

The Deserted Medieval Village of Seacourt, Berkshire

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with contributions by Fabian Radcliffe, O.P.¹

INTRODUCTION AND SUMMARY

THE remains of the medieval village of Seacourt lie on the lower slopes of Wytham Hill and look eastward across the Thames to Oxford, one and a half miles away. The site early attracted the interest of Oxford historians² and was one of the first deserted medieval villages to be investigated by excavation. The first trial trenches were dug in 1937 by the Oxford University Archaeological Society under the direction of Capt. C. Musgrave,³ and were followed by excavation on a rather larger scale in 1938 by members of the Oxford University Summer Camp for Unemployed at Eynsham, under the direction of Mr. S. A. Opie.⁴ When it was soon learned that the proposed Oxford Western By-pass would destroy a great part of the site, an excavation fund was opened and further exploratory work took place on a much larger scale in June and July 1939 under the direction of Mr. R. L. S. Bruce-Mitford.⁵ These excavations served to show the rich archaeological potential of the site, but with the coming of war the plan for the new by-pass was shelved and with it any idea of further work, at any rate for the meantime, at Seacourt.

¹ Martin Biddle directed the 1958 excavations, retained the general direction (at a distance) of the 1959 work and has written this report; Fabian Radcliffe was responsible for the excavation of Areas 6 and 11 and for virtually all the work on the site in 1959 and has contributed the Note on semi-circular staircases. Both wish to thank Mr. P. V. Addyman for his valued work throughout the 1958 excavations and at the critical moments of rescue in 1959.

² In 1662-3: Anthony Wood, *Survey of the Antiquities of the City of Oxford*, I (Oxf. Hist. Soc., xv (1889)), 325-8; in 1722: Thomas Hearne, *Remarks and Collections*, vii (Oxf. Hist. Soc., xlviii (1906)), 380; and in 1728: Thomas Hearne, *Reliquiae Hearnianae* (ed. Philip Bliss, 1869), iii, 7.

³ *Oxonienisia*, II (1937), 203. The writer is most grateful to Capt. Musgrave for visiting the site in 1959 and discussing his work of 1937.

⁴ *Oxonienisia*, III (1938), 168, 174f.

⁵ *Oxonienisia*, v (1940), 31-41. Mr. Bruce-Mitford very generously placed all the records and finds of his excavation at the disposal of the writer. Those of his sites which were within the area of the new by-pass are here described in as much detail as is necessary, and this report thus forms the final record of those parts of his excavation. The other sites have only been mentioned in passing, since they were purely exploratory, and their full publication must await further work in their immediate vicinity. All the 1939 finds that merit description are published here. The records and finds of the 1937, 1938 and 1939 work have been placed in the Ashmolean Museum (cf. below note 8), apart from a type-series now in the British Museum.

MEDIEVAL VILLAGE OF SEACOURT

In 1954 the proposal for the Western By-pass was resuscitated and with it the necessity for a large scale investigation of the village. In 1958 the Ministry of Works arranged for an eight-week excavation, later extended, which was directed by the present writer. As it happened the construction of the by-pass was delayed until the spring of 1959 and in the interim the Rev. Fabian Radcliffe was able to complete the investigation of certain problems outstanding from the 1958 excavation.⁶ Finally in March 1959 and the following months Fabian Radcliffe and the writer, assisted by Mr. P. V. Addyman, were able to record and partially excavate many structures revealed in the course of earth-moving in preparation for the new road,⁷ which now cuts across the site from north to south (FIG. 3).

This report⁸ deals with all the work carried out in 1958 and 1959 and with such of the pre-war work as concerns the area destroyed by the construction of the Western By-pass. This area included much of the centre of the village and the attempt has therefore been made to make this report as comprehensive a study of Seacourt as is possible in the present state of our knowledge. The pre-war trial excavation of other parts of the site⁹ has shown, however, that much could still be done to give us a more complete and balanced picture of medieval Seacourt and some suggestions for this work are made elsewhere in this paper (p. 123).

The excavations showed that, apart from a shallow Roman ditch, none of the structures in the area covered by the new by-pass was earlier than the mid-late 12th century and that, since the village was in existence from at least the 10th century, this area must therefore represent an expansion from an original nucleus elsewhere. The buildings of the first period in this area were evidently of wood and their plans were recovered, together with many finds of pottery, small objects, domestic animal bones and grain. On this evidence some conclusions about the economy of the village have been founded. At some time during the 13th century stone buildings, and a well-metalled road with central drain, began to replace the wooden structures, a process which continued into the early 14th century. The plans of several of these stone buildings were obtained, as well as many associated finds. Nothing was recovered of a date much later than the middle of the 14th century and, taken in conjunction with the documentary evidence, this suggests that the site was deserted by some time before 1400.

The finds of pottery and small objects were extremely numerous and these

⁶ *Med. Arch.*, III (1959), 320-1.

⁷ *Med. Arch.*, IV (1960), 159-60.

⁸ The records of the 1958 and 1959 excavations, together with the finds, have been deposited in the Ashmolean Museum (see note 5 above).

⁹ See notes 3-5 above.

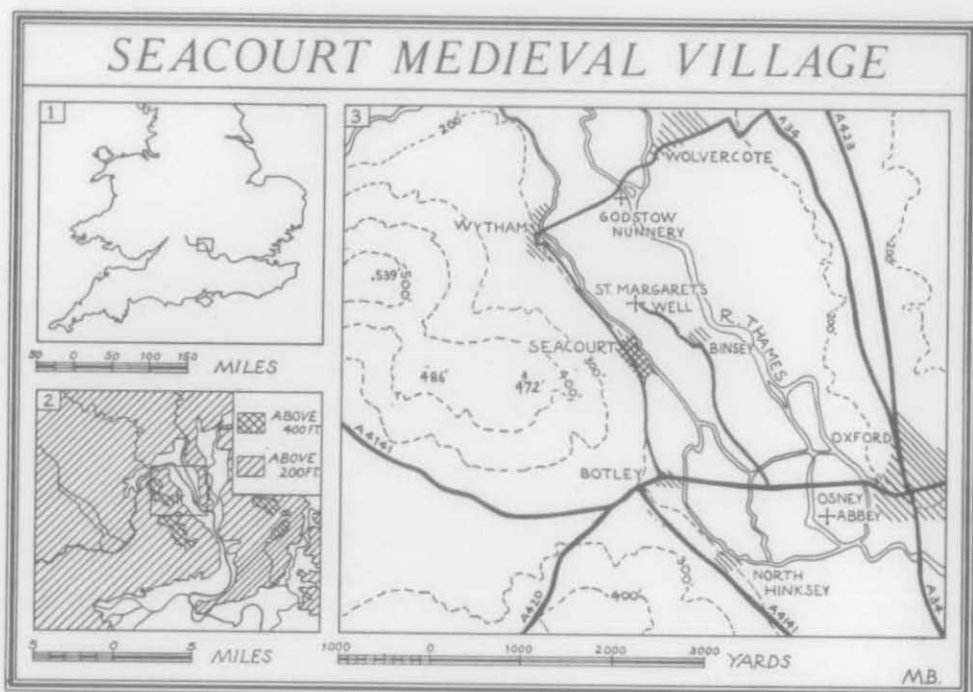


FIG. 1

The location of Seacourt (Based on the Ordnance Survey by permission of the Director General).

have been described in some detail, often with the addition of the results of scientific investigations, all of which were carried out or arranged by Mr. L. Biek and the Ancient Monuments Laboratory of the Ministry of Works, whose (A.M.) number is given at the end of each description to facilitate future reference. Among the finds the grain (pp. 195-6), the pattern-welded knife (PL. XI A; FIG. 29, 9; p. 175), the decorated bone knife handle (PL. XI B, C; FIG. 29, 4A, B; p. 172) and the east Mediterranean blue glass sherd (PL. X, D; p. 185) call for special comment.

THE VILLAGE

THE SETTING

The site of the village (FIG. 1)¹⁰ lies astride the 200 ft. contour on the eastern slopes of Seacourt Hill which, with Wytham Hill, forms an outlier

¹⁰ Nat. Grid Ref. SP (42) 485075.

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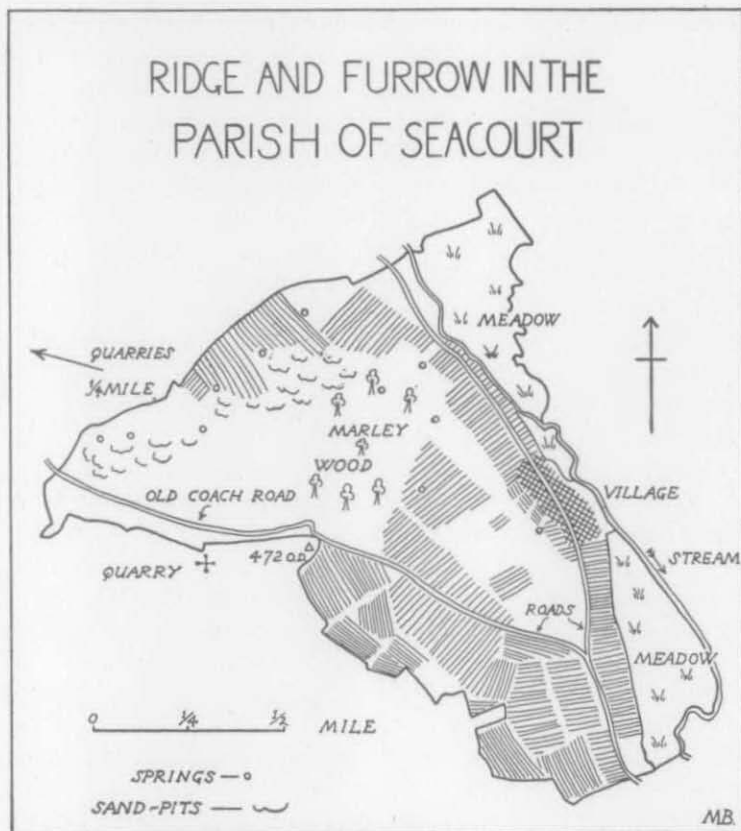


FIG. 2

The setting of Seacourt, showing ridge and furrow, pre-19th century woodland, meadow land, springs and quarries (The parish boundary is taken from the 1887 edition of the six inch Ordnance Survey map by permission of the Director General).

of the Oxford Heights, and projects northwards into the Oxford Clay Vale.¹¹ Wytham and Seacourt Hills are themselves two separate masses of Coral Rag resting upon a single outcrop of Lower Calcareous Grit sands, the hills being united by a narrow neck of the sand, which in its turn rests upon the Oxford Clay; there is here a strong line of seepage at the base of the Calcareous Grit.¹² The site itself is low enough down the eastern side of Seacourt Hill to be almost entirely on Oxford Clay.¹³ This was clearly the case to the south-west of the old Botley-Wytham road (i.e. the higher part of the village)

¹¹ *The Oxford Region* (ed. A. F. Martin and R. W. Steel, 1954), 3-6, FIG. 2.

¹² W. J. Arkell, *The Geology of Oxford* (1947), 145-8, FIG. 25.

¹³ Geological 6" map at the Geological Survey and Museum.

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and was confirmed at the Geological Survey on a hand sample of material taken from the site by Mr. L. Biek (p. 193). To the north-east of the old road, however, the subsoil was mixed clay and gravel and clearly not Oxford Clay. A few hundred yards to the north-west, the geological map shows an area of Second Terrace Gravel, made up of local oolitic materials; possibly that part of the site north-east of the old road lay largely on a deposit of a similar nature, passing from Oxford Clay through to the narrow strip of Alluvium shown by the river. The general area seems to have been a meeting place for drifts from the north-west, north and north-east; its surface geology is thus complex and must be considered in connection with suggested 'imports' of stone and coal (pp. 186-7).¹⁴ The village immediately overlooks the westernmost branch of the Thames, here called Seacourt Stream, to the east of which the flood-plain of the Thames spreads out to the Thames itself, beyond which rises the gravel terrace on which Oxford is built.

This geological pattern influenced the village in several ways. First, the line of seepage at the base of the Calcareous Grit produced a number of springs which surround the hill at the line of junction between the Grit and the Oxford Clay (FIG. 2), thus providing a plentiful supply of fresh water. At times of heavy rainfall these springs, running out over the Clay, were probably also a constant source of trouble (p. 76). Secondly, the excavation showed that only in the later 12th century did occupation spread on to the Oxford Clay and northwards on the mixed clay and gravel of possible Second Terrace origin described above. The original nucleus of the village, so far undefined, must have lain to the south and was probably situated on a continuation of this mixed clay and gravel, which would have provided some drainage while still keeping the village above flood-level. Thirdly, the neighbouring Corallian formations on Wytham and Seacourt Hills provided a ready source of building materials: quarries (FIG. 2) in the Coral Rag can be seen on both hills,¹⁵ while there are sand-pits in the Calcareous Grit on the east side of Wytham Hill,¹⁶ and gravel-pits in the drift capping Seacourt Hill.¹⁷ There appears, however, to be no ironstone available in the vicinity to account for the evidence of considerable smelting activity¹⁸ (p. 116) and for the source of this one must look further afield, perhaps to Shotover or Banbury.¹⁹ Finally, lying at a point of contact between two clearly differentiated zones of the Oxford

¹⁴ The above account of the surface geology of the site itself is heavily indebted to a report provided by Mr. L. Biek, whose other contributions will be marked with his initials.

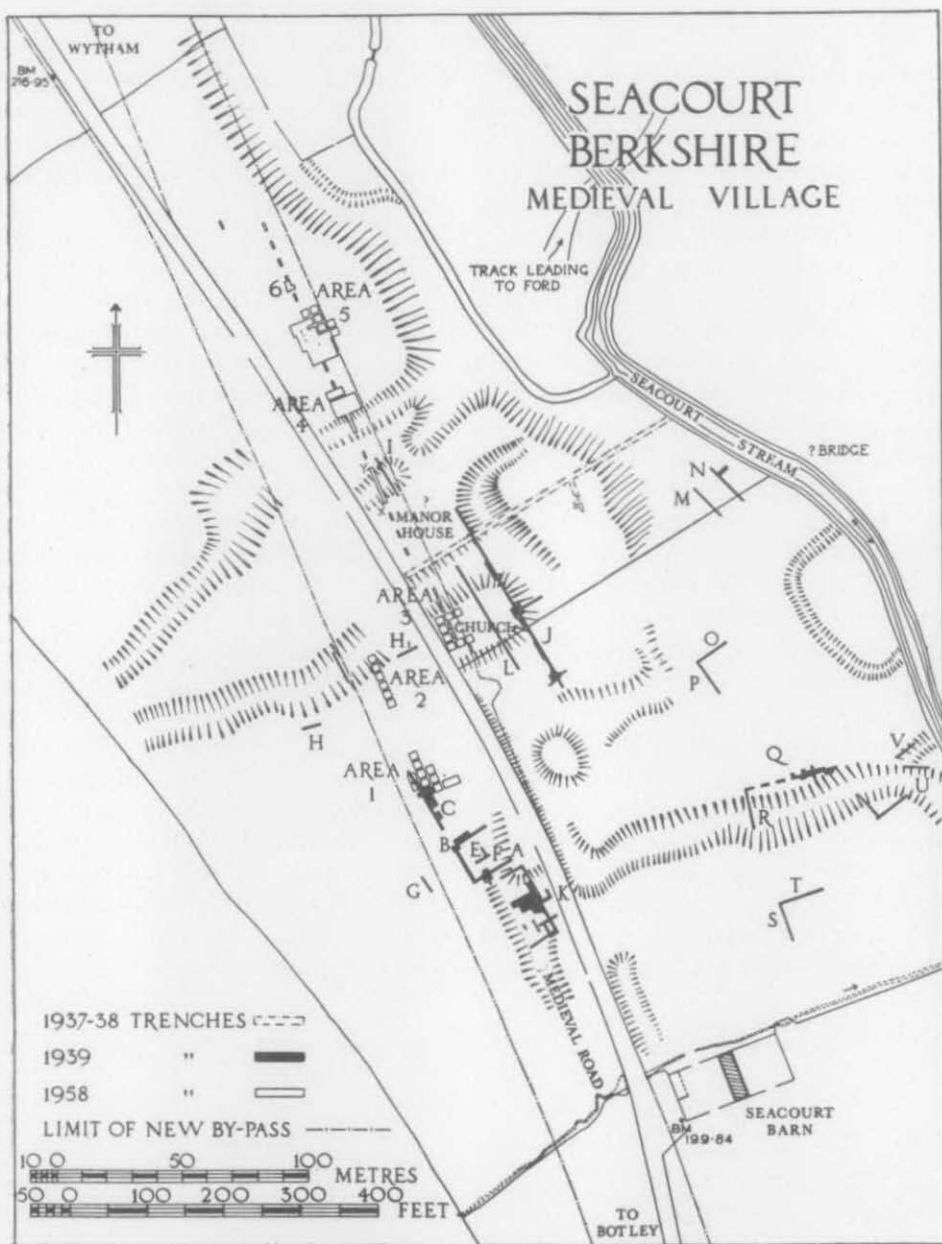
¹⁵ T. I. Pocock, *The Geology of the Country around Oxford* (Memoirs of the Geological Survey, 1st ed., 1908), 32.

¹⁶ Pocock, *op. cit.*, 32 and air-photograph CPE/UK. 2268 (Pt. III), 5314-5316.

¹⁷ Pocock, *op. cit.*, 97.

¹⁸ Information L. B.; but see p. 192 for the possibility of ironstone in the river gravels.

¹⁹ Arkell, *op. cit.*, 18, 129-30.



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Region, the Oxford Heights and the Clay Vale,²⁰ one would expect that the village would reflect this duality: it appears indeed that this is so and that the 12th and early 13th century village looked to the clay-lands, while the later 13th and 14th century village showed features of the stony highlands to the south and west (p. 118).

Previous settlement in this bend of the Thames between Abingdon and Eynsham seems to have been scanty,²¹ and since the desertion of Seacourt in the later 14th or early 15th century calls for explanation, one is forced to enquire whether there is something of a marginal character in this area, at any rate in the immediate locality of Seacourt. The soil on the site itself and elsewhere on the clay would have been heavy to work and subject to waterlogging, yet also rich and useful,²² while that on the Wytham and Seacourt Hills is stonebrash and sand and not so useful.²³ In modern times, at least, the area has had a light rainfall compared with the rest of the region,²⁴ and the vegetation is extremely mixed, showing both open limestone grassland and large areas of woodland,²⁵ which the rare species of fauna found there show to be 'undoubtedly ancient'.²⁶ It was perhaps the multiple character of this area which rendered it less suitable for human settlement than other places close at hand: the limited amount of rich ploughland around Seacourt Hill was subjected to excessive waterlogging locally from the spring-line at the base of the Corallian (a factor which seems to have influenced the buildings and plan of the village, p. 119), while the hills themselves are still in part covered with thick woodland, which the stony limestone soil would not have made it worthwhile to clear for the plough. The ridge and furrow shown in FIG. 2 probably indicates the greatest extent of arable in the parish, and may well equate in time with the expansion of the village in the late 12th and 13th centuries. From at least the early part of the 18th century²⁷ there has been very little land under the plough in Wytham and Seacourt²⁸ until the 1940's when the site of the village itself was ploughed for the first time.²⁹

²⁰ *Oxford Region*, 3-6, 31-2.

²¹ *Oxford Region*, 76-102; FIGS. 23-7, 33. These figs. should be compared with FIG. 35 which shows Domesday population in this area as in general similar to the rest of the region.

²² Information L. B.

²³ *Oxford Region*, 130; FIG. 45.

²⁴ *Oxford Region*, 40-1; FIG. 13.

²⁵ *Oxford Region*, 57, 65.

²⁶ *Oxford Region*, 69.

²⁷ J. Rocque, *Map of Berkshire* (1761), map xvi, shows Seacourt parish unploughed except for the top of the hill and the fields N. of Botley; but a fine map of the whole parish of Seacourt, now Bod. MS. Top Berks., b. 13, ff. 17-29 of c. 1726 shows the whole parish as unploughed; ff. 1-16, a map of Wytham parish of the same date, shows only a small amount of land under the plough.

²⁸ *V.C.H. Berks.*, iv, 428.

²⁹ According to the ploughman. The field in which Areas 3-6, etc., were excavated appeared never to have been ploughed.

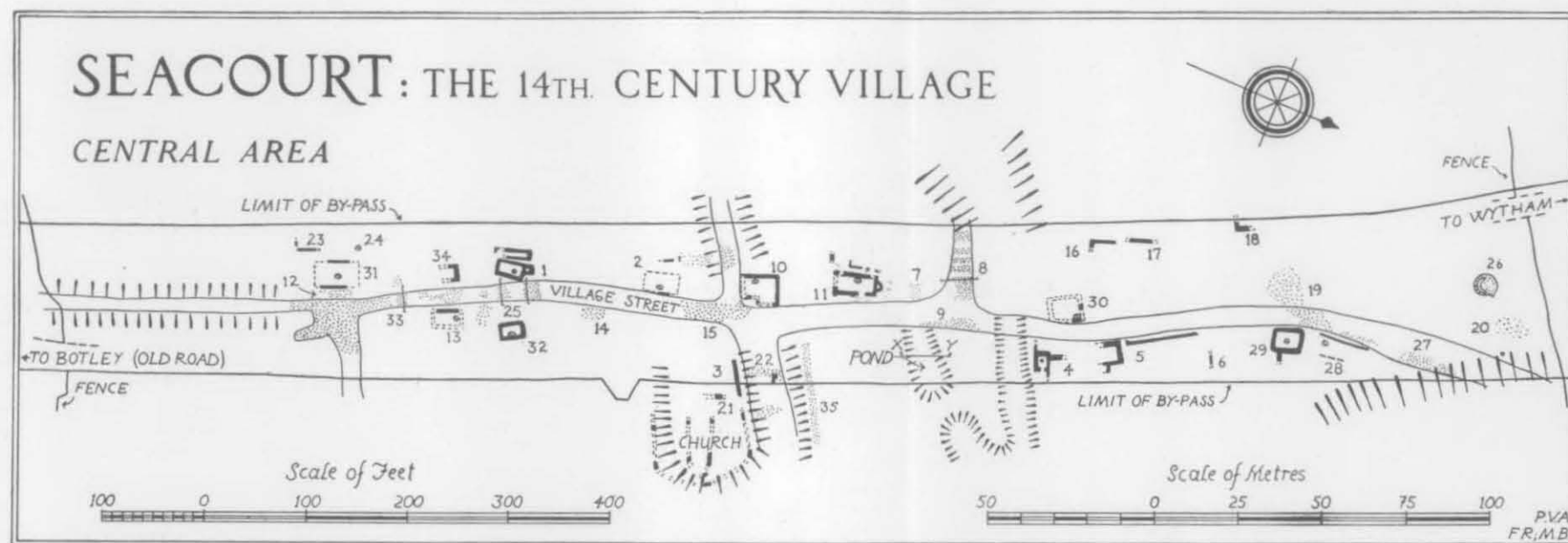


FIG. 4

Seacourt in the 14th century. The plan shows all the stone buildings revealed by excavation and during road construction within the limits of the Oxford Western By-pass. Stipple shows areas of stone rubble.

MEDIEVAL VILLAGE OF SEACOURT

The extent of the parish of Seacourt, which lies in Horner Hundred, and has an area of 813.6 acres, is shown in FIG. 2.³⁰ As much ridge and furrow as can be observed on the ground³¹ or from the air is marked, but some may be covered by modern plantations.³² These plantations are not shown, but Marley Wood, which is seen on Rocque's map of 1761 and is certainly of ancient origin, is indicated. The air-photographs³³ show clearly the meadows by Seacourt Stream and the head-lands of the ridge and furrow abutting against them.³⁴ The village itself lies roughly in centre of the eastern side of the parish, where its earthworks contrast sharply (PL. II A; FIG. 2) with the regular pattern of ridge and furrow which surrounds them on three sides, in places overlapping (p. 119).³⁵ The air-photograph 'is kind to the detail of roads, but uninformative about house plans or the church foundations',³⁶ yet it is sufficient to show, in conjunction with the ground survey (FIG. 3; cf. FIG. 4) that the plan of the village was one of street-line groupings of houses,³⁷ mainly in a north-south strip, but with several streets leading both west and, to a greater extent, east.³⁸ Immediately north-east of the village are a series of mill-leats,³⁹ which deserve further investigation; while due east of the village on the west bank of the stream is a small moated site of unknown purpose, which is too low-lying and too small to be a manor house enclosure. The stream itself is crossed by a ford⁴⁰ north-east of the village, beyond the mill-leats (PL. II A; FIG. 3); this is probably the site of the bridge carrying the old road from Oxford via Binsey, but the bridge may have been further south, due east of the village (FIG. 3). The remains of this bridge were noted in the 1660's by Wood and could be seen until late in the 19th century,⁴¹ but their exact position was never recorded.

The relationship of Seacourt to the medieval settlements that surrounded it was undoubtedly controlled by the position of the village astride the original

³⁰ The parish boundary and acreage are taken from O.S. 6" Berks., II S. W. of 1887.

³¹ The writer is indebted to Mr. David Sturdy for this information.

³² 'The Plantation' and 'Marleywood Plantation', both of which occur on the 1887 O.S. 6" map, are not marked on the O.S. 2" (Surveyed 1817), Sheet No. 162 (Bromide copies in B.M.) and must therefore have been planted between 1817 and 1887.

³³ By G. W. G. Allen, Ashmolean Museum, Nos. 1049-55.

³⁴ A meadow at Seacourt is mentioned c. 1165, *English Register of Godstow* (E.E.T.S., CXXIX (1905)), 43.

³⁵ Air-photographs by G. W. G. Allen, Ashmolean Museum, Nos. 1049-59; no. 1052 is here published as PL. II A and 1059 as PL. II B.

³⁶ M. W. Beresford, *The Lost Villages of England* (1954), 69.

³⁷ *Oxford Region*, 162. The topography exerted considerable control at Seacourt, confining the village between the river to the E. and the Oxford Clay—on to which it eventually spread—to the W., thus producing a mainly N.-S. plan.

³⁸ The plan of the village will be discussed in greater detail below, pp. 119-20.

³⁹ See below, pp. 81, 124.

⁴⁰ Shown on G. W. G. Allen's air-photographs, Ashmolean Museum, Nos. 1052, 1053, 1058.

⁴¹ Wood, *op. cit.*, I, 324, n. 9(b); *Register of Godstow*, 43 (editor's note). Wood, *op. cit.*, I, 577-8, also records the robbing of stone from Seacourt for use in buildings elsewhere.

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main road in and out of Oxford on the west. Before the construction of the Botley Causeway about 1530,⁴² this was apparently the only really practicable route. It went 'north from Oxford through Walton for about a mile; then turned west; crossed the main Thames at Binsey ford; and thence advanced across various branches of Thames by bridges, whose abutments remained till living memory,⁴³ to Seacourt. The road may have crossed the supposed bridge immediately east of Seacourt and have joined the main north-south street south of the church, although there is no immediately obvious east-west street by which it could have done this. But if there was no bridge at this point (and only excavation will really settle the question) the road may have come into the village by the ford or bridge beyond the mill-leats, have wound up the slope in the sunken way to the south and east of the possible site of the manor-house (FIG. 3), and have arrived in the centre of the village at the cross-roads by the church (FIG. 4). The second alternative suits the plan of the village best, but certainty can only come with the location of the river crossing.⁴⁴ The road would then have proceeded west up the hill towards O.D. 472 (FIG. 2); from here on its line was followed by the later coach road to Eynsham which came west out of Oxford by the Botley Causeway.⁴⁵ Further west near Radbrook Common, this road met another coming from the north-east over Wytham Hill. It was a typical medieval road of many tracks (PL. II B) and presumably similar to the one which ran east and west from Seacourt.

Anthony Wood had no doubt that the importance of Seacourt was due to its position on the western route in and out of Oxford, and not to its proximity to the pilgrimage well of St. Margaret at Binsey;⁴⁶ there is little reason to disagree with him, except to suppose that Seacourt was really a perfectly normal village, which may well have profited by its position on the road, but

⁴² Wood, *op. cit.*, 1, 437. There had been the beginnings of a road here since c. 1210: *Dark Age Britain* (ed. D. B. Harden, 1956), 236, note 15.

⁴³ *Register of Godstow*, 43 (editor's note of c. 1905). There is a deserted medieval village at Binsey.

⁴⁴ T. Warton, *Specimen of a History of Oxfordshire, Kiddington* (2nd ed., 1783), 57 seems to support the second alternative; the road from Oxford 'goes over saint Giles's field, and Port Meadow, has an apparent tractus over the Isis, now called Binsey-ford, being a few yards north of Medley-grove, runs through Binsey churchyard, in which are the signature of large buildings, winds up the hill towards the left, where stood the ancient village of Seckworth . . . now reduced to a barn and a pound . . . and from thence either proceeds to Gloucester, or falls into the Akeman about Witney'. The phrase 'winds up the hill towards the left' precisely describes the course of the road around the possible site of the manor house (FIG. 3). I am indebted to Mrs. Wickham Steed for this reference.

⁴⁵ Arkell, *op. cit.*, 145-6; FIGS. 25, 26. The later coach road kinks here—O.D. 472—possibly at the point of junction with the supposed road from Seacourt. The latter must have gone W. up the hill from the village, for the village end of it can be seen in FIG. 4, immediately W. of the church. Before 1905 it was 'still to be traced through the woods of the Wytham estate, but it is all overgrown': H. W. Taunt, *Godstow . . . Medley, Wytham, and Binsey with the lost village of Seacourt* (Oxford, 1905), 8. Another possible road to Eynsham went N. from Seacourt through Wytham; this would be an alternative route and would not preclude the existence of the road over Seacourt and Wytham Hills.

⁴⁶ Wood, *op. cit.*, 1, 323-5.

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which would certainly have existed had the road been elsewhere. The suggestion that Seacourt was deserted because of the construction of the Botley Causeway or of the decline of pilgrimage to St. Margaret's Well takes no account of the chronology of these events (p. 83, note 87). Certainly the existence of the road would have made the journey to market easy for the villagers, who were within easy reach of both Eynsham and Oxford markets.⁴⁷ We may thus perhaps expect to find influences from both western and eastern England occurring in the objects bought at market (p. 137), but Oxford, towards the towers and spires of whose buildings the villagers must have looked every day of their lives, will have exerted the deepest influence.

DOCUMENTARY HISTORY

The earliest mention of Seacourt occurs in a charter of Eadwig which grants twenty hides of land 'aet Hengestesige, and aet Seofecanwyrthe, and aet Wihtham' to Abingdon Abbey about 957.⁴⁸ It is possible that before this Seacourt formed part of the hundred hides, which Ælfric states were held by the king *jure regali* in the reign of Eadred, and which are probably to be equated with Hormer Hundred.⁴⁹ The earliest form of the name, Seofecanwyrthe, is probably to be explained as 'Seofeca's worth', where the hypothetical form Seofeca is closely related to the Old German Sibico,⁵⁰ but no other evidence is available to illuminate the origin of the village. It may perhaps be conjectured that it came into being late in the Saxon period when the settlement of the region was being consolidated about 900 with the foundation of Oxford and the congregation of traders about the abbey gate at Abingdon.⁵¹

In 968 Edgar granted Cumnor to Abingdon⁵² and at this time Hinksey, Seacourt and Wytham were apparently members of Cumnor,⁵³ as they still were in 1086.⁵⁴ Before this date Seacourt had been granted out to a military tenant, and was always subsequently held by a lay lord, the Abbot of Abingdon retaining the over-lordship.⁵⁵

⁴⁷ *Oxford Region*, 108-9; FIG. 37.

⁴⁸ *Chronicon Monasterii de Abingdon* (ed. J. Stevenson, Rolls Series, 1858), I, 179-82; II, 509-10. The bounds of the grant are given in Anglo-Saxon. Cf. *Cartularium Saxonicum* (ed. W. de G. Birch), III (1893), 200-1, no. 1002.

⁴⁹ F. M. Stenton, *The Early History of the Abbey of Abingdon* (1913), 47-9. A charter of Cenwulf, c. A.D. 821 (*Chronicon*, I, 25; II, 500-1) which purports to grant *inter alia* Cumnor and Hinksey to Abingdon and would presumably include the territory of Seacourt, is rejected as spurious by Stenton, *op. cit.*, 23.

⁵⁰ E. Ekwall, *Oxford Concise Dictionary of English Place-Names* (1960), 409.

⁵¹ E. M. Jope in *Dark-Age Britain* (ed. D. B. Harden, 1956), 236.

⁵² *Chronicon*, I, 267-9.

⁵³ *Chronicon*, I, 270. This is a 13th century comment on the grant of Edgar.

⁵⁴ D. B. Berks., f. 586. Cf. *V.C.H. Berks.*, I, 336; IV, 406.

⁵⁵ *V.C.H. Berks.*, IV, 421. The descent of the manor and associated detail is given in *V.C.H. Berks.*, IV, 421-3 and need not be repeated here: references will be made to it as required and not separately footnoted.

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At the time of the Domesday Survey⁵⁶ Seacourt (called Seuacoorde) was rated at five hides, as it had been in the time of Edward the Confessor; there was land for seven ploughs, of which two were in demesne, while the villagers had five teams; and there was an adult male population of twenty-seven: twelve villeins and fifteen bordars. Compared with some of its neighbouring villages which still survive, Seacourt was larger than Wytham and Wolvercot, and about the same size as Appleton; but it was much smaller than Cumnor,

	Hides T.R.W.	Hides T.R.E.	Plough lands	Total teams	Popu- lation	Value £		
						T.R.E.	Post	T.R.W.
Seacourt ..	5	5	7	7	27	5	3.5	8
All Berks. vills to be deserted ..	8.5	4.6	5.4	5.3	17.0	7.2	5.2	6.6
All vills in D.B. hun- dreds of Hormer, Marcham and Sutton	8.3	5.1	8.0	6.1	22.4	8.2	(10.8)*	9.5

*Average unreliable: insufficient data

TABLE I. Average values for various components of the D.B. description for all the D.B. vills in Hormer, Marcham and Sutton hundreds, and for all the to-be-deserted vills in Berks., compared with Seacourt.

which had thirty-five ploughs and an adult male population of 133. Compared with the Domesday figures for other villages that were to be deserted, Seacourt was well above the average in population, slightly above average in plough lands and teams, and average or rather below in hides and value. In comparison with all the Domesday vills in Hormer, Marcham and Sutton hundreds, Seacourt was above average only in population; in all else it was below average, as in most respects were those vills later to be deserted (TABLE I).⁵⁷

⁵⁶ Domesday figures from *V.C.H. Berks.*, 1, 336; material for still existing villages extracted by Mr. David Sturdy. Figures for villages to be deserted from the files of the Deserted Medieval Village Research Group (D.M.V.R.G.) by courtesy of the Secretary, Mr. J. G. Hurst.

⁵⁷ The averages for Marcham, Sutton and Hormer hundreds given in the table are based on the figures in F. H. Baring, *Domesday Tables* (1909), 63, 65, 73.

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This suggests that individually the inhabitants of Seacourt may have been rather poorer than those in surrounding villages. Certainly, however, at the time of Domesday, Seacourt was a well established village, of an equal if not superior economic standing to several of its neighbours which survive today.⁵⁸

For most of the 12th and 13th centuries the manor was held by the de Seacourts. About 1165 William de Sewkeworth granted to Godstow Nunnery the tithes of his two corn mills at Seacourt,⁵⁹ and about 1200 his son,⁶⁰ Robert de Sevecowrthe, granted to the same nunnery the 'tythe of hys two myllis fuleree in Sevecowrthe'.⁶¹ The Latin original of this English cartulary makes it clear that the two pairs of mills are distinct, and the Seacourt fulling mills thus take their place among the earliest recorded in the Oxford region.⁶²

The first mention of a church at Seacourt occurs in 1200 when it was granted by this same Robert to Studley Priory in Oxfordshire.⁶³ The pension of three shillings that was due to the Abbot of Abingdon in 1291,⁶⁴ and which was paid in 1396-7,⁶⁵ was probably already being levied in 1218, when there was an agreement between the Abbot and the Prioress of Studley about the tithes of Seacourt.⁶⁶ The dedication of the church is known from a grant of 1240 in which William, son of Robert, gave a meadow to the church of St. Mary of Sewkeworth.⁶⁷

In 1316 the reversion of the manor came to Henry, Lord Beaumont, in whose family it remained until 1409; at the earlier date and for some time afterwards it was held for one knight's fee and twenty shillings due for castle ward at Windsor.⁶⁸ In the Lay Subsidy of 1327 three persons paid a total of 27s. 4d., of which Henry de Beaumont paid 25s. 9½d.⁶⁹ In the Subsidy of

⁵⁸ Cf. the map of Domesday population in *Oxford Region*, 105, FIG. 35, where the circle immediately W. of Oxford represents Seacourt and can be seen to be larger than many of the surrounding villages.

⁵⁹ *Register of Godstow*, 43, (no. 25); 'tethe of hys too Millis . . . in corne, money and fysshes'; in the Latin original 'in bladis et nummis et piscibus'.

⁶⁰ The account of the relationship of the Seacourt family in *V.C.H. Berks.*, iv, 422 middle, is confused and does not tally with *V.C.H. Berks.*, iv, 421 and end of 422, which are correct.

⁶¹ *Register of Godstow*, 44 (no. 26): the Latin original gives 'decimas duorum molendinorum meorum fuleree'.

⁶² *Oxford Region*, 113.

⁶³ See *V.C.H. Berks.*, iv., 422-3 for a detailed account of the church and its tithes. There must have been a church here by 1186 when a Richard 'presbiter de Seuecort' was present at an inquiry into the tithes of Horsepath: *Cartulary of Oseney Abbey*, iv (Oxf. Hist. Soc., xcvi (1934)), 367-8.

⁶⁴ *Taxatio Ecclesiastica* (Record Commission, 1802), 187.

⁶⁵ *Accounts of the Obedientiary of Abingdon Abbey* (Camden Soc., 1892), 59. The pension was paid 'de Vicar de Sowkeworthe', which indicates the ordination of a vicarage here prior to 1396-7.

