

## Bedfordshire Archaeology, 1969-70

compiled by D H KENNETT

The summaries below are intended to serve as a guide to current fieldwork, excavations and museum research on the archaeology of Bedfordshire. Important isolated finds and museum acquisitions are also included.

The compiler wishes to thank all those who have contributed notes for this section and hopes that future work and finds will be brought to his notice for inclusion in subsequent issues of the *Bedfordshire Archaeological Journal*.

### BEDFORD Castle TL/052497

A second trial trench on this site in 1969 was supervised by David Baker (cf. *Beds. Arch. J.* 4 (1969) 85). It ran N-S from the S side of the wall on the S side of the Ram Yard car park. Bricks in the footings showed the superstructure of this wall to be post-mediaeval, though sealing an earlier footing associated with occupation layers immediately on natural subsoil. A stone lined pit of uncertain date was seen in the south end of this trench.

Mechanical extension and deepening of the original trench produced one side of a deep rubble filled feature cut into the natural subsoil. This may have been a robber trench, and belonged to the earliest period at this point.

It is hoped to excavate more extensively on the Castle in 1970. Generous help with the 1969 work came from Bedford Corporation, Division of Technical Services.

### BEDFORD: Medieval Pottery

Work has continued on the collection of medieval pottery in Bedford Museum derived from commercial redevelopment of Bedford in the 1930's, (*Beds. Arch. J.* 4 (1969 17-25; 84). The Cauldwell Priory finds and jugs from the Westminster Bank, 81-83, High Street, Bedford, have been drawn and catalogued (*Beds. Arch. J.* forthcoming).

An unusual item is a three-handled vessel, from an unknown site on Bedford High Street (fig. 1).

Two large sherds give a complete profile of the vessel with a handle at each end of the rim sherd, in one case broken off before reaching the body of the vessel. The vessel has a dark grey shell-gritted core with larger pieces of filler in a harder texture. Surface breaks show clearly a laminated structure of the fabric with surface breaks on the lines of the laminations. The inner surface is light grey fading to light purple; the outer originally light red-brown to light brown, but largely flaked off or smoked to dark grey (Bedford Mus. 3721).

In size this vessel resembles the Thetford ware spouted pitchers, known from Ely (*P. Camb.A.S.* 50 (1956) 52, fig. 7.1), Thetford (*Med. Arch.* 3 (1959) 35, fig. 13), and Colchester (*P. Camb. A.S.* 50 (1956) 46, fig. 6.1), which, however, are spouted with two handles on opposite sides with the spout set between them. On the Thetford pitcher there is an additional handle opposite the spout. Thetford ware pitchers are known in some quantity from Cambridge (*P. Camb.A.S.* 50 (1956) 51-52, fig. 7) but this would seem to be their western limit. In a shelly ware, this vessel is related to St Neots ware, but its texture is different to the norm at Bedford. Possibly this vessel is an attempt to imitate the pitcher in size but without the spout and with a different handle arrangement. One cannot easily date such a vessel, but the general dating for shelly wares at Bedford would suggest a range of 850 to 1250 A.D. for the three-handled pot.

### BLETSOE TL/019586

The North Bedfordshire Archaeological Society have continued excavations under the direction of David Hall to determine the extent and dating of the cemetery. A single row of inhumations, buried at irregular depths, aligned NW-SE, appear to be Christian Saxon. The skeletons lay with hands crossed, a position similar to the late Saxon skeletons excavated at Brixworth, Northants. The

