

# RESCUE EXCAVATIONS AT THE DESERTED MEDIEVAL VILLAGE OF STANTONBURY BUCKS.

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## INTRODUCTION

The Deserted Medieval Village of Stantonbury was situated between Newport Pagnell and Wolverton in the Upper Ouse valley. The parish of Stantonbury was roughly rectangular with a long north-south axis. The northern boundary was the river Ouse, from which the ground rises gradually to circa 350ft. above O.S. datum at the south end of the parish. The village sited on the low lying meadowland with underlying gravel close to the river (Fig. 1) was almost completely quarried away during gravel extraction in 1965 and 1966. Today only a few house platforms, the earthworks of the gardens of the seventeenth century Manor House and the ruined church remain (Fig. 2). Immediately south of the village site the land rises gently to limestone and boulder clay; old quarry sites east of the church, cut through ridge and furrow, may be the source of the building material for the Manor House erected in 1692 by Sir John Wittewronge, or alternatively for the stone walls that enclosed the fields in the immediate village area until their recent destruction by the gravel company.

The parish is cut in half by the east-west road running from Wolverton to Newport Pagnell and the land on the south side of this road is now within the designated area of the new city of Milton Keynes. The new grid road V7 perpetuates the line of a medieval and possibly Roman road.

During 1956 it became apparent that the village site would eventually be destroyed by gravel quarrying. A pit worked by the Bletchley Concrete Aggregate Company, a subsidiary of Thomas Roberts of Westminster Limited, was gradually extending westwards and would soon engulf the village site. Mr. G. K. Tull sought the advice of the Deserted Medieval Village Research Group and it was suggested that the newly formed Wolverton Archaeological Society should excavate at least one house platform. Several unsuccessful attempts were made by the Society and the Ancient Monuments Inspectorate of the MPBW during the next ten years to arrange an excavation; but this was impossible due to the lack of co-operation from the Pit Manager and the tenant farmer.

During the spring of 1966 the gravel pit extended to the village site and its destruction was commenced. Instead of continuing their normal method of quarrying with a clean cut pit edge, the gravel company, due to the poor

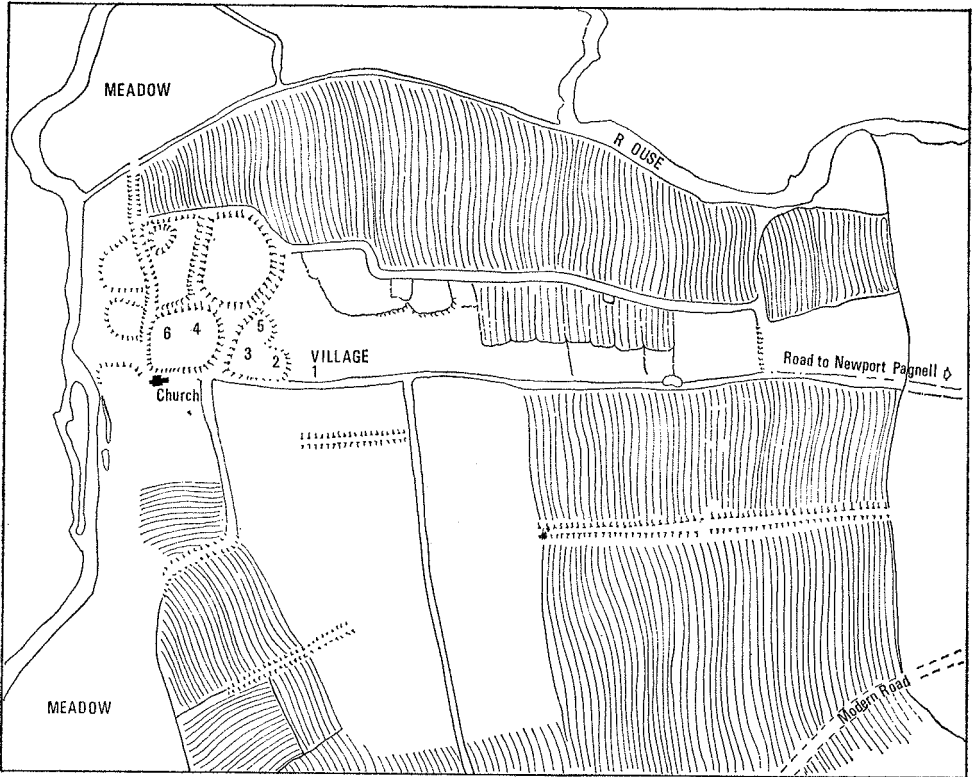


Fig. 1. The village in the Medieval Period with part of its Field System.

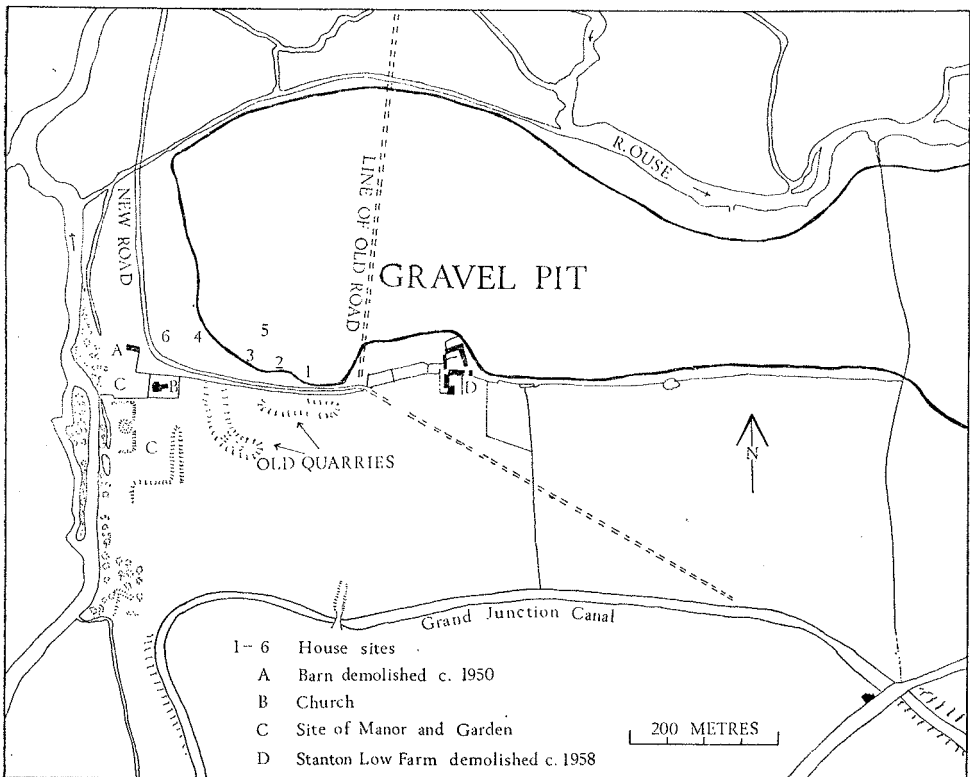


Fig. 2. The village site today showing extent of gravel pit.

quality of the gravel, churned up the whole area so much that archaeological activities of any sort were well nigh impossible. At the last minute they agreed to a watching brief to be carried out by the writer on condition that no excavation took place and that their work was not held up in any way.

The watching brief was carried out on four wet March days and work on the muddy site was difficult. However, a quantity of medieval pottery was recovered from partly destroyed house platforms and the plan of one house (Fig. 3) was partly recorded. Though most of the pottery found was unstratified it provides an interesting series for this area from which little has yet been published.

## HISTORY OF THE VILLAGE

The manorial history is dealt with by the various published County Histories, the best account being given in *Victoria County History of Bucks Vol IV*, on which the following summary is largely based; without detailed research little more can be said at the moment.

In the Domesday survey STANTON was assessed at 5 hides and was worth £6. There was land for 5½ ploughs and 2 more on the demesne. A mill here was worth a rental of 10 shillings and 8 pence and 50 eels per annum. There was enough meadow for 4 plough teams. The village was held by Ralf, a tenant of Miles Crispin. In 1066 it was held by Bisi a thegn of King Edward.

During the 13th century the village became known as STANTON BARRY taking the second part of its name from the family of Barre or Barry who held the manor at that time.

When Thomas Barry died about 1326<sup>1</sup> his possessions in the village were, a Manor House worth 12 shillings, a broken mill worth 6 shillings, a ruined Dovecote worth 2 shillings, a Fishery worth 2 shillings and 6 pence, 40 acres of arable land worth 4 pence an acre, a further 60 acres of arable land worth only 2 pence an acre and 14 acres of meadow worth 1 shilling and 6 pence an acre. This accounts for only 114 acres out of a total of approximately 800 acres in the parish. The number of free tenants at that time is uncertain but 3 villeins paid a total rent of 20 shillings to Thomas Barry and 5 cottars paid him a total rent of 10 shillings plus some work.