⁶⁶ *V.C.H. Berks.*, iv, 423.

⁶⁷ *Register of Godstow*, 44 (No. 27).

⁶⁸ *Cal. Inq. P.M.* (Edw. II), vi, 470 (no. 748) inquisition of 1326. Seacourt is given in the *Nomina Villarum* of 1316 as 'Villa de Wightham cum Seukeworthe', *Feudal Aids*, 1 (1899), 53.

⁶⁹ These and the following tax figures are quoted from the files of the D.M.V.R.G. in advance of their full publication, through the kindness of the secretary Mr. J. G. Hurst. Where averages or other calculations are made below these are based on D.M.V.R.G. figures, but were worked out by the writer.

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1334 Seacourt had a quota of 26s. 9½d., which compares with an average quota of 39s. 9d. for the Berkshire villages later to be deserted, and an average of 35s. for all villages locally.⁷⁰ Seacourt shares with the rest of Hormer and Ock hundreds the unusual fact of having a quota less than the Subsidy of 1327.⁷¹ That this may suggest some decline in the economic standing of the village and the area prior to the Black Death, is perhaps supported by an inquisition of 1342 in which the manor is stated to be held of the Abbot of Abingdon by service of 16s. yearly,⁷² whereas at least as late as 1326⁷³ it had rendered 20s. The reason for this decrease is nowhere explicit, but it may perhaps be wondered if this is not an example of that lowering in rents from the mid-14th century onwards, which has been cited as part of the evidence for a decline in population beginning in the early part of the same century.⁷⁴

In 1351 the village was allowed a relief of 13s. 4d., or 50 per cent on its 1334 quota of 26s. 9½d.⁷⁵ This compares with an average relief of 28.2 per cent for all to-be-deserted villages in Berkshire and would seem to indicate that the Black Death of 1349 struck Seacourt heavily. The county average for Black Death relief was 35 per cent but in the areas north and south of Abingdon the relief was well above county average: Hormer hundred had a relief of 57 per cent; Sutton hundred of about 60 per cent and Abingdon town of 71 per cent.⁷⁶

The Poll Tax returns of 1377 are not extant for Berkshire, and it is particularly unfortunate that the assessments of 1381 are also not available. The manor of Seacourt survived until 1546,⁷⁷ when it was included in the manor of Wytham; but it is the fortunes of the village, not of the land comprising the manor, which is of interest here. The church continued as a legal, if not a physical entity, until 1540-6,⁷⁸ but the payment of the Abbot of Abingdon's pension of 3s. by the Vicar of Seacourt in 1396-7⁷⁹ throws no light on the

⁷⁰ I am indebted to Prof. M. W. Beresford for the quota figure and for the average locally.

⁷¹ A fact noticed in the D.M.V.R.G. files.

⁷² *Cal. Inq. P.M.* (Edw. III), viii, 252 (no. 381). This inquisition, P.R.O., C135/66/32, gives the extent of the manor and mentions that it contains five carucates of land, 60 acres of meadow, pasture, a water mill, a little grove and a fishery. The service is stated to be 16/4 in an inquisition of 1373, *Cal. Inq. P.M.* (Edw. III), xiii, 222 (no. 239).

⁷³ *Cal. Inq. P.M.* (Edw. II), vi, 470 (no. 748).

⁷⁴ M. Postan, 'Some Economic Evidences of Declining Population in the later Middle Ages', *Economic History Review*, 2nd ser., II (1950), 236-8, 245 (afterwards cited as Postan, 1950); cf. J. Saltmarsh, 'Plague and Economic Decline in England in the Later Middle Ages', *Cambridge Hist. Journ.*, vii, i (1941), 23-41, especially 24, 5 (afterwards cited as Saltmarsh, 1941).

⁷⁵ D.M.V.R.G. files. Of the 32 to-be-deserted villages in Berks. for which figures survive, 11 received no relief, while only 3 received 75 per cent or over. This is a clear indication that the Black Death was not a major cause of village desertion in Berks.

⁷⁶ This discussion of Berks. Black Death relief from the D.M.V.R.G. files.

⁷⁷ See detailed descent in *V.C.H. Berks.*, iv, 422.

⁷⁸ *V.C.H. Berks.*, iv, 423.

⁷⁹ *Accounts of the Obedientary of Abingdon Abbey* (Camden Soc., 1892), 59.

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state of the village.⁸⁰ In the Subsidy of 1428 it does not appear as a parish of less than ten houses and thus as exempt from taxation,⁸¹ but it is clear from the next reference to the village that its non-appearance in the 1428 lists is fortuitous. In 1439 the Vicar of Seacourt, John Pigg, petitioned the Pope that the church of Seacourt should be pronounced to be without cure, stating that 'the church itself of Seckworth was collapsed, that the houses and inhabitations in the parish were uninhabited and exposed to ruin, with the exception of two only, and they distant from the said church and from one another, and that, with this exception, the said church had no parishioners'. The Pope upheld this petition.⁸² Seacourt never recovered and the village does not appear in the 1524 Subsidy,⁸³ while in the Hearth Tax of 1663-4 only three houses appear,⁸⁴ which are presumably the forerunners of the farms which exist today. The population of the parish is given in the 1801, 1861 and 1901 census returns as 30, 39 and 30 respectively. Although a large part of Seacourt parish has formed part of Wytham Park for a very long time, probably since at least the time of the amalgamation of Seacourt and Wytham manors in 1546, Seacourt⁸⁵ was not joined to the parish of Wytham for civil and ecclesiastical purposes until 1899, when part of Seacourt was split off and became a civil parish within the county borough of Oxford.⁸⁶

The date of the effective desertion of Seacourt as a village must lie before 1439: we have seen that there is evidence for some economic decline before the Black Death; that there was a heavy tax relief as a result of that plague; and that in 1439 the village was uninhabited and the church collapsed. The final desertion was perhaps due to the acceleration by the Black Death of a decline that had already begun. The plague itself certainly did not wipe out the village,⁸⁷ but the consequent drop in population, combined with the

⁸⁰ The non-payment of the 1401-2 subsidy by the then lord of the manor (*Feudal Aids*, I (1899), 58) is merely a reflection of the many irregularities in the collection of that tax. Taxation returns which refer only to a manor and its feudal services are irrelevant for a study of the economic situation in the village(s) of that manor.

⁸¹ *Feudal Aids*, I (1899), 59; checked by P.R.O., E164/4.

⁸² *Cal. of Papal Letters*, IX (1913), 60.

⁸³ D.M.V.R.G. files.

⁸⁴ D.M.V.R.G. files.

⁸⁵ Seacourt was still pronounced *Secūrth* by Wytham people c. 1900 (*Register of Godstow*, 42) and this would appear from the contemporary documents to be near the medieval pronunciation.

⁸⁶ I am indebted to Miss J. E. Collins for supplying the census figures and details of boundary changes.

⁸⁷ It has been suggested (*V.C.H. Berks.*, IV, 421) that the desertion of Seacourt was due to the decline in popularity of the pilgrimage well of St. Margaret at Binsey, but this suggestion must be discounted as the well was much visited during the 15th century (Wood, *op. cit.*, I, 328-9). It has also been suggested that the construction of the Botley Causeway, by rendering obsolete the old road W. from Oxford through Seacourt, contributed to the desertion of the village; this can also be discounted, for although there had been a Botley road since at least c. 1210—and therefore during much of the lifetime of Seacourt—the causeway itself was not constructed until the early 16th century (see above p. 78, note 42), well after the documented desertion of the village.

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problems of working difficult land (see above p. 76) in a period of climatic deterioration,⁸⁸ may well have led to its final abandonment. It may be suggested that this took place well before 1439, since it would take some years for the church to collapse through neglect.⁸⁹ Thus it will probably not be far wrong to place the final desertion of the village, on documentary evidence, between 1360 and 1400;⁹⁰ any refinement of this dating must rest on the archaeological evidence which is discussed below (pp. 118-9).

THE EXCAVATIONS

The excavations at Seacourt in 1958 and 1959 were confined to the area threatened by the construction of the new by-pass (FIG. 3). Of the two fields involved, one on higher ground west of the old road, the other east of the old road and sloping down to the river, the former had been ploughed immediately before the excavations started in 1958, while the other was under grass. In addition, the western field was on a sub-soil of Oxford Clay (see above p. 73); in the very bad weather conditions of 1958 the ploughing of this field made work there very difficult and at times impossible, and the work on Areas 1 and 2 was restricted and not completed. Conditions in the eastern field were quite different and work was concentrated there (PL. IIIA).

Areas 1-6 (FIG. 3; the positions of all areas are shown on FIG. 4) were excavated under full archaeological control in 1958; Area 11 was excavated at leisure in 1959 after its presence had been revealed by earth-scraping for the new by-pass and Areas 8 and 25 were examined at the same time; the remaining areas (Areas 7, 9, 10, 12-24, 26-32 and additions to Area 1) were recorded, often very hastily, during earth-scraping operations in the spring of 1959. Certain sites within the area of the new by-pass were excavated before the war; those which were further investigated in 1958-9 are included in

⁸⁸ The evidence for such a deterioration in the 13th and 14th centuries is beginning to accumulate. In the Broads and the Wash a period of land submergence began in the late 13th century: J. T. Lambert and others, *The Making of the Broads* (1960); C. Green in *Ant.*, xxxv (1961), 21-8; S. Hallam in *Ant.*, xxxv (1961), 152-5; at Moreton, Somerset and Holworth, Dorset (*Proc. Dorset. Nat. Hist. & Arch. Soc.*, 81 (1959), 137) climatic deterioration has been suggested as a possible cause of the desertion of the villages in late 14th-15th centuries. At Pleshey and Writtle in Essex (P. A. Rahtz, *Pleshey Castle, First Interim Report 1960*, 15), clay make-up levels of c. 1300 are tentatively attributed to the same cause, which may also lie behind make-up levels of the same date at the More, Herts. (*Arch. J.*, cxvi (1959), 146). Land-shells appear to indicate a similar deterioration in the later Middle Ages (*P.P.S.*, xxiii (1957), 236-9) and it is to be hoped that further work on dendrochronology will enable this whole question to be more accurately defined (*Med. Arch.*, 1 (1957), 78-95).

⁸⁹ The church foundations seen in 1939 were described as massive (*Oxoniensia*, v (1940), 39) and the ridge-tiles and stone slates recovered in 1958 (see below, pp. 187-9) indicate a well-built roof, which would have collapsed only after a considerable period of continuous neglect.

⁹⁰ The comments on the Berks. tax figures in the D.M.V.R.G. files call attention to a general drop in population in the north of the county and to a drift of population away from the hamlets of Horner hundred. It appears from the Dissolution survey of Abingdon Abbey that this movement was then fairly recent; it was too late therefore to have conditioned the desertion of Seacourt.

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Areas 1-32, but three sites about which nothing new was learnt are here named Areas 33-5.

In Areas 1-6 the excavation trenches were laid out as a grid of 10 ft. squares; this method provided a large number of vertical sections, but tended to obscure the plans of both the stone and timber buildings, and on a future occasion a much larger unit of excavation (say a 20 ft. square or a 10 ft. by 20 ft. rectangle) would be used, although this would need very close control and sub-division during excavation. On the other hand the Seacourt excavations clearly demonstrated the vital need for frequent vertical sections, and the interpretation of the site is based on these (FIGS. 10-13).

This section of the report is as far as possible purely descriptive; the minimum of interpretation required to make each area intelligible is included, but for the overall interpretation and conclusions reference should be made to the next section (pp. 117-24).

AREA 1 (Plan, FIG. 5; sections, FIG. 11; PLS. III B, C; IV A, B).

This area was excavated in order to follow the structures found in trench C of 1939.⁹¹ Two main periods of occupation were defined. The earlier (*Period I*) consisted of traces of wooden structures and several ditches; the later (*Period II*) comprised two stone buildings and a paved street.

Period I

Running roughly north-south below the later paved street of the village was a broad shallow ditch filled with dark grey clay (sections E-F and E'-F').⁹² It crossed below the line of the street in Area 1 and was found in 1939 (in trench A, here termed Area 33, about 150 ft. south of Area 1) on the western side of the street and partly below it.⁹³ It is possible that this ditch ended, or was interrupted, in Area 1, near feature II, but this could not be checked in the time available. The pottery from this ditch⁹⁴ includes several pieces which imply that it was not filled until at least the middle of the 13th century.

To the west was a small building of which some beam-slots and post-holes could be traced. Beam-slots 1 and 3, at right-angles to each other, form the north-west corner of the building (C on plan, FIG. 5), which was not followed further to the south. On the northern side, beam-slot 2 and post-holes 1-4 form the western and northern sides of a small projecting building, presumably

⁹¹ *Oxoniensia*, v (1940), 35.

⁹² In the description of the various areas north is interpreted for convenience as the Wytham end of the strip of the new by-pass within which the excavations were confined; in actual fact this points north-west (FIG. 4). Section E'-F' was named Area 25 during the 1959 rescue work; here it is described under Area 1.

⁹³ *Oxoniensia*, v (1940), 34-5.

⁹⁴ FIG. 19, nos. 13, 16; FIG. 22, no. 10; FIG. 24, nos. 4, 8, 11.

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part of building C and possibly drained by the gully which passes through it from east to west. The beam-slots and post-holes were all extremely shallow as was the case with the wooden buildings in Area 5; but it was not possible to complete their excavation nor to be certain that the gully was really contemporary with building C and not later than it. Not enough of the building was recovered to be sure of its form or purpose, but the northern projection may have been a byre, entered through the post-wall on the north and drained by the gully. The irregular patches of dark soil, features 1 and 11, with a similar area to the south into which the gully appears to drain, were not completely excavated, but it seems likely that they mark the end or interruption of the ditch which runs below the later paved street. Building C was securely stratified below the spreads of stone rubble derived from the later buildings on the site (section G-H), and the layer of black earth caused by the occupation of the building could be traced everywhere below the stone structure (section E-F, level 3). Fragments of tripod-pitchers were found in beam-slot 2 and a group of three cooking pots in feature 11,⁹⁵ while among the pottery from the gully was one finer glazed sherd as well as other fragments of group A⁹⁶ fabrics. These suggest that building C was roughly contemporary with the ditch below the street.

West of building C was an area enclosed by ditches A and B,⁹⁷ both of which were overlain by the stone buildings and their rubble (section G-H). Between the ends of the two ditches was a beam-slot (4 on plan, FIG. 5) and a post-hole, possibly the remains of a gate closing the gap. Nothing is known of the nature of the compound thus enclosed.⁹⁸ The pottery from these ditches,⁹⁹ which includes some fragments of a pitcher with applied red clay spirals (not illustrated), implies that they were open in the middle of the 13th century; they were thus at one stage probably in use with building C and the ditch below the street, but, unless re-cut, they were probably not dug as early as the construction of the other features.

The stratification of the general occupation level which covered and was presumably derived from these *Period I* structures was very confused; only when it underlay the stone buildings could it be clearly distinguished from the later deposits, for elsewhere it must have been trampled during the whole period of occupation.

⁹⁵ FIG. 22, nos. 1-3.

⁹⁶ *Oxoniensis*, IV (1939), 115-8.

⁹⁷ Ditch B, together with building A, was excavated in 1939; the plans were lost during the war and they are drawn on FIG. 5 from rough notes and photographs and cannot be as accurate as would be liked.

⁹⁸ A ditch running E.-W. was noted further N. (beyond the limits of the plan, FIG. 5) but it could not be traced further, or properly excavated, due to lack of time.

⁹⁹ FIG. 19, no. 9; FIG. 20, nos. 2, 5; FIG. 22, nos. 4, 5; FIG. 24, nos. 9, 16, 17.

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This makes any attempt to date the change from *Period I* to *Period II* on the basis of the pottery very difficult, but the fact that none of the pottery actually associated with any of the early features was later than the middle of the 13th century suggests that the change must have taken place shortly after that date.

Period II

Overlying the black occupation levels and ditches of *Period I* were two stone buildings (A and B, plan, FIG. 5) and the cobbled paving of the main north-south street of the village.

This street must have been laid down shortly after the middle of the 13th century from the evidence of the pottery in the ditch which it covered (see above). The surface (PL. III B) was made of closely packed lumps of Coral Rag and other stones from the locality; in the centre were the cover slabs of a stone-built drain running along the middle of the road and draining southwards (section E-F; PL. III C). The western edge of this street thinned out into the scatter of stone rubble which covered the area of building B; near the edge of the street were several plough scars which must have been made sometime after the desertion of the village and possibly in quite modern times.

The northern ends of buildings A and B were uncovered during the 1958 excavation; in section E-F their walls, and the robber trenches of their walls, can be seen overlying and cutting into the earlier levels. The remainder of building B was recorded during the earth-scraping operations for the new by-pass, and, as was the case with most of the structures recovered during this stage of the work, only its outlines could be planned (PL. IV A).¹⁰⁰ These showed a rectangular building 25 ft. by 12 ft. internally, built of unmortared lumps of local stone, with a burnt area representing the hearth towards one end; there were no traces of an internal partition. At the north end was the square projection revealed in 1958,¹⁰¹ the walls of which survived partly as robber trenches in which there were some traces of a coarse mortar.

Building A was mostly excavated in 1939 (PL. IV B), and its northern end uncovered again in 1958. It was a long and very narrow building, only 4 ft. wide and some 25 ft. long internally. In the northern wall were traces of three post-holes (A, B and C on the plan, FIG. 5), and in the east wall were some fire-reddened stone slabs, presumably re-used; otherwise the walls

¹⁰⁰ PL. IV, A is published to show the kind of outline evidence on which the plans of the buildings recorded during earth-scraping are based. In most cases the wall lines were smudged by the bulldozer, but could still be planned with a reasonable degree of accuracy.

¹⁰¹ The exact junction between the two was not recovered, and the conditions under which building B was recorded did not make the accuracy of its relationship to the northern projection very certain.

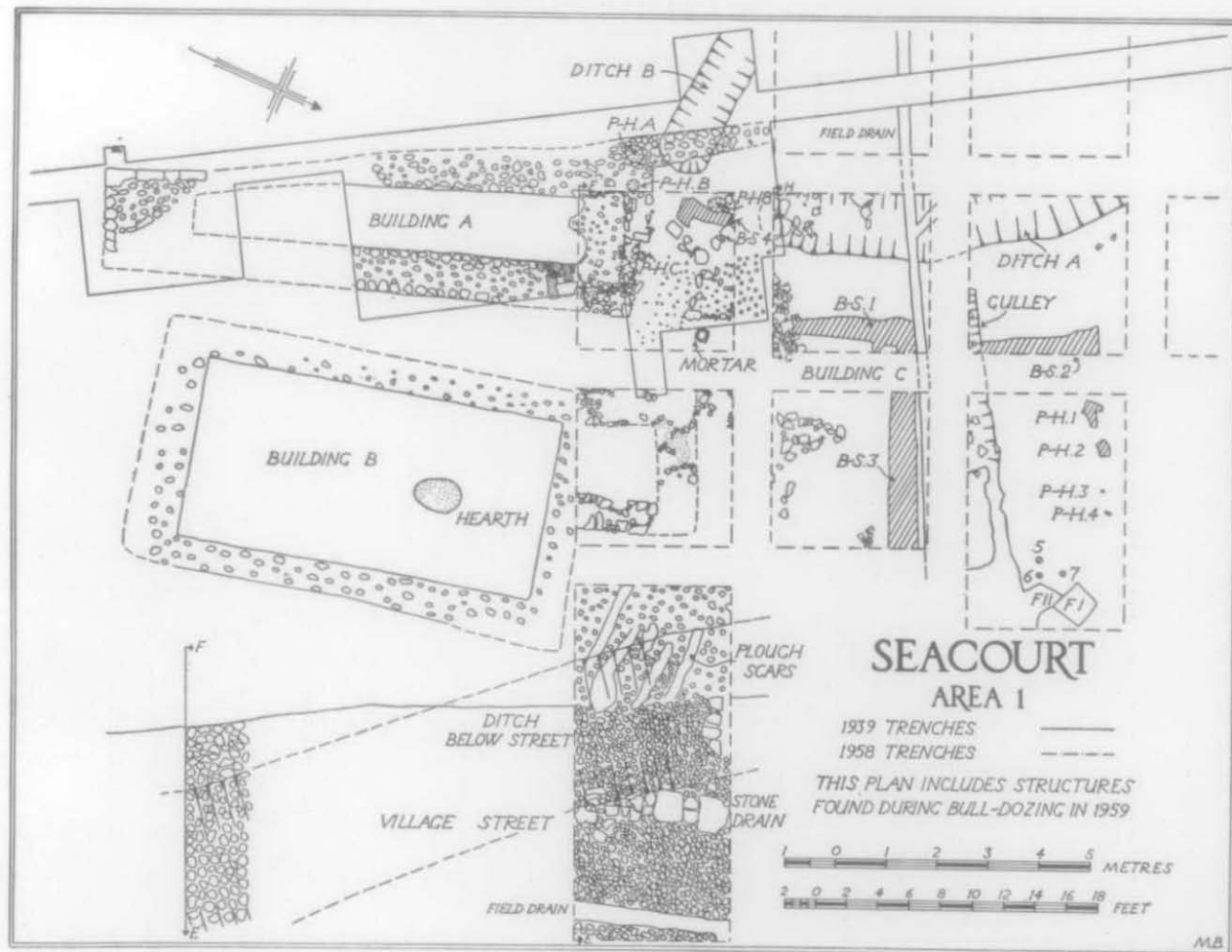


FIG. 5
Plan of Area 1, showing structures revealed in 1939, 1958 and 1959.

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were built of unmortared lumps of local stone, like those of building B. A narrow wall, possibly a yard wall, ran northwards from the north-west corner of building A.

These two structures clearly belong together and building B must be interpreted as a house, partly on account of the hearth, partly by analogy with similar buildings elsewhere in the village. It is however clearly not a long-house; and the byre-like building A suggests itself as accommodation for cattle. One long side of this structure could well have been open, apart from the supports for the roof, for the entry of cattle: it is, in effect, a single row of stalls.

The projection at the north end of building B is not easy to identify, but its construction is different from that of the rest of building B in that its walls contain some mortar. It is therefore possibly of a slightly different date and may well be an addition, possibly to serve as a pig-sty or small outhouse. The area north of building A was lightly cobbled; a badly broken lower stone of a quern or mortar probably formed part of this cobbling.

There were no truly stratified levels of *Period II*, only a spread of rubble which covered most of the area. This and the black occupation level which had continued to accumulate since *Period I* contained some of the latest pottery from the excavations.¹⁰² These stone buildings were probably built not long after the middle of the 13th century, according to the pottery from the *Period I* levels which underlay them, and continued in occupation after the middle of the 14th century.

There is virtually no evidence on which to reconstruct the appearance of any of these buildings. The traces of the timber structures are too scanty to reveal anything apart from a fragmentary plan. Of the stone buildings, A seems to have been partly timber-framed. Four unstratified fragments of glazed roof-tile, probably ridge-tile, are insufficient evidence for a tiled roof, and indeed the general lack of roof-tiles suggests that the roofs were thatched,

AREA 2 (for position see general plan, FIG. 3)

The excavation of Area 2 was undertaken to discover whether there were any buildings on the south side of the main (see above p. 78) east-west street. The work here was seriously restricted by weather conditions and only the sequence was established.

The earliest features were five pits, one of which, pit 25, produced a group of early 13th century pottery (pp. 131-2). Post-dating these pits was another pit (pit 28) and an occupation level which contained fragments of a

¹⁰² FIG. 27, nos. 1-5.

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glazed ridge-tile and some pottery¹⁰³ suggesting a late 13th century date. This layer was in its turn covered by a heavy layer of cobbling, clearly associated with stone buildings nearby, one of which was represented by a hearth and a single stone wall recorded during the construction of the by-pass (FIG. 4). Pottery from above the cobbles¹⁰⁴ suggested that this area was occupied until late in the 14th century.

Although no traces of wooden buildings were noticed here, the earliest levels were free of stone rubble. It may be presumed that here, as in Area 1, there was a change from timber to stone construction; the pottery sealed below the cobbling indicates that this must have taken place in or after the late 13th century.

At the north end of the area a pebbled surface represented the southern edge of the east-west street.

AREA 3 (for position see general plan, FIG. 3; PL. IV C, D)

The site of the church was located during the 1939 excavations.¹⁰⁵ It was feared in 1958 that the by-pass would destroy its west end, although most of the church appeared to lie outside the threatened area; the excavation of Area 3 was undertaken as a check. The excavation showed that the church did not extend within the planned limits of the new road;¹⁰⁶ it revealed an east-west wall of unmortared local stone (PL. IV C; FIG. 4), the western end of which terminated in a massive foundation of roughly dressed blocks, against which a pebble path had been laid passing from the roughly cobbled street to the north into the area south of the wall (PL. IV D). This wall appears to have been found further to the east in 1939; it may perhaps be interpreted as the churchyard wall.

West of the church the ground was found to have been made up about 18 in. by dumping clay over which a thick layer of gravel had been laid. This make-up was disturbed by a number of shallow pits; these contained very few finds and appeared to have been rapidly refilled with the material derived from them. Below this make-up level was a layer of black clay containing some mid to late 13th century pottery,¹⁰⁷ some burnt clay (p. 194) and some slag (p. 192). Although the evidence of the sections was not conclusive, the churchyard wall appeared to be later than this make-up, which itself contained some late 13th or even early 14th century pottery.¹⁰⁸

¹⁰³ FIG. 19, no. 11; FIG. 22, nos. 13, 14.

¹⁰⁴ FIG. 26, no. 16.

¹⁰⁵ *Oxoniensis*, v (1940), 37-39.

¹⁰⁶ Unfortunately these limits were exceeded during construction work and some of the church appears to have been damaged (Area 21).

¹⁰⁷ E.g. FIG. 19, no. 8.

¹⁰⁸ FIG. 25, no. 8; FIG. 26, no. 1.

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It is clearly desirable that Seacourt Church should be entirely excavated,¹⁰⁹ but until that is done it may be suggested that the evidence outlined above implies considerable building activity in the immediate area of the church in the later 13th or early 14th century: it seems probable that this activity will be reflected in the structure of the church itself.

THE POND AND POSSIBLE SITE OF THE MANOR-HOUSE (Plan, FIG. 3; section X-Y, FIG. 11; PL V, A)

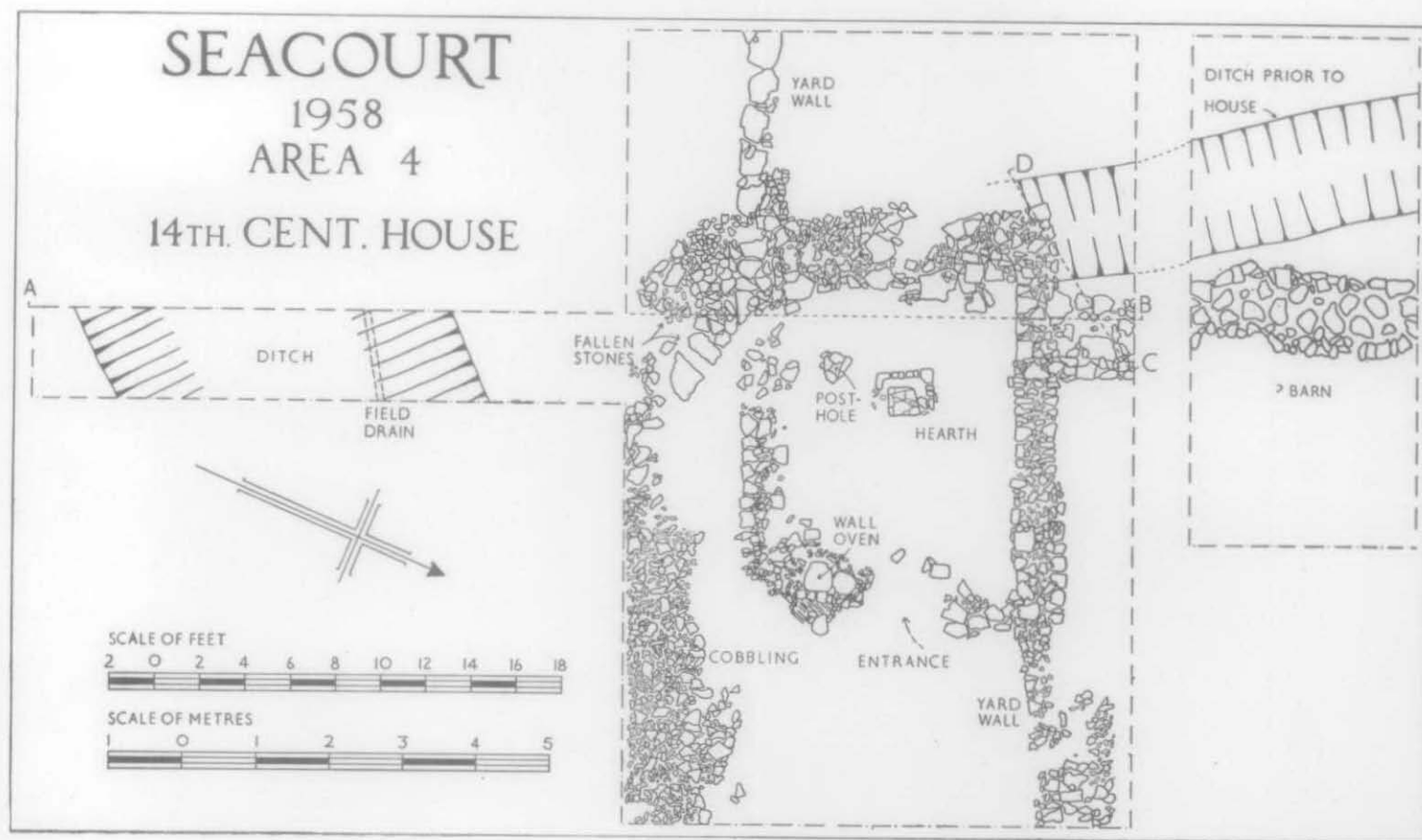
A clearly marked depression on the east side of the old Botley-Wytham road was sectioned to discover whether it was a road or ditch. The trench (PL. V A) revealed a broad, flat-bottomed, hollow (section X-Y) cut into the underlying sub-soil and filled with wet grey sand and clay devoid of finds (level 4). The material from the original excavation had been piled up to south and north over the former turf-line (levels 6 and 9). A layer of pebbles below level 9 suggested an early floor or surface at this point. A small cut was also made in the causeway which closed this depression on the east; this revealed that it was undisturbed natural soil which, with its old turf-line, was covered by further levels of dumped material from the excavation of the hollow. The pottery from the old turf-lines and dumped spoil¹¹⁰ seems to be of 12th century date, and this would appear to be the date of the construction of the feature.

The natural sub-soil in the immediate area is very clayey and holds water well. Further, the level of grey clay and sand filling the hollow was quite clean, a startling contrast to the other ditches and pits at Seacourt. It is clear too that the hollow was deliberately dug and that the causeway was left to the east in order to close in the new excavation. The cleanliness of the fill suggests that there was something special about this feature and it is possible that it was designed to collect or store water. It may be described as a pond, but had it been a normal village pond its filling would have been quite different.

The causeway across the lower end of the pond leads south into a roughly rectangular flat area bounded on the east and south by the main east-west street of the village (see above p. 78), and on the west by the main north-south street. This important position north of the church could well have been the site of the manor-house. The unusual pond and the apparently deliberate causeway would perhaps support this interpretation, which places the manor-house in the classic position in relation to the church.

¹⁰⁹ It is for this reason that the plans and sections of the 1958 work near the church are not published here; they can be found, together with the records of the 1939 excavations, at the Ashmolean.

¹¹⁰ FIG. 18, no. 14.



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Most of this area lies outside the line of the new by-pass and should be investigated by excavation. The part of the area to be destroyed was trenched (FIG. 3), but no signs of any structures were found. Mr. S. A. Opie's excavation in 1938¹¹¹ disclosed the existence of a mass of laid stonework along the southern edge of the area; this is too far north to be part of the street found north of the church (see above) and may be the foundation of a precinct wall surrounding the area (cf. the stone boundary wall in Area 5, below p. 104).

AREA 4 (Plan, FIG. 6; sections, FIG. 11; PLS. III A; V B; VI)

The excavation of Area 4 (PL. III A) began with the cutting of a section across the ditch which runs from west to east at this point. This trench (PL. V B; section A-B) revealed a shallow, gently sloping ditch filled with several layers of silting (levels 4, 5 and 6), the lowest of which contained a fragment of a pottery bottle and a cooking pot rim, FIG. 26, no. 13; these suggest that the lowest fill was accumulating in the late 13th or early 14th century. It is possible that the ditch was first dug at this time, the spoil (level 7) being piled at the side; this interpretation is suggested by the cleanness of this level, for had the ditch been merely scraped out, the material would have been dirty. The very black level west of the stone house (see below, p. 96) may represent such a cleaning, in which case level 7 probably dates from the original excavation of the ditch.

Just above the northern lip of the ditch was a heavy rubble spread covering and surrounding the remains of a house of unmortared lumps of rough local stone (PL. VI; FIG. 6). The walls had been laid over and partly cut into an underlying level of black loam and clay (section A-B, level 12; section C-D, level 3) and at their north-western corner sealed an earlier ditch filled with gritty black and brown loam (section C-D, level 4). Only a very small part of Area 4 could be stripped to the level of natural soil and, apart from the ditch, no other features earlier than the stone house were found. The pottery from the ditch formed an important group (p. 134), which appears to date to the first half of the 14th century: it is hard to believe that it can be much later since the overlying stone house seems to have been occupied for some time, to judge from the evidence of the superimposed hearths. A date for the construction of the house not much after 1325 would in fact seem reasonable.

The house was rectangular and measured 12 ft. by 10 ft. internally; the walls were of varying widths, the thickness of the west wall probably being due to the underlying ditch. Rather to the west of the middle of the

¹¹¹ *Oxoniensia*, III (1938), 168, 174 f. Here called Area 35 (see below, p. 117).

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only room was a hearth formed of a flat slab of sandstone and surrounded by a carefully laid and roughly dressed border of the same stone (PLS. V B; VI). South of the hearth was the stone packing of a post-hole; no fellow to this was found and its purpose is obscure, for it cannot have had anything to do with the roof; it may perhaps have been part of a support for hanging cooking vessels over the hearth. The entrance seems to have been in the east wall where the stonework was interrupted; no post-holes for a door-frame were observed. South of the entrance the wall was thicker than normal and in the centre was a fire-reddened slab of flat sandstone. To the east of this slab were a number of pieces of thin stone and coarse pottery set on their sides, much in the way that broken roofing tiles were used to make tile hearths in more elaborate buildings.¹¹² These two features were probably part of an oven made in the thickness of the wall; the position of the patch of set-on-edge work suggests that the oven opened onto the exterior of the building. This type of oven is heated by the burning in it of wood and charcoal which is raked out leaving sufficient heat to bake the bread which is then put in; the opening of the oven on the exterior of the building would thus be a sensible and safer arrangement.

The central hearth overlay two earlier hearths and their occupation levels (section A-B, Hearth 1 goes with level 11; Hearth 2 with levels 9 and 10; Hearth 3 (the stone hearth) with level 8), none of which contained any datable pottery. The stone hearth was removed for magnetic dating (see below pp. 191-2) and sometime in the future the progress of this method may produce an independent absolute date for the final firing of this hearth. The pottery from the uppermost occupation level,¹¹³ most of which was composed of the debris from the collapse of the house, suggests 14th century occupation, but is not more closely datable. This level contained many tiny fragments of early medieval and Roman pottery, and some Roman objects (FIG. 28, no. 24 and possibly 19); it seems possible that these are derived from earth used in the construction of the unmortared stone walls. There is no evidence for any timber framing and the walls may have been built up to roof level with unmortared stones packed with earth. This would explain the large quantity of earlier material. Two fragments of glazed ridge-tiles were found in the topsoil and one fragment of an ordinary roof-tile with mortar on the underside in the midden west of the house. These are not sufficient evidence for a tiled roof, which would have produced much more debris. The roof was probably thatched.

Outside the house on the west a thin wall of large stones ran towards the

¹¹² Cf. a 14th century hearth at The More, Herts. (*Arch. J.*, CXVI (1959), 148, PL. XIX A).

¹¹³ FIG. 26, no. 17; FIG. 27, nos. 6, 7, 8.

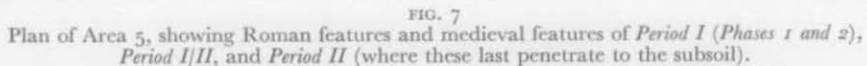


FIG. 7

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road, probably enclosing a yard on its northern side. Here was a thick layer of very black loamy soil, very soft and fine, suggesting the decay of a large amount of organic matter. This level was covered by the collapsed debris of the stone house, but it could not be definitely associated with the stone building. It contained a large quantity of early pottery, much of it badly abraded, and nothing that was certainly as late as the mid to late 14th century.¹¹⁴ Furthermore, some of the sherds in it joined onto others from those parts of the early ditch which did not run below the house. It seems likely that this level is earlier than the stone house; it might have been a midden, or it may represent a late 13th or early 14th century cleaning of the large west-east drainage ditch (see above, p. 93).

A thick wall of loosely set lumps of local stone ran northwards from the house; from the north-east corner of the building a similar wall ran downhill to the east. These may be boundary walls of a compound (cf. the boundary wall running from the corner of a building in Area 5, FIG. 9, p. 104), but a pebbly level on the east side of the northern wall suggest a building here, possibly a barn or byre. It was not traced by excavation. The pottery from this pebbly level¹¹⁵ suggests late 13th or early 14th century occupation at the earliest.¹¹⁶

On the south side of the house a large area on the lip of the ditch had been cobbled with rough lumps of local stone probably indicating an east-west track at this point.

AREA 5 (Plans, FIGS. 7-9; sections, FIG. 12; PL. III A; VII; VIII)

Trial excavations north of Area 4 showed the existence of stone structures overlying earlier timber buildings; these indications were followed up and Area 5 became the largest and most complex of the 1958 sites, and it was here that the greatest amount of time and money were expended (PL. III A).

Roman remains were found underlying the medieval features, which themselves presented a complex succession.