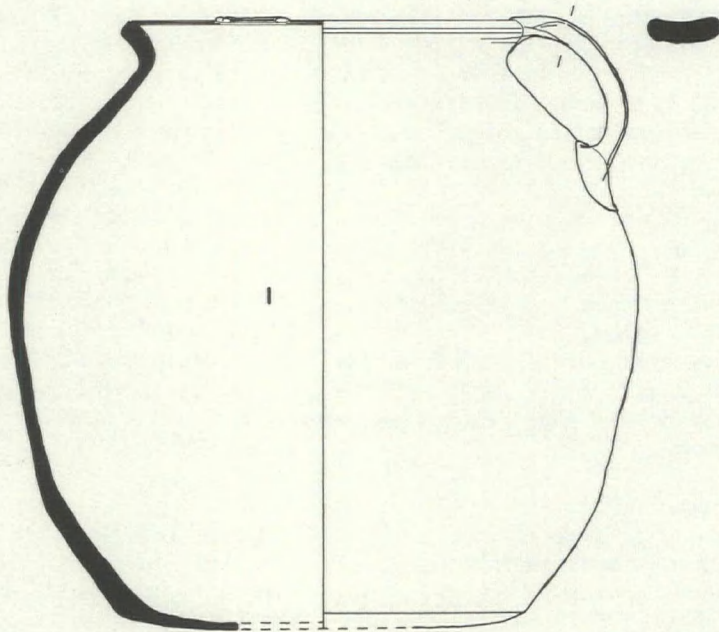
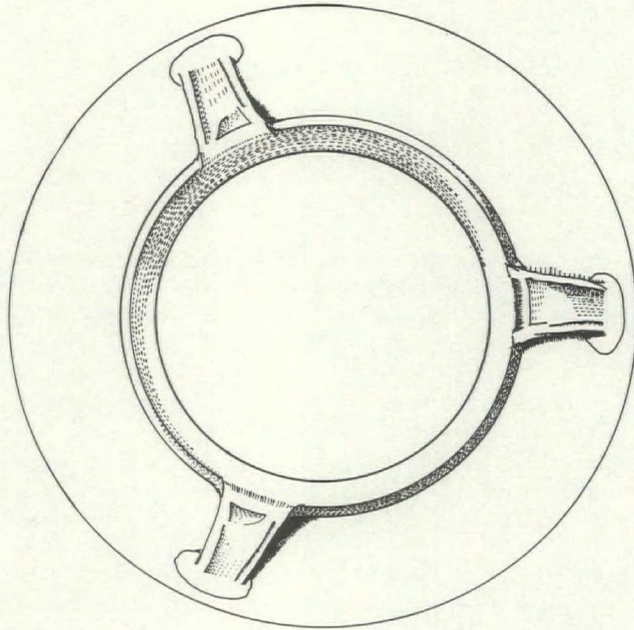


Fig 1 Three-handled pot from High Street, Bedford ( $\frac{1}{4}$ ).

graves, of both sexes, but no children, cut into late fourth century levels with pottery and coins; sherds of Romano-Saxon pottery were also present.

#### BLETSOE TL/021593

The North Bedfordshire Archaeological Society recovered a group of pottery from a contemporary pit or ditch. The sherds were insufficiently representative to determine whether they were pre-Roman Iron Age or Anglo-Saxon.

#### BRICKWORKS

A W Guppy is collecting information about early brickworks in Bedfordshire.

#### CADDINGTON

The palaeolithic floors discovered by Worthington G Smith in 1915 are to be re-examined by a team from the Universities of Oxford and Oregon. Prior to this R Hagen has been examining the Worthington Smith finds in Luton Museum and has been able to establish correlations between the floors and the flint artefacts (*Beds. Arch. J.* forthcoming).

#### CAMPTON

A group of six worked flints have been presented to Bedford Museum. They are two scrapers, a flake, a tanked and barbed arrowhead, a burin and a small knife blade broken off to leave only the final 5.c.m. before the point.

#### CARLTON SP/493548

M J Hare has examined Carlton church and reports the earliest structure to have been a two cell Anglo-Saxon church. (*Beds. Arch. J.* forthcoming).

