plan of inhumation

#### UNSTRATIFIED POTTERY

The spoil heaps and surrounding area yielded, over some weeks subsequent to the excavation, sherds of various pottery, mostly Roman (Fig 17, 70-78). The most significant is a sherd from a large hand-made La-Tène type bowl with a diameter of 200mm or more (Fig 17, 78). Pale grey with deep orange surfaces, two horizontal grooves define a shoulder zone, containing a rough wavy line and two wavy lines of stabbings. A similar one was found at Weekly (Jackson and Dix 1986-7, 78) for the running scroll; also Overstone, Northampton (Williams 1976, fig 1, 2) and Elsdon 1976.

A second Samian sherd from a Dr. 35 bowl, identified as central Gaulish, Flavian (69-96AD)

There was also a thin scattering of 18th-century pottery.

#### THE BURIAL

Fragmentary long bones from a shallow human interment were found in Grid D24 (Figs 2 and 18). They consisted of two femurs, and tibiae with part of a fibula, one articulated at the knee. The pelvis had disappeared, but part of the left humerus, articulated with the proximal end of the radius and ulna survived. It was not possible to relate the burial to any dateable layers, as there was no associated material. The bones were left *in situ* and covered with geotextile and soft fill.

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