Roman features

A shallow ditch crossed the northern part of the area from east to west and may have been turning south towards the western limit of the portion that was traced. The section (R-S) shows that there was a shallow scoop running along the northern margin of the ditch. The pottery from the primary

¹¹⁴ FIG. 25, no. 9; FIG. 26, no. 15.

¹¹⁵ FIG. 25, no. 2; FIG. 26, no. 12.

¹¹⁶ In spite of the clear early 14th century date of this building, the lack of recognizable 14th century pottery in the occupation levels is strange. It seems that types now recognized as late 13th or early 14th century must continue in use through most of the 14th century.

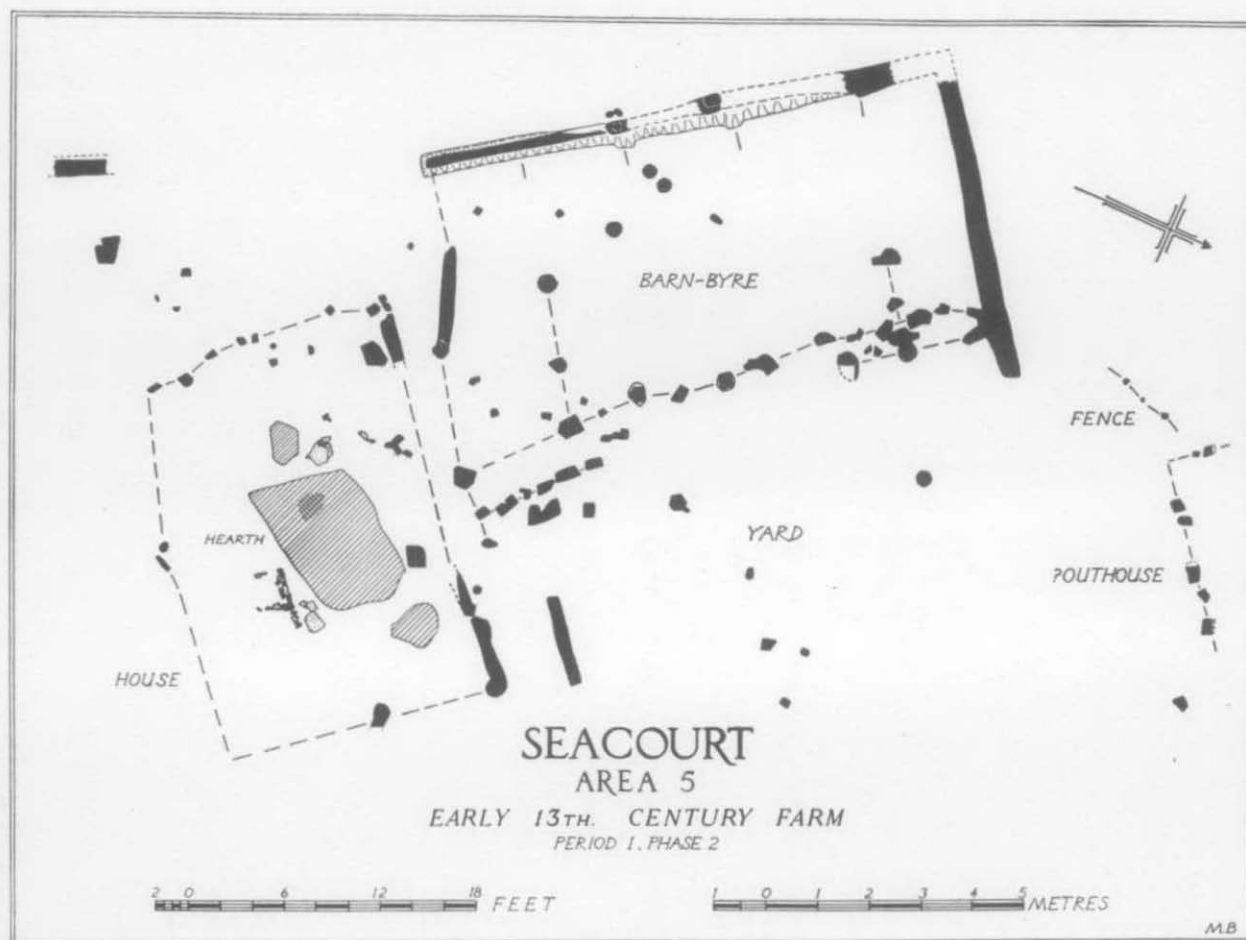


FIG. 8
Area 5. This plan shows the structural features of *Period I, Phase 2* (early 13th century), and omits all other features. (Cf. FIG. 7).

silt, level 8, included small fragments of Castor and New Forest wares, but the material from the upper filling,¹¹⁷ level 7, produced some more certainly 4th century pieces and the ditch can be dated to this period.

On the southern margin of the ditch there was a scatter of large sherds of 2nd century pottery,¹¹⁸ including some Samian ware.

Elsewhere in Area 5, Roman sherds occurred frequently in the medieval levels, but only near the south end of the medieval north-south ditch did there seem to be an actual Roman level; this contained some 4th century pottery.

Medieval features

These are divided into two main periods: *Period I* is represented by the wooden structures in the area and is separated into two phases. *Period I* is divided from *Period II* by the cutting of the north-south ditch along the western margin of the excavated area and *Period II* itself is represented by the overlying stone structures. This sequence will be described in chronological order.

Period I, Phase 1. This phase includes the few features which were demonstrably earlier than the large timber buildings of *phase 2*. Pit 5 was partly sealed below the clay hearth of the *phase 2* house (section L-M, level 4 sealing levels 5-8) and contained a group of late 12th century pottery (see below pp. 130-1). This sequence is of crucial importance for the dating of the *phase 2* building; it can be clearly seen in PL. VIII A. The pit itself was quite featureless and flat-bottomed only in section L-M. The other *phase 1* feature is the deep oblong slot, feature v (section T-U; PL. VIII B). Stratigraphically this could not be distinguished from feature III, which by its alignment should belong to *phase 2*. But the alignment of feature v itself suggests that it is not part of the *phase 2* structures and its character is quite different. It was filled with featureless black loam which contained some apparently late 12th century pottery,¹¹⁹ but the purpose of this deep slot, apparently not directly associated with any other contemporary features, is quite obscure.¹²⁰ Further south and underlying the clay hearth of *phase 2* were two post-holes¹²¹ and the shallow slot, feature VI. None of these contained any datable pottery, but the level sealed below the hearth (section R-S, level 5) contained some late 12th century and early 13th century sherds.¹²²

¹¹⁷ FIG. 17, nos. 8-13.

¹¹⁸ FIG. 17, nos. 1-7.

¹¹⁹ FIG. 23, nos. 2, 10; FIG. 24, no. 7.

¹²⁰ Three similar slots set in echelon were discovered by the writer at a late-Saxon site at Therfield, Herts., but their interpretation was likewise obscure.

¹²¹ Post-hole 49 was 3½ in. deep; post-hole 77 about 2 in. deep.

¹²² FIG. 19, nos. 4, 6, 7.

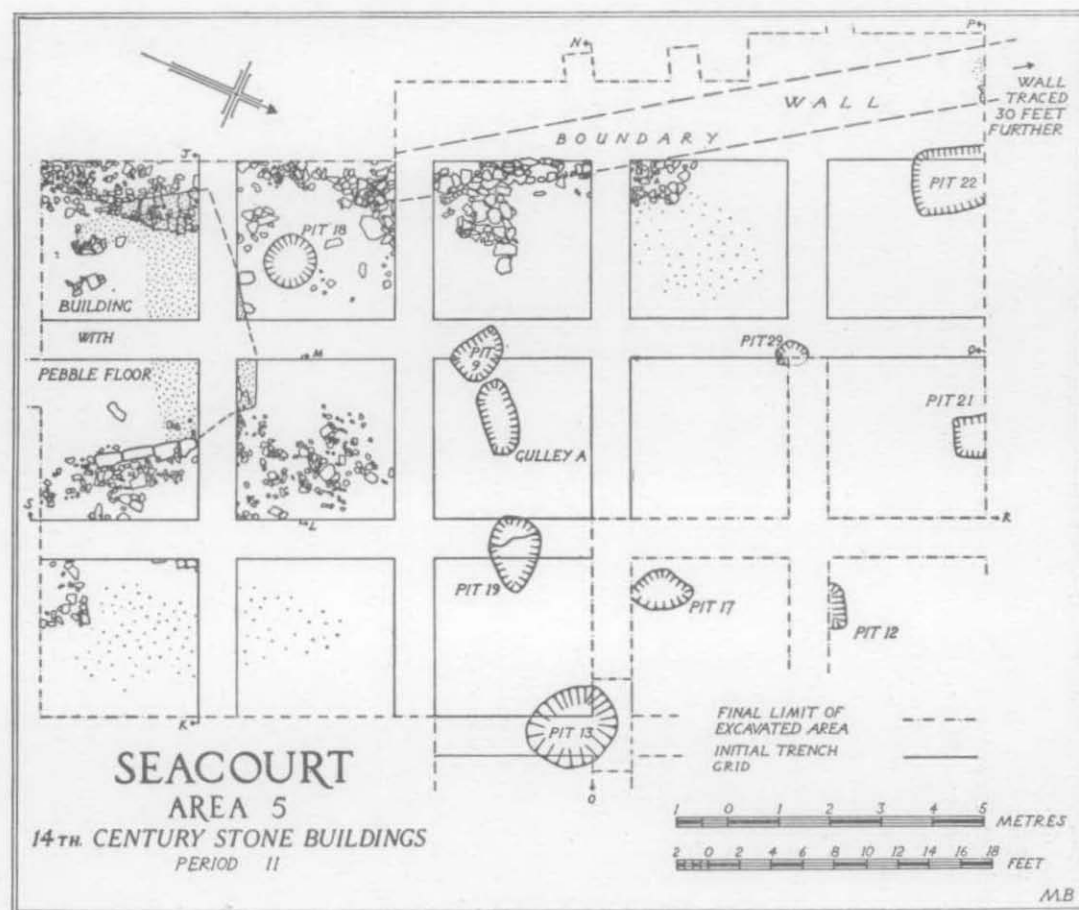


FIG. 9
Area 5. Plan of the stone buildings of Period II.

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Period I, Phase 2. Overlying and sealing pit 5 was part of a large clay hearth, a portion of which had been heavily burnt (represented by double shading on the plan, FIG. 7; cf. PL. VIII A). The south-east corner of the clay layer was bounded by a stone setting, aligned with the structures of this phase and apparently part of a border for the hearth. There were two detached patches of clay to east and west of the hearth and originally the clay level may have been intended as a floor, now mostly worn away.

Surrounding this clay layer were the scanty traces of a number of shallow post-holes. Post-holes 46, 47, 53-56 and 71-73 appear to form one side of a rectangular building, the north side of which is defined by features III and XIII (PL. VIII B);¹²³ the eastern end of feature III appears to take the form of a round post and post-hole 44 would continue an eastern side parallel with the western side which is more clearly defined; of a possible southern side only feature VII and post-hole 52 remain.

All these post-holes and features are shallow;¹²⁴ in addition most of the southern and eastern sides of the structure have been lost with the falling away of the slope in this direction. Nevertheless if these traces are considered together (plan, FIG. 8) it will be seen that they delimit a roughly rectangular area perfectly aligned with another timber building of the same phase (see below, p. 101) and neatly surrounding the clay hearth, the burnt patch of which is slightly to one end of the area so formed. It is suggested that these scanty traces outline the ground plan of a timber building, measuring 24 ft. by 15 ft. internally and probably a house (PL. VII A).

Within the walls are several features which call for comment. Set one on top of the other into the fill of pit 5 are a series of flat stones (section L-M, feature X; PL. VIII A), presumably the underpinning for a post. A similar flat stone, not in this case requiring the foundation necessary over the soft fill of a pit, is in position by the stone border of the clay hearth. These stone slabs probably supported the main roof posts; the post-holes along the inside of the north wall (nos. 48, 50 and 51) may have taken, together with the north-east and north-west corner posts, the main timbers of the wall. It is worth noting that post-holes 48 and 50 are roughly aligned across the narrow axis of the building with the two stone supports already described; the lines thus formed may have been those of the main trusses of the roof. The house cannot have been of cruck construction unless the central posts were a later insertion when further support was needed. In fact a much more elaborate

¹²³ The eastern part of feature XIII was destroyed by accident during trial-trenching.

¹²⁴ Depths of post-holes and features of the house in inches: Post-holes 44 (3), 46 (1), 47 (3), 48 (2½), 50 (3), 51 (1½), 52 (5), 53 (3½), 54 (3½), 55 (3), 56 (4), 70 (3), 71 (1½), 72 (4), 73 (3½). Features III (2½), VII (2), XIII (3).

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timber-framed structure seems indicated. The roof will probably have been thatched, for no roof-tiles were found.

The stone supports, especially feature x, were clearly meant to support the bottom of the post at ground level. This probably explains the extreme shallowness of the post-holes of this and other timber buildings at Seacourt: they were timber-framed structures sitting on the ground, but not anchored into it; they derived their stability from their own framing, exactly as a more elaborate timber-framed house sits on the stone sills that form the lower part of its walls. But the ground wall was a luxury; the wooden sills could be laid directly on the ground, which was first levelled and beaten flat.¹²⁵ In these conditions the detection of timber structures is a matter of extremely delicate technique; the traces can be easily missed and in places may be actually missing.

It is more difficult to explain the use of a mixture of posts and sills in the construction of the Seacourt house, but the evidence is clear and is repeated in the larger timber building in Area 5 and also in the timber structures of Area 1 (see above pp. 85-6).

The shallow depression, feature xiv, was bordered by three post-holes, possibly from a three-legged support of some kind, but cannot be further explained.

Aligned with the timber house just described was another and much larger building. The south, west and north sides of this structure were represented by beam-slots, while the eastern side consisted of a series of post-holes (PL. VII). The southern wall (PL. VIII B) was marked by the irregularly placed beam-slot, feature ix/xii, which terminates in post-hole 23. The west wall was clearly defined by a deep beam-slot, but this had been almost completely obliterated by the digging of a later ditch (section N-O, level 11 cut into by level 10).¹²⁶ It appears that this slot did not take a single sill, for traces of individual posts were noted in the bottom (see plan, FIG. 7 and PL. VIII C). The north wall was marked by a single shallow beam-slot (section P-Q, east end; PL. VIII D), which had been partly removed by the down-cutting of a later pit. The eastern wall was much more complex; basically it consisted of a line of large, but shallow, post-holes (from south to north nos. 7, 14, 45, 20, 21, 22, 81, 85, 84 and 66 merging into the northern beam-slot)¹²⁷ at approximately 2 ft. intervals. In front of this line, at the north and south ends of the wall, was a further line of post-holes (nos. 1-5, 11, 12 at the south end;

¹²⁵ L. F. Salzman, *Building in England down to 1540* (1952), 202.

¹²⁶ This fact was not appreciated in the early stages of excavation when the edge of the ditch appeared to be the edge of the beam slot; consequently PL. VII A and B, while they show the general outline of this side of the structure, are not as perfect a representation of the situation as they should have been.

¹²⁷ One was probably removed by the down-cutting of the later gully A.

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nos. 80, 88, 86, 87 and 67 at the north end), which may represent a later addition, or even a rebuilding of the entire wall.

At the south end, post-holes 6, 9 and 10 may represent a further repair. The eastern extension of the north beam-slot, however, covers both these additional lines and it is just possible that they belong to the original structure. All these post-holes, as in the case of the house, were very shallow; only the west beam-slot achieved a reasonable depth.¹²⁸

Within this building there are various post-holes and a shallow depression, feature xi, which are not easily explicable. Along the inner margin of the west beam-slot, however, there are three small expansions; opposite the northernmost of these are post-holes 65 and 83; there are no post-holes opposite the second and third expansion. Post-holes 14, 19 and 68 form an east-west line and the point where it would meet the west beam slot is exactly mid-way between the south end of the slot and the third expansion. These expansions and post-holes divide the building into five bays and probably mark the lines of the trusses; the internal posts may be for roof-support, but could as plausibly mark internal partitions. The roof must have been thatched as no roof-tiles were recovered.

The building of five bays which thus appears (FIG. 8; PL. VII) is aligned with the house already described. Its purpose can only be surmised, but it has, unlike the house, no hearth and it was possibly used as a barn and byre. The position of the main entrance is not clear, but there was possibly an entrance at the south-east corner where the west beam-slot terminates abruptly.

From the north-east corner of this building a line of small post-holes, (nos. 26-28), probably forming a fence, leads away to the south-east corner of another and unidentified building outlined by post-holes (nos. 29-32, 34-36). Against the fence was a patch of dark soil, not definable as a pit, which contained a group of late 12th and early 13th century pottery (p. 132), mostly in large sherds and probably forming a midden for the domestic refuse of this period. There are a number of isolated post-holes;¹²⁹ a beam-slot at the south-west corner of the area (feature i) may indicate the presence here of another building. The isolated beam-slot, feature iv, could be part of a lean-to at the north-east corner of the house. Pits 11, 14, 15 and 16 and the scoop, feature viii, seem from their pottery to belong to this phase. Pit 16

¹²⁸ Depths of post-holes and features of the barn-byre in inches: Post-holes 1 (3), 2 (2), 3 (2), 4 (3), 5 (5), 6 (3), 7 (5), 8 (3), 9 (3), 11 (6), 12 (3), 13 (1½), 14 (4½), 15 (3), 16 (3½), 17 (3½), 18 (2), 19 (4), 20 (2½), 21 (7), 22 (4), 23 (5), 45 (5½), 58 (3½), 59 (3½), 60 (5), 61 (3½), 62 (4½), 63 (3), 64 (1½), 65 (5), 66 (3), 67 (2), 68 (5), 69 (2), 80 (4), 81 (5), 82 (2½), 83 (3½), 84 (3), 85 (3), 86 (3), 87 (3), 88 (4), 89 (5), 90 (2). Feature ix/xii (3), North Beam-slot (3), West Beam-slot (18).

¹²⁹ The depths of the post-holes of the minor structures and the isolated post-holes in inches: Post-holes 10 (2½), 24 (2½), 25 (2), 33 (2½), 42 (2), 57 (3½), 74 (2), 75 (1), 76 (1½), 78 (1½), 79 (2½). Nos. 26-32, 34-41 and 43 were not excavated.

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(section V-W)¹³⁰ was straight-sided and flat-bottomed; the undercutting at its base suggested that it may have been timber-lined and several large pieces of oak (p. 197) were found in the fill. Examination of the soil from this pit (p. 196) produced some charred grain. It is highly unlikely that grain was stored underground in this sub-soil, but it is difficult to suggest other reasons for timber-lining in such a small pit.

The group of buildings thus formed (FIG. 8) clearly belonged together and were probably an almost complete farm unit with house, barn-byre, other buildings and a yard. Stratigraphically they are defined on the one hand by the pit and other levels below the clay hearth of the house, and on the other by the north-south ditch which destroyed the west wall of the barn. The pottery from pit 5 and the level below the hearth includes one sherd¹³¹ of the first quarter of the 13th century; the material from the north-south ditch (see below)¹³² indicates that it was open towards the end of the same century. The farm can therefore be dated c.1225-c.1275.

The Period I/II ditch. Along the western margin of the excavated area was a shallow ditch which had destroyed most of the west beam-slot of *Period I, phase 2* (section N-O, level 10; cf. section J-K, levels 7 and 8 and section P-Q, level 8). The dark clay filling this ditch contained some late 13th century pottery.¹³³ After the ditch had been dug the area to the west appears to have lain open, unless the house of *Period II, phase 2*, survived alone. It must have been at this period and after the filling of the ditch that the thick black occupation level covering the earlier buildings (sections J-K, level 6; N-O, level 9; P-Q, level 7; R-S, level 3; etc.) became so churned by the passage of men and carts that it was in no case possible to trace the earlier features in the overlying level, although the latter must have mostly been laid during the occupation of the timber structures. The pottery¹³⁴ from this level was extremely mixed, early sherds being found at the top and late 13th century sherds near the natural soil. This black level gives a clear indication of the conditions which must have existed at the time of its deposition; it was a constant feature of all the excavated areas. Before the construction of cobbled streets, conditions underfoot in Seacourt must have been extremely difficult in bad weather.

Period II. Cut partly into the clay filling of the north-south ditch was the foundation trench for a wall which was loosely, but massively, built of large rough stones of local origin (some up to 2 ft. long. Sections J-K, level

¹³⁰ The pottery group from pit 16 is discussed below, p. 131.

¹³¹ FIG. 19, no. 7.

¹³² FIG. 20, no. 1, 4; FIG. 23, no. 25.

¹³³ See note 132.

¹³⁴ Only a few sherds published, e.g. FIG. 24, nos. 2, 14.

5; N-O, level 3; P-Q, level 6). This wall¹³⁵ was traced (by excavation and during the construction of the by-pass) for a total distance of about 90 ft. (Plan, FIG. 9; cf. general plan of stone structures, FIG. 4). It was thus probably too long to have formed part of a roofed structure and was almost certainly a boundary wall (cf. the suggested boundary walls in Area 4, p. 96, Area 28, p. 115 and Area 35, p. 117). The wall follows not only the line of the earlier ditch, which itself follows the alignment of the earlier timber structures, but all these follow the line of the street (FIG. 4), a fact which confirms the interpretation of this wall as a boundary wall.

The filling of the foundation trench for the wall (section P-Q, level 6) produced some pottery¹³⁶ suggesting that the wall was built after the late 13th century; this is confirmed by the pottery from the underlying north-south ditch (see above).

At its southern end this wall was replaced by a stone building (section J-K, levels 3, 4 and 4a) with a pebble floor. Many of the stones of the walls had been robbed out, but the edge of the floor preserved the outline of the building. Since it is later than the boundary wall it must have been built at the earliest in the late 13th century and may well be an early 14th century structure, although the pottery¹³⁷ sealed below the floor would not seem to require so late a date. The occupation levels in and around this building were too near the surface to be properly stratified but they produced the sherd of East Mediterranean blue glass (p. 185; PL. X, D) and some probably late 14th century pottery;¹³⁸ occupation here probably went on as late as in any other excavated area of the village.

A number of pits are dated to *Period II* on the evidence of the pottery they contained, but only pits 18 and 22 could be shown stratigraphically (e.g. section P-Q, levels 3, 4 and 5) to belong to this period. The late 13th century pottery group from pit 13 is of some interest (pp. 133-4).

AREA 6 (Plan and sections, FIG. 10)

Trial trenching¹³⁹ north of Area 5 revealed a large pit, most of which was excavated. It was flat-bottomed with slightly overhanging sides which were undercut at the base of the pit as in pit 16 (Area 5, see above p. 103). It is suggested that here too there was originally a timber lining, the rotting

¹³⁵ The wall was traced across Area 5, but removed rapidly in order to reach the timber structures below; it is therefore only planned in outline on FIG. 9.

¹³⁶ FIG. 26, no. 10.

¹³⁷ Very little published e.g. FIG. 24, nos. 2, 14.

¹³⁸ Especially FIG. 25, no. 13; FIG. 26, no. 6 and FIG. 27, nos. 9-11; but see also FIG. 25, nos. 1, 3, 12 and FIG. 26, no. 11.

¹³⁹ Other trial trenching north of Area 5 (see general plan, FIG. 3) revealed extensive traces of timber structures cut into the underlying sub-soil. Lack of time prevented these being followed, although a complete plan of the timber buildings of this part of the village could have been recovered.

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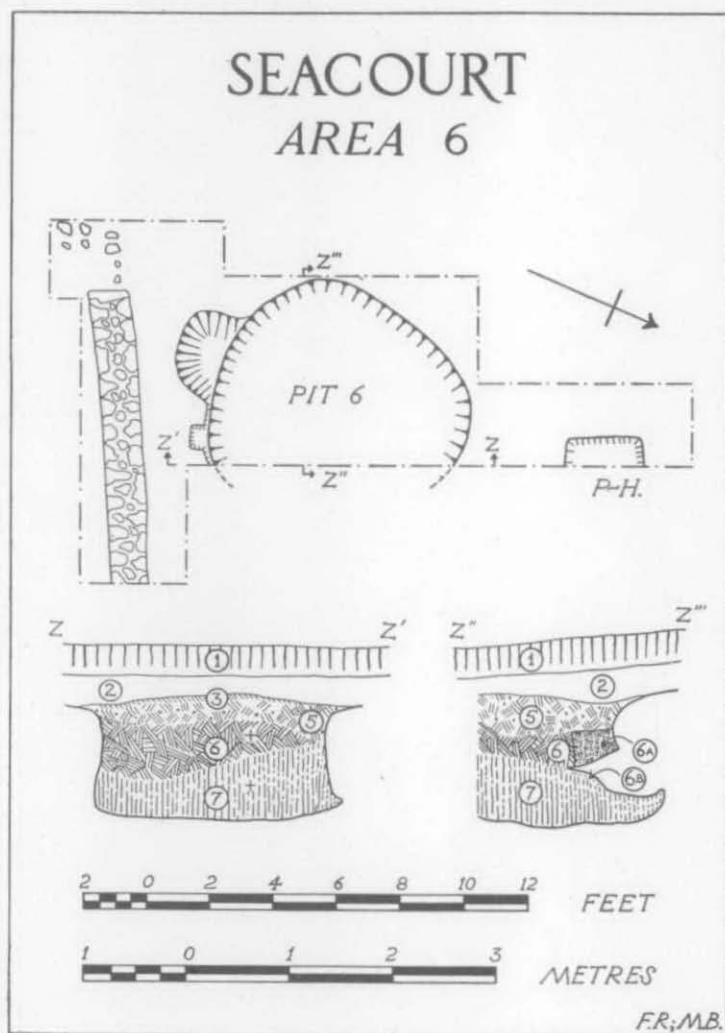


FIG. 10
Plan and sections of Area 6.

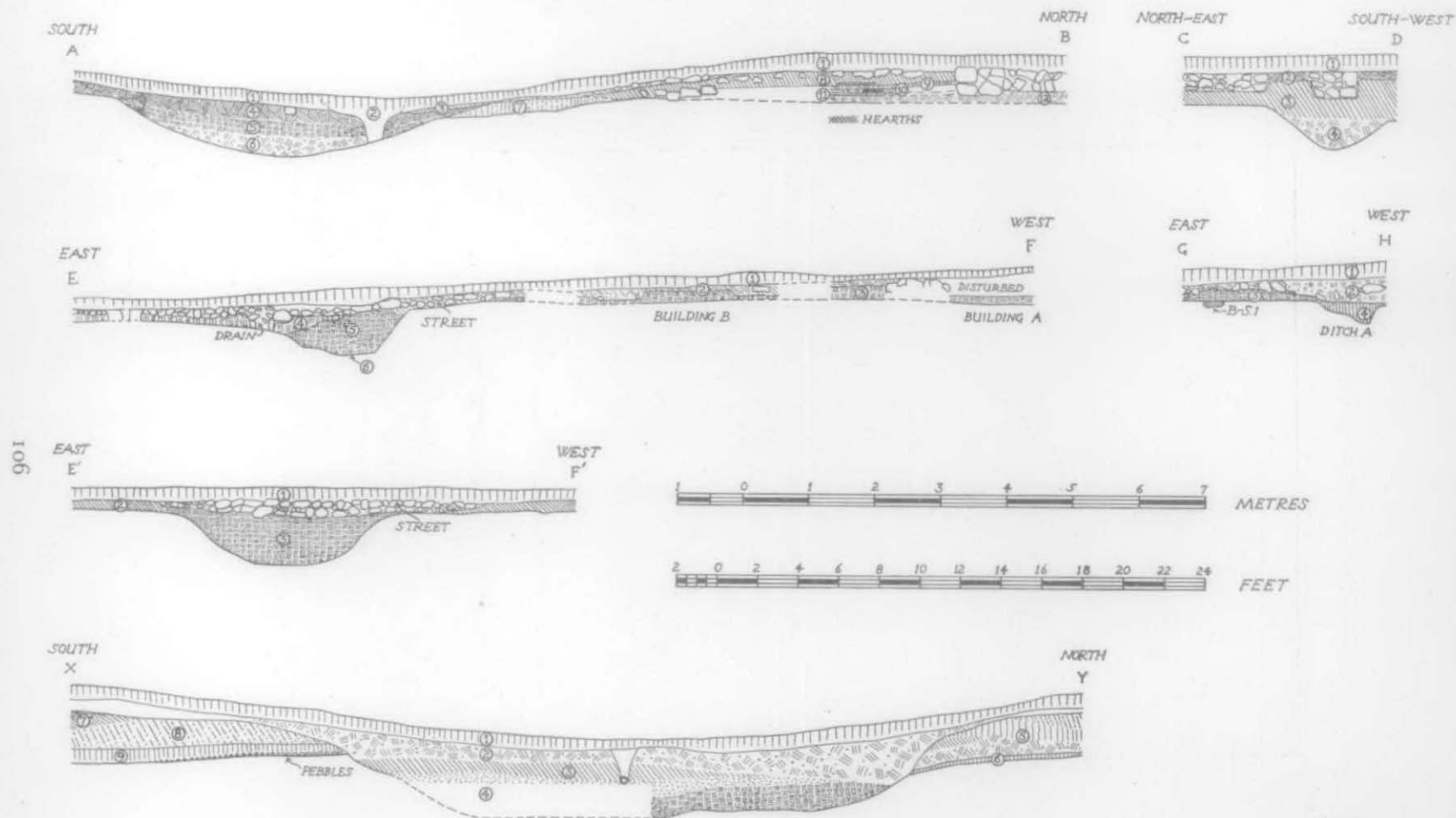


FIG. 11
Sections of Area 1 (E-F, E'-F', G-H), Area 4 (A-B, C-D) and the Pond (X-Y).

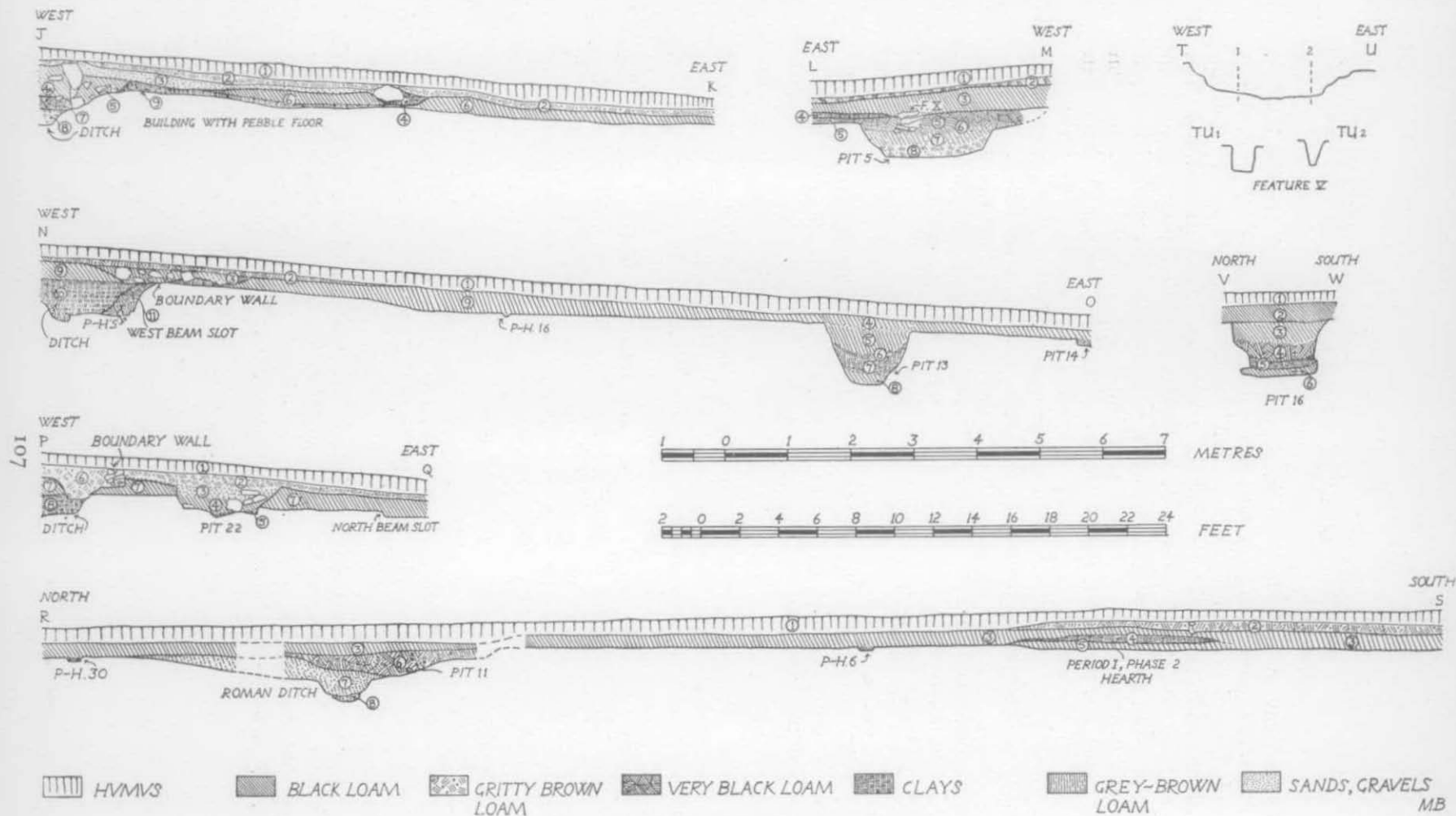


FIG. 12
Sections of Area 5 (L-M, N-O, P-Q, R-S, T-U, V-W).

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of which caused the collapse of the western side of the pit (section Z"-Z'''). The group of pottery from the pit (discussed below pp. 132-3) suggests that it was filled in the early 13th century. Soil samples from levels 6 and 7 (marked with crosses in section Z-Z') produced a large amount of charred grain and other seeds (pp. 195-6), but as in the case of pit 16 it is not really reasonable to suppose that this was a grain-storage pit; conditions here would have been far too damp. Indeed the large rectangular post-hole, only 4 in. deep, on the north side of the pit, suggests the possibility that grain might have been stored off the ground in granaries supported on wood or stone 'stattles': the mark left by the stattles of such a granary as that at Wytham shown in PL. IX, A, would be very similar to this large rectangular post-hole.

South of the pit a narrow wall of unmortared stones ran east-west across the trench; some late 12th or early 13th century pottery was sealed below it, while the surrounding occupation layer (level 2) contained a great deal of pottery of mid 13th to early 14th century date.

AREA 7 (FIG. 4)

This was a roughly rectangular area of stone rubble exposed during the construction of the by-pass. It was too small to have been a house unless it had been badly robbed.

AREA 8 (FIG. 4)

A stone spread, 15 ft. wide, was visible running from east to west across the western half of the area bull-dozed for the by-pass. It must have been one of the east-west streets of the village running along the south margin of a clearly marked depression (FIG. 3) which excavation in Area 4 showed to have been a drainage ditch. A trench dug across this stone spread revealed a broad shallow depression below it, full of dark loamy clay. This depression may have been the original track of the road worn hollow by much use and filled with mud churned up by the traffic. The pottery below the stone spread was apparently of late 12th century date.

AREA 9 (FIG. 4)

A spread of stone rubble, its eastern edge forming a fairly well defined line, was uncovered during the construction of the by-pass. It appears to have formed part of the north-south street of the village.

AREAS 10 (FIG. 4)

During the construction of the by-pass the outline of a house was traced in this area. The walls were too badly damaged for their complete plan to be seen, but the building appeared to be L-shaped with one wing projecting slightly, as far as the line of the north-south street. The burnt area of a single

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AREA 11

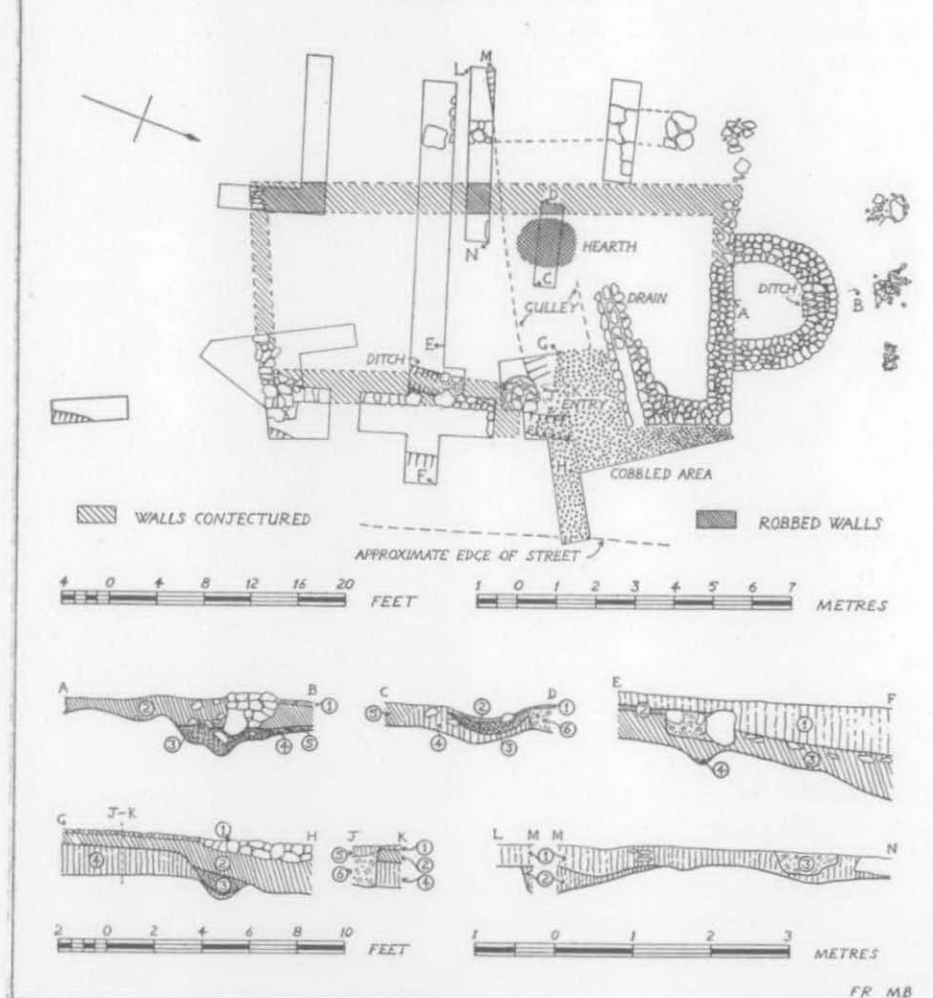


FIG. 13
Plan and sections of Area 11.

hearth could be seen. The house stood at an important position at the central cross roads of the village and appropriately was possibly two-roomed. The northern wing measured 32 ft. by about 29 ft. internally but the total length of the north-south wing was not recoverable.