#### CHICKSANDS, Rowney Warren TL/1040

A Belgic urn (fig. 2) found in Rowney Warren, Chicksands, has been placed in Bedford Museum on an indefinite loan. It is thought to be one of a number from the area, though the others have yet to be seen by an archaeologist. The present vessel, of a hard, black ware, is complete save for slight damage to the rim and body. It has horizontal grooves on the main part of the body with light vertical striations between them. On the neck are indistinct diagonal striations. The vessel is 22.0.cm. high and has a rim diameter of 9.8.cm. Though many Belgic cremation urns are known

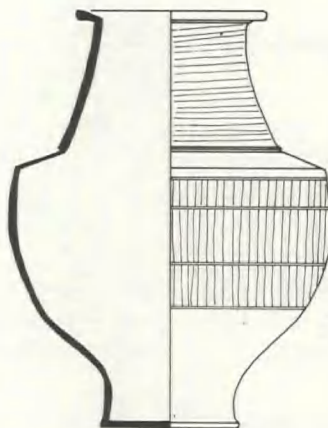


Fig 2 Belgic Urn from Chicksands (¾).

from Bedfordshire, mainly from Kempston though other sites are represented (*Beds. Arch. J.* forthcoming), there are none which exactly parallel this one in shape, though the use of vertical striations on the main part of the body is a common decorative feature. Much of the Bedfordshire Belgic material is readily paralleled by urns of the Aylesford-Swarling group (*P.P.S.* 31 (1965) 241-367) and includes more of these types than was suspected in 1962. However, the Rowney Warren urn does not find a comparison there nor in the pottery of the rich 'Welwyn-type' burials (*Archaeologia* 101 (1967) 1-62). It is hoped the illustration of this vessel will elicit further information both as to its parallels and the other vessels from Rowney Warren.

#### COPLE

During ploughing of a field near Cople on 23 March 1969 a hoard of thirty-five silver coins of the 16th and 17th centuries was found at a depth of approximately 18 inches, with some scattered near the ground surface. The hoard was declared a Treasure Trove, and after examination and recording in the British Museum was returned to the finder as none of the coins was required for the national collection or for Bedford museum. Contents: Elizabeth I—2 shillings, 11 sixpences; Charles I—8 halfcrowns, 5 shillings, 2 sixpences; Commonwealth—1 shilling; Charles II—4 crowns, 2 halfcrowns. The latest coin was a crown of Charles II dated 1680. (*British Numismatic Journal* 1970).

## DUNSTABLE

The Manshead Archaeological Society of Dunstable under the direction of C L Matthews are currently excavating a large timber building, of perhaps a post Roman date, on Friary Field, Dunstable. (*Manshead Magazine* 20).

## DUNTON

The *Biggleswade Chronicle* have reported to Bedford Museum the find of a bronze flanged palstave without a loop in Dunton parish. It is hoped this find may be acquired for Bedford Museum.

## EATON BRAY SP/969207

Examination of the five-bay north arcade of Eaton Bray church has revealed that the east respond, the most easterly pier and the column next to the most westerly have slightly detached shafts. The feature can be seen in the central pier of the westward looking views published in J Godber *History of Bedfordshire* (1969) pl. 17 and N Pevsner *The Buildings of England: Bedfordshire ...* (1968) 81-92, pl. 29. Examination of the four detached shafts on the two piers and the two of the east respond has shown these are wood, not stone. It may be suspected that the use of wood rather than stone is a prime factor in the lean of the arcade. The reasons behind the use of wood are obscure: either a dishonest mason or one supremely confident of his abilities as a civil engineer.

## ELSTOW TL/058476

Excavations by G J Dring have continued on the kiln site at Mile End Road, Elstow.

## ELSTOW Abbey TL/049474

Excavations on this site in its fifth season, 1969, were directed by David Baker for the Bedford Archaeological Society and Portsmouth Polytechnic.

- (a) No further lengths of the ? pre-Roman circular ditch were seen when the remaining available ground was trenched.
- (b) No further 5th/6th century pagan Saxon cremations were found, though the sample of late Saxon inhumations has been improved, as well as that of mediaeval burials around the east end of the church.