The Barry family held Stantonbury until the late 14th century. During the 15th century the village came into the possession of the Vaux family of Harrowden, Northamptonshire. They remained in possession until 1535 and it was during their tenure that the village became depopulated as a result of enclosure, presumably for sheep. Wolsey's Commission of 1517 reported that the village was already enclosed.<sup>2</sup> In the early 16th century Sir Nicholas Vaux petitioned for the King's Pardon for "decaying houses and converting arable land into pasture".<sup>3</sup> Sir Nicholas died in 1523 and his estates passed to his son Thomas, aged 14, who sold Stantonbury in 1535.

The village passed through several ownerships during the next hundred years or so and the owners were not always resident in the village, for in the 1620's the Manor House was let to Viscount Purbeck. Some seventy years later it was rebuilt by Sir John Wittewronge, a member of a family that lived

here for some years and took a prominent part in County affairs. However, they fell on bad times, when in 1721 Sir John Wittewronge the third baronet murdered a mountebank, James Griffiths, at the Saracen's Head in Newport Pagnell, and fled the country. He returned several years later and died from wounds received in a drunken brawl in the Fleet Prison in 1743.<sup>4</sup>

In 1727 he had sold Stantonbury to Sarah Duchess of Marlborough and on her death in 1744 it passed to her grandson John Spencer and remained in the possession of the Spencer family until recent years. Lipscomb states that only four houses remained in the parish in 1736<sup>5</sup>; these may have been the Manor House, Stantonbury Park farmhouse and two other farmhouses, one at Stanton Low to the east of the church and the other at Stanton High in the south end of the parish. The Manor House was destroyed by fire in 1743; the farmhouse at Stanton High which had become two cottages earlier this century has now been demolished; the farmhouse at Stanton Low was demolished about 1960 and only Stantonbury Park farmhouse remains.

The church dedicated to St. Peter was in good order until the 1920's after which it gradually fell into disrepair. Until the 19th century it served the few remaining inhabitants of the parish. The living was certainly shared with Bradwell in the 16th century<sup>6</sup> but was later held in plurality with several other local parishes. In 1857 a new parish was created by adding to Stantonbury part of Bradwell, which had recently been developed to house railway workers employed at Wolverton. For some years the church had a dramatic increase in congregation, but this was short-lived, for in 1860 a new parish church, St. James, was built at "New Bradwell" amongst the railway workers' houses and became the parish church. The last wedding took place at Stantonbury in 1909; the church was restored in 1910 but the ravages of time and local vandals soon undid this work. Services were held once a year but became less frequent, and in the 1950's the Norman Chancel Arch was removed and taken to St. James at New Bradwell. In 1956 the roof fell in and the whole church is now a ruin. The last service held in it was in 1963 when thirty people attended mass in the ruined church on St. Peter's day.

The wedding photograph of 1909<sup>7</sup> shows some farm buildings standing to the north of the church; these were demolished about 1950. The latest pottery collected from the site is of 18th century date; this was collected from a house platform immediately to the north of the church, just to the east of the buildings shown on the photograph.

## THE ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

The first reference to discoveries in the parish is by Browne Willis,<sup>8</sup> who recorded that numerous human remains were unearthed in the parish and that as a result the name was changed from Stanton Barry to Stantonbury in the early 18th century by the then lord of the manor Sir John Wittewronge.

The name Stantonbury was however in use as early as c.1450 in the Lincoln Diocesan Registers.<sup>9</sup> It is possible that these burials were connected with the Roman site about a quarter of a mile to the north east of the church which was exposed by gravel quarrying and was excavated in 1957<sup>10</sup> and 1958, when burials were also found.

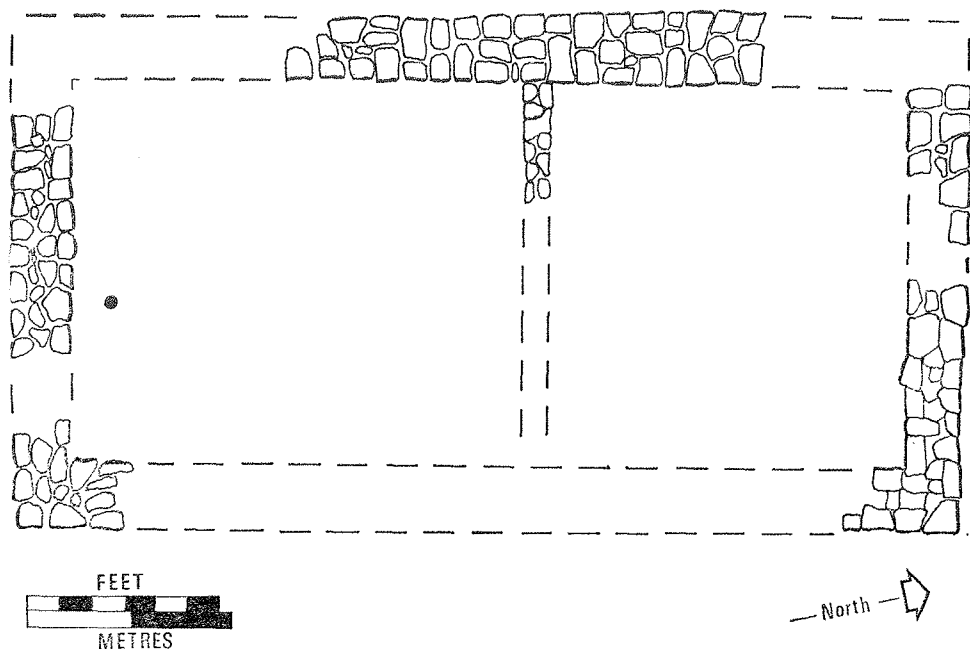


Fig. 3. Plan of Building 1.

About 1930 Alfred Bullard, an antique dealer from Newport Pagnell and local archaeological enthusiast, did some excavation to the west and south of the church, mainly on the earthworks of the site of the Manor House. He is said locally to have found the entrance to the “tunnel” which according to local tradition led to Bradwell Abbey. It is most likely that he located the cellars of the Manor House. Other local people also became engaged in sporadic excavation on the site in the hope of locating the elusive tunnel, but none were successful.

In 1939 a Local History Class organised by the Workers Educational Association undertook a small excavation on the circular mound to the south west of the church and found that it was of artificial construction and contained roof tile and wall plaster debris from the late Manor House.<sup>11</sup>

In 1955 Mr G. K. Tull commenced an excavation in and around the then standing church in an attempt to recover its original plan. The excavation received much local support and as a direct result the Wolverton Archaeological Society was formed. At the time the building was still standing and was in much the same condition as in 1912 when it was surveyed by the Royal Commission on Historical Monuments. The following description is a brief summary of the Commission’s Survey.<sup>12</sup>

In the 12th century the church consisted of a Nave and Chancel only; the fine Chancel Arch dated this early church. The only other early feature was a round-headed squint in the south wall of the Chancel which may have been rebuilt. The Chancel arch was removed in the late 1950’s and eventually rebuilt in St. James church at New Bradwell.

Extensive rebuilding in the 13th century is confirmed by the existence of a blocked arcade of mid-13th century date in the north wall of the Nave. It was also considered that the north and east walls of the Chancel were rebuilt at this time.

In the 14th century a new east window was added and the south wall of the Chancel may have been rebuilt; it contains a blocked 14th-century arch and the 12th-century squint, suggesting an aisle or chapel on the south side of the Chancel.

More work took place in the 15th century and new windows were placed in the west and south walls of the Nave and the north wall of the Chancel. In fact the west wall of the Nave dated by its window and buttresses was considered to have been rebuilt at this time.

In the 16th century the north porch was added and the 13th-century arcade in the north wall of the nave blocked, presumably after the taking down of the north aisle.

The picture obtained from this survey is one of a small village church enlarged in the 13th and 14th centuries, restored in the 15th and finally reduced in size in the 16th. This reduction may have been the direct result of the drop in population after desertion.

The previous existence of the north aisle and south chapel were both reasons for the excavation undertaken by Mr Tull; it was an attempt to recover their plan that he commenced excavation.

The excavation consisted of a series of trenches dug on the north and west sides of the church. The main results (Plan Fig. 10) were the discovery of a previously unsuspected tower at the west end, which was certainly out of use by the late 14th century, as sherds of a Potterspurty Jug (Fig. 8,73) were found in its destruction level. The tower had heavy stone footings five feet thick and measured ten feet by eight feet internally. The rebuild of the west wall of the nave with its 15th-century window and buttresses must have soon followed the dismantling of the tower.

On the north side of the nave the excavation was less successful; no trace was found of the north aisle, apart from a wall two feet six inches thick running north from the junction of nave and chancel for a distance of ten feet and then turning to the east. This suggests an aisle or chapel on the north side of the chancel. No dating evidence was found for this wall apart from the fact that it cut several burials and was certainly not a primary feature. Its junction with the church wall was not properly recorded; it was not clear whether it was of the same build or butted on.