AREA 11 (Plan and sections, FIG. 13)

Almost exactly in the centre of the village earth-scraping for the new by-pass revealed a large hearth and extensive traces of walls. A lull in the construction enabled the detailed examination of this area to be undertaken.

The earliest feature was a broad shallow gulley running from west to east across the site (sections L-M and M-N, level 2; sections C-D, G-H and J-K, level 4); this contained a few mid 13th century sherds. Into this gulley was cut a small north-south ditch (section G-H, level 3; section E-F, level 4) which contained only a few sherds of undatable pottery. Further to the north, below the later semi-circular foundation, was another small ditch running downhill from the west (section A-B, level 3). This was filled with black clay containing some mid 13th century or slightly later pottery including part of a pitcher with applied decoration of red clay. This ditch was itself cut into by a still smaller ditch running north-south; the gritty clay filling this later ditch contained no finds. Overlying all these earlier features was a level of loamy black occupation-soil (sections A-B, level 2; C-D, level 5; E-F, level 3; G-H and J-K, level 2; L-M and M-N level 1) containing, especially in sections G-H and E-F, a fair amount of pottery,¹⁴⁰ which suggests a late 13th or more probably early 14th century date for the accumulation of the level.

The foundation trenches, walls and robber trenches of the stone building were cut down into this underlying level; the stone building is therefore probably of early 14th century date. The walls were made of unmortared lumps of rough local stone set in a foundation trench (section J-K, level 6); most of the west wall had been robbed leaving a robber trench full of gritty clay and earth (section C-D, level 6; section M-N, level 3), but the plan was quite clear. The building was oblong, 36 ft. 6 in. by 13 ft. 9 in. internally, with the door on the eastern or street side towards the northern end of the building. A small buttress was found at the south-east corner and another in the centre of the west wall; these divided the structure into two bays, but there were no traces of an internal partition on the same line, although the excavation was not complete enough for this to be certain. The whole area of the entrance both inside and outside the building was cobbled, the cobbles on the outside gradually merging into the surface of the village street which here seems to overlie an earlier ditch (section E-F, level 3). Inside the house

¹⁴⁰ FIG. 19, nos. 10, 14; FIG. 20, nos. 8, 12, 13; FIG. 21, nos. 2, 3; FIG. 23, no. 23; FIG. 24, no. 1.

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on the right of the entrance was a stone-built drain falling onto the cobbled area. Against the back wall was a large oval hearth of burnt clay (section C-D; level 2) replacing an earlier hearth (level 3). No other internal features were observed, apart from a small pit in the angle between the drain and the east wall.

At the north end of the building was a semicircular foundation of massive construction (section A-B; PL. IX B), straight-jointed on to the north wall. This foundation may be later than the rest of the building, but the straight-joint is not necessarily complete proof and the whole of the structure may be essentially contemporary. It is suggested below (see note, p. 125; cf. PL. IX c) that we have here the foundation of a semicircular staircase-projection; if this is so it obviously implies an upper floor and in this connection the buttresses on the east wall seem more appropriate to a two-storey house. There were traces of stone walls to the west of the house; these were not investigated.

This building is clearly quite different from all the others so far investigated at Seacourt. It is larger; it may have an upper storey; it is situated at the centre of the village. If in fact it had an upper storey it was possibly an inn; its features certainly do not seem to match what is so far known of medieval priests' houses,¹⁴¹ although it might have been the house of one of the poorer members of the clergy.¹⁴² Only the excavation of analogous examples elsewhere will settle this question.

The latest pottery from Area 11¹⁴³ points to continued occupation until the late 14th century at the earliest.

AREA 12 (FIG. 4)

This was an area of stone rubble uncovered during the construction of the by-pass. There appeared to be a wall along the west side; the rest of the area was light cobbling like that outside the house in Area 11. The irregular patch of cobbling east of and contiguous with this area was excavated in 1939 at trench K (FIG. 3), when it was recorded that the village street¹⁴⁴ crossed the trench from north to south. Below the cobbles and metalling were a series of pits and ditches containing indeterminate sherds of early medieval pottery.

AREA 13 (FIG. 4)

Another area of stone, with badly disturbed features, part of a wall, a hearth and probably part of the village street, was noted during the con-

¹⁴¹ W. A. Pantin in *Med. Arch.*, I (1957), 118-146; III (1959), 216-58.

¹⁴² Very little is known of such houses for they have not survived, *Ibid.*, I (1957), 119.

¹⁴³ FIG. 27, nos. 12, 13.

¹⁴⁴ *Oxonensia*, V (1940), 36; other information from the 1939 notes.

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struction of the by-pass. The outline of a house was very uncertain, but its existence was quite definite.

AREA 14 (FIG. 4)

An irregular patch of stone rubble, apparently off the line of the street, was possibly the remains of a house as far as can be judged from the spacing.

AREA 15 (FIG. 4)

An extensive area of rubble with some large stones in the middle was recorded during the construction of the by-pass. It must have been part of the village street; the large stones in the centre may have been a continuation of the drain excavated in Area 1 (see above p. 87).

AREA 16 (FIG. 4)

A stretch of wall and one corner of a building of unmortared rough stones were seen here during work on the new road.

AREA 17 (FIG. 4)

A badly damaged stretch of wall was noted here during road-work. It was probably a continuation of the structure noted in Area 16.

AREA 18 (FIG. 4)

A wall and a possible corner of a building were noted here during the construction of the new road.

AREA 19 (FIG. 4)

This was a large stone spread which probably included part of the surface of the village street. The main area of the spread was probably the site of another stone house. A number of large stones may have been part of a drain or other heavy foundation. At the western edge of the spread was a rectangle of sandstone slabs measuring in all 3 ft. by 2 ft. The slabs were burnt red, and may have been a large hearth. This site was recorded during road-work.

AREA 20 (FIG. 4)

Here there was an amorphous area of stone rubble and gravel spread. To the east, at the brow of the steep slope, was a small hearth which presumably indicates the presence of a building. The traces were noted during road-work.

AREA 21 (FIG. 4; see also Area 3, above p. 90)

The construction work for the new by-pass at this point exceeded its planned limits and disclosed the existence of heavy rubble and at least one substantial wall, clearly part of the church and possibly forming its west end.

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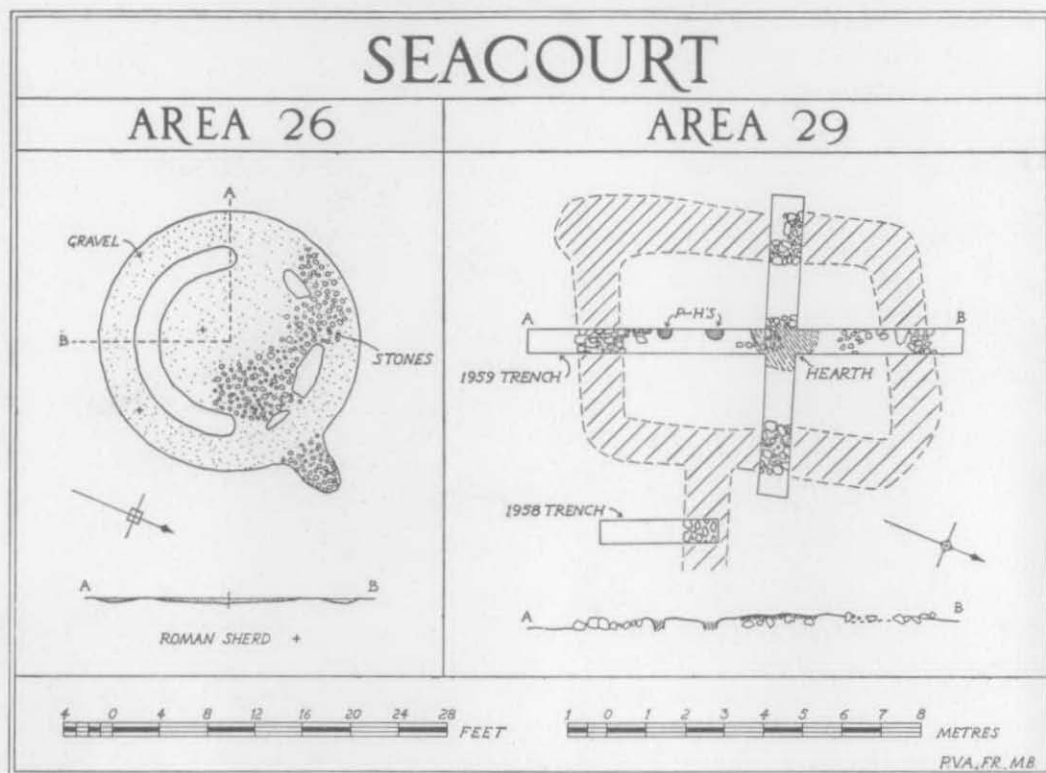


FIG. 14
Plans and sections of Areas 26 and 29.

Little of value could be recorded, but the remains do not appear to have been destroyed and could probably be elucidated by further excavation.

AREA 22 (FIG. 4)

North of the rubble spread indicating the main east-west street of the village¹⁴⁵ was a substantial footing running east-west, and at its west end apparently turning north. The explanation of these traces, recorded during road-work, is quite uncertain.

AREA 23 (FIG. 4)

An angle of rubble walling and a scatter of stones were recorded here during road work.

¹⁴⁵ Excavated in 1939 in trenches J and L: *Oxoniensia*, v (1940), 40.

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AREA 24 (FIG. 4)

A hearth and a scatter of stones in which the surrounding walls could not be traced were revealed here during road construction.

AREA 25 (FIG. 5, trench E'-F'; FIG. 11, section E'-F')

A further section of the village street revealed here during road construction was examined by trenching. The results are described above with the account of Area 1 (see pp. 85-9).

AREA 26 (FIG. 14; for position, see FIG. 4)

Earth-scraping for the construction of the by-pass revealed a gravel circle 22 ft. in diameter. The circle was of tightly packed gravel and clay with a certain amount of small stone which was concentrated as shown in FIG. 14. The whole feature was clearly defined by the surrounding natural clay into which it had obviously been laid. The bare patches within the perimeter where the natural brown clay comes to the surface (see section A-B) may have originally themselves formed a complete circle. The gravel forming this feature contained the jaw and teeth of a large animal, probably ox, and a number of small sherds, all of which seem to be Roman (the most important pieces are marked on the plan, FIG. 14). A large number of small sherds of Roman pottery, together with a few medieval pieces, were found after rain, lying on the surface of the surrounding scraped soil. This feature is very difficult to date; it may be Roman. On the other hand the Roman sherds, of which there are one or two in most of the levels at Seacourt, could easily have become incorporated in the gravel foundation in medieval times.

If a Roman structure, it might be a temple on analogy with the one at Frilford,¹⁴⁶ although other types of circular buildings such as drying and threshing floors may be more probable, having regard to the nature of the Roman occupation (a small rural site), and the absence of a spread of native objects usual on temple sites.¹⁴⁷ If, however, it was medieval, the closest parallel at present is the dovecot at Englishcombe in Somerset.¹⁴⁸

AREA 27 (FIG. 4)

At this point a line of stone was clearly visible during road construction,

¹⁴⁶ *Oxoniensia*, IV (1939), 11-15, FIG. 5. The small amount of Roman pottery in and around the Seacourt structure would be strange for a Roman building, were it not for the fact that the Frilford rotunda was also devoid of finds in its structural levels (*ibid.*, 15).

¹⁴⁷ See Philip Corder, *The Roman Town and Villa at Great Casterton, Rutland* (Second Interim Report, 1954), 19-24, for a stone-built drying floor. However, the most pertinent parallel for this feature is the threshing floor (25 ft. diameter) at Ditchley, Oxon. (*Oxoniensia*, I (1936), 28, 45-6), the stone ring of which (cf. the outer ring of the Seacourt feature) 'formed a low kerb to prevent dispersal and loss of grain'.

¹⁴⁸ *Med. Arch.*, I (1957), 169, FIG. 35. Mr. E. M. Jope kindly discussed this feature and its possible interpretation.

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running down the hill-slope at the north end of the village. The line agrees exactly with what appears to be the line of the village street at this point in the air-photograph (PL. II A).

AREA 28 (FIG. 4)

A strong line of stone, about 50 ft. long and 3 ft. wide, appeared in the final bull-dozing for road construction. Roughly parallel to it and about 20 ft. away was another line of stone which was much less clear. They could have been the two parallel walls of a building, but it was not possible to be definite; there was, however, an obvious hearth in the position marked. It is possible that here was another boundary wall; its thickness would agree well with that of the boundary walls in Areas 4 and 5 (see above, pp. 96, 104) and it would clearly be part of the enclosed ground belonging to the house in Area 29 (see below). The similarity of this arrangement to the situation in Areas 4 and 5 is most convincing. If this were so, the hearth could have been within a lean-to on the east side of the boundary wall, or might have belonged to a subsidiary building connected with the possible parallel wall mentioned above.

AREA 29 (FIG. 14; for position see FIG. 4)

The clearest house revealed by construction work for the by-pass was found here; in the short time available it was possible to do a limited amount of excavation. Two trenches at right-angles to each other revealed that the house was rectangular, with its long axis north and south, and measured 23 ft. by 13 ft. 6 in. internally. The walls were built of unmortared lumps of rough local stone. In the middle of the house, slightly towards the north end, was a large area of heavily burnt clay, bounded on the south and west by reddened blocks of local stone. South of the hearth were two clearly defined post-holes. Where the trench crossed the west wall there seem to have been two periods of construction; the door on to the street may have stood here.

A trial trench in 1958 had revealed a massive east-west wall in this area; it appeared, after plotting the position of the 1959 house, to have been a wall which would have joined the east wall of the house. As in Areas 4 and 5 (pp. 96, 104) it may perhaps be explained as the wall of the enclosure attached to the house, another part of which can perhaps be recognized in Area 28 (see above, p. 115). On the south side of this wall was a thick dark loamy level overlying a layer of fine pebbles and gravel, possibly a floor. If a floor, it would imply a building at this point (cf. the pebble floor by the boundary wall in Area 4, p. 96), perhaps a lightly built lean-to, for no traces were noticed during road construction. The pottery from the black level south of the wall contained fragments of several fine pitchers of mid-late 13th

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century date, but there is no other evidence for the date of the construction of the house and associated structures.

AREA 30 (FIG. 4)

A large rectangular hearth, about 3 ft. by 2 ft. 6 in., was revealed here in the course of road work. The area around the hearth was heavily burnt and overlay an earlier ditch from which no finds were recovered. The walls surrounding the hearth were extremely vague; it appears, however, to have lain in the north-east corner of a building of rough unmortared stone rubble. The dimensions were not recoverable in the time available, but there seems no reason to suppose that the house differed from the normal Seacourt type.

AREA 31 (FIG. 4)

A large area of deeply burnt clay was revealed here during road-work. A possible wall was noted to the west; this, together with the wall in Area 12 (p. 111), may have formed a rectangular building, probably a house, of which the hearth was the clearest surviving trace. Many iron 'skulls' and fragments of slag were collected from this area; they show (pp. 192-3) that while smelting must have been carried on in the vicinity it cannot have taken place in the hearth already noted. Unfortunately it was not possible to associate the iron slag and skulls with any definite level.

AREA 32 (FIG. 4)

During the construction of the by-pass the clear outline of a house built of unmortared stone rubble was revealed at this point. It measured about 27 ft. by 16 ft. internally; there was an obvious hearth against the middle of the east wall. The hearth was probably opposite the entrance which must have been in the west side facing the street. The north and east walls were well preserved, together with part of the west and south sides, but the greater part of the latter could not be certainly traced.

AREA 33 (FIG. 4)

This is the position of the section cut across the village street in 1939.¹⁴⁹ For further details reference should be made to the account of Area 1 (see above p. 85).

AREA 34 (FIG. 4)

This is a building partly excavated in 1939 in trench B.¹⁵⁰ The northern end of a rectangular building was clearly defined, but it was not traced further.

¹⁴⁹ *Oxoniensia*, v (1940), 34-5.

¹⁵⁰ *Oxoniensia*, v (1940), 35.

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In 1959 this same part of the building was seen during road-construction, but no additions could be made to the plan.

AREA 35 (FIG. 4)

This is a clearly defined line of massive stone running east and west for at least 120 ft. It was first discovered in 1938¹⁵¹ and sectioned in trench J of 1939,¹⁵² when it was found to be 9 ft. wide; it was not seen during the construction of the by-pass, probably because of the dumps which covered most of this area. The nature and purpose of this feature could be easily checked in future excavation; it has been suggested above (p. 93) that it may be explained as the precinct or boundary wall of the manor-house.

INTERPRETATION AND CONCLUSIONS

THE ROMAN SITE

Sherds of Roman pottery occurred in most of the areas excavated, but Roman structures were found only in Area 5, where there was a ditch and other traces of occupation, and perhaps in Area 26, which showed a circular building of uncertain nature, but possibly of Roman date. The pottery (pp. 138-9), coins (p. 182) and other objects (FIG. 28, nos. 19, 24) indicate that occupation of the site began about the middle of the 2nd century A.D. and lasted well into the 4th century. No traces of any really substantial buildings were seen and the shallow ditch perhaps suggests that the site was that of a farmstead of native type; if so, the building in Area 26 would, if Roman, best be interpreted as a threshing floor. The animal bones (pp. 197-8) were too few to allow any firm generalizations.

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Chronology

In none of the areas excavated were there any buildings or other features which could be assigned to a date before the late 12th century. There was, however, almost everywhere a scatter of earlier pottery sherds (FIG. 18, nos. 1-14) suggesting occupation nearby perhaps in the 10th, but certainly in the 11th and earlier 12th centuries. The pottery evidence is complementary to the documentary references to Seacourt in the 10th and 11th centuries (p. 79), but the position of the early nucleus of settlement has not so far been located.

¹⁵¹ *Oxoniensia*, III (1938), 168, 174 f.

¹⁵² *Oxoniensia*, V (1940), 40.

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It may have lain in the south-eastern part of the village, although the 1939 trial trenches there (FIG. 3, O-V) did not reveal any clear indication of occupation earlier than the 12th century.

The detailed excavation of Areas 1, 2, 5, 6 and 11 showed that there the earliest features could be dated to the later 12th century. These sites are all near the western and northern limits of the village as shown by the extent of the earthworks on the air-photograph (PL. II A) and by the spread of pottery on the surface of the ploughed field. The evidence of these areas suggests therefore that the village expanded greatly to north and west towards the end of the 12th century. It was probably also at this time that the area of the parish under plough reached its greatest extent, as indicated by the ridge and furrow shown in FIG. 2, an extent which far exceeds any recorded in modern times (p. 76). The expansion of Seacourt at this period appears to be a reflection of that general phase of rising population and land hunger which reached its height in the later 13th century.¹⁵³

In each of the areas at Seacourt where the lower levels could be investigated, the buildings of the earlier period were found to have been of timber. In every case these were replaced by stone structures at dates varying from the mid 13th (Area 1) to the early-mid 14th century (Area 4). The documentary evidence throws no light on this process, but the fact that the north-south street appears to have been one of the earliest stone structures, suggests that there was an element of planning behind the initiation of the change.¹⁵⁴ It must mark a period of prosperity in the village and it certainly indicates, in one sphere at least, a shift of emphasis away from the timber building of the clay-lands towards the traditions of the stony highlands to the west. This phase of timber construction and its associated levels have, for convenience, been referred to as *Period I*, although it will be noted that the end-date varies from area to area and that *Period I* overlaps with *Period II*, to which the stone buildings have been assigned.

By 1439 Seacourt was deserted with the exception of two houses both distant from the church. It has been argued above (pp. 83-4) that the desertion had probably taken place by 1400 and that it had been preceded by a period of economic decline which had made itself felt even before the Black Death. The archaeological evidence suggests that the stone house in Area 4 was built

¹⁵³ Saltmarsh, 1941, 28-9; J. C. Russell, *British Medieval Population* (1948), 246-60; M. W. Beresford, *The Lost Villages of England* (1954), 151, 201.

¹⁵⁴ A change from timber to stone construction has been noted at this date in other deserted medieval villages: Moreton, Somerset, and Holworth, Dorset (P. A. Rhatz in *Proc. Dorset Nat. Hist. & Arch. Soc.*, 81 (1959), 133); Wharram Percy, Yorks. (information from Mr. J. G. Hurst); and possibly Rischolm, Lincs. (F. H. Thompson in *Med. Arch.*, IV (1960), 104). The wide distribution of these villages suggests that the change may be of general validity; if so, it may become necessary to seek for some overall cause affecting much of the country.

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only very shortly before this period. It must have been one of the latest houses in Seacourt, for there are few indications of continued occupation after the middle of the 14th century.¹⁵⁵ The latest pottery from the village (FIG. 27) suggests a little activity down to about 1400, but these late sherds are so few in number that it is difficult to imagine any but a very reduced population after the Black Death. Seacourt, then, was probably a victim of the general decline apparent in the 14th century;¹⁵⁶ but the progress of this decline was accelerated by the plague, which was relatively severe in this part of Berkshire (p. 82), with the result that there is only slight evidence for any occupation of the village after c. 1350 and none at all for any continued occupation after 1400.

Village planning (FIGS. 3, 4)

There is very little evidence for the plan of the village in the late 12th and early 13th century. Although the wooden buildings in Area 5 had the same alignment as the later stone structures, the north-south street, to which the latter were related, does not seem to have been in existence at this period: in Areas 1, 25 and 33 it overlay an earlier ditch of some size. Of the east-west streets, that to the north seems to have overlain an earlier unpaved track in Area 8, while the street north of the church is so deeply cut down as to suggest that it was probably early in use;¹⁵⁷ the remaining east-west street has not been dated. The church and the pond were in existence by this time, and the flat rectangular area, possibly the site of the manor-house, had already been formed. Of the relationship of the village of this period to the postulated earlier nucleus, nothing is known.

About the middle of the 13th century the paving of the north-south street defined the future main axis of this part of the village, although the alignment of the timber structures in Areas 1 and 5 suggests that they were laid out from an earlier boundary of some kind in the same position. The east-west streets already in existence were apparently surfaced at about the same time. All the excavated stone buildings, with the possible exception of that in Area 4, were laid out in relation to this north-south street, onto which the long walls of the houses in each case faced, and onto which the doors of the houses seem to have opened.¹⁵⁸ The houses were well spaced out

¹⁵⁵ It was probably at this time that ploughing encroached on the western part of Seacourt, as shown by the traces of ridge and furrow overlapping the earthworks of the village in PL. II A. It would have been convenient to plough land as near as possible to the remaining houses, and areas already deserted may well have been sacrificed to this purpose.

¹⁵⁶ Postan, 1950, 244; Beresford, *op. cit.*, 202, 241.

¹⁵⁷ This, the main through road from Oxford to the west, is discussed above p. 78.

¹⁵⁸ As far as can be judged by the surviving remains (Areas 11 and 29) and the position of the hearths (e.g. in Areas 10 and 32). Area 4 appears to have been an exception, and was possibly related to the east-west track on its south side.

along both sides of the street; in some places they seem to have faced each other almost as if laid out in pairs (Areas 13 and 34; 1 and 32; 4 and 30; 19 and 29), an impression which perhaps supports the idea of some conscious planning behind the lay-out of the north-south street (p. 118). The larger houses were placed in the more important positions: the house in Areas 12 and 31 was at the head of an east-west street; that in Area 10 at the main cross-roads, while the most elaborate of all, in Area 11 occupied a site opposite the possible position of the manor-house. Many of the stone houses seem to have had out-buildings attached or nearby, and in some cases both were surrounded by stone boundary walls (Areas 4, 5, 28, 29 and 35). The enclosure probably formed in each case a more or less complete farm unit, an immediate parallel to which is provided by the wooden buildings in Area 5 (FIG. 8). This suggestion of continuity between the wooden and stone structures of the village is supported by a consideration of the house plans (see below).

The Seacourt House

The typical house at Seacourt was essentially a rectangular structure about 25 ft. by 14 ft. internally (Area 5, the wooden house, FIG. 8; Areas 1, 29 and 32, stone houses, FIGS. 5, 14 and 4 respectively), with a single hearth either approximately in the centre of the house or against the middle of the rear wall; there were no signs of any partition walls. Houses both smaller (in Area 4, 12 ft. by 10 ft. internally) and larger (in Area 11, about 36 ft. by 14 ft. internally) were recorded. The early 13th century house in Area 5 is so similar in size and plan to the later stone houses that it may be safely assumed that it represents the typical Seacourt house at that time; the later houses converted into stone a plan already in use for timber buildings. Little can be discovered of the appearance of these houses; the wooden house in Area 5 was timber-framed possibly of oak¹⁵⁹ with the wall spaces infilled with daub on a frame-work of wattles,¹⁶⁰ while the lack of roof-tiles shows that the roof was probably thatched. No evidence of timber-framing was noted in the stone walls of the later houses, but even so it is not certain whether they were timber-framed on a stone ground-wall, or entirely stone-built. The stone-robbing which is known to have taken place at Seacourt since the desertion of the village makes it dangerous to argue from the amount of rubble debris found on any site.¹⁶¹ In no case were there enough roof-tiles to suggest anything but a thatched roof.

¹⁵⁹ Fragments of oak were found in post-hole 62 of the contemporary barn-byre building (see p. 196).

¹⁶⁰ A fragment of daub, probably burnt by chance, was found in the primary filling of the north-south ditch in Area 5 (see below p. 194, A.M. 8455); it may have been derived from this house or the barn-byre. It bore clear impressions of wattle.

¹⁶¹ See above p. 77, note 41.

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There were no houses with provision for animals under the same roof as humans. On the other hand both in the early 13th century wooden complex in Area 5, and in association with most of the stone houses throughout the excavated parts of the village, there were subsidiary buildings in either wood or stone. These are seen most clearly in Area 5 (FIG. 8) and in Areas 1, 4, 5, 11, 28 and 29, while the structures in Areas 6, 16, 17, 18, 23 and 24 may also be parts of similar auxiliary buildings. In Area 1, building A was probably a byre; it was also the only stone building which showed any traces of timber-framing (post-holes A-C, FIG. 5).

The Seacourt houses clearly have nothing in common with the typical medieval 'long-house', which has men and animals under one roof-line separated by a cross- or feeding-passage.¹⁶² This is the more strange since in the present stage of research it appears that the long-house was the normal type over the great part of the country, and that the smaller one- or two-roomed cottages were the homes of only the poorer members of the community.¹⁶³ At Seacourt, where all the houses are of the latter type, this explanation cannot apply, as the variations in size and the associated out-buildings confirm. It seems more probable that we have here a distinct tradition which expresses itself in small groups of buildings forming a single farm-unit, rather than in a long-house combining at least two different functions. It has been shown that this type of farm-unit was in existence in the early 13th century (Area 5) and that it was the normal arrangement in the later stone village. Its origins, which must be different from those which gave rise to the long-house, are at present obscure. It is already clear, however, that there are several distinct traditions which could have given rise to the peasant houses of medieval England,¹⁶⁴ and a corollary would be that these houses themselves exist in several different types. This now seems

¹⁶² Cf. the long-house at Beere, Devon, discussed by E. M. Jope in *Med. Arch.*, III (1958), 122.

¹⁶³ J. G. Hurst in a lecture to the British Association at Cardiff, 1960, summarized in *D.M.V.R.G.*, 8th Annual Report (1960), Appendix E.

¹⁶⁴ For the Saxon background, cf. C. A. R. Radford in *Med. Arch.*, I (1957), 27-38. At Warendorf, Westphalia, an extensively excavated 7th and 8th century continental Saxon village, the buildings were of several types including small rectangular houses, not unlike the Seacourt examples in general dimensions, but showing in their post-holes evidence of a tradition of timber building apparently quite different from that at Seacourt (W. Winkelmann in *Neue Ausgrabungen in Deutschland* (1958), 492-517, especially 500, Abb. 5., typen III and IV). It is by no means impossible that the various Warendorf structures might be similar to the ancestors of several types of houses (cf. Radford, *op. cit.*, 36), among them the Seacourt type discussed here, but if so, almost all the links connecting them are still to be traced. Nothing is as yet certainly known in England of the houses introduced by the Danish settlers of the 9th and 10th centuries, but for a village of houses apparently distinct from the known Saxon examples cf. Maxey, Northants., excavated by Mr. P. V. Addyman (*Med. Arch.*, V (1961), 309-10), to whom I am grateful for advance information on the buildings. Late Saxon and early medieval town houses appear to have been quite different from those in the country, but of these virtually nothing is known, except at Southampton (*Med. Arch.*, III (1959), 310-1, FIG. 103) and Oxford, where the Clarendon Hotel site produced late Saxon cellars and other evidence for the contemporary topography of the town (*Oxoniensia*, XXIII (1958), 5-10).

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to have been established at Seacourt; future work will presumably define the distribution in time and space of the Seacourt house and its associated structures, thus enabling some estimate of their ultimate origin to be reached.

Economy

Apart from the probable byre in Area 1 and the wooden barn-byre in Area 5, the structures excavated at Seacourt were dwellings. The only traces of industrial processes were those of iron-smelting in Area 31 (see below pp. 192-3). Agriculture and animal husbandry were clearly the main occupations.

The detailed analysis of the animal bones (see below, p. 197) shows that the percentages of the various animals present in *Period I* are very similar to those in *Period II*. Ox and sheep or goat account for the mass of the material examined, while pig is much less common, and the other animals (horse, roe and red deer, dog, cat and hare) were only represented by single or very few individuals. There was some evidence for the domestic fowl and for goose and wood-pigeon; also a few oyster-shells were found. Although the bones are nearly all derived from the domestic food refuse, they probably give an indication of the composition of the stock held by the village.

Grain was found in soil-samples taken from two pits (pit 16, Area 5; pit 6, Area 6; report below pp. 195-6). There was a little Barley, but the bulk of the material recovered consisted of Wheat and Oats in a proportion of about 5:3. Whether or not this is a true indication of the relative amount of these crops cultivated depends on the nature of the pits in which they were found: if they were storage pits the grain might only represent the contents of the pits, but if they were rubbish pits the samples have a random character of greater validity for an assessment of the crops of the village.

The sides of the pits seemed to show that there had been a timber framing, as would be necessary in a storage pit (FIG. 10 and FIG. 12, V-W see pp. 103, 108). This was not supported by an examination of the soil samples (pp. 193-4), although some large pieces of oak occurred in the filling of pit 16 (VII, no. 7, p. 197). Whatever their original purposes, it thus seems best to regard these pits as having been filled with highly organic rubbish (p. 193). Underground storage of grain in so damp an area is an unlikely suggestion. Carbonization of part of the grain, a process which does not seem to occur spontaneously, may be supposed to have resulted from accidents in drying the corn.¹⁶⁵ The latter process is necessary in damp climates,¹⁶⁶ and the fact that it was required

¹⁶⁵ *P.P.S.*, XXIII (1957), 206.

¹⁶⁶ See E. M. Jope on the corn-drying kilns at Beere, Devon, in *Med. Arch.*, II (1958), 123-4. Mr. Jope informs me that there was a grain-drying barn with flues, inserted at Deddington Castle, Oxon., in the 14th century.

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is strong evidence of unsuitable conditions for the storage of grain underground. No corn-drying kilns have so far been recorded at Seacourt, but their existence may perhaps be expected from the evidence of carbonization.

Work done and work to do

The excavations at Seacourt have revealed for the first time the plan and much of the detail of a large part of a medieval village—apparently the most important part. This was the kind of background against which the medieval peasant lived; these were the kind of buildings and contacts¹⁶⁷ which he knew. Ultimately the picture built up by this and similar excavations will provide a detailed setting for the chronicles, poems and official records of the countryside of medieval England. Much, however, remains to be done both at Seacourt and elsewhere among the nearly two thousand deserted medieval villages now known. At Seacourt the recent excavations have posed a number of questions which have been discussed above. Some of these must be answered by work elsewhere; others can be answered by future research at Seacourt itself.

In general it is clear from the work at Seacourt that excavation must be on a considerable scale if anything like a valid picture of the development of even a small medieval village is to be obtained. The complexity of these sites and the mass of finds in turn demand full publication if the results are to be other than a series of inadequate generalizations.

In particular the location of the original nucleus of settlement, perhaps in the south-eastern quarter of the later village, is highly desirable; so too is the excavation of the church, which provides a convenient, well defined site, not too large in area for a single season's excavation. Both will throw light on the earliest history of the village. In addition it would be most useful to have the complete plans, with boundaries, out-buildings, houses and other structures (e.g. pits and corn-drying kilns) of an entire farm-unit from both the earlier and later periods of the village. Such a unit, probably showing both periods superimposed, appears to have stood on the oval area of flattish ground due east across the street from the possible site of the manor-house. Excavation here in 1937¹⁶⁸ (FIG. 3) revealed stone buildings overlying earlier features, and the contours of the ground suggest that this would prove to be a single, clearly defined unit. In such an area it would be possible to consider questions of the continuity or otherwise displayed by the various structures,

¹⁶⁷ See the discussion of the pottery, p. 137 and the sherd of Mediterranean glass, PL. X, D, p. 185. These contacts at Seacourt presumably reflect the proximity of Oxford market with its own distant contacts.

¹⁶⁸ *Oxoniensia*, II (1937), 203.

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and of planning, function and local economy.¹⁶⁹ The excavation or testing of the suggested site of the manor-house (FIG. 3) would also be valuable. Finally the mill-leats to the north-east of the village fully support the documentary evidence for mills: the location and excavation of a fulling mill or even an ordinary corn-grinding mill would be of the highest interest.¹⁷⁰

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Grateful acknowledgement is made to many bodies and private individuals who assisted the work in 1958 and 1959; to the Ministry of Works who arranged and paid for the work in 1958 and 1959, and have contributed to the cost of publishing this report; to the Ashmolean Museum who, through the good offices of Mr. H. J. Case and Mr. R. W. Hamilton, provided accommodation for the finds in the cellar at 35, Beaumont Street and gave generous financial support to the 1959 work, as well as giving permission for the publication of the air-photographs in PL. II; to the members of the Oxford Architectural and Historical Society who washed the pottery; to the members of the Oxford University Archaeological Society who provided some of the volunteers; to the Oxford City Fire Brigade who most kindly loaned and manned a fire-engine turntable from which high level photographs of the site were taken; to the Deserted Medieval Village Research Group who permitted the information from the Lay Subsidy records extracted for their own use to be published here; and to Messrs. Benfield and Loxley who provided the plant and paid-labour. Among the many individuals who helped in many ways grateful thanks are due to Dr. A. B. Emden and Mr. P. S. Spokes who smoothed the way for many local arrangements; to Mr. E. M. Jope who has helped in every possible way, in discussion, by the gift of offprints and finally by reading and commenting on the typescript; to Mr. J. G. Hurst for discussing the problems of deserted medieval villages and for much other help; to Mr. David Sturdy for discussing many local problems and for providing the information about ridge and furrow on which FIG. 2 is partly based; to Colonel J. H. Haslam who prepared the basic survey of the site; to Mr. A. R. Millard who acted as Assistant Director for part of the 1958 excavation; to Miss Hannelore Baecker (Mrs. Biddle) who prepared the card-index of the small objects and washed some of the pottery; to Miss J. E. Collins who marked most of the pottery and provided information on Berkshire topography as well as working on the site; to Mr. Julian Jourdain

¹⁶⁹ Cf. the results of the extensive excavation of the Iron Age village at Little Woodbury, *P.P.S.*, vi (1940), 30-111.

¹⁷⁰ The only wooden mill so far excavated is at Old Windsor, Berks., *Med. Arch.*, II (1958), 184-5.

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who planned Area 4; to Capt. Fenwick and to many members of Blackfriars who were energetic volunteers; and to Mr. May and Mr. Wise who farmed the site. The drawings of the pottery are the work of Mr. Terry Ball, while Mr. C. O. Waterhouse, M.B.E., Mr. P. Glover and Mr. P. F. Ewence drew the small finds. Specialist reports have been provided by Mrs. E. M. Jope, Dr. D. B. Harden and Mr. B. R. Hartley; Mr. A. Dikigoropoulos, F.S.A., has permitted me to draw on his descriptions and discussion of the small objects found in 1939; finally Mr. L. Biek has arranged for many scientific investigations and carried out others himself; to all these individuals and many others my very best thanks are due.

During the excavation the site was visited by many people including the following: Mrs. H. E. O'Neil, Miss M. V. Taylor, Messrs. H. J. Case, H. M. Colvin, A. B. Emden, J. G. Hurst, E. M. Jope, Prof. I. A. Richmond, Messrs. P. S. Spokes, Lawrence Stone and A. J. Taylor.

NOTE ON

SEMI-CIRCULAR STAIRCASES IN THE OXFORD REGION

By FABIAN RADCLIFFE, O.P.

The semi-circular projection on the north wall of the Area 11 house was diagnosed as the base of a staircase, not because there was material evidence for this *in situ*, but because all other possibilities seemed to be ruled out. It could not have been a midden or sump of any kind since there was no pit or midden deposit; nor could it have been an oven since there was no trace of burning, either on the stone walls or on the natural clay surface. And a bow window projection is unlikely on such a house in the 14th century, let alone on a north wall. But the likelihood of its having been a staircase is considerably strengthened by the fact that a number of houses in the Oxford region have staircases set in semi-circular projections (FIG. 16). Examples are recorded so far at Hook Norton (about twelve),¹⁷¹ Charlton-on-Otmoor (three), Murcot (three), Islip (two), Weston on the Green (at least one), Fencot (one) and Fewcot (one), and there is little doubt that further investigation will reveal more. These stairs are all strictly semi-circular, except for the one at Fewcot which goes through rather more than 180°.¹⁷² Those which ascend more than one storey (as do some at Hook Norton) stop and begin again for the second flight, with the two doors shutting off the steps side by side. Usually

¹⁷¹ *A History of Hook Norton*, by Margaret Dickins, A.R.C.O. (Banbury, 1928), 179.