- (c) Work on the church to July 1969 has not altered the basic sequence, though a large robbed building probably of 12th century date was found south of the south quire aisle chapel, extending as far east as the main presbytery itself. This may be the Chapter House: however the modern churchyard as yet prevents the establishment of relationships between it, the eastern claustral ranges and the church.
- (d) The eastern claustral range has been shown to have moved westwards in the major 14th century reconstruction, unlike the other two ranges which expanded outwards. The evidence of first trenches at the southern ends suggested at least two phases of building within each of the two main periods: the earliest rere-dorter with its drain has been located.
- (e) A complex series of outbuildings was found to the south of refectories and dormitories, with at least five of six phases, and likely to have had timber superstructures. Investigation will continue in 1970.
- (f) A resistivity survey was made south-west of the main claustral area in preparation for work in 1970.

## FELMERSHAM

The metalwork and pottery from Felmersham (*Antiqs. J.* 29 (1949) 37-61; *Beds. Arch. J.* 4 (1969) 81-82) have continued to receive attention. Apart from exhibition of the bronzes in the exhibition of Celtic Art at the 1970 colloquium in Edinburgh and subsequently at the Hayward Gallery, London, attention has been focused on the reconstruction of the metalwork and the nature of the deposit. The fish-head spout (*Beds. Arch. J.* 2 (1964) 74) has been studied and found to be a wine strainer spout most probably fitted to one of the two extant bronze bowls, with the segmental plate as a cover (*Antiqs. J.* 50 (1970) 86-88). The reconstruction of this vessel suggests that the interpretation of the deposit as a bronze-smiths scrap hoard may well be untenable. It seems more probable that a deposit of a wine strainer, a wine bucket, a bronze plated wooden box together with an extensive deposit of pottery is more probably a burial. (*Beds. Arch. J.* forthcoming).

## GREENFIELD

In 1965 a group of Roman pot sherds were brought by Mr Majewicz into Bedford Museum for identification. Found during excavations for a gas pipe-line at Greenfield, they were deposited by the finder in the museum. While none is sufficiently distinctive or complete to merit illustration, the group deserves some record. Fragments of five vessels were brought in (Bedford Museum 65/B/720-724).

The first (65/B/720) is the remains of a hunt cup (height 8.4.cm.) in Castor ware, dark surfaced on the upper part but red on the lower. Only half the design is extant: a hare in full flight done in barbotine. There is a similar cup from Putnoe, Beds., now a number of joined sherds in Bedford Museum, and another from Hauxton, Cambs., whose dating is suggested as A.D. 120-230. (*P. Camb.A.S.* 51 (1957) 16 no 1.a. fig 8).

The second and third vessels are both samian ware of Dragendorf form 33. The smaller (65/B/721) is without a stamp; the larger (65/B/722) is stamped C-IPPI·M. The form is not easy to date within the late first to second century dating usually ascribed. Other cups of the form in Bedford Museum are a wall sherd from Putnoe (unnumbered); an unprovenanced cup (B.M.21) with the stamp ... VINOS; and one from Biddenham (3386) stamped TIBERI·M.

The other pieces from Greenfield are the upper portions of a small jug in yellow ware (65/B/723) and a wall fragment from a coarse grey vessel of Belgic type (65/B/724).

## HARROLD, Lodge Farm SP/933553

Excavations were conducted here during September 1969 by A E Brown of the University of Leicester on behalf of the Ministry of Public Building and Works, on the site of a Roman pottery manufacturing establishment located by members of the Wolverton and District Archaeological Society (*Bull. Northants. Fed. Arch. Soc.* 3 (April 1969) 10). An area of some 80 square metres was cleared, revealing two pottery kilns of updraught type and what was probably the stoke hole of a third. The furnaces of both kilns contained examples of large jars in a pink shelly fabric, of forms dateable to the middle and later years of the first century AD. Both kilns have been damaged by the later digging of pits over 2 metres deep, presumably for the extraction of clay for pottery; these pits, of which four were located, were filled sub-

stantially of loose limestone, but their upper levels contained domestic rubbish and pottery of the fourth century AD. This pottery was similar in fabric to the 1st century material. Pottery from the dense surface scatter suggests that this factory was producing coarse shelly wares throughout the Roman period, and it is hoped to test this idea by further fieldwork and excavations during 1970.