To the west of the church and running over the levelled footings of the tower was a late wall, perhaps the boundary between the church and the manor house, around which were found several sherds of post-medieval pottery and some bottle fragments; one sherd (Fig. 9,84) is the only one worth publication.

Certainly these excavations served a useful purpose but they should not be taken as the last word on the site.

## THE WATCHING BRIEF

This consisted of four days' official work in March 1967 and several visits to the site by myself and Mr. M. Harris during the final destruction of platforms in April and May. The four days of the watching brief were wet and the site was particularly muddy due to the partial destruction of unquarried areas by the contractor's traffic and heavy machinery. The work was carried out with the volunteer help of Miss V. Drummond.

No survey of the earthworks of the site existed and there was not time to plan the surviving, but already partly destroyed platforms accurately. The plan (Fig. 1) is drawn from the air photos of the site and a sketch plan made during the first day of the watching brief.

The work consisted mainly of collecting pottery from partly destroyed house platforms; where the gravel company had put a bulldozer through a platform one was at least able to see a section through it. Although these were not drawn, pottery was collected from them; generally the section consisted of an occupation layer on a thin layer of soil in the natural gravel. Over the occupation layer was normally a general destruction level consisting of stones and pottery sherds. None of the platforms had a build up of occupation levels and generally speaking appeared to have been occupied only during the 12th, 13th and 14th centuries.

The building plan (Fig. 3) was drawn as the building on platform 1 was being destroyed. The operator of the drag line which was excavating platform 1 was helpful and sympathetic; he held off every now and then so that one could quickly check measurements and take photographs. The building was located at about 10 a.m. and had been completely quarried away by lunch-time. In plan it was a simple rectangular house, 30 ft.  $\times$  16 ft. aligned roughly north-south on its longest axis. Internally it was divided by a thin partition wall into two rooms, one 12 ft.  $\times$  14 ft., the other 12 ft.  $\times$  11 ft. The floor of the larger room was of compacted yellow clay whilst the floor of the other room was of brown earth. The walls were of local limestone and of dry construction, the external wall being 2 ft. thick and the internal partition wall only 1 ft. thick. Whether the building was partly of timber construction is uncertain; the walls may have gone up to the roof or have been low sill-walls supporting a timber frame.

## THE MEDIEVAL VILLAGE

The Plan Fig. 1 is reconstructed from Air Photographs of the site and field-work.

The village consisted of two parallel streets running east-west, between which lay the cottages and tofts.

The original settlement may have been in the area north of the church, with gradual expansion to the east. The plan shows that either the ends of several ridges, part of the field on the north side of the village, were cut off and incorporated into the village, or that several of the tofts were ploughed.

The southernmost of the two roads may well have been the main access

to the village, running from Haversham on the west to Newport Pagnell on the east.

The road running south from this was thought by the late Charles Green to have been Roman in origin. It can be seen on the air photo (Plate 1) running south, but it stops short at the ridge and furrow and may only be the road to the fields at the south end of the parish.

The southern end of the parish has been so well ploughed that all traces of ridge and furrow have now disappeared; nothing shows on the R.A.F. photographs taken in 1947 and so it is not possible to record the complete field system.

The site of the medieval manor house is unknown, but the 17th-century manor house was sited to the west of the church. The earthworks of its elaborately laid out gardens can still be seen to the south (Fig. 2).

The Saxon pottery suggests an early settlement, which might well be confirmed by excavation in and around the church.

Now that the structure is crumbling away one can examine the walls in detail, and Roman tiles are seen to be used in the rubble core of the walls of the Nave, which might therefore represent the body of a simple Saxon church.

## THE POTTERY

Most of the pottery described was collected during the Watching Brief, a few sherds were found by Mr Ray Bellchambers and others are from the church excavations in 1955.

All of the Watching Brief material is unstratified apart from that from the floor of Building 1 (Fig. 8,74). Pottery from other North Bucks. sites has been included, where it was felt that it usefully added to the Stantonbury series; this has been referred to by the capital letter of the site name e.g. C for Caldecotte, L for Lavendon, R for Ravenstone, M for Milton Keynes, SG for Stoke Goldington and F for Furtho, Northants.

The pottery is of the following ware types:

- A *Handmade Saxon*. 8th to 9th century  
A dark grey sandy fabric with shiny micaceous grits.
- B *Saxo-Norman Shelly Ware of St Neots Type*. 9th to 11th century  
A wheel-turned fine shelly ware, grey core with characteristic smooth "soapy" surfaces ranging in colour from a light to dark grey brown with red undertones.
- C *Medieval Shelly Wares*. 11th to 14th century
  - a) A fairly hard ware with fine calcite grits which may be shell but a considerable proportion appears (on visual analysis alone) to be limestone. This ware is very similar to B but is harder and has harsher more sandy surfaces. The colour ranges from buff-grey to pink-brown with a reduced grey core. The production centres of this ware are Olney Hyde Bucks.<sup>13</sup> and Harrold, Beds.<sup>14</sup>
  - b) A hard coarse shelly sandy ware, the surfaces are coarser than Ca, the tempering material being shell limestone and sand. These are present



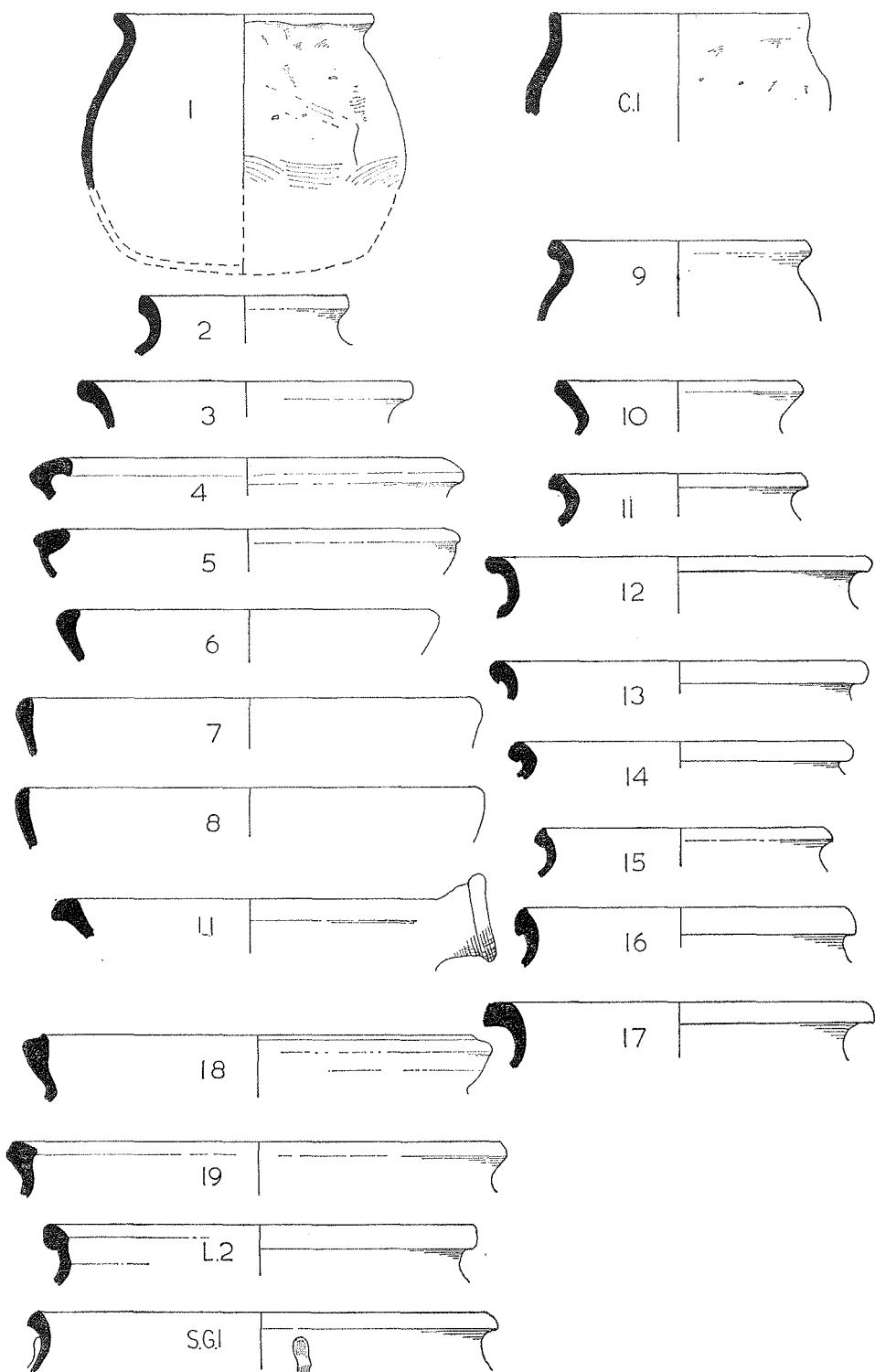


Fig. 4. Handmade Saxon Pottery 1 and C1, St. Neots Type 2-8 and L1, Medieval Shelly Ware 9-19, L2 and SG1. Scale  $\frac{1}{4}$ .