¹⁷² The semi-circular stair built within the house, not in an external projection, is quite common. There are local examples at Headington, Standlake, Ramsden, Bloxham, Kings Sutton and Chacombe (Northants).

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the stairs stand in a semi-circular projection, though some (e.g. at Hook Norton) are in a square projection, and one similar is also recorded at Cothay, Somerset, built about 1480.¹⁷³ Those at Hook Norton were originally built solid, rubble filled and faced with stone; but most are now fitted with wooden stairs, as are all the others which have been examined. Some have a roof of their own; with others, the line of the main roof is brought out over the stair. Usually there is one small window half way up the flight.

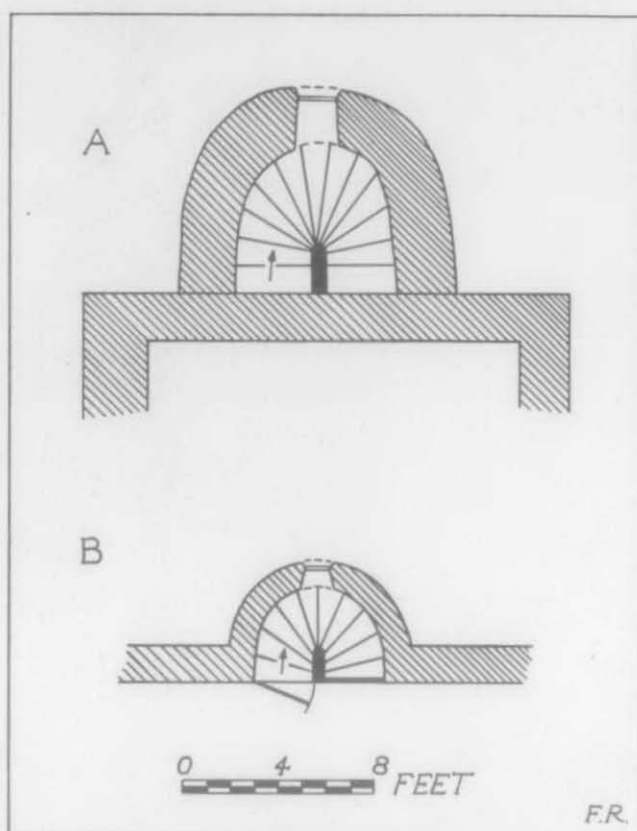


FIG. 15

Semi-circular staircase projections.

- A. Suggested reconstruction of staircase at Seacourt, Area 11.
- B. Semi-circular staircase at Charlton-on-Otmoor, Oxon. (cf. PL. IX c).

¹⁷³ See *A History of Hook Norton*, 179.

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It is not easy to date these stairs. None of the local examples mentioned could well be earlier than 1600. But there is the Cothay example which goes back to the 15th century; the Otmoor area, which contains at least nine of the stairs, has always been a self-contained and conservative region; and there is a stair of exactly similar construction in the Saxon church at Brixworth, Northants. It is therefore possible that the semi-circular staircase projection was a late Saxon and medieval style (dictated by economy of house space, and perhaps also by ease of construction), which survived in this and other areas in smaller domestic buildings into the 18th century, and of which



FIG. 16

Map showing semi-circular staircases in the Oxford region.

- | | |
|-------------------------|------------------------|
| 1. Hook Norton. | 5. Islip. |
| 2. Fewcot. | 6. Charlton-on-Otmoor. |
| 3. Weston on the Green. | 7. Murcot. |
| 4. Fencot. | 8. Seacourt. |

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Seacourt provides a 14th century example.¹⁷⁴ But at the moment there is too little evidence to confirm this suggestion or sketch a history of the style. However, a tentative reconstruction of the Seacourt stair (if such it is) is offered here (FIG. 15 A) with a stair from Charlton-on-Otmoor shown for comparison (FIG. 15 B; cf. PL. IX C). The average width of the treads at Charlton is 1 ft. 1 in., the average height of the risers 8 in. This gives a rise of some 7 ft. 4 in. in the 180° turn. The Seacourt reconstruction is based on the same width of the treads; and if the risers were also 8 in., the stair would have a rise of about 9 ft.

It must be admitted, however, that so far no exact parallel has been found for the Seacourt stair. It differs from the other examples in two ways. First, it is on the gable-end of the house, not on the long wall, as are all the others,¹⁷⁵ but since the stair was perhaps built later than the rest of the house, the end-wall may well have been a more convenient place for it than either the front or back. Secondly, it stands in a rather deeper projection than other stairs. This might mean that the stair was in fact truly circular. On the other hand the extra depth may deliberately have been designed to give a greater rise, or to make the stair less steep. Neither of these two differences seems to be sufficiently radical to rule out the possibility that the Seacourt projection was a stair; at the same time it would have been reassuring to find an exact parallel. But this may be discovered in time.

THE FINDS

Abbreviations of special articles and books

- | | |
|---------------------------|---|
| <i>Bodleian Extension</i> | R. L. S. Bruce-Mitford, 'The Archaeology of the Bodleian Extension', <i>Oxoniensia</i> , IV (1939), 89-146. |
| <i>Gillam, 1957</i> | J. P. Gillam, 'Types of Roman Coarse Pottery Vessels in Northern Britain', <i>Arch. Ael.</i> , XXXV (1957), 1-72. |
| <i>Jewry Wall</i> | K. M. Kenyon, <i>Excavations at the Jewry Wall Site, Leicester</i> . (Soc. Antiqs. Research Rep., xv, 1948). |
| <i>Jope, 1942</i> | E. M. Jope, 'Some Recent Finds of Medieval Pottery', <i>Oxoniensia</i> , VII (1942), 71-9. |
| <i>Jope, 1943</i> | E. M. Jope, 'Medieval Pottery from Merton College, Oxford', <i>Oxoniensia</i> , VIII-IX (1943-44), 102-6. |

¹⁷⁴ M. W. Barley, in *The English Farmhouse and Cottage* (1961) gives examples of stairs in semi-circular projections from Devonshire in the late 16th-17th century (p. 111, fig. 18); and in square projections from Westmorland in the late 17th-early 18th century (p. 235, fig. 34).

¹⁷⁵ The house at Ramsden, quoted in n. 172 above, was originally a simple rectangular building divided into two small dwellings. The gable end walls were each massive structures 4 ft. 6 in. thick, incorporating both a fireplace and a semi-circular stair. This is the only local example I have discovered so far of a semi-circular stair on the gable-end. The stairs quoted by Mr. Barley (see previous note) are all on the long wall of the house.

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- Jope, 1945* E. M. Jope, 'Recent Medieval Finds in the Oxford Area', *Oxoniensia*, x (1945), 96-9.
- Jope, 1947* E. M. Jope, 'Medieval Pottery in Berkshire', *Berks. Arch. J.*, I (1947), 49-76.
- Jope, 1950* E. M. Jope, *et. al.*, 'Pottery from a late 12th century Well-filling and other Medieval Finds from St. John's College, Oxford, 1947', *Oxoniensia*, xv (1950), 44-62.
- Jope, 1952* E. M. Jope, 'Late Saxon Pits under Oxford Castle Mound: Excavations in 1952', *Oxoniensia*, xvii/xviii (1952-3), 77-111.
- Jope, 1952a* E. M. Jope, 'Regional Character in West Country Medieval Pottery', *Trans. Bristol & Glos. Arch. Soc.*, LXXI (1952), 88-97.
- Jope, 1952b* E. M. Jope, 'Medieval Pottery' in H. E. O'Neil, 'Whittington Court Roman Villa', *Trans. Bristol & Glos. Arch. Soc.*, LXXI (1952), 61-76.
- Jope, 1958* E. M. Jope, 'The Clarendon Hotel, Oxford. Part 1. The Site', *Oxoniensia*, xxiii (1958), 1-83.
- Jope, 1959* E. M. Jope and R. I. Threlfall, 'The Twelfth-Century Castle at Ascot Doilly, Oxfordshire: its History and Excavation', *Ant. J.*, xxxix (1959), 219-73.
- King John's House* Lt.-Gen. Pitt-Rivers, *King John's House, Tollard Royal, Wilts.* (1890).
- LMMC* *London Museum Medieval Catalogue* (1940).
- Richborough I* J. P. Bushe-Fox, *First Report on the Excavation of the Roman Fort at Richborough, Kent* (Soc. Ant. Research Rep., vi, 1926).
- Richborough II* Ditto, *Second Report* (vii, 1928).
- Richborough III* Ditto, *Third Report* (x, 1932).
- Richborough IV* Ditto, *Fourth Report* (xvi, 1949).
- Roman Colchester* M. R. Hull, *Roman Colchester* (Soc. Antiqs. Research Rep., xx, 1958).
- Verulamium, Insula XVII* K. M. Richardson, 'Report on Excavations at Verulamium: Insula xvii, 1938', *Arch.*, xc (1944), 81-126.

POTTERY

GENERAL INTRODUCTION

The medieval pottery of the Oxford area is better known than that of any other comparable region in England, thanks to Mr. R. L. S. Bruce-Mitford and Mr. E. M. Jope. The excavations at Seacourt were undertaken primarily to investigate the village and only secondarily to provide further knowledge of the medieval pottery of the area. Indeed, the most important factor in the approach to the medieval pottery was the known date of 1439 by which the village was to all intents and purposes deserted. However, it has been argued above (p. 84) that it is possible to place the desertion of the village before 1400, and it is this terminus which has been used in the report on the pottery and other finds.

Here the pottery is mainly presented as evidence for the dating of the individual structures and general phases of occupation at Seacourt. The illustrations of the pottery are arranged with this end in view: thus there are figures of the Roman

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pottery (FIG. 17), of the earliest and latest medieval pottery (FIGS. 18 and 27), as well as of the pottery from the two main phases of occupation (*Period I*, FIGS. 19-24; *Period II*, FIGS. 25-6). In addition the individual sherds have been described in some detail, so that, with the development of our knowledge of the dating of the medieval pottery of the area, corrections or refinements may be made to the chronology of the village as suggested here. The chronological information derived from the pottery is discussed above in the appropriate sections of the excavation report (pp. 84-117) and in the conclusions (pp. 117-9); in this introduction to the description of the pottery, certain aspects of the pottery *per se* are discussed. In particular something can be learnt from the pottery groups of the development of the habits of the medieval potter; the slowness of this development from the late 12th to the late 13th century is especially clear.

The pottery from the 1958 and 1959 excavations was extremely plentiful, although most of it was very fragmentary even when it came from pits. This was also the case with the previous excavations, some of the pottery from which has been published by Mr. E. M. Jope.¹⁷⁶ As well as being fragmentary, much of the pottery was unstratified, or only stratified in a most general way in the featureless levels of black occupation soil which covered much of the site (see above p. 103). Only a few pits produced enough pottery to form valuable groups. In these circumstances the treatment of the pottery has been very selective; except in the sections illustrating the earliest and latest material from the site, no pottery has been illustrated or described which is not securely stratified in relation to some important feature of the site or in a pit.

POTTERY GROUPS

There are certain important groups, however, which provide a framework to which the rest of the pottery may be related and which have a significance beyond that of the village itself. These groups may now be listed and discussed.

Pit 5 (Area 5)

This pit is described above p. 98 (see also plan, FIG. 7 and section, FIG. 12, L-M). The following pottery from this pit is published:

Level 7. FIG. 23, nos. 1, 16, 19.

Level 8. FIG. 23, no. 9.

The pottery from pit 5 was extremely fragmentary. Levels 6, 7 and 8 were entirely within the pit and the 18 sherds of glazed pottery they contained were only of Group A fabric (*Bodleian Extension*, 116-7), presumably from tripod-pitchers and allied types. The 18 glazed sherds represent only 7.3 per cent of the total pottery found in this pit. Of the 227 unglazed sherds, 110 (48.5 per cent) were of sandy fabric, while 117 (51.5 per cent) were of coarser wares with much white flecking from the use of valley bottom clays (Jope, 1959, 245). Of the 22 identifiable pots from this pit, 3 were glazed pitchers (presumably tripod-pitchers), while 12 were cooking pots and 7 bowls. Of the 12 cooking pots, 7 were in white-flecked fabrics and 5 in sandy wares. All the 7 bowls were in white-flecked fabrics.

The date of this pit is defined by the material in the sealing layer 5, which sug-

¹⁷⁶ Mainly in Jope, 1947, where on p. 72 references are given to the Seacourt material published by him, both in that paper and in *Oxoniensis*. A few sherds from the 1939 excavations are published in the present paper (FIG. 19, 9; FIG. 20, 2; FIG. 21, 4 (parts of); FIG. 22, 5; FIG. 27, 14) by kind permission of Mr. R. L. S. Bruce-Mitford.

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gests that the pit was filled in by the first quarter of the 13th century (especially FIG. 19, no. 7). On the other hand the numerical analysis of the pottery from this pit presents a very different picture from that from pits 16, 25 and 6 and a date for the contents of the pit in the late 12th century at the latest seems reasonable. Pit 5 is linked to pit 16 (see below) by a sherd (FIG. 23, no. 1) from level 7 which joins with a sherd from level 5 of pit 16.

Pit 16 (Area 5)

This pit described above p. 103 (see also plan, FIG. 7 and section, FIG. 12, V-W). The following pottery from this pit is published:

- Level 3. FIG. 23, nos. 12, 13.
- Level 4. FIG. 19, no. 5; FIG. 24, no. 6.
- Level 5. FIG. 23, nos. 1, 4, 6.
- Level 6. FIG. 23, nos. 3, 26; FIG. 24, no. 5.

Once again the pottery was extremely fragmentary. Of a total of 510 sherds from the pit, only 16 (3.1 per cent) were glazed; of these all, except two, were of Group A fabric. The two exceptional sherds were both from level 3 and were presumably from pitchers: one had a brown glaze on a sandy red fabric, the other was a finer, sandy off-white fabric with clear glaze over a line of reddish paint. These sherds suggest similarities in fabric with the pottery from Well 1 at the Bodleian extension, dating to the first quarter of the 13th century (*Bodleian Extension*, 118-9) and imply that the uppermost level at least of pit 16 did not accumulate until the early 13th century.

Of the 494 unglazed sherds, 350 (70.9 per cent) were of sandy fabric, while 144 (29.1 per cent) were of coarser white-flecked wares. This is a considerable increase in sandy wares over the percentages for pit 5 and it supports the later date for pit 16, suggested by the two glazed sherds discussed above. On the other hand the joining sherds from level 5 of this pit and level 7 of pit 5 suggest that the lower levels of the two pits may have been open at the same time, although it is possible that the sherd had been lying on the surface for some time before finding its way into pit 16.

It is not possible to say how many glazed vessels are represented by the tiny glazed sherds from the pit, but of the 40 identifiable unglazed vessels, 26 are cooking pots and 14 are bowls or pans. It is clear that sandy wares were preferred for cooking pots (18 examples against 8 in white-flecked wares), while the reverse was true for bowls (11 examples in white-flecked wares against 3 in sandy wares). In level 6 was a single fragment of coarse grey ware with an orange surface and combed wavy decoration similar to the pitchers (FIG. 18, nos. 8, 9). No other stratified sherd of this ware was found anywhere in the excavations, a fact which suggests that this fabric with this decoration is late 12th century at the latest, at least at Seacourt.

Pit 25 (Area 2)

This pit is described above p. 89, and the following pottery is published:

- Level 3. FIG. 19, no. 3; FIG. 22, no. 7, 9, 11, 12.
- Level 6. FIG. 22, no. 8.

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The pottery from this pit was not quite so fragmentary and some of the glazed pottery was assignable to distinct vessels. The two levels of this pit were probably in fact part of the same level, for several fragments from one fitted those from the other.

Of the 397 sherds from this pit, 41 (10.3 per cent) were glazed. Of the remaining 356, 230 (64.6 per cent) were of sandy fabric, while 126 (35.4 per cent) were of white-flecked, limestone-detritus filled wares. These percentages agree substantially with those of pit 16; in addition the tripod-pitcher neck (FIG. 19, no. 3) is perhaps late in that series, while the cooking pots (FIG. 22, nos. 7-9) show well developed examples of sandy ware rims (especially no. 8). Taken together this suggests an early 13th century date for the pit.

Of the 45 identifiable vessels, 3 were glazed pitchers (probably tripod-pitchers), while 29 were cooking pots and 13 bowls. Of the former, 18 were in sandy fabrics against 11 in white-flecked wares; of the latter, 12 were in white-flecked wares against only 1 in a sandy ware. The two cooking pots (FIG. 22, no. 11, 12) are probably chance survivals in this pit. All these figures are in close agreement with those of pit 16.

Midden of Period I, phase 2, house (Area 5)

This midden is described above on p. 102, and the following pottery is published:

FIG. 19, no. 1, 2; FIG. 23, nos. 7, 15, 17, 24; FIG. 24, nos. 10, 12.

These large fragments of pottery occurred together in a dark patch of soil in the general occupation level N.E. of the barn-byre in Area 5; the area of the midden was probably bounded on the N.W. by the post fence represented by post-holes 26-8 (FIG. 7). It was not possible to define the limits of any pit or to be certain where the deposit ended; it was probably just a mass of rubbish thrown down in the general muck of occupation. It is thus uncertain if all the small sherds are really part of the midden, but it has been thought safe to select the large sherds, and those which fit to form a large part of a pot, as truly deriving from the midden. (Usually the pottery sherds from the general occupation level are very small and cannot be made to fit.)

In this case it is not possible to present any numerical description of the group. The tripod-pitchers (FIG. 19, no. 1, 2) suggest a late 12th or even early 13th century date; the later date is supported by the cooking pots (FIG. 23, no. 24) and especially the bowl (FIG. 24, no. 10).

Pit 6 (Area 6)

This pit is described above p. 104 (see also plan and sections FIG. 10). The following pottery from this pit is published:

Level 5. FIG. 23, nos. 20, 22.

Level 6. FIG. 23, nos. 11, 20.

Level 7. FIG. 23, nos. 14, 18.

Levels 5, 6 and 7 are entirely within the pit; level 6A, which is a clay packing, produced nothing that should be considered together with the pit-filling. Of the 696 sherds from these three layers, 30 (4.3 per cent) were glazed. All the glazed sherds except one were of Group A fabrics; the exception was a sherd of friable sandy pinkish-buff ware with a grey core, decorated with a very heavy applied

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strip of white clay and covered with a thick treacly green glaze which showed greenish-brown over the body of the pot; a date well into at least the first quarter of the 13th century seems required for this sherd. Among the other glazed sherds one very heavily decorated tripod-pitcher accounted for at least 10 fragments: this vessel was heavily rouletted on the neck with at least four rows of rouletting of apparently four different types, each row being placed on one of the ridges of the neck; below the junction of neck and body there were a further six horizontal lines. These two sherds together suggest an early 13th century date for level 5. Levels 6 and 7 must have accumulated or been thrown in very quickly as section Z"-Z''' shows, and an early 13th century date for the whole pit is possible.

Of the 666 unglazed sherds, 460 (69.1 per cent) were of sandy fabric, while 206 (30.9 per cent) were of white-flecked, limestone detritus filled wares. About 80 individual vessels were identifiable of which about 5 are glazed pitchers (about 4 tripod-pitchers and one other); of the remainder 56 were cooking pots and 19 bowls or pans. The 56 cooking pots comprised 38 in sandy wares and 18 in white-flecked wares. The 19 bowls include 18 in white-flecked wares and only 1 in a sandy ware. These figures agree well with the figures for pits 16 and 25, but are in distinct contrast with the figures for pit 5.

Pit 13 (Area 5)

This pit is described above p. 104 (plan, FIG. 9, section, FIG. 12, N-O). The following pottery from this pit is published:

Level 4. FIG. 25, nos. 6, 7, 16; FIG. 26, no. 9.

Level 5. FIG. 25, nos. 5, 10, 14; FIG. 26, nos. 2, 3, 7.

Level 6. FIG. 25, no. 11; FIG. 26, nos. 8, 14.

Level 7. FIG. 25, no. 15; FIG. 26, no. 5.

Level 8. FIG. 26, no. 4.

Level 4, which overlay the pit at the level of the general spread of occupation, contained several large sherds, at least one of which joined with a sherd in the pit itself. It was not possible, however, to distinguish this level exactly from the surrounding occupation material, although it is clear that the pit must have been dug from very near the modern surface. This level is therefore not included in the numerical analysis, but certain sherds from it are published (see above). The greatest quantity of pottery came from level 5, although the other levels together produced a fair amount; sherds of the same pot were in several cases found in different layers and it is clear that the pit was filled in rapidly and can be treated as a whole.

Of the 438 sherds in the pit, 36 (8.2 per cent) are glazed; the glazed sherds include several of Group A fabrics, some certainly identifiable as tripod-pitchers, but there are several glazed sherds from other pitchers and a double-shelled lamp (FIG. 25, no. 11). There were several sherds of glazed ware with applied rouletted strips for which a generally mid 13th century date is probable. There was also a sherd of sandy fabric with an applied rosette of red clay and a covering of mottled green glaze; this sherd, from level 7, is crucial for the dating of the whole pit. It should be compared with other highly decorated jug fragments, some ornamented with applied red clay, from a pit at Carfax, Oxford (*Jope, 1942, 71-4, FIG. 17*), of the mid to later 13th century. This date is supported by the lamp (FIG. 25, no. 11) which is very similar to the lamps from a mid 13th century pit at St. John's

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(*Jope, 1950, 56-60, FIG. 20, nos. 6, 7*); and by the small cooking pots (FIG. 26, no. 9 and another the same) which are in general similar to some of vague but possibly late 13th century date from the pit in square Z on the Clarendon Hotel site (*Oxon- iensia, XXIV (1959), 24-5, FIG. 9, nos. 6, 7*). A mid to late 13th century date may therefore be suggested for the contents of pit 13.

Of the 402 unglazed sherds from this pit, 205 (51.0 per cent) were of white-flecked, limestone detritus filled wares, while 197 (49.0 per cent) were of sandy fabrics. There were 26 identifiable unglazed pots and of these 21 were cooking pots and 5 bowls. The cooking pots consisted of 11 in sandy wares and 10 in white-flecked fabrics; the 5 bowls were all in white-flecked fabrics. These figures show an interesting reversal of the figures for pits 16, 25 and 6 of early 13th century date and a return to the balance of fabrics shown by the late 12th century pit 5.

Ditch below the house in Area 4

This ditch is described above p. 93 (plan, FIG. 6; section, FIG. 11, C-D). The following pottery from this ditch is published:

FIG. 19, nos. 12, 15; FIG. 20, nos. 6, 9-11.

This was a clearly defined ditch running below the stone house in Area 4. The ditch was by no means completely excavated, and since it is possible that the pottery group from it is not truly representative, no numerical analysis has been attempted. However, this pottery is so different from that of all the other groups examined above, that it is worth investigation. The increased proportion of glazed pottery is most striking. In addition the difference in ware from the other groups is very obvious. Here the wares are fine, usually buff-orange and very well fired; the glazes are mottled greens and yellows. These are probably Brill products.

The date of this group is not easy to establish on comparative evidence, for there is very little datable 14th century pottery with which to compare it; on the other hand the evidence of pit 13 at Seacourt and much 13th century material elsewhere shows that the contents of this ditch are clearly not 13th century. It must be remembered that this ditch underlies a stone house, and that the central hearth of this house was replaced on at least two occasions before the desertion of the village which, it is suggested, took place by 1400 and was certainly complete by 1439. It is hard to see how this group can be later than the middle of the 14th century and it is perhaps best attributed to the first quarter of that century. Closer dating may be possible in a few years when the progress of archaeomagnetic dating enables an independent date to be produced for the last heating of the uppermost hearth in the stone house (see below pp. 191-2).

About two-thirds of the unglazed pottery was white-flecked ware, and the rest of sandy fabrics. This evidence, such as it is, supports the suggestion from the analysis of pit 13 that white-flecked, limestone-detritus filled wares increased somewhat in use in the later 13th century after a decrease in popularity in the early 13th century. Of the 13 identifiable unglazed vessels, 10 were cooking pots and 3 bowls. There were 7 cooking pots in white-flecked wares and 3 in sandy fabrics; all 3 bowls were in white-flecked fabrics.

PITCHERS

Mostly the fragments are too few and too small to enable much to be said of the pots themselves; nevertheless they are the backbone of the dating put forward

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in this report. Special mention should be made, however, of the early 14th century group from Area 4 which provides a much needed associated series for a period of which too little is known.

COOKING POTS

The bulk of the pottery for Seacourt consisted of cooking pots. From the evidence of the groups analysed above, it can be seen that there are usually about twice as many cooking pots present as bowls, and sometimes the proportion is even greater. Of the late 12th century cooking pots (in pit 5) half are made of sandy wares and half of white-flecked wares; but in the early 13th century (pits 16, 25, 6) sandy ware was much more popular, although examples in white-flecked wares still occurred. In the mid-late 13th century white-flecked examples increased again in numbers and, in the early 14th century, even outnumbered examples in sandy fabric (Area 4, ditch).

The same forms occur in both fabrics, although the sandy examples tend to be more angular. The bulk of the pottery recovered was of the 13th century, and within this period very little significant development of the cooking pot can be seen. Some examples of earlier types occurred, e.g. the straight-sided cooking pots (FIG. 18, nos. 10, 11; FIG. 22, no. 12; FIG. 23, no. 2) and those with simple everted rims (FIG. 18, no. 14; FIG. 22, no. 11; FIG. 23, no. 1), but mostly the cooking pots were of the characteristic 13th century type with an everted thickened rim, treated more or less elaborately at the top and either angular or rounded.

The most significant change is the introduction in the second half of the 13th century of the small cooking pot with heavily wheel-marked walls (FIG. 26, nos. 9-11); these may have either an angular (FIG. 26, no. 9 and a similar example) or an internally hollowed rim (FIG. 26, nos. 10, 11). The earliest example of a cooking pot with the typical out-turned and undercut rim of the Brill manufactures is of the early 14th century (FIG. 26, no. 15; cf. FIG. 27, no. 3), but Brill products had been reaching Seacourt since the late 13th century (FIG. 24, no. 1).

Cooking pots of the 14th century are hard to identify, but FIG. 27, no. 4, an East Berkshire type, is probably one, as may be FIG. 27, nos. 1 (more probably a storage jar) and 12. A most interesting example is FIG. 27, no. 11 which clearly copies a metal prototype; indeed the introduction of metal cauldrons probably accounts not only for the shortage of 14th century pottery cooking vessels, but also for the deterioration in the ware noticed in the later 13th century (see above, p. 134, and FIG. 28, no. 23 below). A number of cooking pots had spots of glaze on the rim (FIG. 23, nos. 23, 25; FIG. 26, nos. 6, 8); this appears to be characteristic of the late 13th century and after.

Decoration on these cooking pots is kept to the minimum and takes the form of finger-tip ornamentation of the rim and in one case (FIG. 22, no. 10) of the shoulder. Many of the pots show knife-trimming or other working on the shoulder or near the base angle (e.g. FIG. 22, nos. 2, 8, 13; FIG. 23, nos. 12, 16, 18, 20).

BOWLS

The analyses of the groups (above pp. 130-4) show that bowls occur only half as frequently as cooking pots and that they are almost invariably made from valley-

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bottom clays full of limestone-detritus which gives a white-flecked appearance to the fabric. The various types of bowl are shown on FIG. 24; FIG. 25, nos. 13-16; FIG. 26, no. 17; and FIG. 27, nos. 2, 7, 9. They display as great a variety of rim with as little chronological significance as the cooking pots; nevertheless the introduction of the Brill bowl or pan (FIG. 24, no. 1, cf. FIG. 27, no. 2) in the late 13th century is an important chronological innovation. The remarkable glazed, two-handled (?), bowl of the early 13th century (FIG. 24, no. 10; Area 5, midden of Period I, see above, p. 132) is a rare piece of considerable interest.

The whole question of the date of the wide flat bowls with heavily turned rims (FIG. 24, nos. 13-15) seems to have been clarified by the Seacourt evidence which places them firmly in 13th century contexts, rather than in the 12th century where, although they might be expected to have developed from late Saxon in-turned-rim bowls, they do not occur. This evidence parallels that of the pottery from Avebury on which Mr. E. M. Jope has worked.

FABRICS

Something has already been said of the incidence of sandy and white-flecked fabrics, and of the very noticeable change in fabrics to be seen in the early 14th century group from Area 4. Three other wares call for some comment here.

One of the most characteristic fabrics from Seacourt is a reddish-brown, white-flecked ware with a thick grey core; when examined in section this ware shows a reddish-brown 'skin' up to 1 mm. thick, usually on either side of the grey core, but sometimes on the outside only. The reddish-brown surface can vary in shade from almost orange to grey-brown, but the ware almost always has a slightly soapy touch. This fabric ranges in date throughout the 13th century. FIG. 23, nos. 2, 4, 7, as well as FIG. 26, nos. 3 and 17 are examples of the ware.

There is also a sandy brown fabric, usually with a grey core, which has a marked surface sheen; this ware appears on some cooking pots (FIG. 22, no. 1, 2; FIG. 23, no. 15, 22).

The third ware is a pale brown white-flecked fabric with a grey core; very often the limestone-detritus filling has dissolved out leaving a pitted surface. This very characteristic fabric (FIG. 21) usually carries traces of a wash of poor yellowish-green glaze in small patches over a very restricted area of the body. At Seacourt the jug FIG. 21, no. 1, from Area 11, suggests that the ware was current in the late 13th-early 14th century, while FIG. 21, nos. 2 and 3, are possibly of late 13th century date.

This fabric is comparable to that of a pair of bowls one of which is two-handled from Wood Street, Swindon (Ashmolean Museum, 1955, 405-6) which are decorated with cordons and have trickles of poor greenish-glaze on the inside of the rim. Another two-handled bowl in a similar ware and glaze comes from Seacourt itself (Jope, 1947, 59, 60, 74, FIG. 5, no. 5); while two examples from Clarendon Palace (*Ant. J.*, xvi (1936), 77-9, FIG. 6) are of a similar type and may be of a roughly similar ware. Fragments of a storage jar of the same ware have been found in a 13th-14th century context in Oxford (*Oxoniensia*, xxiv (1959), 26-7, FIG. 11, no. 1). The closest parallels to this ware and glaze occur, however, in the west country on a series of cooking pots and jugs whose easternmost distribution extends to Seacourt and Oxford (G. C. Dunning in *T.B.G.A.S.*, lxxviii (1949), 30-44, distribution map,

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40, FIG. 6; *Joze*, 1952b, 68-70, FIG. 9; *Joze*, 1952a, 90-7, with a revised distribution map, FIG. 2, and an analysis of the glaze). The poor glaze on FIG. 24, no. 10 appears to be similar to the glaze on these west country pots, but the fabric is quite different.

REGIONAL INFLUENCES IN THE SEACOURT POTTERY

The influences of the west country and of the area east of Oxford are both clearly discernible in the pottery found at Seacourt, as might be expected from the position of the village astride the main road in and out of Oxford on the west (see above, pp. 77-8). In the later 12th century there are the coarse, comb-decorated, jugs known from Oxford and Avebury and probably of western origin (FIG. 18, nos. 8, 9) and the straight-sided cooking pots of demonstrably Oxford-Cotswold origin (e.g. FIG. 18, no. 11; cf. *Joze*, 1959, 251, FIG. 10). From an earlier period there is the 11th century St. Neots type ware of eastern origin (FIG. 18, nos. 2, 3). In the 13th and early 14th centuries, western influence is apparent in the pale brown wares with poor glaze which are clearly of west country origin (FIG. 21 and above p. 136), while imports from the great factories at Brill, east of Oxford, made themselves felt, though not in great quantity, from the late 13th century onwards (FIG. 24, no. 1; FIG. 25, nos. 2, 3; FIG. 26, no. 15; FIG. 27, nos. 2, 3). During the 13th century Oxford-style pitchers (*Joze*, 1952b, 71-6, FIG. 11) reached the village in quantity (FIGS. 19, 20, 25). With the beginning of the 14th century hard white sandy fabrics of apparently East Berkshire origin appeared at Seacourt (FIG. 27, nos. 4, 7; cf. *Joze*, 1947, 65-7, FIG. 9, nos. 1-5), while in the late 14th century imports were even reaching Seacourt from the Rhineland (FIG. 27, no. 14).

THE DATING OF THE LATEST POTTERY FROM SEACOURT

The village was completely deserted, except for two houses distant from the church (and therefore presumably well outside the area of the excavations), by 1439 (above p. 83); and it can be argued that this desertion actually took place by 1400 (above p. 119). The confirmation or otherwise of this argument lies in the pottery.

The group from the ditch under the house in Area 4 is by far the latest sealed group from the site and appears to date to the first half of the 14th century: the overlying house must have been one of the latest structures in the village. Other pottery of this type is by no means common in the late occupation-levels of the village and pottery which appears to be later is extremely rare, most of the recognizable sherds being published in FIG. 27. Some of these in characteristic fine buff sandy fabrics (e.g. FIG. 27, no. 9) may be closely paralleled among the material from the site of tenements in Oxford apparently ruinous by 1357 and incorporated into Oriel College in the late 14th century, probably as part of the college garden (*Joze*, 1942, 76-9; *Oriel Record*, Jan., 1942; C. L. Shadwell and H. E. Salter, *Oriel College Records* (1926), 128-31). Other types such as FIG. 27, no. 12 have a long ancestry; only FIG. 27, no. 7 has no immediately quotable local parallel datable before the end of the 14th century, but the type is known from London and the Cheam kilns before the later 14th century.

It is therefore difficult to postulate more than a slight occupation at Seacourt, at any rate in the areas examined, after the middle of the 14th century and virtually impossible to define any continuation of occupation after 1400. This analysis is in good agreement with the documentary evidence for the later history of the village which is dealt with above (pp. 83-4).

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ROMAN POTTERY

SAMIAN WARE

Mr. B. R. Hartley very kindly examined the Samian from the pottery scatter south of the Roman ditch in Area 5; he reports that four of the fragments were from Central Gaulish platters of Form 31 of the Antonine period, while the remaining piece is a flange fragment from an East Gaulish bowl of Form 38, probably late Antonine. (The Samian pottery has not been illustrated.)

COARSE POTTERY (FIG. 17)

Only the more important pieces have been illustrated; some other pieces, referred to in the text, were too small to illustrate.

Area 5, pottery scatter south of the Roman ditch

1. Wide-mouthed bowl, out-turned rim, slightly overhanging; high shoulder; cordon at junction of neck and body; groove on body. Hard grey ware, outer surface partly polished. Also two other examples closely similar. Cf. *Jewry Wall*, 94, FIG. 24, no. 12. First half 2nd century.

2. Wide-mouthed bowl, out-turned rim, rounded and slightly overhanging; grooves on neck and body. Grey ware. 2nd century.

3. Heavy jar with thick rolled-out rim; coarse grey and brown ware with a great deal of limestone-detritus flecking. Native in shape and fabric.

4. Straight-sided dish, very slightly curved; two incised grooves below rim. Hard, light grey ware.

5. Straight-sided dish, very slightly curved, rim thickened and with groove below; chamfered base-angle. Hard dark grey ware. Cf. a dish from Sunningwell, *Oxoniensia*, xvii/xviii (1952-3), 230-1, FIG. 48, no. 9. 2nd century.

6. Straight-sided dish with flanged rim, acute-angled trellis pattern externally and pattern of interlocking curves on the underside of the base. Hard grey ware. 2nd century.

7. Narrow-necked jar, with simple rolled-out rim and cordons on the neck. Burnishing inside the rim and externally, except for two zones left rough. Grey ware. Cf. *Verulamium, Insula XVII*, 117, FIG. 16, no. 4. Late 2nd-early 3rd century.

Area 5, pottery from the upper fill of the Roman ditch (Section R-S, level 7)

8. Pedestal foot, orange-red ware with red-brown coating and white slip decoration. New Forest ware, cf. *Roman Colchester*, 288, FIG. 121, no. 334. 4th century.

9. Rim of ? beaker. Hard orange-pink ware, incised grooves externally.

10. Rolled-out rim. Soft grey ware, burnished externally.

11. Rolled-out rim with slight groove on neck. Friable grey ware, light brown core.

12. Simple rim with out-turned flange. Soft grey ware.

13. Colour-coated bowl imitating Dragendorff's Samian form 38. Pink ware, grey core; orange-pink colour-coat. Cf. *Dorchester kiln, Oxoniensia*, 1 (1936), 88-9, FIG. 15, no. 14. 4th century.

Miscellaneous Roman pottery

14. Colour-coated bowl imitating Dragendorff's Samian form 38. Pink ware, grey core; pinkish-brown colour-coat. 4th century. Area 5, from fill of medieval pit 12.

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15. Campanulate bowl. Smooth grey fabric. Cf. *Gillam, 1957, 22, Type 213* (FIG. 23). Mid-late 2nd century. Trial trench north of Area 6, on natural soil.

16. Hook-rimmed mortarium. Hard buff-cream ware. Cf. *Gillam, 1957, 29, Type 276* (FIG. 28), there dated A.D. 250-330. Area 5, in medieval level.