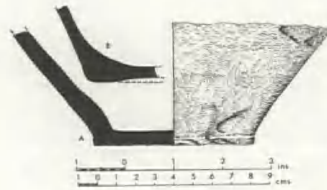


Fig 3 Collared Urn Bases from Hinwick (1/4).

**HINWICK:** Bronze Age Cinerary Urns SP/928612 J Dyer reports that during 1969 a box of fossils, rocks and curiosities found in the attic of Dunstable Road Primary School, Luton, was sent to the Archaeology and History Department at Putteridge Bury College of Education for identification. Amongst the contents was the complete base of a Bronze Age cinerary urn, and a sherd from the base of a second similar urn (fig. 3). Both pots were coarsely made in orange shell and flint-gritted ware. The complete base shows the impressions of what appear to be two or three ears of grain, at present unidentified. From an almost illegible label on the larger base it is possible to ascertain that the urns were found in the northern corner of Great Close field at Hinwick, some four or five from the top hedge, and enclosed in a head of stones. Other details cannot be deciphered. The site of the find lies at about 310 feet above sea level, on the eastern side of the Roman road which runs south from Irchester, at N.G.R. SP/928612. Other material in the box of curiosities associates the find with R.R.B. Orlebar of Hinwick House and suggests a finding date early in the present century. How the material reached the attic of a Luton school remains a mystery. The pottery has been placed in Bedford Museum.

## LUTON

Commercial redevelopment of the central area of Luton is being watched by Luton Museum.

## LUTON

T P Smith has made a preliminary investigation of the house types connected with the Luton hat industry. All houses were terraced. The basic type, current 1860-70, had two downstairs rooms, with a stair between rising from a small lobby between the two rooms. At the rear was a narrower extension, with both a downstairs and an upstairs room, each entered directly from the house. The first modifications were to separate the kitchen and downstairs workroom, to put a narrow passage between each pair of houses to give access to the rear yard and to insert a passage beside the back bedroom to give access to the upper workroom. The second type was current 1870-1900. A development, mainly dating to 1900 to 1914, was the house with a wide passage, with a bedroom over.

## MAULDEN: Ruxox Farm TL/051363

The Ampthill Archaeological Society have continued investigations of the Romano-British settlement at Ruxox Farm. The prehistoric finds, mostly flints, are noted elsewhere in this journal. Other important items include the bronze handle of a late Roman knife, decorated in relief with a hound chasing a hare.

## MEPPERSHALI TL/138364

Destruction of the north-west side of a medieval fish-pond in 1967 was observed by J Dyer who reports a bank of clay without rivetting or lining of either wood or stone. It is supposed any associated structures would be to the south of the site, near the present rectory, as only nineteenth century pottery was found on the site watched.

## PAINTED POTTERY

Two sherds of late pre-Roman painted pottery have been discovered in the collections of Bedford Museum. One is without an exact provenance; the other is from Sandy.

## RAVENS DEN: Mowsbury Hill, TL/067533

G J Dring, for Bedford Museum, is investigating this moated site which has also produced Iron Age pottery.