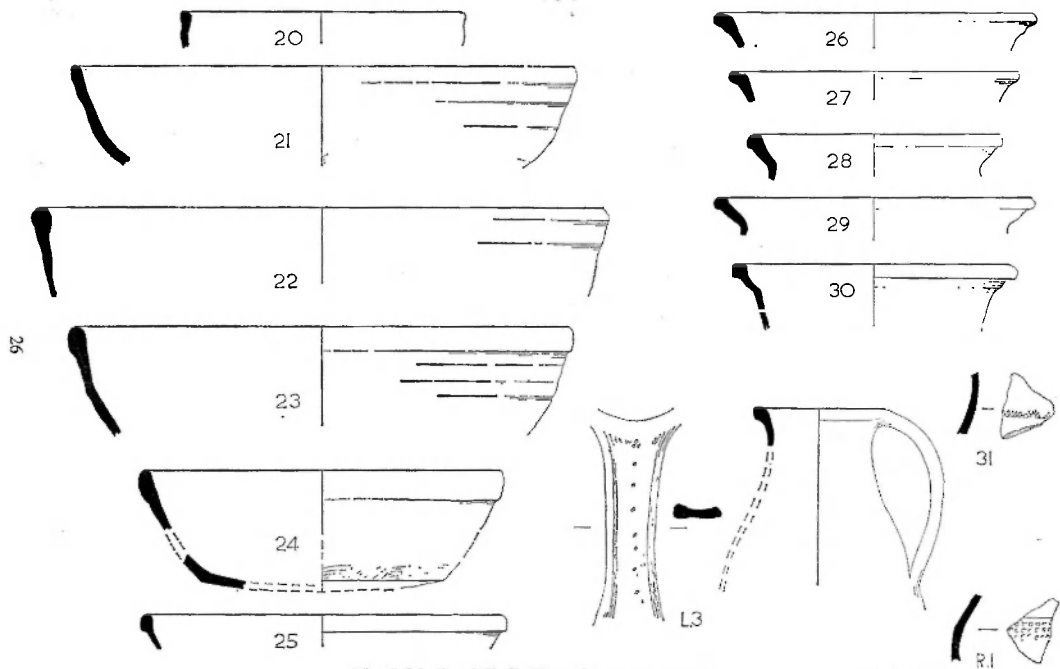


Fig. 5. Medieval Shelly Ware 20-31, L3 and R1.

Scale 1/4.

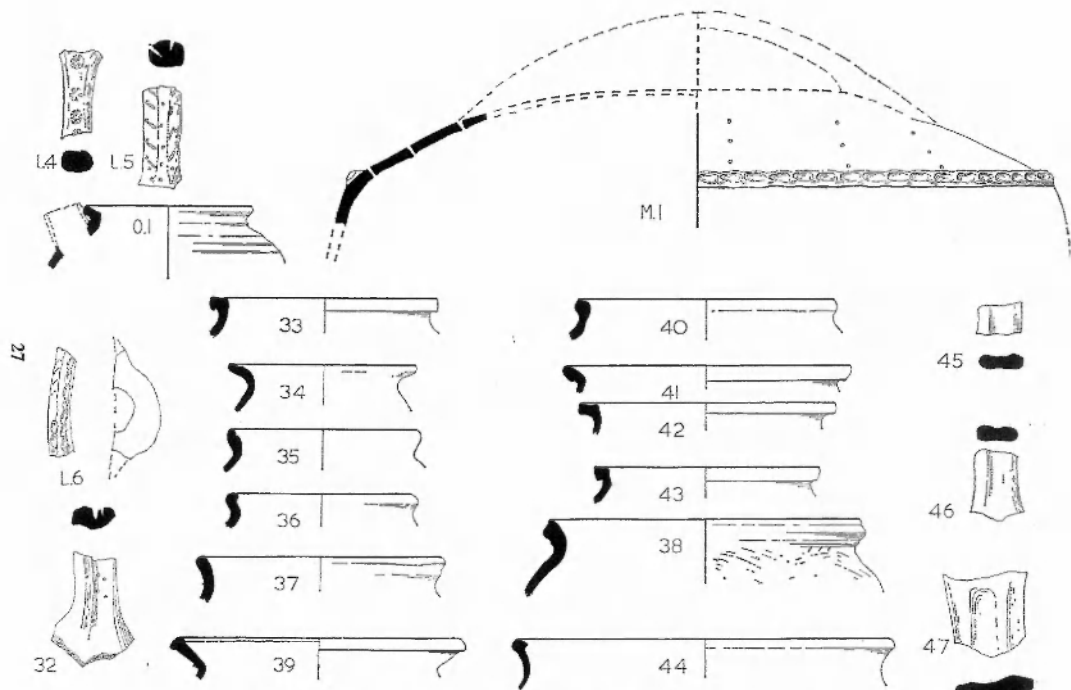


Fig. 6. Medieval Shelly Ware L4-L6, O1, 32 and 33, Great Brickhill Ware 34-47.

Scale  $\frac{1}{4}$ .

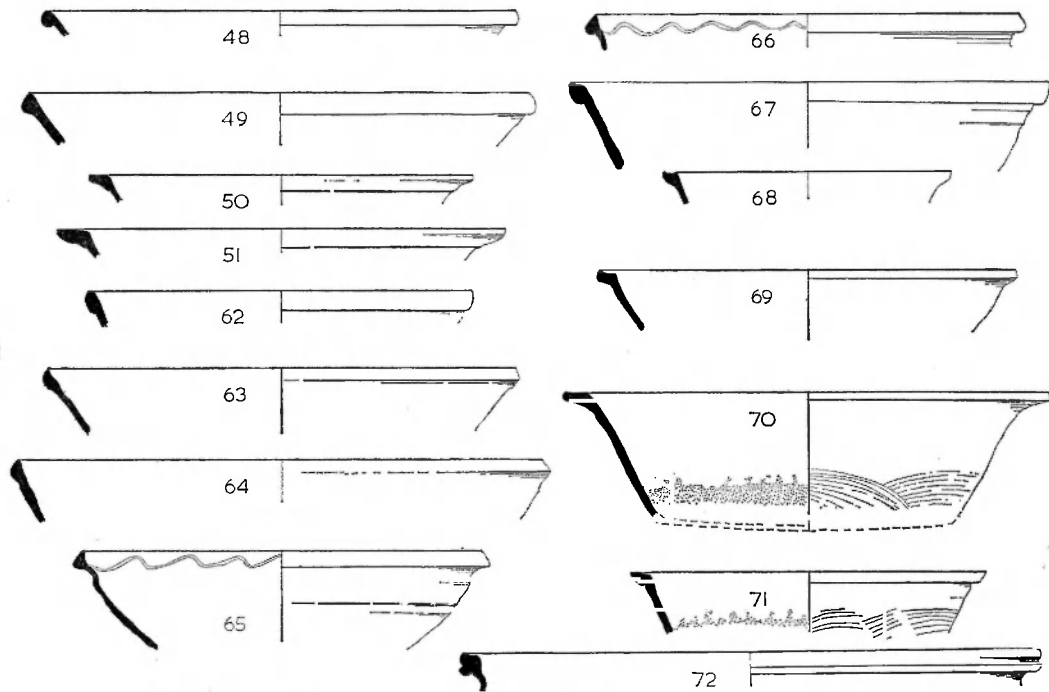


Fig. 7. Bowls, Great Brickhill Ware 48-51, Potterspurgy Ware 52-72.

Scale  $\frac{1}{2}$ .

in smaller amounts than in Ca but in general the fragments are larger.  
Made at Olney Hyde.<sup>15</sup>

D *Brickhill Ware*. 12th to 14th century

A hard dark grey coarse sandy fabric with sometimes red-brown undertones on the external surfaces. The kilns at Great Brickhill have not yet been excavated but their approximate location has been known since 1957.<sup>16</sup>

E *Potterspury Ware*. 13th to 15th century

A fine sand-tempered ware with fairly smooth surfaces.<sup>17</sup> The colour ranges through pink-buff to offwhite with a grey core. This ware is generally glazed with a characteristic olive-green glaze.

F *Brill Ware*

A fine sand-tempered ware, offwhite to cream in colour with a mottled green glaze and often with applied red-brown strips.

G *Coventry Ware*

An offwhite gritty ware with pink undertones and a mottled dark light-green glaze.

H *Misc. Glazed Wares*

Non-local medieval glazed wares which are represented by a few small abraded sherds not easily attributed to a known kiln source.