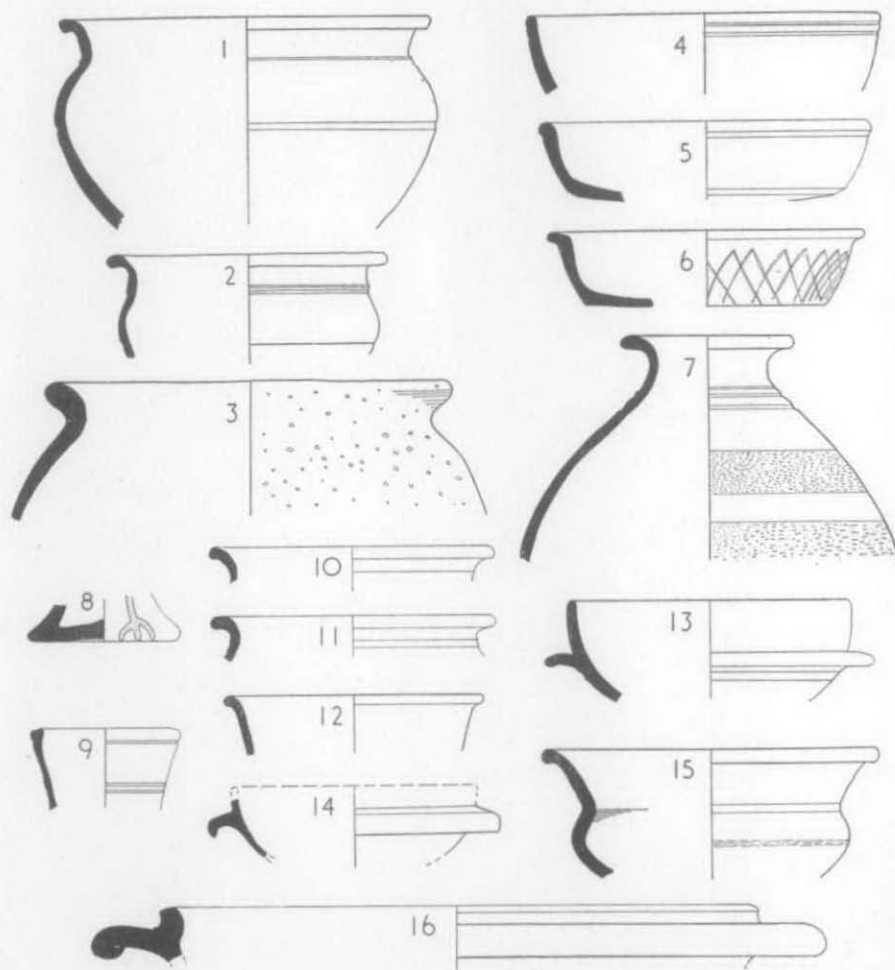


FIG. 17

Roman pottery. pp. 138-9. ($\times \frac{1}{4}$).

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MEDIEVAL POTTERY

THE EARLIEST POTTERY FROM THE MEDIEVAL VILLAGE (FIG. 18)

In this figure an attempt has been made to collect together those sherds which appeared to be among the earliest from the village. In many cases these sherds appeared to be out of context in the levels in which they were found; they probably represent a scatter of pottery derived from the original nucleus of the village, as yet unidentified.

1. Fragment of a pierced lug; coarse rather soapy grey ware, light brown surface (in places) and white limestone flecking; well fired. This is to be compared with the triangular, ear-like, vertical lugs to be seen on the rims of some Saxon pots, cf. F. H. Thompson in *Ant. J.*, xxxvi (1956), 192-7, to whose list examples in St. Neots ware from Cambridge and Abingdon Pigotts, Cambs., should be added (*Proc. Camb. Ant. Soc.*, XLIX (1956), 58, 64, FIG. 2, no. 6). Their occurrence in St. Neots ware brings their possible date down to at least the mid-9th century, and the Seacourt example need be no earlier. Area 5, fill of pit 11.

2. Rim of cooking pot of St. Neots ware, characteristic profile and dark purple-brown, white-flecked, ware. Cf. J. G. Hurst in *Proc. Camb. Ant. Soc.*, XLIX (1956), FIG. 15. For a discussion of St. Neots ware at Seacourt, see No. 3 below. Area 5, *Period I* midden.

3. Inturned rim of a bowl of St. Neots ware, characteristic profile (cf. Hurst, *ibid.*, FIGS. 5 and 6) and ware as no. 2 above. Area 3, make-up W. of church.

The rims of 3 bowls and 10 cooking pots of St. Neots ware were found in the 1958 and 1959 excavations; other fragments were found in 1939, and some further pieces have been published in *Jope*, 1947, FIG. 2, nos. 1, 2, 5. St. Neots ware seems to pass out of use in the Oxford region in the second half of the 11th century (*Jope*, 1958, 59, FIG. 20). The examples from the 1958 and 1959 excavations at Seacourt are not only extremely few in number when compared with the great mass of later pottery, but are also accompanied by little other pottery of the same early period. They are clearly strays from an earlier centre of occupation.

4. Spouted-bowl, brown ware with grey core and limestone detritus; diagonal slashing on the upper surface of the rim. Such spouted-bowls seem to be in the late Saxon tradition (cf. *Proc. Camb. Ant. Soc.*, L (1957), FIG. 7, no. 20), and this example from Seacourt may well be 11th century in date. Area 1, unstratified.

5. Deep, straight-sided bowl with small spout at the rim; coarse grey-brown ware with much limestone detritus. The rim section is very similar to that of a bowl with a very heavy spout or handle-socket from the Clarendon hotel (*Jope*, 1958, FIG. 13, Z.2). This could easily be 11th century in date. Area 1, upper fill of ditch A.

6. Spouted-jar, with high waisted spout and simple flaring rim; hard sandy buff ware. This sherd is quite unlike the other spouted vessels from Seacourt, both in ware and form; in ware it approaches closely to the fabric of the tripod-pitchers of the Oxford area, even including minute fragments of red material sometimes found in tripod-pitcher fabric. This spouted vessel may thus be a late example of the type, or it may be an 11th century pot imported into the Oxford region (cf. *Jope*, 1958, 34-40). Area 5, occupation outside building with pebble floor.

7. Spouted-bowl, rather similar to no. 5 above, but the ware is heavily quartz-gritted. Area 5, upper fill of N.-S. ditch.

MEDIEVAL VILLAGE OF SEACOURT

8. Jug neck, with simple thickened, rounded rim. Coarse grey ware with orange outer surface; heavily gritted with limestone-detritus and flint, much of it weathered out. Decorated with straight vertical combing on the neck, below a series of diagonal combed nicks, and above wavy horizontal combing on the body. Large baggy pitchers with this very characteristic ware and decoration are known from Oxford (cf. *Bodleian Extension*, 1115, PL. X, no. 1 and Ashmolean Museum no. 1915. 268a) and Avebury (*Joze*, 1947, FIG. 2, no. 13); while this combed decoration is to be

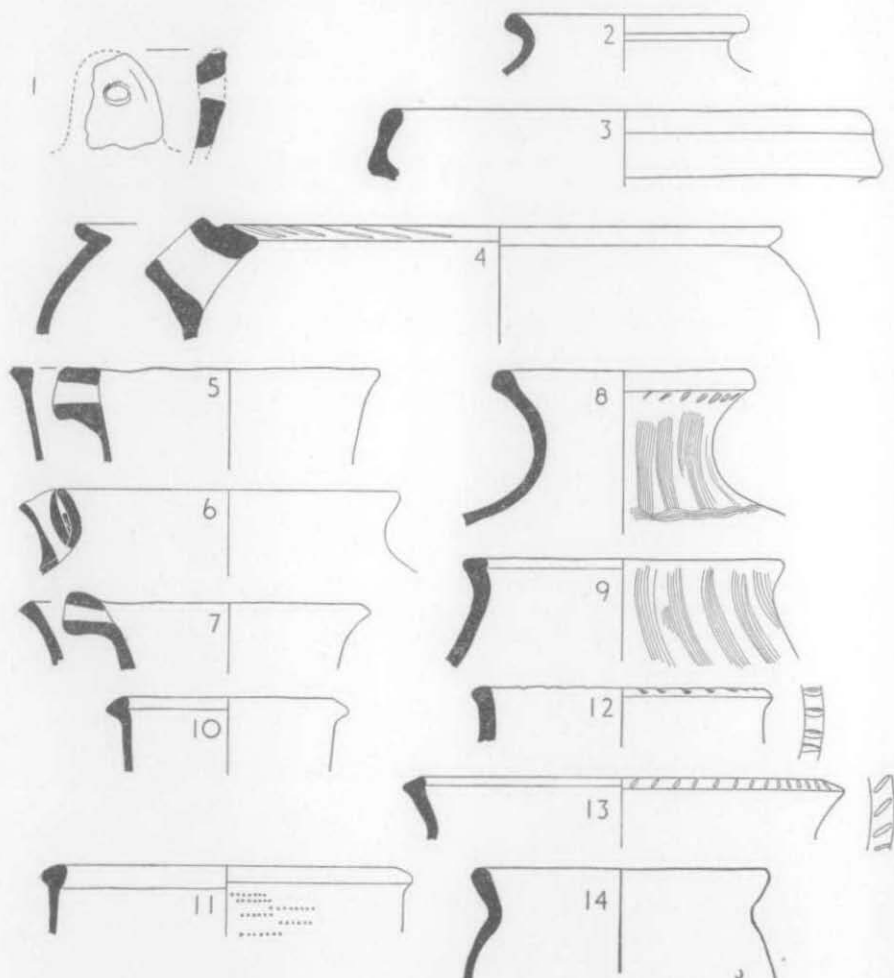


FIG. 18

The earliest medieval pottery from Seacourt. pp. 140-2. ($\times \frac{1}{4}$).

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seen on a series of 13th century cooking pots from Selsey Common, near Stroud (*Trans. Bristol & Glos. Arch. Soc.*, LXVIII (1949), 30-2, FIG. 2). It may be suggested that these pots originated in the area W. of Oxford; they are probably 12th century, cf. the evidence of a sherd of this ware from pit 16, see above, p. 131. Area 5, occupation outside building with pebble floor.

9. Jar rim, ware and ornament identical to no. 8 above. The type of vessel is uncertain. Area 2, unstratified.

10. Rim of cooking pot with straight side and clubbed rim; thin-walled, well-potted ware, grey-brown with limestone-detritus. There were a few other examples from the 1958-9 excavations, usually with the wall sloping out to a base wider than the rim, unlike the present example which is vertical sided. This is a late 11th-12th century type which has been studied in *Jope*, 1959, 240-1, FIGS. 9-10. Other examples from Seacourt have been published in *Jope*, 1947, FIG. 4, nos. 8, 9. Area 4, midden W. of stone house.

11. Rim of cooking pot of the same type as no. 10 above, but with horizontal rows of impressed dot ornament, a feature not apparently previously recorded. Late 11th-early 12th century. Area 11, on cobbles by entrance.

12. Rim of pot of pale brown ware with a thick grey core; heavily gritted with limestone-detritus and flint particles. The top of the rim is decorated with deep notches, cf. the decoration on the rim of spouted pitchers from Oxford (*Jope*, 1952, FIG. 34, nos. 37, 38) of presumably 11th century date. Area 5, lower fill of N.-S. ditch.

13. Another rim, similar to no. 12 above, but in a purple-grey ware full of limestone-detritus, very similar to the ware of no. 5 above. Area 1, lower fill of Ditch A.

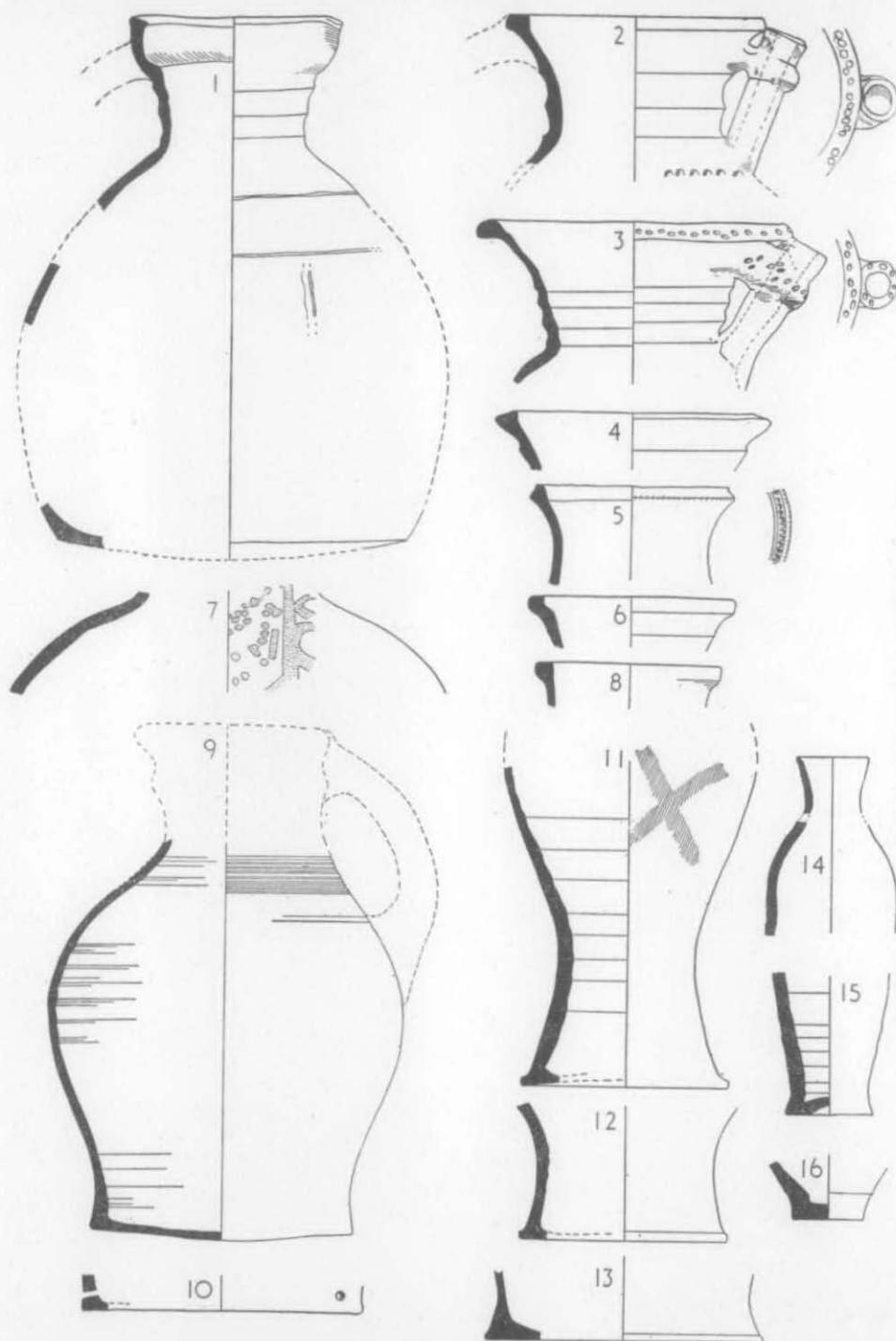
14. Cooking pot with a simple everted rim; grey, limestone-detritus filled ware, with a light brown exterior surface. Cf. the similar rims from under Oxford Castle mound (*Jope*, 1952, FIG. 33, nos. 9, 19, 20). From the eastern edge of the pond between Areas 3 and 4.

THE POTTERY FROM THE LEVELS OF PERIOD I (FIGS. 19-24)

In this section the pottery which was found in association with the first period of structures is illustrated and described. *Period I* is not a strict chronological term in itself, and a comparison of FIGS. 19-24 with FIGS. 25-6, illustrating the pottery from *Period II*, will show the overlap to be expected in the steady development of the village from the earlier phase of wooden structures (*Period I*) to the stone buildings of the later phase (*Period II*). This was not a sudden event, but a process lasting over perhaps seventy-five years, and the pottery has been presented in the two periods to demonstrate this fact (see above, p. 118).

Pitchers and bottles from levels of Period I (FIG. 19)

1. Neck and fragments of the body of a pitcher of hard brownish grey sandy fabric, with good olive-green glaze externally and inside the rim, and in spots on the inside of the base-angle. This is similar to the general type of tripod-pitchers, but the hollowed rim of the present example is rather unusual, and the pitcher is perhaps late in the series, cf. *Jope*, 1958, 54-9 for tripod-pitchers in general and *ibid.*, 72, FIG. 21, Z, 21 for a late pitcher with similar rim. Early 13th century. Area 5, midden of *Period I*.



* FIG. 19

Late 12th-13th century pitchers and early 14th century bottles from *Period I* levels.
pp. 142-5. ($\times \frac{1}{2}$).

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2. Neck and spout of a pitcher (probably a tripod-pitcher) of normal type. Harsh, sandy orange-pink fabric, with good, deep yellow, glaze. Impressed dots on the upper surface of the rim, and larger impressions in a horizontal line on the body. Cf. a late 12th century example from St. John's College (*Joze*, 1950, FIG. 16, no. 1). Area 5, midden of *Period I*.

3. Neck and spout of a pitcher (probably a tripod-pitcher), similar to no. 2 above, but buffer ware and greener glaze; also a more extensive use of impressed dot decoration. Probably fairly late in the series. Late 12th-early 13th century. Area 2, filling of pit 25.

4. Rim of a pitcher (of tripod-pitcher type) of harsh buff-grey fabric with pale yellow-green glaze, 12th-early 13th century. Area 5, occupation material below the clay hearth of the wooden house (sections L-M and R-S, level 5).

5. Rim of a pitcher (of tripod-pitcher type), harsh grey fabric with buff surfaces; yellow-green glaze inside and out. Impressed squares along upper surface of rim. The tall vertical rim probably places this late in the series (*Joze*, 1950, 48, FIG. 16, no. 3; 17, no. 3); late 12th century-early 13th century. Area 5, pit 16, level 4.

6. Rim of a pitcher (of tripod-pitcher type), harsh grey ware with good olive-green glaze inside and out. Rather similar to no. 4 above. 12th-early 13th century. Area 5, in and below the clay hearth of the wooden house (sections L-M and R-S, level 5).

7. Fragment of the wall of a decorated pitcher of Bruce-Mitford's Group B (*Bodleian Extension*, 119-21, PL. X, no. 8); granular fabric mixed with white quartz grains, pinkish-red in colour with buff-brown outer surface. Decoration of applied white slip in spots and strokes; patches of yellow-green glaze. First quarter 13th century. Area 5, from below clay hearth of wooden house (section L-M and R-S, level 5).

8. Clubbed rim of a jug; fine grey ware with buff surfaces; light green and brown glaze in patches on top of rim and externally. A typical late 13th century jug rim, cf. *Bodleian Extension*, FIG. 24 B. Area 3, occupation level below the make-up W. of the church.

9. Lower part of a jug or pitcher of greyish-buff sandy fabric with a wash of poor quality greenish (matt) glaze, mainly on upper part. The base is fire-blackened. The form is not easy to parallel, but the constriction above the base points to a 13th century date, while the ware will probably not allow a date much, if at all, after the middle of the century. Area 1 (1939, trench C), fill of ditch B, below stone wall.

10. Base-angle of a pot of fine buff ware with pink core. There is no glaze on the small sherd surviving. The wall of the pot is pierced just above the base-angle by a carefully-formed round hole. The nature of this pot is uncertain, but it must have been used for some kind of straining. Possibly late 13th century. Area 11, below W. wall of building (section M-N, level 1 below level 3).

11. Tall slender base of a baluster jug of developed form; rather sandy, evenly fired, orange-pink fabric; unglazed but with criss-cross decoration of pinkish-red paint. Some indication of a later 13th century date is given by coin evidence (*Bodleian Extension*, 122) and the finding of a group at Balliol College on land enclosed for the scholars in c. 1290; and a late 13th century date for the developed

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form of the present example is indicated. Area 2, fill of pit 28 and occupation level sealed by stone cobbles.

12. Base of a baluster jug of well fired, fairly fine, pinkish-buff fabric, finer and better than No. 11 above, but rather abraded; the exterior surface is slightly orange. Patches of greenish-yellow glaze. Late 13th century. Area 4, fill of ditch running below house (section C-D, level 4).

13. Base-angle of a pot of harsh, sandy, grey fabric with brownish-grey exterior surface; there are patches of olive-green glaze on the wall of the pot. The form is late, but the sandy ware probably indicates a date in the mid 13th century. Area 1, fill of ditch below street (section E'-F', level 3).

14. Bottle of hard, well fired, pink ware; not sandy, but containing large particles of red and black impurities; the outer surface is grey-brown from final firing in a reducing atmosphere. There is a spot of brownish-yellow glaze on the shoulder. For similar bottles, including an example from Seacourt, see *Joze*, 1947, 65, FIG. 8, nos. 6-8. The ware of the present example is rather similar to the pottery from the ditch below the house in Area 4 (see above, p. 134; FIGS. 20, no. 10), and an early 14th century date is perhaps indicated. Area 11, occupation level prior to stone building (section E-F, level 3).

15. Base of a bottle of soft, rather abraded, light buff-grey ware with pink inner surface and large red particles in the fabric; slightly sandy ware. Probably late 13th century. Area 4, fill of ditch running below house (section C-D, level 4).

16. Small base of a bottle with sharply flaring sides; softish, buff-cream ware with a pinkish tinge and core rather like the fabric of no. 15 above. There are red particles in the fabric. Unglazed. This is presumably the bottom of a bottle of the rather bulbous type, as opposed to the tall slender variety represented by nos. 14 and 15 above; cf. *Joze*, 1947, FIG. 8, nos. 5-7, although the parallel is not exact, and it might be the base of a small jug. The fabric suggests a date after the middle of the 13th century. Area 1, fill of ditch below street (section E-F, level 5).

Pitchers from the levels of Period I (FIG. 20)

1. Angular pitcher of thin, soft, pinkish-orange ware, rather sandy. Angular rim, carefully moulded handle with diagonal slashing. The decoration is limited to grooves on the neck and shoulder. Patchy, rather poor, mottled green glaze. Cf. exactly the form of a pitcher from the *Bodleian Extension*, 126, FIG. 26 F., which is, however, in a finer and harder ware. This type of pitcher represents the severer mood which set in by the end of the 13th century (*Joze*, 1947, 65); the present example, with its soft sandy ware, is probably of about that date. Area 5, lower fill of N.-S. ditch (section J-K, level 8).

2. Rim and part of the handle of a pitcher of sandy buff ware with a grey core. There is light, yellow-green glaze on top of the handle which has deep stabbing down the centre. Area 1 (1939, trench C), fill of ditch B.

3. Neck and handle of a pitcher of hard, fine, somewhat 'metallic' buff ware with a pink and grey core; the surfaces are grey-buff. The form is severe and the decoration is limited to stabbing on the handle and grooves on the neck. There are a few small patches of olive-green glaze. This corresponds in form and fabric to Bruce-Mitford's Group C (*Bodleian Extension*, 123-4, FIG. 24 B), and it marks a considerable improvement on the sandy fabric of no. 1 above. A date in the early

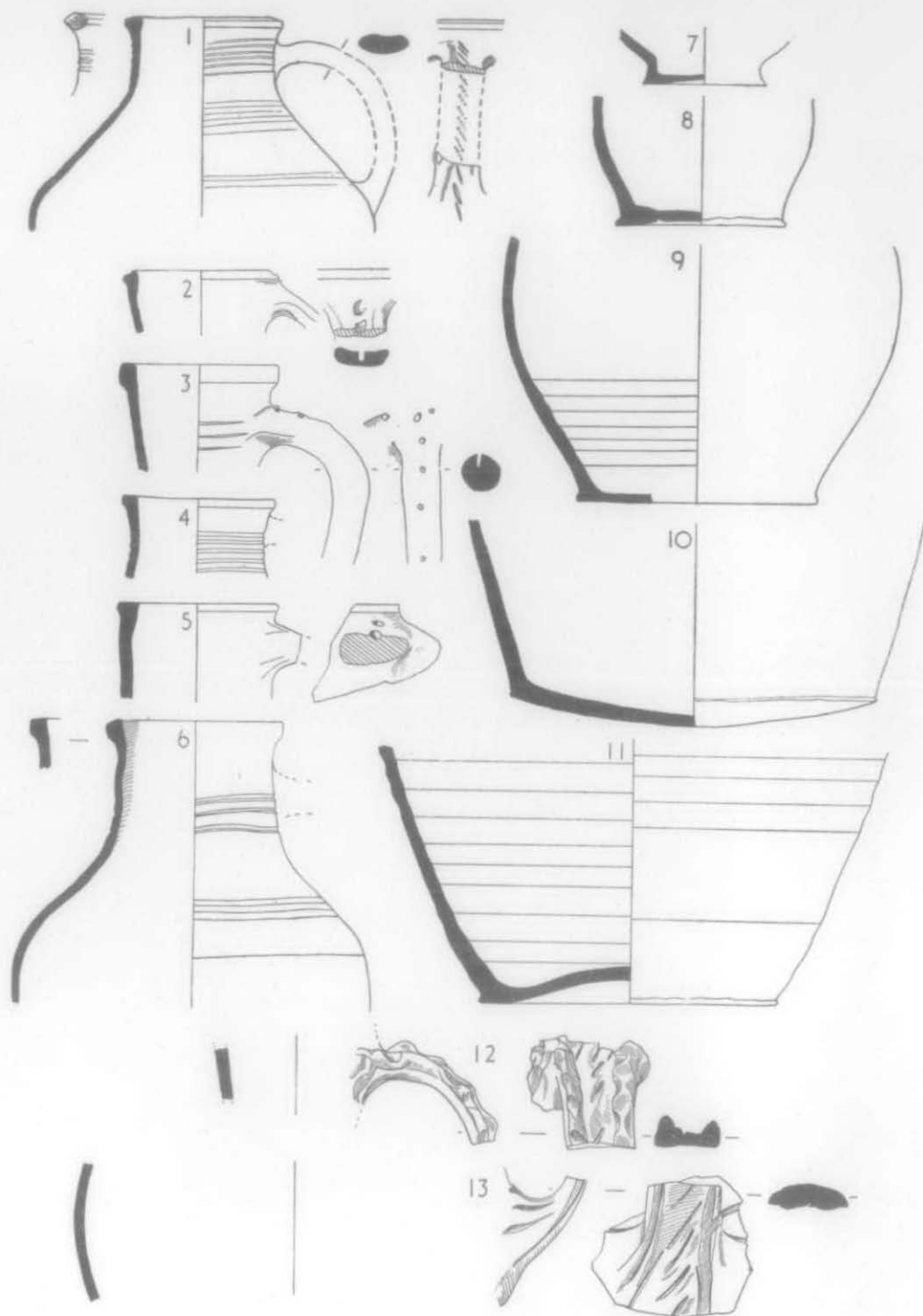


FIG. 20
13th-early 14th century pitchers from *Period I* levels. pp. 145-9. ($\times \frac{1}{4}$).

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14th rather than the late 13th century is perhaps indicated. Area 11 (section E-F, level 3).

4. Fragment of the neck of a pitcher of very fine, very hard, grey 'metallic' fabric; dark olive-green glaze externally over grooves. Cf. no. 3 above; late 13th century. Area 5, upper fill of N.-S. ditch (section J-K, level 7).

5. Neck and part of the handle of a pitcher of hard sandy buff ware with dull yellow glaze externally, and deep stabbing on the handle. Cf. no. 2 above. Probably mid-13th century. Area 1, fill of ditch A (section G-H, level 4).

6. Neck and upper part of a pitcher of very hard, fine, pinkish-buff ware with a 'metallic' ring and rich yellow glaze on the upper part of the body. A severe form with the decoration limited to grooves. Probably early 14th century (cf. above p. 134). Area 4, fill of ditch below house (section C-D, level 4).

7. Base of a pot of harsh, sandy, buff-cream ware; very well glazed internally with mottled deep green (matt) glaze, which also occurs outside on the wall of the pot. In form this piece is similar to the open, lobed, quatrefoil or cinquefoil bowls which are known from Oxford chiefly in 15th century contexts; the internal glaze supports this interpretation. An early 15th century date for this type is now recognized (*Trans. Essex Arch. Soc.*, 3rd ser., I, i (1961), 5) and the Seacourt piece may indicate that the type appeared before 1400. Area 11, probably unstratified (section E-F, level 1). (N.B. This piece was accidentally misplaced and should appear on FIG. 27.)

8. Base of a pitcher of fine, well fired, greyish-cream ware with a thick pink core and many red particles in the fabric. There are a few spots of greenish-brown glaze externally. Late 13th-early 14th century. Area 11, below W. wall of building (section M-N, level 1 below level 3).

9. Base of a pitcher of fine, hard fired, buff-brown ware with a pinkish-orange core and slightly greyish-brown exterior surface. On the upper part of the walls is a yellow-green glaze which, where it thins out, gives a purple effect over the greyish-brown surface of the ware. Late 13th-early 14th century. Area 4, fill of ditch below house (section C-D, level 4).

10. Base of a large pitcher of very fine, hard, pink-buff ware. The exterior surface is rather orange in places. There are two small patches of yellow or greenish-yellow glaze. The base is very markedly sagging and the base-angle is defined by a small ridge. Cf. *Bodleian Extension*, FIG. 25 A. Probably early 14th century (cf. above p. 134). Area 4, fill of ditch below house (section C-D, level 4).

11. Base of a very large pitcher of rather sandy, coarse, pinkish-buff ware with an orange exterior. There are a few spots of yellow glaze and a large patch under the base, which is kicked. The sides are fairly straight and there is rippling on the outside and more markedly on the inside of the walls. In spite of the rather coarse ware, this pitcher is clearly part of the same early 14th century group as most of the rest of the pottery from the ditch below the stone house in Area 4. The form of the base can be compared with a pitcher from the *Bodleian Extension*, 104, FIG. 24 B. Area 4, fill of ditch below house (section C-D, level 4).

12. Handle of a pitcher of fine creamy-grey ware with grey core in places and a buff-cream surface below the handle. The handle is elaborately decorated with finger pressing along the edges and with diagonal stabbing down the centre. On the small part of the body remaining there is part of a fingered applied strip. The whole upper surface of the handle is covered with a rich green glaze, patches of

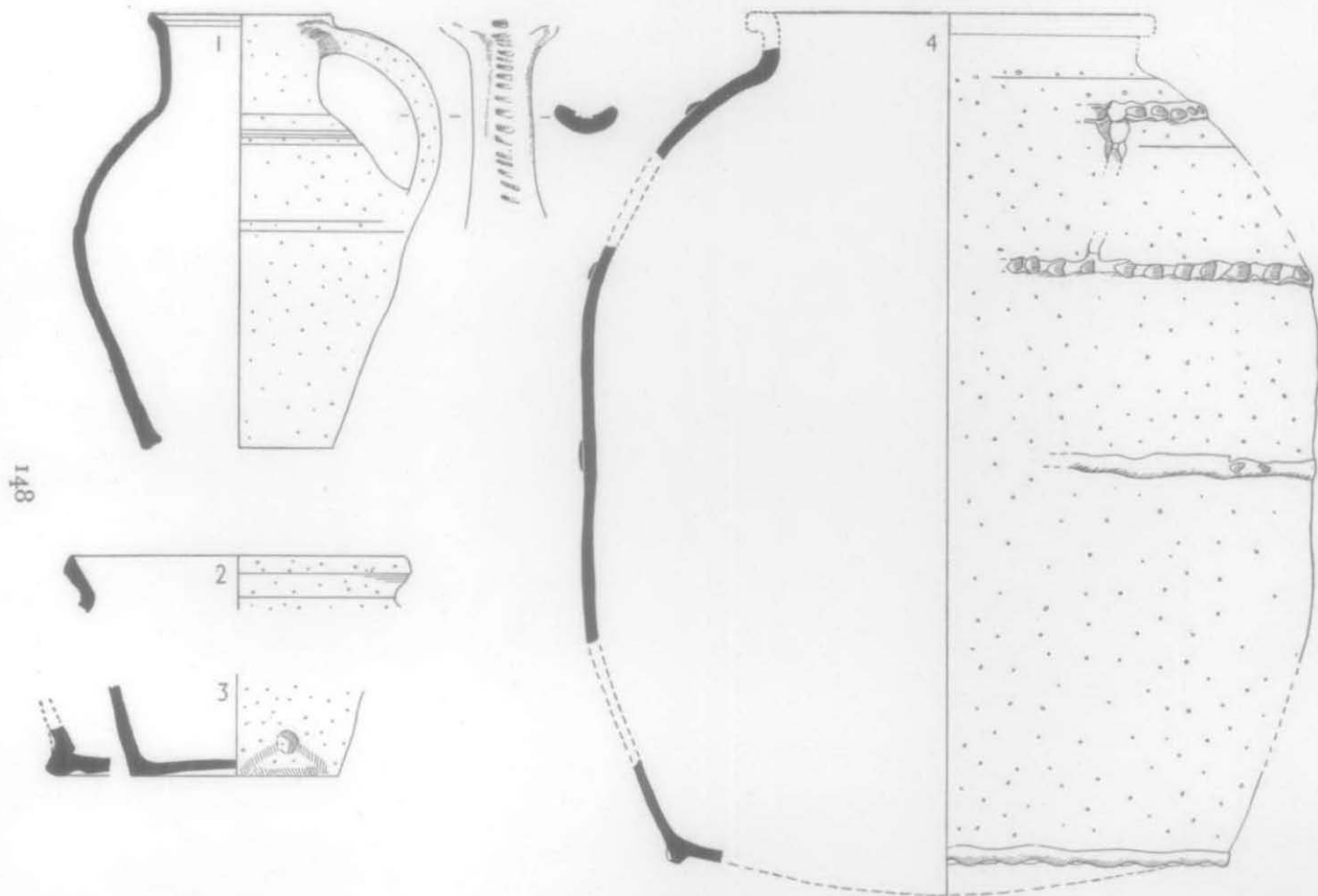


FIG. 21
13th-early 14th century pale brown, white-flecked pottery from *Period I* levels.
p. 149. ($\times \frac{1}{4}$).

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which occur under the handle. Although the form is more elaborate than is usual at this date, the ware places it firmly in Bruce-Mitford's Group C (*Bodleian Extension*, 123-4) of late 13th-early 14th century date. Area 11 (section E-F, level 3).

13. A rather severer, but still elaborate pitcher handle, of hard buff-cream, probably Brill, ware with a thick grey core. There is a patchy wash of speckled and pimply yellowish-green glaze over most of the exterior. There are deep diagonal slashes on the handle and on the body by the handle-spring. Late 13th century. Area 11 (section E-F, level 3).

Pale brown, white-flecked, pottery from levels of Period I (FIG. 21. This pottery is discussed above, pp. 136-7)

1. Pitcher of pale brown, well fired ware containing a great deal of white limestone-detritus which gives a white-flecked appearance; on the interior much of this has weathered out producing a pitted surface. There is a grey core in places, and in a few places on the handle and body the ware is dark grey or black. A tiny portion of the base-angle is preserved. The decoration is limited to grooves on the body and a series of horizontal impressions, made with a three-pronged instrument, on the back of the handle. There are patches of a wash of poor quality greenish-yellow glaze in places on the upper part of the body. An early 14th century date is suggested by the associated material: Area 11 (section E-F, level 3).

2. Rim of a pot, identical ware to no. 1 above, but with a clearly marked grey core; there is no glaze on the small fragment preserved but the fabric and form must be compared with west country cooking pots of the 13th century (*Joze*, 1952b, 68-70, FIG. 9, nos. 40-6) which characteristically carry a wash of poor glaze on the inner surface of the rim. Probably late 13th century; in spite of its west-country character, this type is known to have been made at Brill. Area 11, below W. wall of building (section M-N, level 1 below level 3).

3. Base of a pitcher, of ware exactly comparable to nos. 1 and 2 above. In one place the base-angle has been pushed into a flange by a finger-pressing on the wall of the pot. Late 13th-early 14th century on the same evidence as no. 2 above. Area 11, below W. wall of building (section M-N, level 1 below level 3).

4. Storage jar of pale brown, limestone-detritus filled ware, exactly comparable to the wares of nos. 1-3 above, but with some small patches of wash of poor yellow-green glaze on the shoulder. The jar is decorated with both horizontal and vertical applied strips ornamented with finger pressings. The rim is missing, but the base-angle with a heavy applied strip is preserved. For the applied strips cf. a west country cooking pot in a similar ware and glaze from Whittington Court, Glos., in *Joze*, 1952b, FIG. 9, no. 43; and a two-handled jar from Seacourt in the same ware (*Joze*, 1947, FIG. 5, no. 6), but medieval storage jars are not common, though 12th century examples from Ascot Doilly (*Joze* 1959, 243-4, FIG. 14, E21-3) and Felmersham, Beds. (*Ant. J.*, xxxi (1951), 49, FIG. 2, no. 14) may be cited, as well as a series in S.E. England (*L.M.M.C.*, 219, FIG. 71). A 13th century storage jar of similar ware without glaze, but different shape, was found at the Clarendon Hotel (*Oxoniensia*, xxiv (1959), 26-7, FIG. 11, no. 1). Probably late 13th-early 14th century on a comparison of the ware with nos. 1-3 above. Area 1 (1939, trench C; fragments found in 1939 and 1958), unstratified.