## SHARNBROOK

One of the few pieces of medieval pottery from Sharnbrook in Bedford Museum is the handle of a St Neots ware firecover; Firecover (fig 4); handle and adjacent part of top; black core with shell and some stone grit, stone grit visible on under side of top; light red surfaces, fading in some places to a deeper red-purple; under side blackened especially round smoke holes; unglazed; on top decoration of scored sgraffito grooves up to 40.mm. long, of 1.mm. average depth, and 2.mm. average width; decorated on handle with thumb pressings at junctions of top and handle to disguise luting; handle divided in three by central depression, with the ridges on outside being pressed into undulations; four scored grooves 13.mm. long, 1.mm. deep, and 2.mm. wide on higher ridge; 35 punctuations to let out air during firing, distributed 9 on central depression, 11 on lower ridge, 15 on higher ridge.

This is the second St Neots ware firecover to be published. The other is fragments of a more complete example from Brafield-on-the-Green, Northants. (*J. Northampton Mus.* 6 (1969) 51-53). Both are among the earliest known firecovers: a type which is found throughout the medieval period. Another local example is the sides and ridge of one from Cauldwell Priory, a sherd in a hard, black, sandy ware, now in Bedford Museum. (For a general discussion of firecovers see *Archæologia* 102 (1969)).

## STOTFOLD

F W Kuhlicke reports the find of a flat bronze (?) axe without decoration from Stotfold: it is hoped this object, now in private possession, will be secured for exhibition in Bedford Museum.

## STOTFOLD TL/223364

D C King reports the discovery of Roman finds from Stotfold in August 1969. Post-holes apparently set in a levelled gravel area were discovered during building development. Finds include Belgic sherds; much samian; including a piece with the stamp CIROE; castor ware in some quantity; a puddingstone quern; many nails; and four metal objects. These were two bronze brooches, a group of niello domed studs, once attached to a leather object, and a metal band with silver facing with a scene depicted on it.