I *Post-Medieval Wares*

These wares were present in the following proportions:

A.	Only one sherd.	D.	4 lbs. 6 ozs.
B.	4 ozs.	E.	7 lbs. 10½ ozs.
Ca.	3 lbs. 5½ ozs.	F, G, H. and I.	Only a few sherds.
Cb.	14½ ozs.		

## CATALOGUE OF THE POTTERY

The pottery is dealt with in ware groups; sherds are not individually described unless they vary considerably from the normal fabric description given above. All rim diameters are in centimetres with the prefix D.

A. *Handmade Saxon*. Fig. 4,1 and C1.

1. Rim and shoulder, D 15.5 cm. in hard dark grey reduced sandy fabric with fine shiny micaceous grits. The external surfaces are rough and lumpy to the touch with faint smoothing marks on the shoulder visible to the eye; towards the base the body was smoothed by knife-trimming. The rim is slightly everted and the base has been reconstructed as slightly sagging.

- C.1. Rim of a similar vessel from the Shrunken Medieval Village of Caldecotte, which is situated in the valley of the Ousel some five miles south east of Stantonbury. The ware is similar but coarser and darker in colour. I am indebted to Mr. Hedley Pengelly the finder for permission to publish this sherd.

No. 1 was the first sherd of this ware to be recognized in North Bucks.;

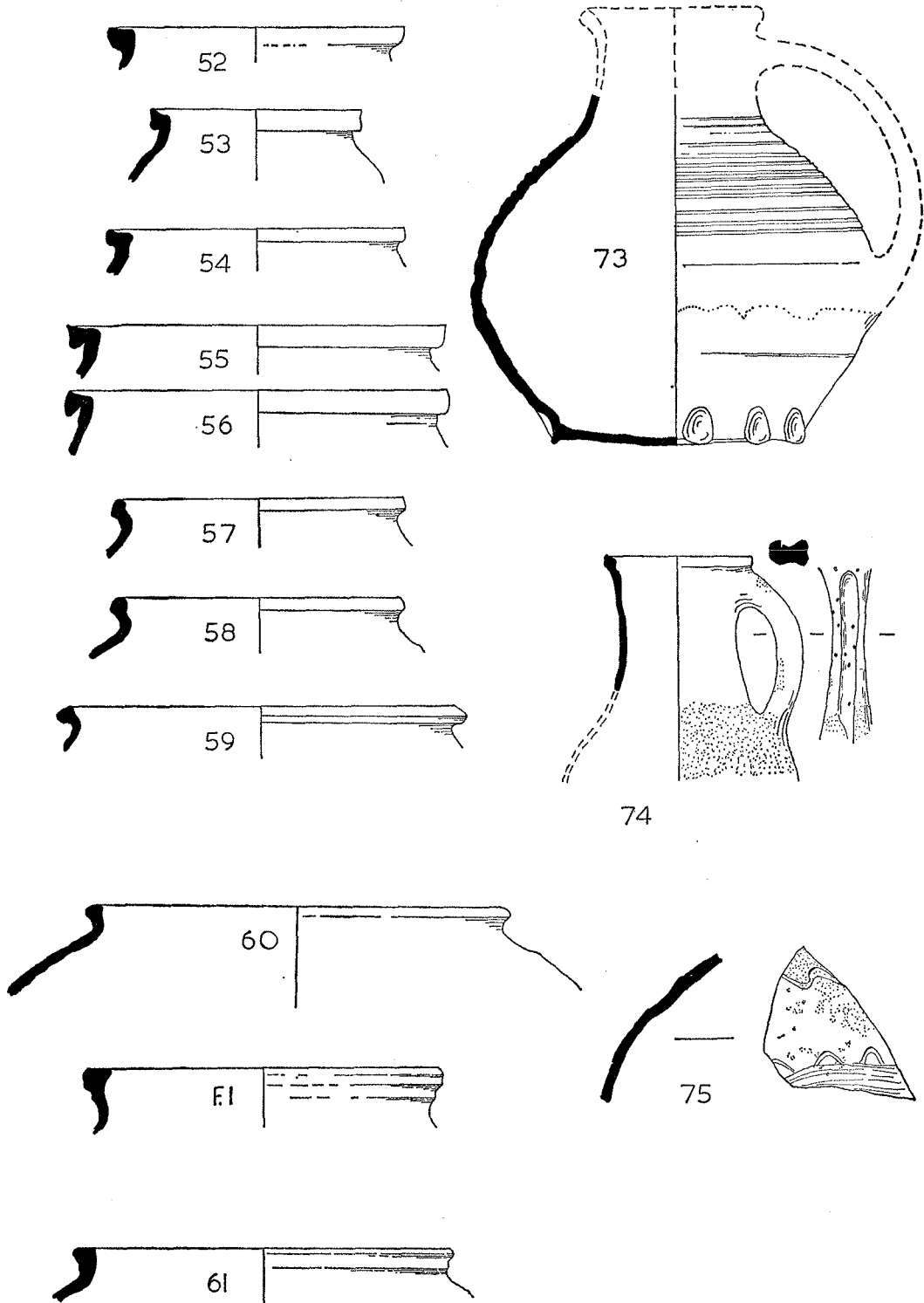


Fig. 8. Potterspurly Ware.

Scale  $\frac{1}{4}$ .



PLATE V. The partly destroyed site from the south east.

*Photo Dr. J. K. S. St. Joseph*



PLATE VI. The earthworks of the gardens of the seventeenth century Manor House; the ruined church is in the centre, and at the top of the photograph can be seen the site of the village despoiled by the gravel pit.



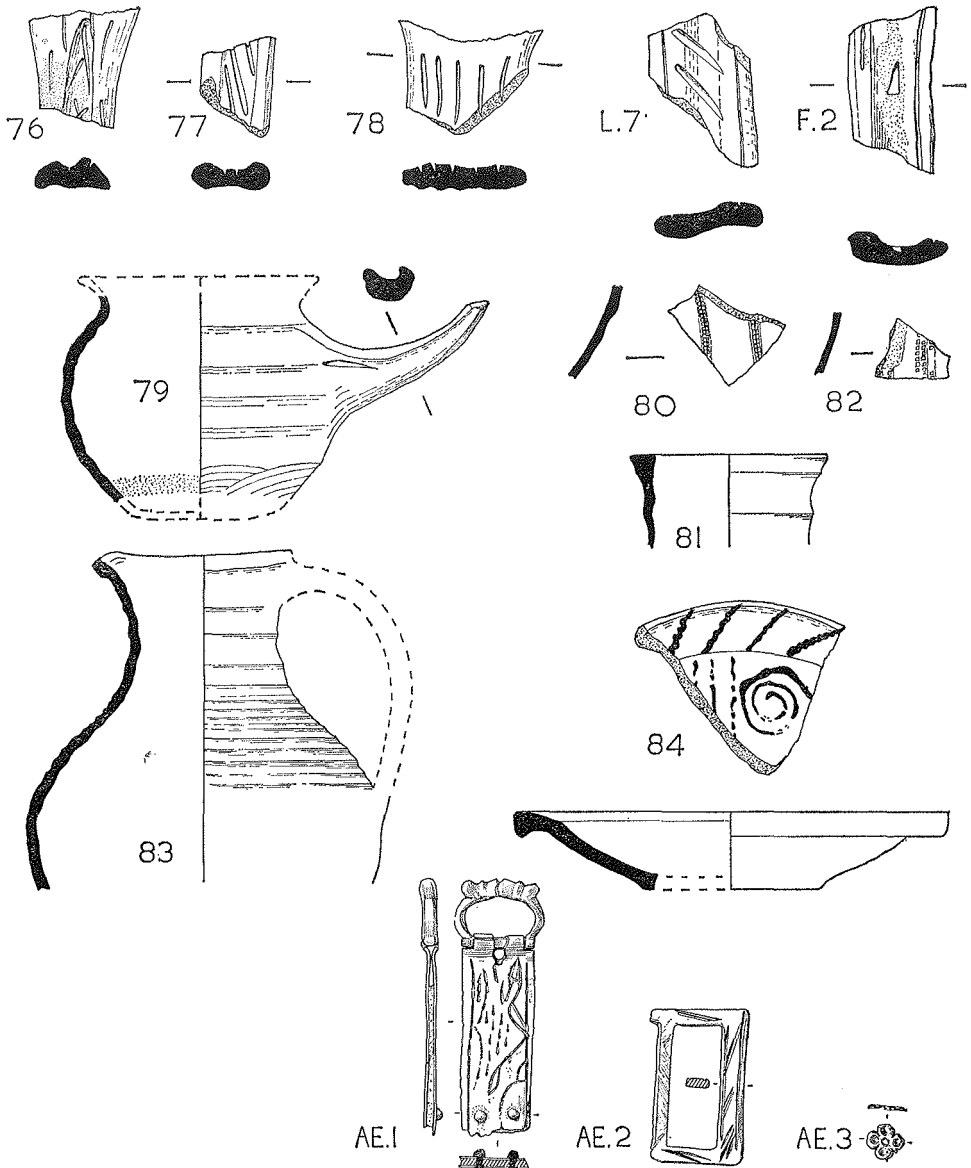


Fig. 9. Potterspurry Ware 76-79, L7, F.2, Miscellaneous Wares 80-84, Bronze objects Ae 1-3. Scale  $\frac{1}{4}$ .

more recently found examples come from Haversham, Milton Keynes and Walton,<sup>18</sup> all riverside parishes situated in the Ouse or Ousel Valleys. These discoveries suggest that Saxon settlement in this area will be found on the gravel terraces along the rivers.