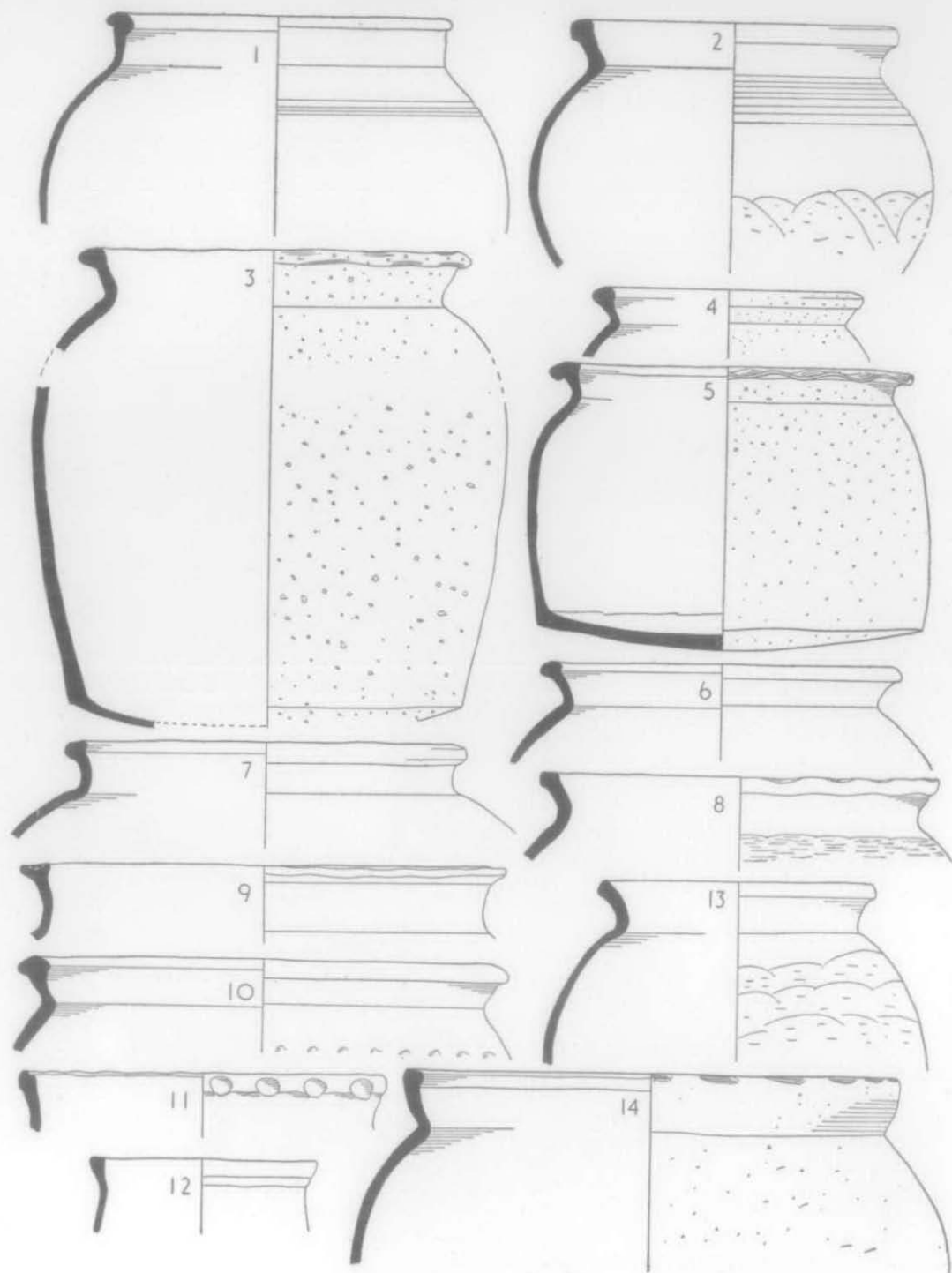


FIG. 22
Late 12th-13th century cooking pots from *Period I* levels. pp. 151-3. ($\times \frac{1}{4}$).

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Cooking pots from levels of Period I (FIG. 22)

This and the following figure (FIG. 23) demonstrate the very wide range of rim forms which may appear on medieval cooking pots of even a restricted locality and period. Where dates are given below these are usually based on the find-spot and the associated material rather than on the cooking pots themselves. Cooking pots as a type are discussed above, p. 135.

1. Cooking pot, sandy brown ware with grey core; slightly sheeny surface; upright rim, thickened internally and externally; grooves on the shoulder. 13th century. Area 1, fill of feature 11, associated with nos. 2 and 3 below.

2. Cooking pot of harsh, slightly sheeny, sandy, buff-grey ware with grey core; slightly everted clubbed rim, grooves on the shoulder and knife-trimming on the lower part of the body. 13th century. Area 1, fill of feature 11, associated with nos. 1 and 3.

3. Cooking pot of very coarse sandy ware with a great deal of flint and some limestone-detritus gritting; mostly grey but the exterior is brown with buff-orange patches; the rim is everted and flanged externally with slight fingering of the flange, the shoulder is high and the base sagging. 13th century. Area 1, fill of feature 11, associated with nos. 1 and 2 above.

4. Cooking pot of coarse flint and limestone-detritus gritted ware, light brown exterior and grey interior surfaces; rim slightly everted and expanded and rounded at the top. Mid 13th century. Area 1, fill of ditch A (section G-H, level 4).

5. Cooking pot of a ware very similar to no. 3 above: almost sandy, but with many flint and limestone-detritus particles some of which have dissolved out leaving a pitted surface. The ware is light grey, but the exterior surface is mostly light brown with orange and purple tinges in places. The rim is everted and has a pronounced flange which is gently waved as in no. 3 above; the base is sagging. (Cf. *Jope*, 1950, 54, FIG. 18, 1, for shape). Mid 13th century. Area 1 (1939, trench C), filling of ditch B.

6. Cooking pot of buff-cream sandy ware with grey core; everted rim thickened and rounded at the top. 13th century. Area 1, upper fill of a ditch probably contemporary with ditch A (not shown on FIG. 5; further to the N.).

7. Cooking pot of harsh, sandy, buff-grey ware tinged in places to buff-yellow. Rim similar to no. 6 above, but more clubbed. Early 13th century. Area 2, upper filling of pit 25.

8. Cooking pot of harsh, sandy, light grey ware with a light brown exterior. Everted rim similar to no. 7, but squarer and slightly finger tipped along the upper surface. There is tooling, probably knife-trimming on the shoulder. Early 13th century. Area 2, lower filling of pit 25.

9. Cooking pot rim of harsh, sandy, light grey ware with buff patches on the tip of the rim and outside. Everted rim, the top of which is expanded and heavily finger pressed in the centre, but only slightly waved each side. Early 13th century. Area 2, upper filling of pit 25.

10. Cooking pot rim of hard sandy grey ware with some flint gritting; the rim is everted and expanded. On the shoulder there are traces of a horizontal line of finger tip impressions. 13th century. Area 1, fill of ditch below street (section E-F, level 5).

11. Cooking pot rim of slightly soapy limestone-detritus filled ware, grey body with light brown outer surface. Simple upright rim, thickened at the top and

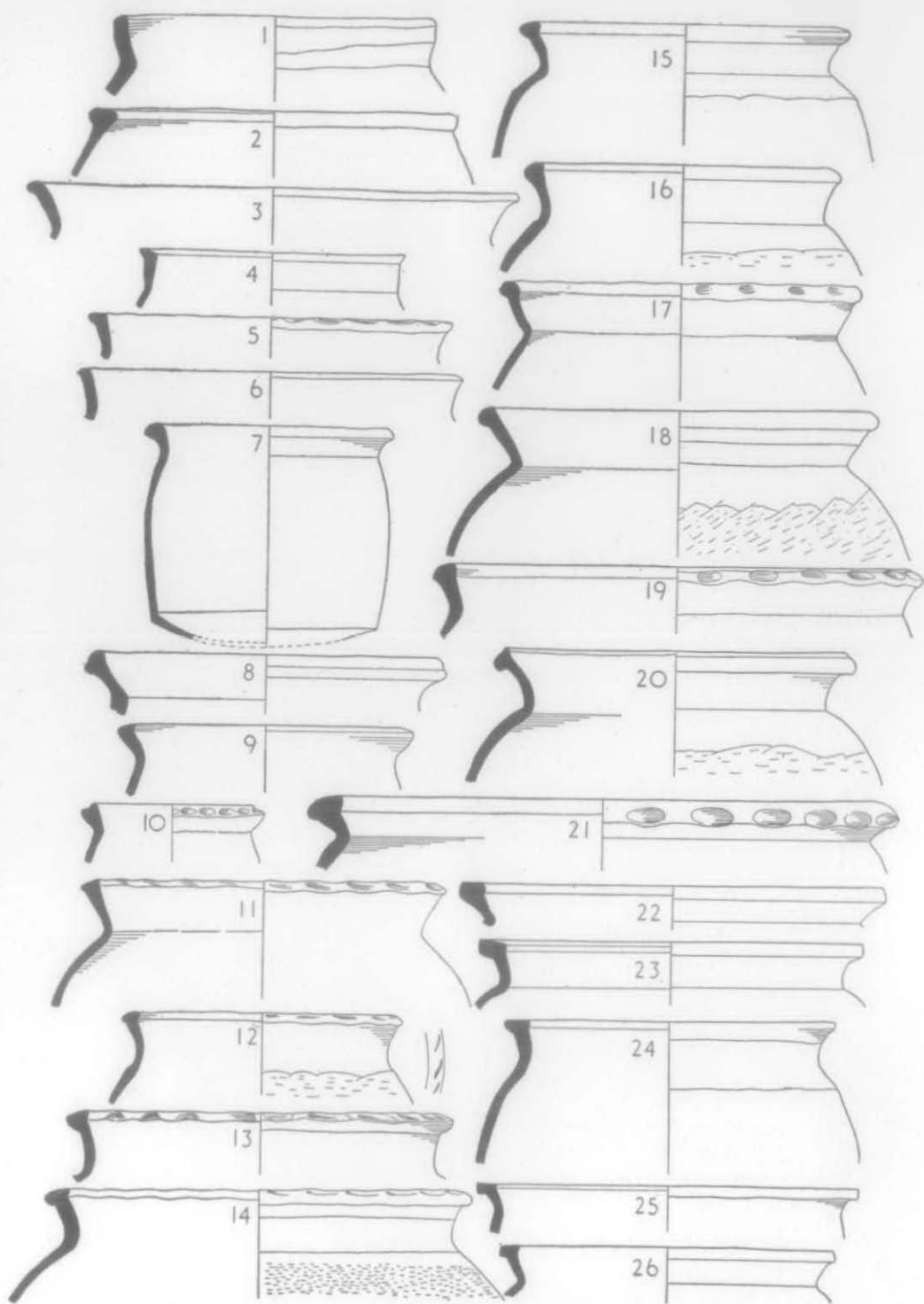


FIG. 23
Late 12th-13th century cooking pots from *Period I* levels. pp. 153-6. ($\times \frac{1}{4}$).

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grooved on the upper surface; there is a line of finger tip impressions along the outside of the top of the rim. Probably 12th century and a stray in the level in which it was found, but possibly a true survival into the early 13th century (cf. no. 12 below). Area 2, upper filling of pit 25.

12. Cooking pot rim of hard grey ware, with limestone-detritus flecking. The inner surface and the top of the rim is light brown. Simple upright rim, very slight neck and straight sides: essentially a straight-sided cooking pot of the variety which has a slight shoulder (cf. *Jope*, 1959, 240, FIG. 8, D1-3, but with a simpler rim). Like no. 11, above, this type may really survive into the early 13th century as the find-spot suggests. Area 2, upper filling of pit 25.

13. Cooking pot of soft, light brown, sandy, ware with many tiny particles of red material in the fabric. Simple everted rim, only slightly thickened at the extremity. The shoulder of the pot has been extensively tooled, probably with a knife or bone tool. 13th century. Area 2, filling of pit 28.

14. Cooking pot of harsh, light grey, coarse sandy ware, hard fired and containing a large amount of flint gritting and some limestone-detritus. The colour of the outer surface varies from light to dark grey to buff. Everted rim thickened at the extremity and in-turned; the outer angle of the rim has a series of light finger impressions. 13th century. Area 2, occupation level below stone cobbles.

Cooking pots from levels of Period I (FIG. 23)

In this figure the range of cooking pot rim forms is shown, from simple and upright rims (no. 1) to the everted and clubbed rims (no. 26). It should be noted that this only corresponds very generally with chronological development—e.g. the very different date of nos. 25 and 26.

1. Cooking pot rim of slightly soapy grey ware with a brownish tinge on the surfaces; there is some limestone-detritus gritting. Simple upright rim, slightly in-turned at the top. Probably late 12th century. Area 5, fitting fragments from pit 5, level 7, and pit 16, level 5.

2. Cooking pot rim of slightly soapy grey ware with reddish-brown surfaces and limestone filling. The form is unusual and the slope of the wall seems much too great for a straight-sided cooking pot. Late 12th-early 13th century. Area 5, filling of feature v.

3. Cooking pot rim of harsh, sandy, grey ware. Everted rim, slightly thickened into a flange at the top. Late 12th-early 13th century. Area 5, filling of pit 16, level 6.

4. Cooking pot rim of slightly soapy grey ware with reddish-brown surfaces and limestone-detritus flecking. Simple upright rim, flanged outwards at the top. Late 12th-early 13th century. Area 5, filling of pit 16, level 5.

5. Cooking pot rim of slightly soapy grey ware with reddish-brown outer surface and limestone-detritus flecking. Everted rim, flanged outwards at the top and finger pressed. Early 13th century. Area 5, filling of pit 16, level 3.

6. Cooking pot rim of rough grey ware with flint and limestone-detritus filling. The outer surface is light brown and the rim is thin and well potted, recalling nos. 4 and 5 above. Everted rim, slightly thickened at the top. Late 12th-early 13th century. Area 5, filling of pit 16, level 5.

7. Cooking pot of soapy reddish-brown ware with grey surface over the lower part of the exterior. There is much limestone-detritus filling. Small pot with

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upright sides, slight neck and rolled out, thickened rim. The base is very sagging. Early 13th century. Area 5, midden of *Period I*.

8. Cooking pot rim of rather soapy, grey, limestone-detritus and shell-filled fabric, with reddish-brown outer surfaces. Everted, expanded rim, with marked outward flange. Early 13th century. Area 5, in hearth, level 4 (sections L-M and R-S).

9. Cooking pot rim of hard, grey fabric with much limestone-detritus filling; thin ware, well potted. Everted, expanded rim, with marked internal flange. Late 12th century. Area 5, filling of pit 5, level 8.

10. Cooking pot rim of rather soapy grey ware with reddish-brown interior surface and some limestone-detritus filling. Everted, thickened rim with finger tipping along the top. Late 12th-early 13th century. Area 5, filling of feature v.

11. Cooking pot of hard, harsh, sandy, grey ware, well potted and fired. Everted, thickened rim with finger tipping along the top. Early 13th century. Area 6, filling of pit 6, level 6.

12. Cooking pot of sandy grey ware with reddish-brown surfaces. Everted rim, thickened at the top, where it is decorated with diagonal slashing; knife-trimming on the shoulder. Early 13th century. Area 5, filling of pit 16, level 3.

13. Cooking pot rim of hard, somewhat sandy, grey ware with light brown exterior surface. The rim is everted and flanged externally with finger tipping along the top. Early 13th century. Area 5, filling of pit 16, level 3.

14. Cooking pot of harsh, sandy, grey ware with a light brown outer surface. The rim is everted, thickened at the top and finger tipped; there is knife-trimming on the shoulder. Early 13th century. Area 6, filling of pit 6, level 7.

15. Cooking pot of fairly fine, sandy, grey ware with brown sheeny inner and outer surfaces. Everted rim, expanded both ways; there is a little knife-trimming on the shoulder, which has a marked angle. Early 13th century. Area 5, midden of *Period I*.

16. Cooking pot of sandy, grey ware with light brown surfaces inside and out. Everted rim, thickened at the top; knife-trimming on the shoulder. Late 12th century. Area 5, filling of pit 5, level 7.

17. Cooking pot of slightly soapy, grey ware with reddish-brown inner and outer surfaces and much limestone-detritus gritting. Simple everted rim, thickened and rounded at the top and lightly finger tipped. Early 13th century. Area 5, midden of *Period I*.

18. Cooking pot of light grey sandy ware. Everted rim, rounded externally at the top; knife-trimming on the shoulder. Early 13th century. Area 6, filling of pit 6 level 7.

19. Cooking pot rim of very hard fired, reddish-brown, limestone-detritus filled, ware, probably really a 'waster'. Everted rim, thickened both ways at the top and lightly finger tipped on the outer angle. Late 12th century. Area 5, filling of pit 5, level 7.

20. Cooking pot of hard, harsh, sandy ware, grey core with light orange-brown surfaces inside and out; well potted and fired. Everted rim, expanded both ways at the top, but with a marked outward flange; there is extensive knife-trimming on the shoulder. Early-mid 13th century. Area 6, filling of pit 6, level 5.

21. Cooking pot rim of coarse, flint and limestone-detritus gritted, grey ware. Short, everted rim, heavily thickened both ways at the top and decorated with

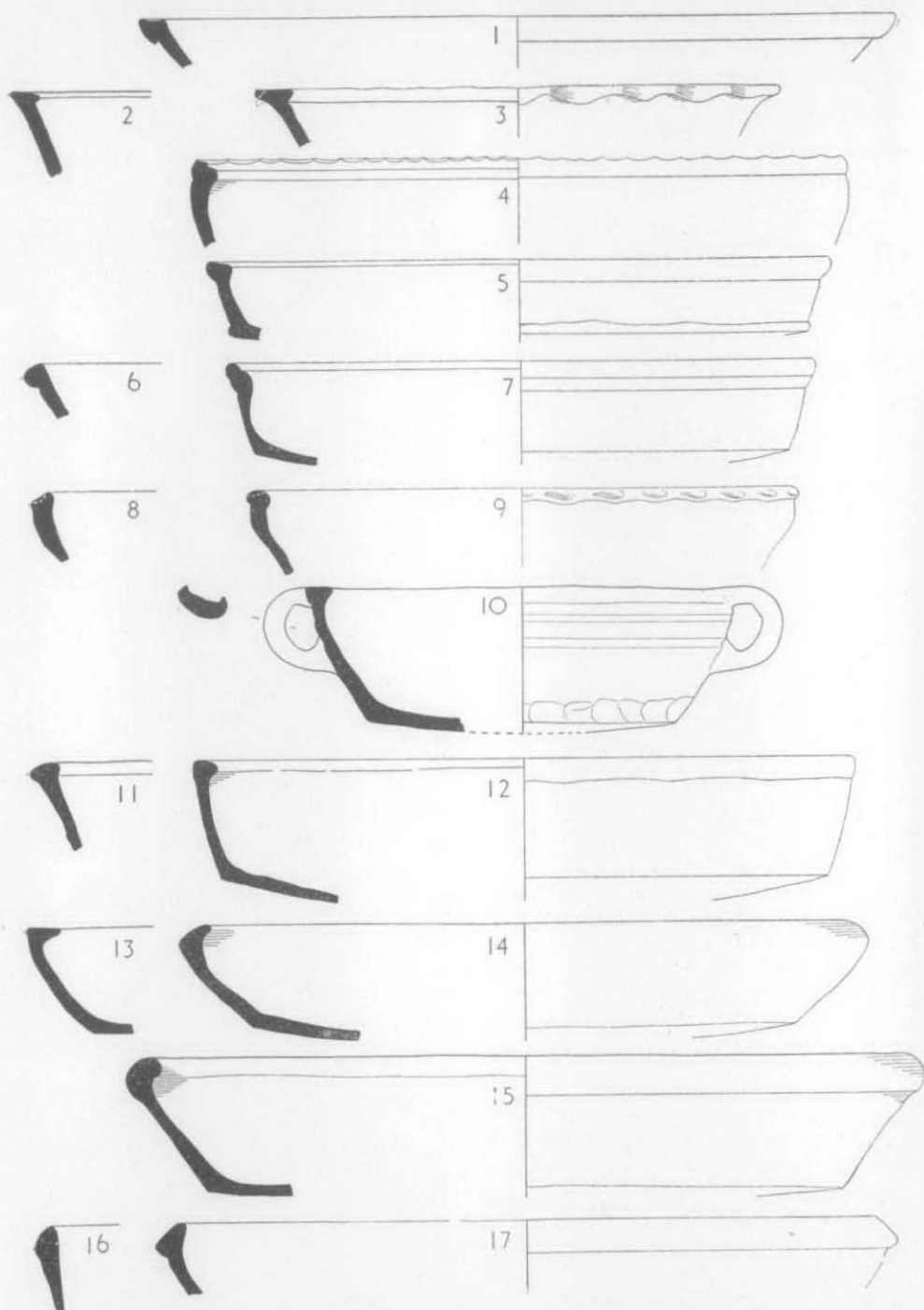


FIG. 24
Late 12th-13th century bowls from *Period I* levels. pp. 156-7. ($\times \frac{1}{4}$)

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finger pressing on the outer flange. 13th century or even early 14th century from its find-spot, but possibly a chance survival. Area 4, filling of ditch below house (section C-D, level 4).

22. Cooking pot rim, of hard, sandy, light brown ware with a grey core. Slight sheen on the surface, cf. no. 15 above and FIG. 22, nos. 1, 2. Everted rim, expanded at the top with a slight fold inside. Early-mid 13th century. Area 6, filling of pit 6, level 5.

23. Cooking pot rim of harsh, sandy, buff-cream ware with a grey core; there are patches of lime-green glaze under the outside of the rim. Everted rim with squared, clubbed, flange. Probably late 13th century. Area 11, occupation level below stones (section G-H, level 2).

24. Cooking pot of soft brownish-grey, limestone-detritus filled, ware. Upright rim, carefully moulded at the top. Early 13th century. Area 5, midden of *Period I*.

25. Cooking pot rim of fine, hard, orange-buff ware, carefully potted and moulded; wash of pale yellowish glaze on top of the rim and externally. Late 13th century Area 5, upper filling of N.-S. ditch (section J-K, level 7).

26. Cooking pot rim of harsh, sandy, reddish-brown ware, hard fired and carefully moulded. Everted rim, squared at the top; rather like no. 25 above, except that the ware is coarser, but considerably earlier in date. Late 12th-early 13th century. Area 5, filling of pit 16, level 6.

Pans and Bowls from levels of Period I (FIG. 24)

In this figure the range of bowl types from levels of *Period I* has been illustrated. In a number of cases variant rims are shown without an indication of diameter; this will be found in the text.

1. Bowl rim of soft, flaky, sandy, pink ware with a grey core. Squared and over-folded rim of the type characteristic of the Brill kilns (*Jope, 1942, 74-5, FIG. 18*). Late 13th or early 14th century. Area 11, occupation level below stone buildings (section E-F, level 3).

2. Bowl of slightly soapy grey ware with reddish-brown interior surface. Steeply sloping sides and rim with internal flange. Rim diameter c. 12½ in. 13th century. Area 5, *Period I* occupation below *Period II* stone buildings (sections L-M and R-S, level 3).

3. Bowl of coarse, soft, flint gritted ware, light grey with pink tinge on outside surface. Broad flanged rim with internal bevel; wavy finger pressings on the outer flange. 13th century. Area 1, upper filling of a ditch probably contemporary with ditch A (not shown on FIG. 5, but further to the N.).

4. Bowl of coarse light grey ware with grey-brown outer surfaces and much limestone-detritus backing. The upper part of the wall is curved inwards and the top of the expanded rim is decorated with finger pressing. Early to mid 13th century. Area 1, filling of ditch below street (section E-F, level 5).

5. Bowl of greyish-brown ware with limestone-detritus filling. Shallow wall, expanded rim and sagging base, marked by an external bead. Late 12th-early 13th century. Area 5, filling of pit 16, level 6.

6. Bowl of slightly soapy reddish-brown ware with some limestone-detritus filling and a grey core. Expanded and rounded rim, somewhat undercut; rim diameter c. 13½ in. Early 13th century. Area 5, filling of pit 16, level 4.

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7. Bowl of soapy reddish-brown ware with a grey core and much limestone-detritus filling. Upright wall, thickened rim with an internal bevel; sagging base. Late 12th-early 13th century. Area 5, filling of feature v.

8. Bowl of slightly soapy reddish-brown ware with much flint and limestone-detritus gritting. In-curved rim, thickened at the top and decorated with deep finger tipping on the outer slope of the rim. Rim diameter 12 $\frac{3}{4}$ in. Early to mid 13th century. Area 1, filling of ditch below street (section E-F, level 5).

9. Bowl of hard, harsh, sandy ware, brownish-grey with a grey core. The rim is in-turned and thickened and the upper surface is decorated with finger tipping. Early to mid 13th century. Area 1, upper filling of ditch A (section G-H, level 4).

10. Bowl of light grey, sandy ware with buff surfaces. Flaring sides with in-turned rim. There is one handle surviving and there were probably two originally; the upper part of the body has two wide grooves; there is knife-trimming at the base-angle and the base is sagging. The inside of the bowl is covered with a poor, pimply wash of greenish-yellow glaze. This type of bowl seems to be unusual, although a similar glazed example came from Woodperry, Oxon. (*Jope, 1943, 103-4, FIG. 33, no. 8*); a deeper two-handled pot also came from Seacourt, though in a different ware (*Jope, 1947, 60, FIG. 5, no. 6*). Early 13th century. Area 5, midden of *Period I*.

11. Bowl of coarse grey ware with reddish-orange interior surface and much very coarse limestone-detritus gritting. The sides are straight and the rim is expanded both internally and externally. Rim diameter 14 $\frac{1}{2}$ in. Early-mid 13th century. Area 1, filling of ditch below street (section E-F, level 5).

12. Bowl or pan of reddish-brown, limestone-detritus filled ware, with a grey core. Almost vertical sides, rim flanged internally and sagging base. Early 13th century. Area 5, midden of *Period I*.

13. Bowl of slightly sandy, brownish-grey, ware with some flint and limestone-detritus gritting. The rim has a sharp internal flange and the upper part of the wall is almost vertical. 13th century. Area 1, upper filling of a ditch probably contemporary with ditch A (not shown on FIG. 5, but further to the N.).

14. Bowl or pan of reddish-brown ware with some flint and limestone-detritus filling and a grey core. The rim is sharply in-turned but rather more rounded than no. 13 above; the base is sagging. 13th century. Area 5, occupation level sealed by *Period II* stone buildings (sections L-M and R-S, level 3).

15. Bowl or pan of greyish-brown sandy ware with flint and limestone-detritus gritting and a grey core. Flaring sides and a thickened, rounded and in-turned rim; slightly sagging base. Early to mid 13th century. Area 1, filling of ditch below street (section E-F, level 5).

16. Bowl of reddish-brown ware with some flint and limestone gritting and a grey core. Almost upright rim, thickened externally at the top. Early-mid 13th century. Area 1, upper filling of ditch A (section G-H, level 4).

17. Bowl or pan of reddish-brown ware with some limestone-detritus filling and a grey core. In-turned rim with a marked external down-turned flange. Early-mid 13th century. Area 1, filling of ditch A (section G-H, level 4).

THE POTTERY FROM THE LEVELS OF PERIOD II (FIGS. 25-6)

The meaning of *Period II* is discussed above, p. 142; in practice it will be found

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that the pottery of *Period II* overlaps that of *Period I* in date. The amount of pottery from the later levels of the village is very much less than that from earlier levels.

Pitchers and other pots from levels of Period II (FIG. 25)

1. Pitcher of hard, fairly fine, but slightly sandy ware, buff-cream surfaces with a grey core. The whole of the exterior, apart from some small patches near the base, is covered with olive-green glaze. Tall, narrow, neck with a clubbed rim; globular body with a marked constriction above the base, which is missing. The pitcher is decorated with applied rouletted strips of alternate white and red clay; the back of the handle is deeply stabbed. The heavily rouletted strips, sometimes wavy, should be compared with a pot from the *Bodleian Extension*, 125, PL. XII, no. 4. Probably mid-late 13th century and possibly a survival in the level in which it was found. Area 5, occupation outside building with pebble floor (section J-K, level 2).

2. Pitcher neck and rim of very hard, fine, buff ware with a grey core; lime-green glaze externally and traces of the tops of two applied strips of red clay. Upright neck with squared rim; there are stabs at the top of the handle and finger impressions at the junction of handle and body. The latter feature is characteristic of the products of the Brill kilns, cf. *Jope*, 1945, 96. Early 14th century. Area 4, occupation within ? barn, contemporary with the stone house.

3. Pitcher handle and rim of very fine, hard, orange-buff ware; there is a little mottled green glaze on the handle. Upright neck and squared rim; the handle is carefully moulded and deeply slashed and has finger impressions at the junction with the body, cf. no. 2 above and the remarks there. Cf. *Bodleian Extension*, 125 FIG. 26 A. Early 14th century. Area 5, occupation outside building with pebble floor (section J-K, level 2).

4. Pitcher handle of hard, sandy, buff-brown ware with a thick grey core and occasional red and white impurities. The neck is flaring and the rim thickened at the top; the strap handle is decorated with a pattern of deep stabs, the central groove being picked out with white slip over which there is in places a light yellowish-brown glaze. Mid-13th century. Area 11, level within apsidal foundation (section A-B, level 2); probably not contemporary with the building; but a survival.

5. Pitcher rim of fine, hard, orange-buff fabric with some mottled green glaze on the outside. Slightly flaring neck with squared rim; grooves on the neck. Late 13th century. Area 5, pit 13, level 5 (section N-O).

6. Pitcher rim of hard, rather harsh, sandy fabric, light brown with grey core; the exterior is decorated with white slip and the interior is covered with white slip. There is a trace of poor, light yellow, glaze. Everted rim with a marked carination. From level 4 above pit 13 (Area 5) and therefore probably late 13th century.

7. Pitcher base of harsh, sandy, light grey ware with a pink core; there are streaks of yellow-green glaze from the upper part of the body. Markedly globular body with slightly sagging base and ridged base-angle. Late 13th century. Area 5, pit 13, level 4.

8. Pitcher spout of hard, slightly sandy, pinkish-buff ware with a grey core; thick, dark green glaze, somewhat patchy and mottled in places. Supported spouts of this kind derive from tripod-pitcher spouts, but this example is certainly later and should be compared with a series from *Bodleian Extension*, 103-4, FIG. 24 A, of late 13th-early 14th century date. Area 3, in make-up level W. of church.

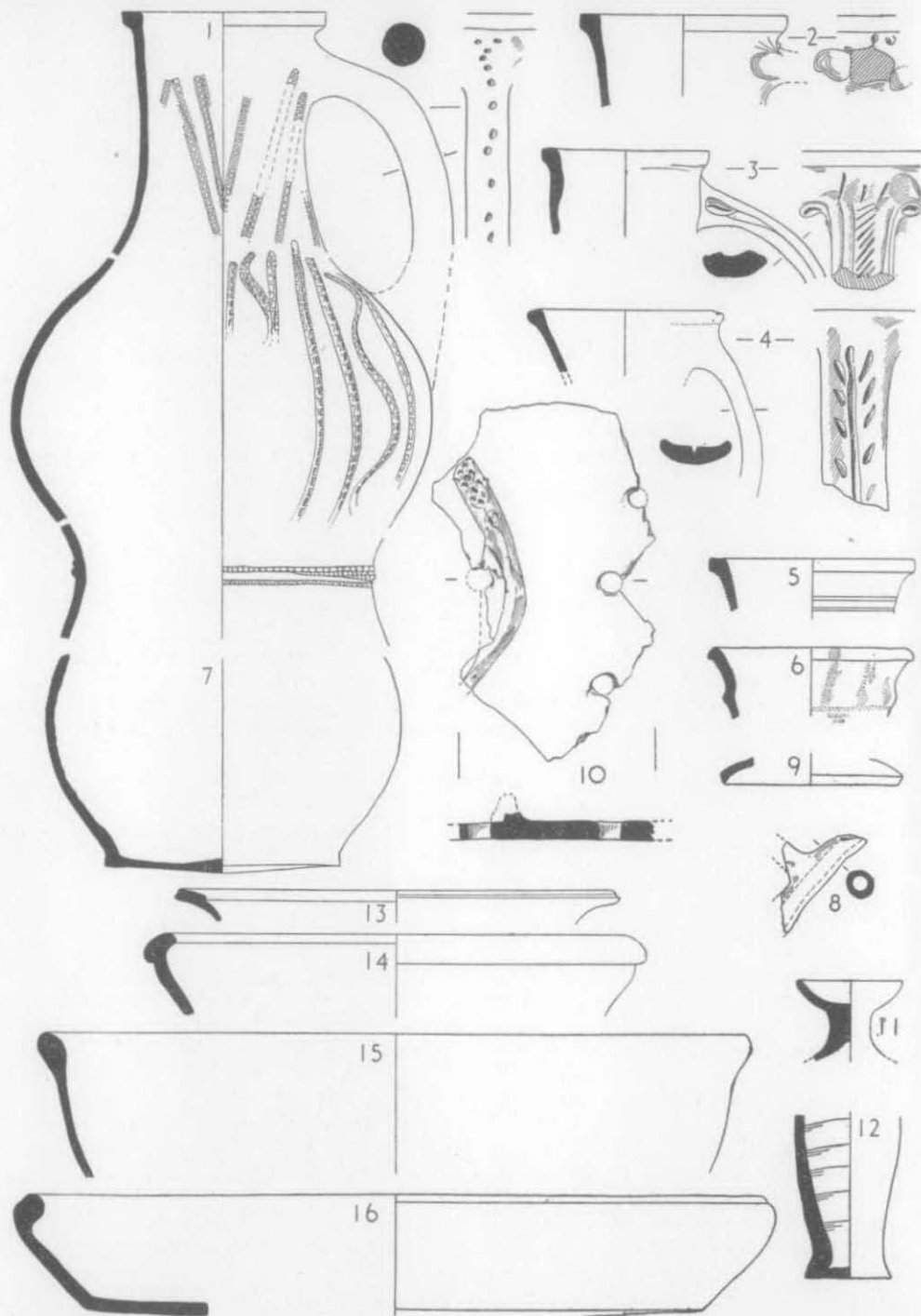


FIG. 25
Late 13th-14th century pottery from *Period II* levels. pp. 158-60. ($\times \frac{1}{4}$).

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9. Lid rim of hard, fine, buff-cream ware with a pinkish core; mottled green glaze on the underside and outer edge of the rim. The rim is sharply angled and down-turned. The ware implies a late 13th century date or later and lids do not seem to be common before this period. Area 4, midden to W. of stone house.

10. Flat pottery plate of coarse flint, and limestone-detritus gritted, reddish-brown ware with a grey core. The plate is pierced in at least four places and the underside is fire-blackened; on the upper surface is an applied ridge of clay, heavily stabbed in places. The use of this object is uncertain, but the ridge may have been intended to support sagging-based pots in an upright position, while the plate itself lay on top of a fire, direct heat from which would pass through the holes in the plate. Alternatively, or perhaps in addition, the plate could have been used as a griddle on which flat cakes could have been cooked. An iron griddle-plate from Beere, Devon, has been discussed, with parallels, by E. M. Jope in *Med. Arch.*, II (1958), 138, FIG. 34, no. 1. Late 13th century on the evidence of the find-spot. Area 5, pit 13, level 5.

11. Double-shelled lamp of sandy, buff ware with a light grey core and a sheen on the surface; there is mottled green glaze on the interior of the bowl and in patches on the exterior. The rim is simple and rounded over; the base is hollowed out conically underneath by scooping out with a knife, but the upward flaring sides of the foot are missing. The development of double-shelled lamps has been studied by Jope, 1950, 57-60, FIGS. 20, nos. 6, 7; 21. The present example is probably late 13th century on the evidence of the find-spot. Area 5, pit 13, level 6.

12. Lower part of a bottle of fine, hard fired, pinkish-buff ware with a buff-orange surface. There are small patches of mottled green glaze externally. The ware implies a late 13th, or more probably an early 14th century date, if no later. Area 5, occupation outside building with pebble floor (section J-K, level 2).

13. Bowl of very hard, sandy, purple ware with a reddish-brown and grey core. Some yellow-brown glaze internally and a surface sheen externally. The rim is bevelled externally and undercut internally, presumably as a result of folding the rim back during potting. Cf. a bowl of similar form, but finer ware from the Bodleian Quadrangle, 1941 (Jope, 1942, 76-7, FIG. 20, no. 1) of suggested late medieval date. Area 5, occupation outside building with pebble floor (section J-K, level 2).

14. Bowl of coarse reddish-brown ware with a grey core and flint and limestone-detritus gritting. In-turned rim, folded over outside. Late 13th century. Area 5, pit 13, level 5.

15. Bowl of coarse reddish-brown ware, blackened externally and with a grey core and shell and limestone-detritus filling. Flaring wall with simple thickened, rounded rim. Late 13th century. Area 5, pit 13, level 7.

16. Bowl of coarse light brown ware, a grey core and a little flint and limestone-detritus gritting. In-turned rim, slightly grooved externally, and a sagging base. The exterior is partly soot-blackened. Later 13th century. Area 5, pit 13, level 4.

Cooking pots and a pan from levels of Period II (FIG. 26)

1. Cooking pot of fine, slightly sandy, soft pink ware with a few red impurities. Everted neck and carefully squared rim; grooves on the shoulder and a very slightly sagging base. Late 13th century on the evidence of associated finds. Area 3, make-up W. of the church.

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2. Cooking pot of harsh, hard, sandy grey ware, soot-blackened externally. Everted, squared rim and light wheel-rillings on the body, with a patch of greenish glaze near the base. Late 13th century. Area 5, pit 13, level 5.

3. Cooking pot of reddish-brown, slightly soapy, limestone-detritus filled ware with a grey core and interior surface. Rather baggy profile with an upright rim, thickened and rounded at the top, and a sagging base. Late 13th century. Area 5, pit 13, level 5.

4. Cooking pot rim of reddish-brown, slightly soapy ware with a grey core and interior surface and some limestone-detritus gritting. The rim slopes inwards, but is thickened and flanged at the top. Late 13th century. Area 5, pit 13, level 8.

5. Cooking pot rim of hard, slightly sandy light brown ware with a light grey core. Everted, squared rim, hollowed on top. Late 13th century. Area 5, pit 13, joining fragments from levels 7 and 8.

6. Cooking pot rim of hard, sandy, dark grey ware, light brown in places on the inner surface; greenish-purple glaze on the inside. Rim rounded externally and folded back over to form an internal ridge. Ware and technique are similar to the bowl, FIG. 25, no. 13 above, and this cooking pot from the same level is probably of the same date; mid-late 14th century. Area 5, occupation level outside the building with pebble floor (section J-K, level 2).

7. Cooking pot of hard, thin, harsh, sandy grey ware with a lighter grey core. Carefully moulded, squared rim with internal bevel. Late 13th century. Area 5, pit 13, level 5.

8. Cooking pot rim of sandy, buff ware with a grey core. There is a patch of yellow-green glaze externally. Everted rim, thickened externally. Late 13th century. Area 5, pit 13, level 6.

9. Small cooking pot of slightly friable, sandy ware with light brown surfaces and pinkish-red core; the whole of the exterior has a slight sheen. The pot is thin-walled and sharply moulded with an everted angular rim; there are wheel-markings on the body and the base is sagging. Late 13th century. Area 5, pit 13, joining sherds from levels 4 and 7. Another very similar cooking pot of softer ware without the surface sheen came from pit 13, levels 5 and 6.