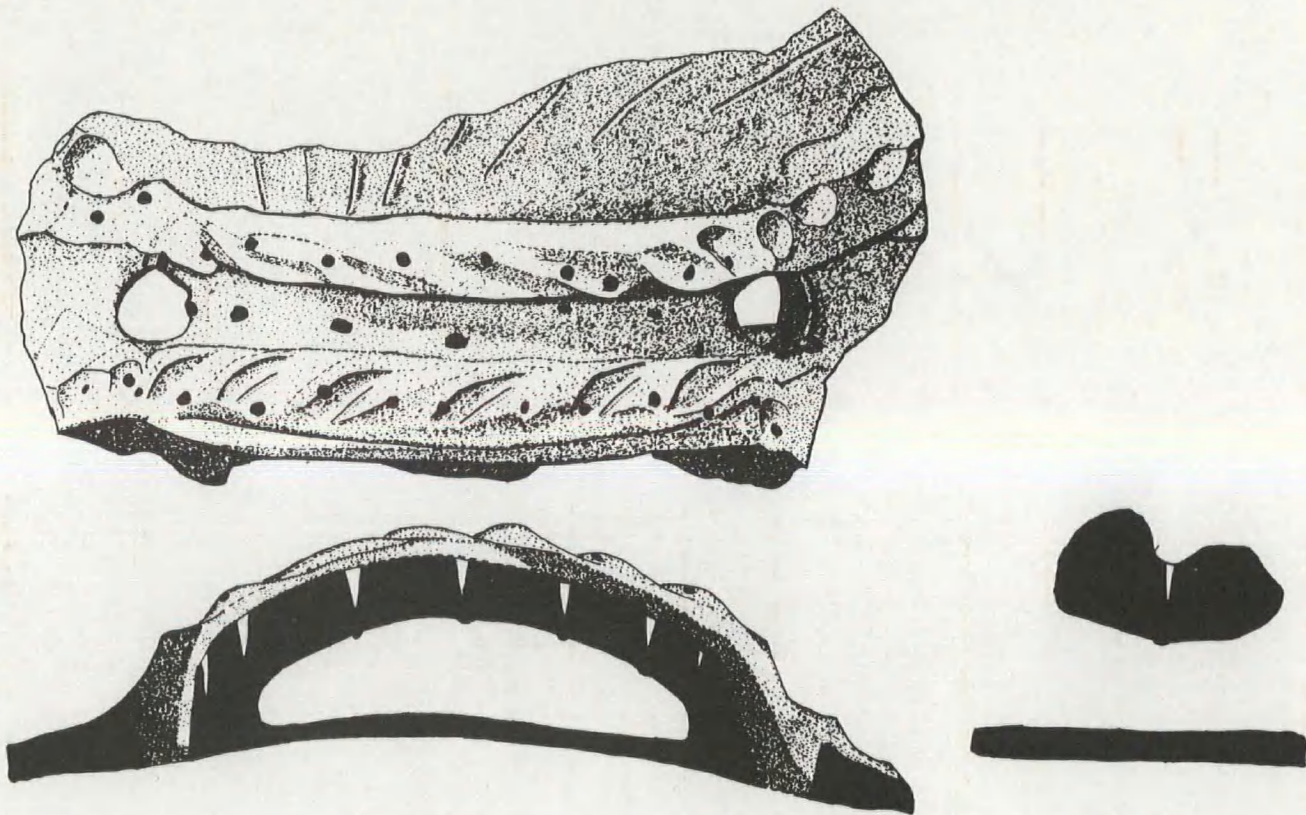


Fig 4 Firecover handle from Sharnbrook ( $\frac{1}{2}$ ).

#### THURLEIGH TL/052585

Investigation under the direction of D N Hall is proceeding on the interior of Thurleigh Church, with a view to elucidating the history of the structure.

#### TODDINGTON

The late cruciform brooch from one of the two Anglo-Saxon cemeteries at Toddington which is now in the Cooper-Cooper collection of Northampton Museum (number 199/1955-56) has been drawn and studied (*Med. Arch.* forthcoming).

#### WOOTTON TL/0045

In September 1969, a group of Romano-British pot sherds found at Wootton were presented by T Cory, Canon's Close, Wootton, to Bedford Museum. There are three vessels (Bedford Museum 69/B135-137).

135 (fig. 5.135) A flagon, light buff-coloured ware, in many fragments, lacking parts of the body and upper portion of the handle, reconstructed as 22.0.cm. high with a base diameter of 7.8.cm. and a rim diameter of 6.2.cm. This second century type of bulbous flagon is found elsewhere in Bedfordshire: in a very similar ware from Kempston, a vessel in the grave group of 31-1-1928 (Bedford Museum 3291); and two from Putnoe (Bedford Museum, unnumbered) one in this light buff ware, one in a light pink ware.

136 (not illustrated) the base of a jar in a hard, thin grey fabric, common in the district.

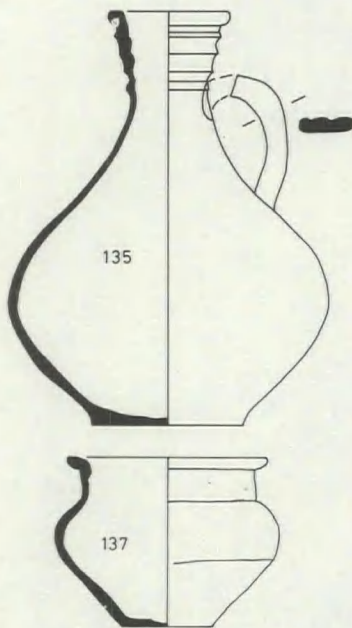


Fig 5 Pottery from Wootton (¼)

137 (fig. 5.137) An Iron Age jar of black surfaced ware, height 9.0.cm., base 4.8.cm., rim 10.4.cm. This vessel is almost identical to one from Kempston found in 1863 at the time of the discovery of the Anglo-Saxon cemetery (Bedford Museum 3679). These are the first archaeological finds reported from Wootton. One hopes that the indications of pre-Roman Iron Age and Romano-British activity they give can be more fully substantiated.