- B. *Saxo-Norman Shelly Ware of St. Neots Type*. Fig. 4,2-8 and L.1. St. Neots ware was first published in detail in 1956<sup>19</sup>; its production centre has not yet been located and it is named after the type site on

which it was first found in quantity. The distribution area of this ware as defined by Hurst covers the East Midlands, East Anglia and London. To the west it is found as far away as Oxford; this has been considered as evidence of trading of pottery from the St. Neots area to the Oxford Region. It is more likely however that St. Neots ware is a regional type of late Saxon pottery made at several centres. The similarity of the ware to the medieval shelly wares made at Olney Hyde and Harrold suggest that it could have been made locally, however no evidence is as yet forthcoming from the local kiln sites.

#### *Cooking Pots*

2 and 3 are simple everted-rim cooking pots, D.12.4 and 20.2; both are buff-brown in colour with a grey core. 3 is rather large and may be later in date.

#### *Bowls*

4. Inturned bowl, D.25.6, from Building 3.

5. Similar bowl, D.25.2.

5. Slightly inturned rim, D.22.6 from Building 3.

7. Straight-sided bowl, D.27.3, from Building 2.

8. Similar example but with slightly incurved side, D.27.7 from Building 3.

L.1. Spouted bowl from Lavendon.<sup>20</sup> This is so far the only example of a spouted bowl to be found in North Bucks.

#### C. *Medieval Shelly Wares*

In this Upper Ouse area the shelly wares of the 12th and 13th centuries are of two main types:

Ca. This ware is similar to the Saxo-Norman shelly ware (B) and is not readily distinguished from it. There are however certain characteristic features that make its recognition fairly straightforward. These are:

1. The fabric is generally lighter in colour with surfaces ranging from bright pink to buff-brown in colour.

2. The fabric is harder and has coarse surfaces; this tendency increases during the 13th century.

3. The introduction of new forms during the 12th century; these are larger Cooking pots of medieval form and Deep Bowls.<sup>21</sup>

This ware has been collected from the sites of two unexcavated kilns at Olney Hyde and was certainly made there. It was also produced at Harrold, Beds.<sup>22</sup>

*Cooking Pots*. Fig. 4,9-19, L.2 and S.G.1.

These range from developed Saxo-Norman types like 9-12 to the medieval examples 13-19, L.2 and S.G.1.

9. Simple everted rim, D.15.6.

10. Similar but more angular and slightly thickened, with external bevel, D.14.8.

11. Everted rim with external bevel and internal hollow, D.15.4.

12. Everted rolled rim, D.22.8.

13. Similar but larger example, D.22.4.
14. Everted rolled rim, D.20.4.
15. Everted with external bead and pointed top, D.17.5. Like Harrold C8.
16. Larger example, D.20.1.
17. Heavy everted rim, D.23.
18. Unusual heavy rim, D.23.0.
19. Large squared rim, sloping down internally, D.27.5.
- L.2 Well developed rim form with internal hollow, D.
- S.G.1 Simple everted rim from Storage Jar with applied strip running down from just under rim, D.

*Bowls.* Fig. 5,20-30.

During the 12th and 13th centuries the most common form of bowl has an almost upright rim with an angle in the side and a sagging base. This bowl is seen as a development from the Saxo-Norman bowls with inturned rims; the inturned section gradually became more upright until it sloped outwards as in 21. The next stage in the development was a thickening of the rim as in 22 to form eventually a flattened bead as in 23 and 24 from which the more pronounced bead of 25 and the flange as in 26 and 27 are obvious developments.

A new type of bowl was introduced at some time early in the 12th century<sup>23</sup>; this is called the Deep Bowl because it has high almost vertical sides. A characteristic feature of this type is the internal hollow in the rim, possibly serving as a rebate for a lid, which would make this vessel into a form of stewpot not far removed in form from its modern counterpart. This bowl is represented at Stantonbury by Nos. 28-30.

20. Small bowl with almost upright rim, D.22.5.
21. Large example, D.40.0; there are faint throwing grooves on the body.
22. Large bowl with rim thickened to form a club shape, D.45.5.
23. More developed example with definite bead rim, D.42.2.
24. Smaller example of same type D.29.0. Knife trimming towards the base.
25. Bead rim bowl, D.29.0.
26. Bowl with partly developed flange rim, D.25.5.
27. Similar example, D.23.
28. Deep Bowl, D.
29. Similar example, D.22.8.
30. Deep Bowl with more developed rim, D.25.3.

All of the above forms are made at Olney Hyde and Harrold.

*Jugs.* Fig. 5,31, L.3 and R.1.

There were few sherds of shelly jugs found at Stantonbury. In general the Ca Jugs from North Bucks. sites are much like St. Neots Ware Jugs, with strap handles coming straight out from the top of the rim like L.3. The handles are either plain or decorated with functional stabbing as on L.3; the latter 13th-century examples have the sides of the handle folded in, creating a central groove, which is a characteristic feature of the Olney Hyde Jugs. Decoration on the body is not common and is limited to the occasional band of rouletted decoration in triangles as on 31, or squares as on R.1 and a Jug from Warrington.<sup>24</sup> A small group of Jugs have rod handles like L.3

and L.4 and these have decoration of impressed stamps, L.4, or stabbing and slashing, L.5. A few rod handles were found at Olney Hyde and they were certainly made at Harrold. L.4 is the only handle from this area with an incised stamp-decoration; the use of stamps of this type is seen as a resurgence of Saxon decorative motifs by potters in the 12th century and has been briefly discussed<sup>25</sup> by G. C. Dunning, who shows the distribution to be mainly in the south and south-east of the country.

#### *Misc. Vessels*

The kilns excavated at Olney Hyde were producing Cb, the coarse shelly ware which is the most common and uninspiring type of local pottery, and found on every medieval site in profusion. Yet, the excavation at Olney showed that vessels of every description were made in this ware. The exotic vessels in Cb will be dealt with later but certain uncommon forms in Ca are found in North Bucks as follows:

#### *Curfew Fig. 6*

M.1. sherds of a curfew, (Firecover) in very fine shelly ware, diameter approximately 56 cm, decorated with an applied thumbed strip around the shoulder and ventilated by small stab-holes in the top. The fabric is identical to that of the Firecover from Brafield on the Green<sup>26</sup> which was found associated with a group of 12th century pottery. The example published is from Stantonbury and was found some years ago by Mr Ray Bellchambers to whom I am grateful for permission to publish it.

#### *Spouted Pot Fig. 6*

O.1. Small pot D. found at Olney<sup>27</sup>; the spout has completely broken away but its junction with the body and the impression it left against the rim are clear evidence of its existence. Tubular spouts of this type are a hangover from the Saxo-Norman period and continue in use into the 12th and perhaps the 13th century.

#### *Side Handle Fig. 6*

L.6 Side handle from a bowl; these were made in Cb at Olney Hyde, but this is as yet the only example that I know of in fine shelly ware. It is decorated with light finger-impressions.

#### *Ch. Course Shelly Ware*

The fabric is tempered with limestone, shell and sand. The temper is sparser than in Ca and as a result the surfaces are less smooth, and fairly coarse to the touch. Generally the colour ranges from buff to orange-brown with a reduced grey core. It was probably produced at Olney Hyde where two kilns have now been excavated; both were dated approximately mid-13th to mid-14th century, but it may have been made at Harrold. This is seen as the last of a long series of shell-tempered wares which commence in the Iron Age and continue through the Roman period to the 14th century with a break during the Saxon period when they were replaced by gritty wares from approximately the 6th to 9th centuries<sup>28</sup>.

The kilns at Olney Hyde were mainly producing plain jugs with simple strap handles, one or two grooves down the back and the top junction not at the rim but halfway down the neck. The other principal products were bowls and cooking pots, some of which had bifid rims to take pottery lids which were

also a kiln product. But the most interesting fact about the Olney pottery industry was the production of exotic forms as mentioned above; these included Lamps, Curfews, Chimney Pots, Finials<sup>39</sup>, Mortars and Bowls with side and basket handles.

The only sherd of Cb worth publication is a Jug handle No. 32 which has the single groove typical of Olney Hyde products but not the thumb impressions at the base of the handle that are normally seen on Olney products.

#### D. *Great Brickhill Ware*

This ware was made at Great Brickhill, Bucks, which is situated on the Greensand ridge overlooking the valleys of the Ousel and Ouse, about eight miles south east of Stantonbury. Wasters of this ware were first recognized in 1957 when Bryan P. Blake and the writer collected sherds from the sides of a sunken roadway known as Jack Iron Caps Lane, sherds can be collected for a distance of at least a hundred yards along the roadway, coming from layers of wasters at the base of the topsoil in the exposed sides of the roadway. No kilns have yet been located but the production of this ware at Great Brickhill is certain. The ware is sand-tempered and normally completely reduced to a dark grey colour but occasionally there are reddish undertones on the surfaces.

The sherds found on the kiln site are all from Cooking Pots and Jugs of 14th-century date, yet Bedford<sup>30</sup>, Stantonbury and other local sites all produce material which dates from the 12th century and is of an almost identical ware. The question whether this early material was made at Great Brickhill has been raised before;<sup>31</sup> until the kiln site has been excavated and more material brought to light it must remain unanswered. In my opinion Great Brickhill is the most likely source for this early medieval sandy ware.

#### *Cooking Pots. Fig. 6*

34. Simple everted rim roughly smoothed internally D.14.8.
35. Less everted rim with slight internal hollow D.15.4.
36. Similar rim, D.15.2. The hardness of the sherd and the smooth finish suggest a later date than 34 and 35.
37. Angular everted rim with external bevel, D.19.8.
38. Thick rim from large Cooking Pot or Storage Jar, D.25.2. roughly finished externally and with three stab marks under rim.
39. Angular everted rim, D.23.5.
40. Almost upright squared rim, D.20.8. possibly 14th century.
41. Flanged rim, D.15.2.
42. Everted flanged rim with concave top, D.20.5. 13th to 14th century.
43. Undercut squared rim, D.18.0. This is a common form at Brill and Pottersbury in the 13th and 14th centuries.<sup>32</sup>
44. Everted thickened rim with external bevel and internal bead, D.30.2.

#### *Jugs. Fig. 6*

Nos 45-47 are sherds from plain strap handles of 14th-century date, this is the only type of Jug handle found at the Kiln site.

#### *Bowls Fig. 7*

- 48 and 49 are simple bead rim bowls D.37.8 and 40.5.
50. Flanged bowl, D.30.0.
51. Flanged bowl, D.35.6.

### E. *Potterspurry Ware*

A fine sand-tempered ware made at Potterspurry, Northants, only five miles to the west of Stantonbury. Two medieval kilns have been excavated at Potterspurry one in 1950 by E. M. Jope and another in 1970 by the writer. The kilns are both unpublished in detail, but a survey of Potterspurry ware was published by the writer in 1970<sup>33</sup>. The 1970 kiln was dated by Archaeomagnetic samples to the late 14th century and the kiln excavated in 1950 was also considered to be of late medieval date. There is documentary evidence of pottery manufacture in the village from the late 13th century but pottery found in the area suggests that the industry commenced in the early 13th century.

The material recovered from the stokehole of the 1970 kiln showed that a wide range of fabric was being produced, colours ranged from offwhite to pink-buff and grey-buff, the colours no doubt being dependent on the iron content of the clay and the firing conditions. Several sherds from Stantonbury which had previously been classified as Miscellaneous wares were positively identified as Potterspurry products after the material from the 1970 kiln had been examined.

#### *Cooking Pots. Fig. 8*

52. Thickened rim with concave top, D.18.

The majority of the Cooking pots fall into three main types:

a. Almost square undercut flanged rims; the form is common at Brill<sup>34</sup> and Potterspurry. Of the four examples published 53 is much finer and better made and 54 is not undercut.

53. D.12.8.

54. D.18.1.

55. D.22.8.

56. D.23.2.

b. Thickened with external bevel and internal hollow, a general date of 14th century is likely for this rim type.

57. D.17.8. A few splashes of pale green glaze externally.

58. D.17.7. Grass indentations on top edge of rim suggesting stacking on grass whilst drying out.

59. D.24.7.

60. D.25.8.

c. Thickened rim with flat top; both the examples published are glazed and a date in the 14th to 15th century is likely.

61. D.23. Good quality olive-green glaze externally and just over the top edge of the rim, suggesting that the pot was inverted and dipped into the glaze rim first.

F.1. Similar example with dark green glaze from Furtho, Northants D.

#### *Bowls Fig. 7*

The bowl rims are of seven main types:

a. Flattened Bead rims, a copy of the shelly rim form seen in 23 and 24, the example published 62 has a diameter of 35cm, there were three similar examples.

b. Simple thickened rims with pointed tops and slight internal hollow.

63. D.37.4.

64. D.42.5.
  - c. Thickened rims with pronounced external bevel, internal hollow and pointed top.
65. D.33.0. Decoration of incised wavy line around internal concavity, faint throwing grooves on body.
66. Similar example D.
  - d. Squared rims.
67. Heavy example with top edge sloping down internally.
  - e. Flanged rims.
68. Small bowl, D.22.8 the rim is concave on top and has a rounded underside.
69. Similar but larger example, D.33.0.
70. A more complete profile of a bowl with a thin flanged rim which is flat topped and square cut, D.27.9; there is a patchy green glaze internally and the base has been knife-trimmed externally.
  - f. Undercut Flanged Rims.
71. The only example of this type, D.27.9; similar internal glaze and external trimming as 70.
  - g. Unusual rims.
72. In section this rim is trefoil shaped, D.45.6.

*Jugs.* Figs. 8 and 9

The characteristic features of the Potterspurly Jug are rilling on the body, glaze on the upper part of the body, heavy knife-trimming towards the base and strap handles with stabbing and/or slashing.

73. Almost complete profile of a Jug found in the 1955 excavation. The form is almost globular with fine rilling on the shoulder and thumbpresses around the base. Pale olive-green glaze on the shoulder extends to just below the widest part of the body. The handle and rim are missing.
74. Upper part of small jug with strap handle. The rim is square and has a slight internal hollow. The glaze is as on 73. The handle is of narrow strap type and has a single groove down the back and random stabbing. From the floor of Building 2.
75. Wall sherd from jug body, decorated with incised wavy lines. There are splashes of yellow-green glaze on the upper part and knife-trimming below.
- 76, 77 and 78 fragments of strap handles with slashed decoration, the decoration on Potterspurly Jug handles has been briefly classified<sup>35</sup> and these with slashing only are of type "C".
- L7. This example from Lavendon has a groove running down either side of the handle enclosing the central slash marks. This type of decoration has been considered to be more typical of the Brill product than those from Potterspurly, but an example from Wythemail<sup>36</sup> and several examples from the kiln excavated at Potterspurly in 1970 are conclusive evidence of the manufacture of jugs with this type of handle at Potterspurly.
- F2. This example from Furtho<sup>37</sup>, Northants has a continuous groove down one side and an intermittent one the other side; a wedge-shaped mark may be one of several running down the handle.

*Pipkin Fig. 9*

79. Wall sherds and handle of a pipkin; the body is decorated with faint throwing grooves and is knife-trimmed towards the base. There is a thin orange glaze internally around the base only. The handle is upturned and has a wide deep groove along its top edge and four slash marks one on each side at the junction with the body. The tip of the handle has been squared off with a knife.

F. *Brill Ware Fig. 9.80*

80. Wall sherd from the upper part of a jug body, pale pink-buff fabric with mottled green glaze. The body is decorated with applied strips with rouletted decoration on them. One strip is of the same clay as the body and the other of red-brown clay; these often alternated around the jug giving a pleasant effect. There were also three wall sherds of this ware not illustrated.

G. *Coventry Ware Fig. 9,81-82*

81. Rim sherd of jug, in typical Coventry fabric, olive-green glaze externally and over top edge of rim; there are brown streaks running down the glaze.

82. Wall sherd with applied strips of the same clay as the body, with rouletted pattern on the strips.

H. *Miscellaneous Glazed Ware Fig. 9*

83. Upper part of jug body in a smooth pink-red sand-tempered ware, with splashes of clear glaze on the shoulder which is decorated with incised grooves. The rim is a simple thickened form with a pulled out lip. The handle is missing, but the scar where it was broken off at the base shows that it was of strap type with three thumb presses at its junction with the body.

I. *Post Medieval Wares Fig. 9*

Post medieval wares were found only on the platform nearest to the church, and from the 1955 excavation. There is little of particular note, the bulk of the material being small wall sherds.

The following wares were found:

Ia. Imported stonewares of Raaren, Seigburg and Westerwald types.

Ib. Red Earthenware with brown internal glaze most probably made at Potterspurty.

Ic. Staffordshire type slipwares, also made at Potterspurty.

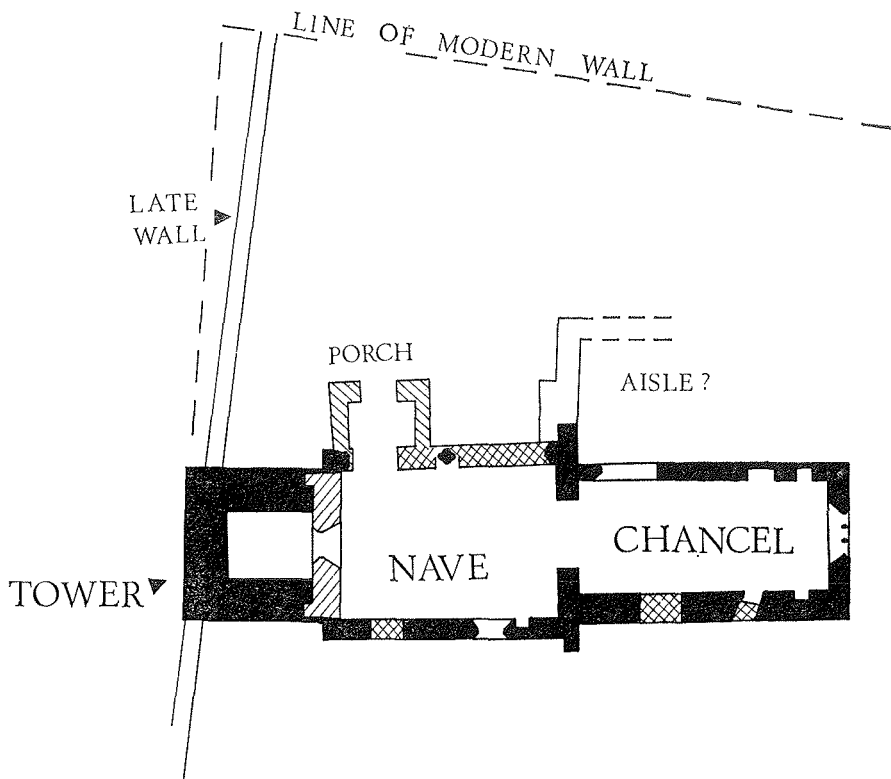
Id. Staffordshire ware with mottled brown glaze.

The only example published is 84 which is a small bowl in ware Ic, the ware of this example is a red earthenware with an internal white slip, on which is a brown trailed slip decoration under a clear lead glaze. Here and there the white slip runs over the edge of the rim on to the body.

## ROOF TILES

Fragments of Ridge tiles of Potterspurty manufacture were found during the watching brief and an almost complete example came from the excavation west of the church. The fabric of these tiles is a fine sand-tempered buff to red-brown colour with a mottled green glaze. They have been found on the pottery kiln sites at Potterspurty and have a distribution in North Bucks, and





■ 12TH 14TH CENTURY

▨ 15TH CENTURY

▩ 16TH CENTURY

▧ BLOCKING



METRES

Fig. 10. St. Peter's Church showing walls found in 1966 excavation.

South Northants, similar to that of the Potterspury pottery. At Whaddon, Bucks, during a rescue excavation on the site of a Manor House similar tiles and parts of elaborate finials bearing anthropomorphic and zoomorphic decoration were found<sup>38</sup>.

Fragments were also found of "slates" made from thin sheets of the local limestone. These are common on local medieval sites and in my opinion are mainly of local manufacture rather than from Colley Weston, Northants, and Stonesfield, Oxon.

### IRONWORK

No ironwork was collected during the watching brief, a quantity of nails and other fragments was produced by the 1955 excavation but as little of this

material came from stratified levels it is not included.

#### COPPER ALLOY (Fig., 9 AE1-AE3)

Three objects were found during the watching brief all were unstratified.

AE1. Strap end length 6.5cm consisting of a strip folded through a buckle and rivetted on to the leather strap, fragments of which still survive. The decoration was effected with a sharp ended punch.

AE2. Part of double buckle with incised decoration, originally 4cm by 4.4cm.

AE3. Small repousse ornament 6mm square.

### ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I am grateful to the various members of the Wolverton and District Archaeological Society that helped during and after the watching brief, particularly Mrs V. Dawes and Michael Harris. To Thomas Roberts of Westminster Limited for permission to carry out the watching brief, to Mr G. K. Tull for information about the 1955 excavation, to Mr Ray Bellchambers for information about the 1939 excavation and the loan of several sherds of pottery, and to the Buckinghamshire County Museum for permission to examine and publish material from the 1955 excavation.

All of the finds have now been deposited in the County Museum at Aylesbury. I am also grateful to Dr J. K. S. St Joseph for permission to publish the photograph, Plate 1 and to Professor M. Beresford for permission to publish Plate 2.

### NOTES

<sup>1</sup> P.R.O. C134/95/4.

<sup>2</sup> Early Chancery Proceedings 452/37.

<sup>3</sup> "A handlist of Buckinghamshire Enclosure Acts and Awards", W. E. Tate, Bucks County Council 1946, 18.

<sup>4</sup> "The History and Antiquities of the County of Buckingham", G. Lipscomb, M.D., 1847 Vol 4, 347.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid. p. 345.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid. p. 349.

<sup>7</sup> "The Nineteen Hundreds in Stony Stratford and Wolverton", S. F. Markham, M.A., B. Litt., 1951 facing p. 65.

<sup>8</sup> British Museum, Add Mss 5839 fo. 179.

<sup>9</sup> "The Place names of Buckinghamshire", English Place-Name Society, Vol II, Cambridge (1925), 25.

<sup>10</sup> M. U. Jones "Excavations at Stanton Low, in the Upper Ouse Valley, During March 1957, "Records of Buckinghamshire" XVI, (1957-8) 198-215.

<sup>11</sup> Information from Mr. R. Bellchambers.

<sup>12</sup> Royal Commission on Historical Monuments, Buckinghamshire, Vol II, 270.

<sup>13</sup> Publication in preparation by the writer.

<sup>14</sup> D. N. Hall "A Thirteenth-Century Pottery Kiln Site at Harrold Beds.", *Milton Keynes Journal of Archaeology and History I*, 1971.

<sup>15</sup> See note 13 above.

<sup>16</sup> Site located by D. C. Mynard and B. P. Blake.

<sup>17</sup> D. C. Mynard "Medieval Pottery of Potterspur Type", *Bulletin of the Northamptonshire Federation of Archaeological Societies*, IV, (1970) 49-55.

<sup>18</sup> By Mr. Richard Griffiths.

<sup>19</sup> J. G. Hurst, "Saxo-Norman Pottery in East Anglia", *Proc. Camb. Antiq. Soc.* (1955) 43-70.

<sup>20</sup> Found near Lavendon Castle by R. Britnell.

<sup>21</sup> D. C. Mynard, in P. J. Woods "Excavation in Orchard Close, Brixworth 1969-70", *Northampton Museum Journal* forthcoming, for discussion of the type.

<sup>22</sup> Op. Cit. in note 14.

<sup>23</sup> Op. Cit. in note 21.

<sup>24</sup> D. C. Mynard.

<sup>25</sup> G. C. Dunning, in "Anglo-Saxon Pottery: A Symposium", *Med. Archaeol. III* (1959) 35,

<sup>26</sup> D. Kennet, "The firecover from Brafield on the Green", *Northampton Museum Journal*, 6 (1969) 51-53.

<sup>27</sup> A surface find at the Roman site in Ashfurlong Field by the writer.

<sup>28</sup> This is true of the Upper Ouse Region.

<sup>29</sup> The Finial recently published from Bedford is almost certainly of Olney Hyde manufacture, being identical in size and fabric to that from the recently excavated kiln at Olney Hyde. The ref. for this Bedford example is G. C. Dunning, in D. Baker "Excavations at Bedford, 1967", *Beds. Arch. Journ. V.* (1970) Fig. 10.

<sup>30</sup> D. Baker "Excavations in Bedford 1967", *Bedfordshire Archaeological Journal V.* (1970) Fig. 7, 43-50 and pages 80-81.

<sup>31</sup> L. Millard, "Some Medieval Pottery from North Bucks", *Records of Buckinghamshire XVIII*, (1967) 118.

<sup>32</sup> E. M. Jope "Medieval Pottery Kilns at Brill, Buckinghamshire", *Records of Buckinghamshire XVI* (1953-4) 39-42.

<sup>33</sup> Op. Cit. in note 17.

<sup>34</sup> Op. Cit. in note 32.

<sup>35</sup> Op. Cit. in note 17.

<sup>36</sup> D. C. Mynard in D. G. Hurst and J. G. Hurst "Excavations at the Medieval Village of Wythemail, Northamptonshire", *Med. Archaeol. XIII* (1969), Fig. 59, 118.

<sup>37</sup> Near Stony Stratford; a D.M.V.

<sup>38</sup> Excavation by Mr Richard Griffiths (publication in preparation in association with the writer and S. A. Moorhouse).

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