10. Small cooking pot of very fine, hard fired, buff-cream ware with a slightly pinkish core. The pot is carefully made, although fairly thick-walled. The rim is everted and slightly hollowed internally, the upper part of the body is heavily rilled and the angle of the sagging base is knife-trimmed. This type of pot is clearly related to no. 9 above but is much finer and an early 14th century date might be indicated. Area 5, filling of the foundation-trench of the boundary wall (section P-Q, level 6).

11. Cooking pot rim of fairly fine, slightly sandy, light grey ware. The walls are thin and the rim everted and hollowed internally with finger pressings along the upper edge. There are rillings on the body. Cf. a group of late 13th-early 14th century date from the Clarendon Hotel (*Oxoniensia*, xxiv (1959), 24-5, FIG. 9, nos. 6, 7). Late 13th-early 14th century. Area 5, occupation level outside the building with pebble floor (section J-K, level 2).

12. Cooking pot rim of very fine, very hard, yellowish-cream ware. Very carefully potted with a squared rim. Probably mid 14th century from its find-spot. Area 4, occupation level inside ? barn of stone house.

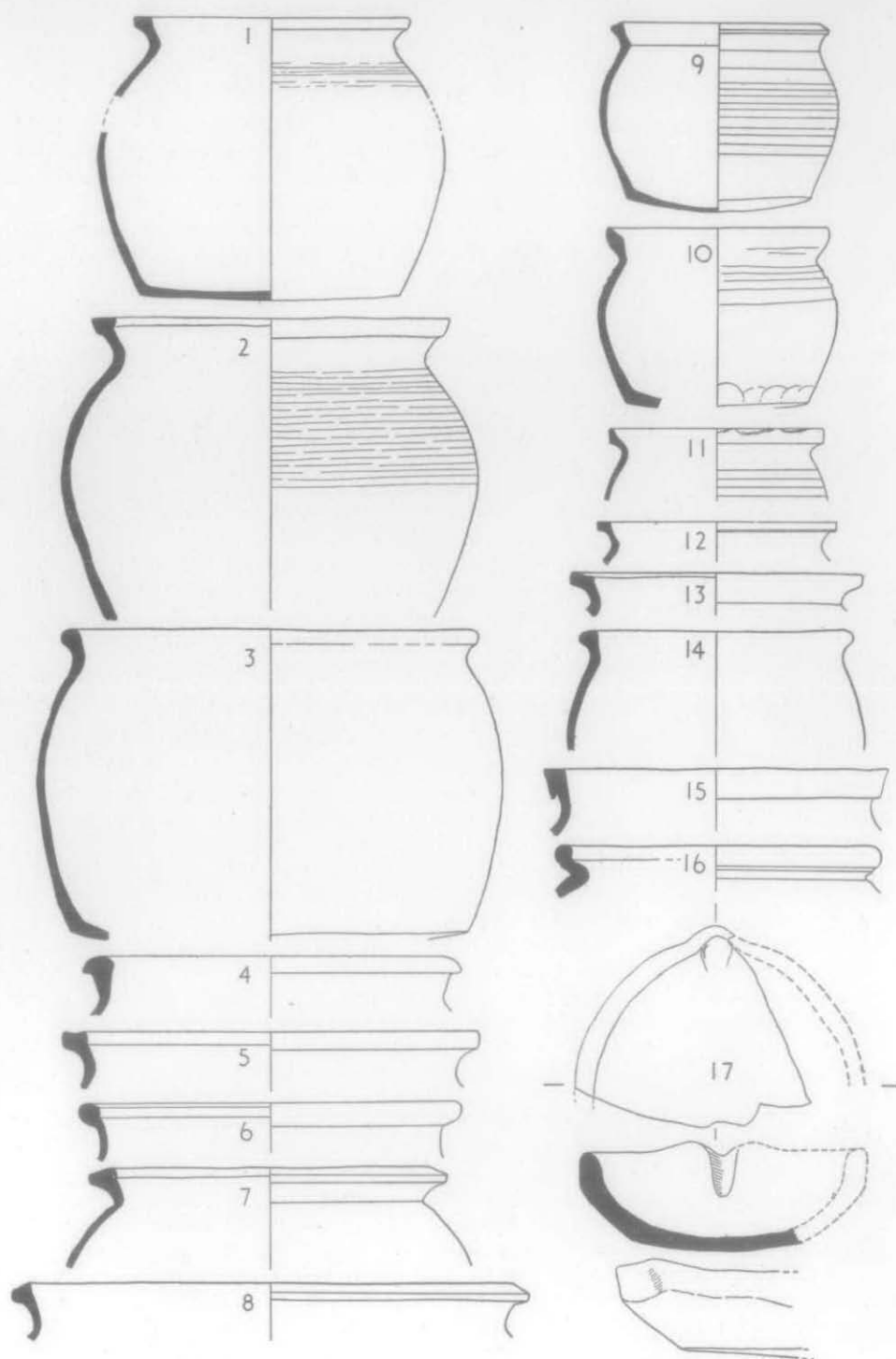


FIG. 26

Late 13th-14th century cooking pots and pan from *Period II* levels. pp. 160-3. ($\times \frac{1}{4}$).

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13. Cooking pot rim of rather soft, fine, yellowish-cream ware with a pink core. Everted squared rim. Late 13th-early 14th century. Area 4, primary filling of ditch to S. of stone house (section A-B, level 6).

14. Cooking pot of coarse, flint and limestone-detritus filled, grey ware. Rather baggy shape with thickened, everted rim, slightly hollowed internally; cf. no. 3 above. Late 13th century. Area 5, pit 13, level 6.

15. Cooking pot rim of fine very hard fired, brick-red ware with greyish-brown surfaces and a grey core. There is a spot of brownish glaze internally. Upright, squared and outward-folded rim, characteristic of products of the Brill Kilns (*Jope*, 1942, 74-5, FIG. 18). Probably early 14th century from the find-spot. Area 4, midden to W. of stone house.

16. Cooking pot rim of hard, somewhat sandy, light orange fabric with a pinkish core. The rim is everted and rebated to take a lid; the profile is generally rounded. This type of ware, though perhaps in a rather finer character, and this type of rebated rim are usually dated to the 15th century in the Oxford area (Cf. *Oxoniensia*, xxiv (1959), 26-32, FIGS. 12, nos. 4, 5; 14, nos. 8-10. *Jope*, 1942, 76-9, FIG. 20, nos. 4-7); the present example suggests that they were prevalent before the desertion of Seacourt c. 1400 (see above p. 119). Area 2, occupation level on stone cobbles.

17. Oval pan of coarse, reddish-brown ware with a grey core and some limestone-detritus filling; the lower part of the interior is covered with a wash of poor, pimply greenish-yellow glaze; there are traces of soot on part of the walls and at the lip. Probably oval pan, rather pointed towards the lip, which is pushed out from the wall. No trace of a handle survives, but this could well be an example of the 'dish for joints' published by Mr. David Sturdy (*Oxoniensia*, xxiv (1959), 35-6, FIG. 16, no. 1). The same pointed oval type occurs in an early 14th century context at Deddington Castle, Oxon. (information from Mr. E. M. Jope). Mid 14th century. Area 4, occupation level over second hearth and probably partly contemporary with third hearth (section A-B, level 9).

THE LATEST MEDIEVAL POTTERY FROM SEACOURT (FIG. 27)

The material illustrated in this section is unstratified, or only stratified in a very general way. Other late sherds were well stratified in *Period II* levels (FIGS. 25-6) to which reference should also be made.

1. Large storage jar, or possibly cooking pot, of very fine cream ware with a grey core; there are a few spots of lime-green glaze on the interior and of yellow glaze on the exterior surfaces. Large globular body with short everted rim thickened at the top and with an internal bead; there is part of a vertical applied strip of clay, ornamented with finger impressions, on the body. Near the base, which is missing, the wall of the pot has been knife-trimmed. No parallel for this vessel can be quoted, but it ought to be pre-1400 at Seacourt. Area 1, general occupation level (section G-H, level 2).

2. Large open bowl or pan of soft, rather flaky, buff-orange ware with a light grey core; the interior (base and lower part of the walls) is covered with pimply, dull yellow glaze. The rim is squared and sharply down-turned in manufacture; the base is flat. This is a typical product of the Brill kilns as identified by Mr. E. M. Jope (*Jope*, 1942, 74-5, FIG. 18). This Seacourt example should be pre-1400. Area 1, general occupation level (section G-H, level 2).

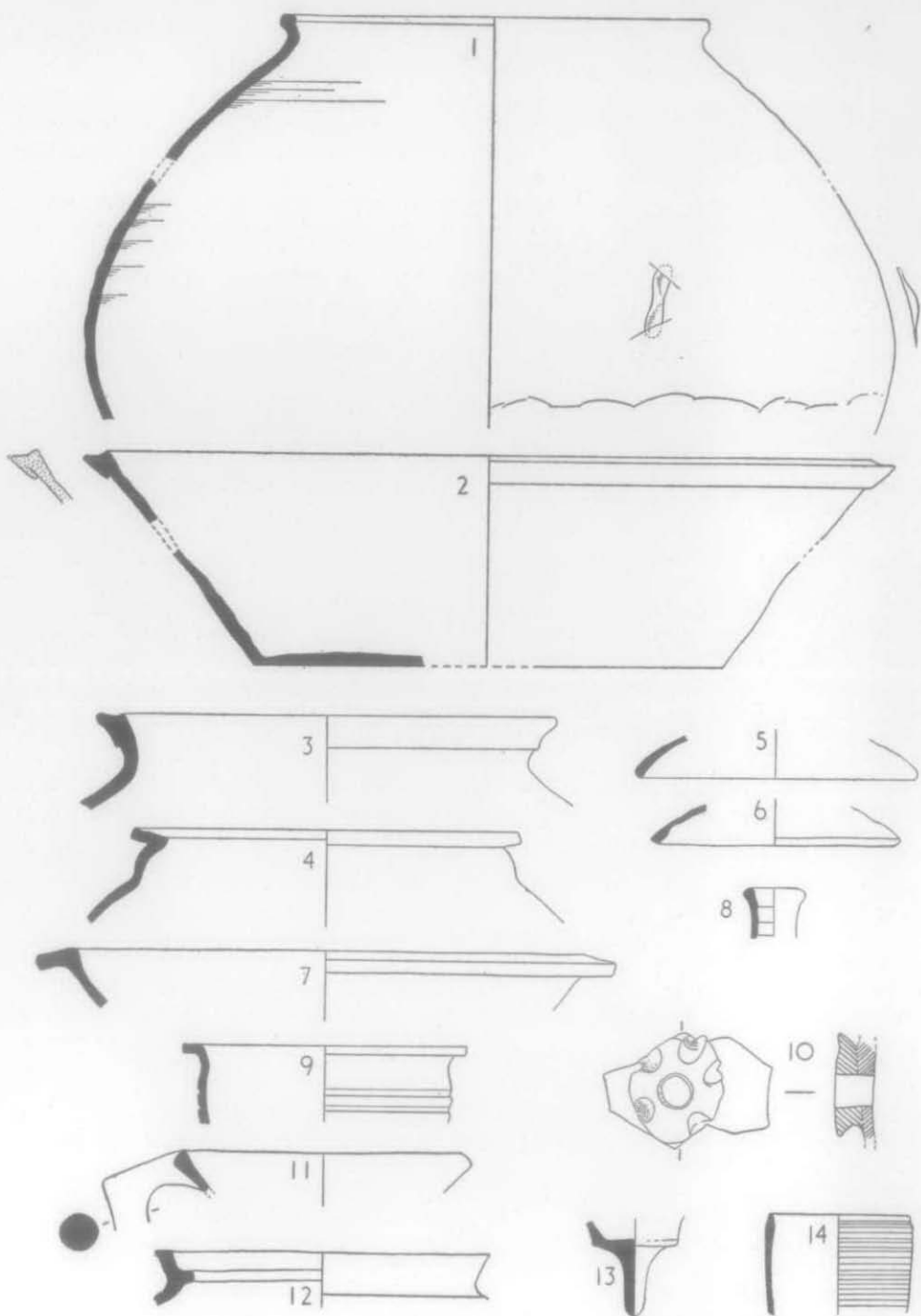


FIG. 27
The latest medieval pottery from Seacourt. pp. 163-6. ($\times \frac{1}{4}$).

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3. Cooking pot of fine, hard fired, buff-orange ware with slightly pinkish core. Squared rim of characteristic Brill type, cf. no. 2 above. Pre-1400. Area 1, general occupation level.

4. Cooking pot rim of hard, sandy cream fabric. Sharply everted rim above a marked roll in the shoulder of the pot; cf. a pot from Maidenhead of similar form and fabric (*Joze*, 1947, FIG. 9, no. 1). Pre-1400. Area 1, occupation material on top of street and in the general occupation level.

5. Lid of fine light grey fabric with a pink core; mottled deep green glaze internally and a thin wash externally. Simple rounded rim, cf. FIG. 25, no. 9 above. Late 13th-14th century. Area 1, general occupation level.

6. Lid of hard, orange-buff fabric with a small patch of yellowish-green glaze. More angular rim than no. 5 above. 14th century. Area 4, among destruction rubble of house.

7. Bowl of hard, sandy buff-cream ware. Angular flanged rim with a few spots of green glaze under the rim. Cf. a similar pot from Hedsor (*Joze*, 1947, FIG. 9, no. 5). Pre-1400. Area 4, among destruction rubble of house.

8. Neck of a bottle of very fine orange-buff ware. Simple rolled-out rim. Pre-1400. Area 4, among destruction rubble of house.

9. Upper part of a small cooking pot or bowl of very fine, hard, dull reddish-brown ware with a surface sheen; there is a streak of rich yellow-brown glaze running down the inside. Sharply moulded angular rim and deep grooves on the body; this piece is almost metallic in its sheen and sharpness. Pre-1400, see discussion of this piece, above p. 137. Area 5, unstratified.

10. Spigot hole from a large pitcher; coarse buff-cream ware, hard fired and with a few small patches of yellow glaze both inside and out. Pre-1400. Area 5, unstratified.

11. Rim and handle of a cooking pot of hard, sandy, orange-buff ware. The rim is everted and slightly thickened at the top and there is a little brownish-purple glaze inside the rim; the handle is round in section with a sharply angled shoulder. This pot copies the typical 14th century metal cauldron and should be compared with a similar pot from London (*LMMC*, 224, FIG. 74). Pre-1400. Area 5, unstratified.

12. Rim of sandy reddish-buff fabric with a grey core; there are some spots of poor yellowish glaze on the outside of the rim. Angular everted rim with an angular internal seating for a lid. This type has a long ancestry and at Northolt, Midd'x, it appears c. 1370 (information from Mr. J. G. Hurst). Area 11, unstratified.

13. Lamp of hard reddish-brown ware with a buff core. Flaring sides with a sharp base angle and a long point. The ware of this example points to a 14th century date and this is a very late specimen of a type of lamp that was thought to have gone out of use by the later 12th century (*Joze*, 1950, 58). Area 11, unstratified.

14. Rim of a stoneware jug; very fine, unglazed, greyish-white ware. Simple upright rim, rounded at the top and the neck rilled all the way up. This is a typical product of the Siegburg kilns. Examples of this ware dated to the 14th century are known on the Continent, e.g. from the castle of Oud Haarlem, Holland, destroyed in 1351 (I am grateful to Mr. J. G. N. Renaud of the Dutch State Service for Archaeological Investigation for this information); 15th century examples from Colchester and other sites in England have been recognized (see J. G. Hurst in *Trans. Essex Arch. Soc.*, 3rd ser., 1, 1 (1961), 3-5, FIG. 32). The Seacourt example

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was found in 1939 at Site Q (FIG. 3) in the filling of a circular pit at the E. end of the trench; it would therefore seem to be stratified and to date from before the desertion of the village in 1439, or, as is suggested above p. 119, from before 1400. It is thus probably a 14th century import and by far the earliest example of this ware so far recorded in England.

OTHER OBJECTS

The chief interest of the small objects from Seacourt lies in the variety of types present, the high quality of some of the pieces, and the close dating that is available for many of them. None of the objects is likely to be later than c. 1400,¹⁷⁷ nor much earlier than c. 1175-1200; in many cases it is possible to suggest a much closer dating within this framework. In the descriptions that follow a date given before the find-spot is based on the evidence of the object; one given after the find-spot is based on the evidence of the site. The difficulties arising from the stratigraphy have been discussed elsewhere (p. 130); here too the strictest criteria have been applied and firm dates are only given to those objects whose context is certain, the others being described as unstratified and only included if of intrinsic importance. All the objects from the 1939 excavations which deserve publication are described here by kind permission of Mr. R. L. S. Bruce-Mitford, who arranged for and checked the drawings made of them by Mr. C. O. Waterhouse, M.B.E., and for whom Mr. Andreas Dikigoropoulos, F.S.A., had prepared descriptions and comments on the objects. Mr. Dikigoropoulos has very kindly permitted his work to be incorporated in the present paper and those paragraphs below which are concerned with the objects found in 1939 are largely his work. Specialist reports which refer to individual finds are introduced in the appropriate places; other specialist reports may be found below p. 189ff. Work undertaken in the Ancient Monuments Laboratory and reported on by Mr. L. Biek has been indicated by his initials, and many of the drawings and descriptions incorporate the evidence from X-rays taken at the laboratory by Mr. E. S. Cripps. These are marked * in the text, and outlines hidden by corrosion products have been indicated in the drawings by dotted lines where useful.

OBJECTS OF BRONZE (i.e. copper alloy, not analysed) FIG. 28

1. Gilt bronze pendant-fitting used to attach an heraldic or other decorative pendant to horse-harness. The duck-like upper moulding is paralleled in examples in the Cluny Museum: *LMMC* 118-22, FIG. 39. 1939, trench M, unstratified. Probably 14th century.

2. Plate with cross on circle above plain moulding at upper end, which is twice as thick as the lower end. Probably part of a strap-end, cf. no. 4 below, 1939, trench B, unstratified. Probably 14th century.

3. Buckle with large, waisted loop; simple pierced, terminal leaf and unpierced side scrolls; roughly rectangular buckle plate, approximately $\frac{1}{3}$ of the total length,

¹⁷⁷ With the exception of the spur, FIG. 30, no. 21. It is remarkable how very few objects of any sort, apart from clay pipes and 17th or 18th century wine bottles, reached the site after the desertion of the village c. 1400; even Victorian china is conspicuous only by its absence.

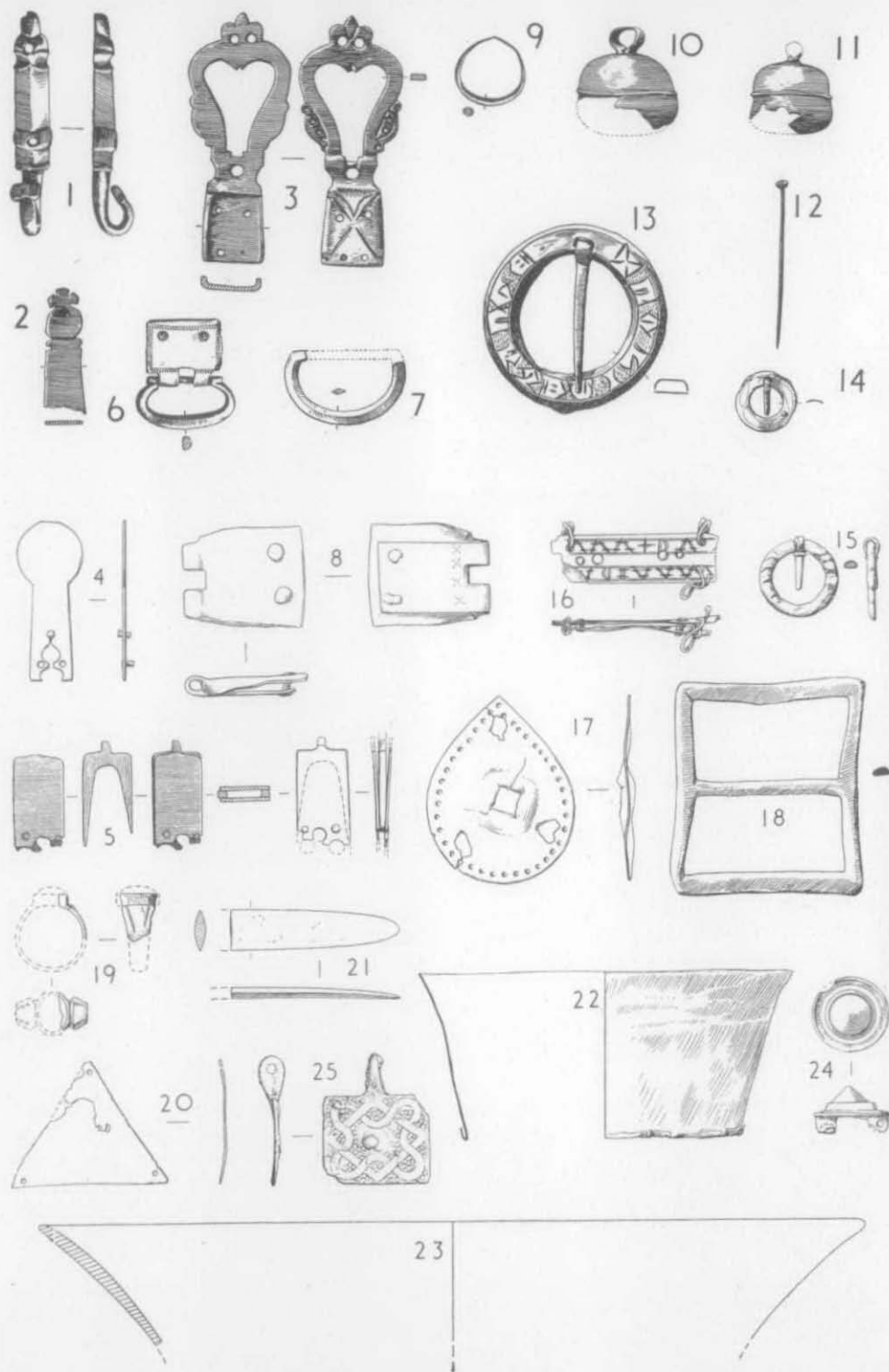


FIG. 28
Bronze objects. pp. 166-72. ($\times \frac{1}{2}$).

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decorated with a simple geometric design and pierced for attachment to the belt. This buckle has clear analogies with a well known type of belt-chape of which examples have been found at Kidwelly (*Arch.*, LXXXIII, 122, FIG. 11, no. 6), London (*LMMC*, 269, FIG. 85, no. 1, and another in the Guildhall Museum), ? Toddington, Beds. (*JBAA*, II, 271) and Northampton (Northampton Museum); the group as a whole has been studied by J. B. Ward Perkins (*Ant. J.*, XIX (1939), 197-9), who dates the chapes c. 1390-1410. They are more elaborate than the Seacourt buckle, having a complex leaf-terminal, pierced side scrolls, a figure of St. Christopher within the loop, and a black-letter inscription on the plate (IHC or variant thereof), which is only $\frac{1}{4}$ of the total length. In the Seacourt example the shape of the loop, the terminal leaf and the side scrolls, all point to a connection with the more elaborate group, of which the Seacourt buckle would seem to be an earlier variety. The Seacourt buckle is a true buckle, having a hole in the buckle plate for the swivel of the buckle pin; in the more elaborate examples the place of the pin is taken by the figure of St. Christopher, and they are therefore more correctly described as belt-chapes or possibly clasps. The simple terminal leaf on the Seacourt buckle may be compared with similar leaves on belt-chapes shown on contemporary brasses: *LMMC*, 266, FIG. 84, nos. 7(1334), 8(c. 1348), 9(c. 1370), 12(1358), 13(1361). The Seacourt buckle may therefore be dated to the mid-14th century, which agrees well enough with its find-spot: 1939, trench C, 'in loose stones', i.e. in a *Period II* context (see above pp. 87-9).

4. Outer plate of a belt-chape of forked type. Two rivets still in position and clear indications of white metal probably solder residues on the inner (rougher) surface (L.B.). Cf. exactly *LMMC*, PL. LXXV, 10, with the same ogival opening. 1958, Area 4, occupation within house (section A-B, level 8). Mid-late 14th century A.M. 8187.

5. Belt-chape of forked type. The drawings show the separate components and their relationship when in position. There are traces of white metal, probably solder, inside the assembly, which also contained distinct translucent brown fibres, probably leather; 0.5 per cent of nitrogen, but no hydroxyproline, was detected (see no. 8 below: L.B.).¹⁷⁸ For a discussion of forked belt-chapes see *LMMC*, 267-8; *Med. Arch.*, V (1961), 291, and cf. no. 4 above. 1958, Area 1, filling of ditch A (section G-H, level 4), mid-13th century. A.M. 8181.

6. Strap-end buckle. The oval loop has marked shoulders and the plate is decorated along the edges with an apparently rouletted pattern of small triangles. 1939, trench C, apparently among stones and therefore belonging to the later period on this site. Probably later 13th-14th century.

7. Buckle-loop, lozenge-shaped section. 1939, trench Q, unstratified. Pre-1400.

8. Plate from strap-end buckle. Inside the plate a layer of dark-brown, apparently organic material had been preserved, evidently by contact with the metal. This material is most probably leather; a prepared section under the microscope appears as brown translucent fibres in a 3-dimensional weave pattern. No remnants of hair follicles or grain layer help to identify the animal origin. Chemical examination showed the presence of only 0.9 per cent of nitrogen (one would expect

¹⁷⁸ Examination of the 'leather' was kindly undertaken by the British Leather Manufacturers' Research Association (B.L.M.R.A.). See also note 179 below and no. 8.

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about 6-7 per cent in vegetable-tanned leather) but the amount of hydroxyproline (the amino acid characteristic of skin protein) was very close to the value estimated from the nitrogen content.¹⁷⁹ One end of the 'leather' had evidently been stitched, as indicated by the dotted crosses in the drawing, with twofold yarns, the folded yarns being twisted in the S direction and the singles in the Z direction (PL. x A). Microscopical examination shows that the ultimate fibres have transverse nodes or dislocation marks along their length which appear as cross-markings in polarized light (PL. x B). These markings and the behaviour in staining tests indicate that they are flax fibres. There was also a small fragment of plain weave fabric woven from single yarns that appear to have little or no twist. The yarns are composed of bast or leaf fibres and further identification is made impossible by the discoloration and brittleness of the fragment.¹⁸⁰ The evidence as a whole indicates a fold of material stitched back, most probably over the buckle bar and (? pierced by the) pin, much as the metal was then riveted over to enclose this fold. The presence of textile suggests that no leather was ever exposed, but that it acted as reinforcement or support (either throughout, or only in the buckle plate) to what would appear as a textile belt. (L.B.). 1958, Area 1, unstratified. Pre-1400. A.M. 8180.

9. Simple finger-ring, round section thinning towards the ends which are turned round on each other to form the ring. 1939, trench Q, below a mortar floor associated with a building of c. 1250. Before mid-13th century.

10, 11. Fragments of two bells. These are possibly crotals or hawk's bells cf. *King John's House*, 20, PL. XIX, 14. 1939, unstratified. Pre-1400.

12. Pin with round flat-topped head. 1939, trench Q, unstratified. Pre-1400.

13. Circular brooch with an inscription in Lombardic lettering on the upper surface. The top and sides of the brooch are made of a single piece of metal bent over to form the edges, the back plate being separate, and presumably originally attached with solder. The back plate is flat and projects in a small curve opposite the point of the pin, which itself swivels in a hole passing through both front and back plates. The upper surface of the brooch is also flat and somewhat narrower than the back plate. It bears the inscription NOLI ME TANGE running between two incised lines and prefaced by a Maltese cross. There is no final contraction mark, and it may be assumed that the final RE of the correct form TANGERE has been omitted in order to balance the inscription either side of the pin. The letters of the inscription are plain, while the interspaces are lightly speckled. The individual letters on the brooch have been compared with tabulated lists of letters from medieval seals given in *Arch.*, LXXIX (1929), 149-65: the letters O, L, E, A, G are similar to letters of the late 13th and first half of the 14th century; the letters N, M, I, T, could on the other hand date from the early 13th to the late 14th century. Omitting therefore any consideration of the conservatism or otherwise of the engraver, it is possible to suggest a date of c. 1250-c. 1350 for the brooch. 1939, trench C, unstratified.

14. Small circular brooch, the plate slightly curved in section with a faint *pointillé* decoration of four ? leaves on its upper surface; simple pin swivelling through a hole in the plate. A flat plate with a rather more elaborate floral *pointillé*

¹⁷⁹ Examination by B.L.M.R.A.

¹⁸⁰ The yarns were kindly examined by the Shirley Institute, to whom I am indebted for PL. x A and B.

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decoration is dated 1350-1426 at the More, Herts. (*Arch. J.*, cxvi (1959), 182, FIG. 19, no. 3). 1939, trench J, unstratified. Pre-1400.

15. Circular brooch plate, semi-circular in section, with slight traces of possible decoration of diagonal lines on the upper, rounded, surface. The pin swivels round a groove in the plate, not through a hole in the plate as in nos. 13 and 14 above. This type of brooch, including another example from Seacourt, has been studied by E. T. Leeds in *Oxoniensia*, III (1938), 174-5, where the Seacourt example is FIG. 21d and two others, found associated with burials of White Friars, whose house was founded in 1318, are at FIG. 21b and c. 1959, Area 11, unstratified. 14th century.

16. Riveted double plate assembly, possibly the plate from a strap-end buckle if the notch at one end (on the left in the drawing) of the upper plate is the notch in which the buckle pin swivelled. The plates are held together by two rivets still in position; in addition there are holes through both plates at three of the corners through which twists of wire pass linking both plates loosely together and two holes, also through both plates, in the centre of the assembly. Of the latter, one hole is out of register with its fellow in the lower plate. The two plates were therefore punched separately and this was done from what are now the outsides of the plates in each case except for the holes which now contain rivets. In one of these the evidence is ambiguous; in the other both holes have been punched from the upper, decorated surface (L.B.); the rivets therefore probably represent a later repair. The upper surface is decorated with two bands of bungled ? inscription which repeat each other as they face inwards to the centre of the plate. Each band is enclosed between two incised lines and the whole of the decoration appears to have been carried out in a chip-carving technique. The inscriptions appear to read: A A A + D A in each case. 1958, Area 5 unstratified. Pre-1400. A.M. 8190.

17. Decorated plate with ornament of impressed¹⁸¹ dots round the edge. There are three holes, presumably for attachment, near the edges and a square hole at the centre. Around the latter the metal gives the impression of having been pulled upwards and this piece may be a guard at the distribution point of two straps, one of which, or its terminal fitting, would pass through the central hole to a firmer seating behind. 1958, Area 1, among the stones of the street (section E-F). 14th century. A.M. 8182.

18. Large rectangular buckle of which the frame is semi-circular in section. For an example with similarly bowed sides, but rather different proportions, cf. *LMC*, PL. LXXIX, no. 6. 1959, Area 11, unstratified, but probably from the occupation in the house. 14th century.

19.* Finger-ring. The setting seems to have had an octagonal frame, and the shoulder of the ring is decorated with two incised lines. The stone is missing. Possibly cast, but the porous appearance on the X-ray may be due to corrosion (L.B.). 1958, Area 4, occupation and midden W. of house (section C-D, level 2). Mid-late 14th century, unless the ring is Roman, then 3rd-4th century; cf. no. 24 below and *Richborough IV*, 127, PL. XXV, 97. A.M. 8185.

20.* Slightly concave triangular plate with a hole at each apex. This appears to be a scale pan of the type shown in Holbein's painting of George Gisze, dated 1532. A more elaborate example, decorated with lines parallel to the edges and

¹⁸¹ Microscopic examination (L.B.) shows enough sound metal still stretching across the depressions to make this quite certain, although some of them are now holes.

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with a central stamp, W.D., is illustrated in *King John's House*, PL. XIX, 17 and p. 20,¹⁸² where the balance arm and cords for suspension are also shown. It is probably 16th or 17th century in date. In the Norwich Museum there are two similar pans: one (no. 122, 957) from Wangford Warren, Suffolk is inscribed LATON, i.e. 'Made in latten'; it might be of 13th-14th century date. The other (no. 205, 957) from Davey Place, Norwich, bears the mark of the Founders' Company and is probably 15th century. The find-spot of the Seacourt example indicates a date in the first half of the 13th century for this example. Further study might reveal that the earlier pans as a whole are both unstamped and undecorated, as the Seacourt example suggests. There is some evidence of lead-rich corrosion products on the concave surface. As frequently noted elsewhere, the weight may have been adjusted exactly by means of a spread of 'solder'-like white metal (L.B.) 1958, Area 1, in the filling of the ditch below the street (section E-F, level 5). First half 13th century. A.M. 8183.

21. Point and lower part of a double-edged knife or dagger, pointed oval section and slightly bent point. Daggers of 'bronze' (i.e. some type of copper alloy) seem to be uncommon in the Middle Ages and no parallel can be quoted for this example. 1958, Area 2, filling of pit 25 associated with fragments of tripod pitcher. Late 12-early 13th century. A.M. 8189.

22. Part of the wall of a flaring-mouthed stew-pan. Plain rim. The base, which is missing, was attached to the wall by being folded up and over the up-turned foot of the wall. Cf. a similar pan, but with a more elaborate rim, from London: *LMMC*, 207, PL. LIV. 1959, Area 11, unstratified, but probably from the occupation in the house. 14th century.

23. Part of the flared rim of a large bronze ? cooking vessel. The outer surface is heavily encrusted with soot from presumed use over a fire (L.B.). Cf. 14th century examples from London, *LMMC*, 202-7, PLS. LV and LVI. 1958, Area 29, in occupation material over pebble floor to S. of wall. Mid 13th-14th century. A.M. 8184.

24. Small round brooch with a conical 'stone' set centrally within a raised flange, appearing bluish-black but actually dark brown. The flat outer rim of the brooch is decorated with a rouletted pattern of flattened S's. Flat back with projecting fittings for the pin, which is missing. The materials were only examined non-destructively. The plating of white metal on the back was shown to be tin.¹⁸³ The clear traces of gold visible on the upper surface, particularly in the rouletting, could for technical reasons not be detected in the same manner, nor could mercury, here thought to have been used in applying the gold, and in similar circumstances confirmed in another object in the same way. From visual examination alone it was not possible to say whether the 'stone' was natural or artificial glass,¹⁸⁴ but it is probably dark paste. Brooches of this type are clearly of Roman date and parallels at Winchester (City Museum) and Richborough (*Richborough IV*, 121, PL. XXXI, no. 63 quoting *Richborough II*, 42, PL. XVII, no. 9 for a full discussion of the type) suggest a 4th century date. 1958 Area 4, occupation within house (section A-B, level 8), where it must be derived from the Roman site nearby (Area 5, pp. 96-7). A.M. 8188.

¹⁸² I am indebted to Mr. G. C. Dunning for this reference.

¹⁸³ Kindly examined with an X-ray fluorescent spectrometer by Mr. Peter Ainsley of the Research Laboratory for Archaeology and the History of Art, Oxford.

¹⁸⁴ Kindly examined by Mr. E. A. Jobbins of the Geological Survey and Museum.

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25.* Rectangular decorated plate with central hole. X-ray examination (L.B.) revealed that the plate was highly decorated on one surface with a raised diamond pattern with interlacing band, the field being filled with sunk, ? ring-punched circles. Cf. A decorative pendant of the type III of *LMMC*, 118, FIG. 38 and PL. XXI, No. 1. 1959, Area 11, occupation on cobbling outside the entrance to the stone building. (section G-H, level 1). 14th century. A.M. 9719.

OBJECTS OF IRON (FIGS. 29-31)

Shears (FIG. 29)

1. Large pair of shears with pronounced loop at the junction of the two arms; the shoulder of the blade is smoothly curved, without any elaboration. This is type I B of the classification proposed in *LMMC* FIG. 47; and can also be closely compared with shears of mid-13th century date from Dyserth Castle (*LMMC*, FIG. 48, no. 4) and with a pair in a contemporary illustration of c. 1250 (*LMMC*, FIG. 48, no. 6) where the large size of the shears is comparable to the size of the Seacourt example, which is 13½ in. long. Shears of this size would be suitable for sheep-shearing, cf. an Iron Age pair in *The Stanwick Fortifications* (Soc. Antiqs. Research Rep., xvii (1954), 50, PL. xxvii c). 1939, trench B, unstratified. Pre-1400.

2.* Small pair of shears with pronounced loop at the junction of the two arms and small notches in the shoulder of each blade. A variant of type III of the classification in *LMMC*, FIG. 47, more closely to be compared with a pair of shears from Moorfields dated to the 15th century (*LMMC*, FIG. 48, no. 12). 1958, Area 1, unstratified. Pre-1400. A.M. 8436.

3. Another pair, very similar to no. 2 above, but with smaller notches at the tops of the blades. 1958, Area 1, unstratified. Pre-1400. A.M. 8401.

Knives (FIG. 29)

The knives from Seacourt can be divided into two groups: those which have flat, strip-tangs whose handles are formed by the addition of thin pieces of bone or wood on either side of the tang, attached by means of rivets through the whole assembly (FIG. 29, nos. 4-7); and those which have pointed tangs which are meant to be inserted into a block of wood or piece of bone, which itself forms the complete handle (FIG. 29, nos. 8-12). All the examples of the strip-tang variety from Seacourt, including the four published here, came from 14th century or unstratified contexts: a 14th century date is therefore suggested for this type. The pointed tang variety, however, came from both 13th and 14th century contexts, and this type is indeed the one normally found in deposits of all ages and periods. This evidence supports the implication in *LMMC*, 51 that strip-tang knives are in the main of 14th century and later date, the earliest being one of c. 1270 from Rayleigh Castle, Essex (*Trans. Essex Arch. Soc.*, n.s., xii (1912), 169, FIG. 4, nos. 1, 2). The introduction of this type seems now to be well enough defined for it to have an independent chronological value of its own.

4.* Part of a knife-handle, the strip-tang of which is faced on both sides with decorated and inscribed bone scales held in position by three rivets (PL. XI c) passing through the whole assembly; the butt is covered by a knobbed, trapezoid plate, possibly of brass. The thickest part of the handle, as seen in cross-section, probably represents the uppermost surface, in line with the back of the (missing) blade. It seems probable that the inscription, which is in Black Letter and reads from blade

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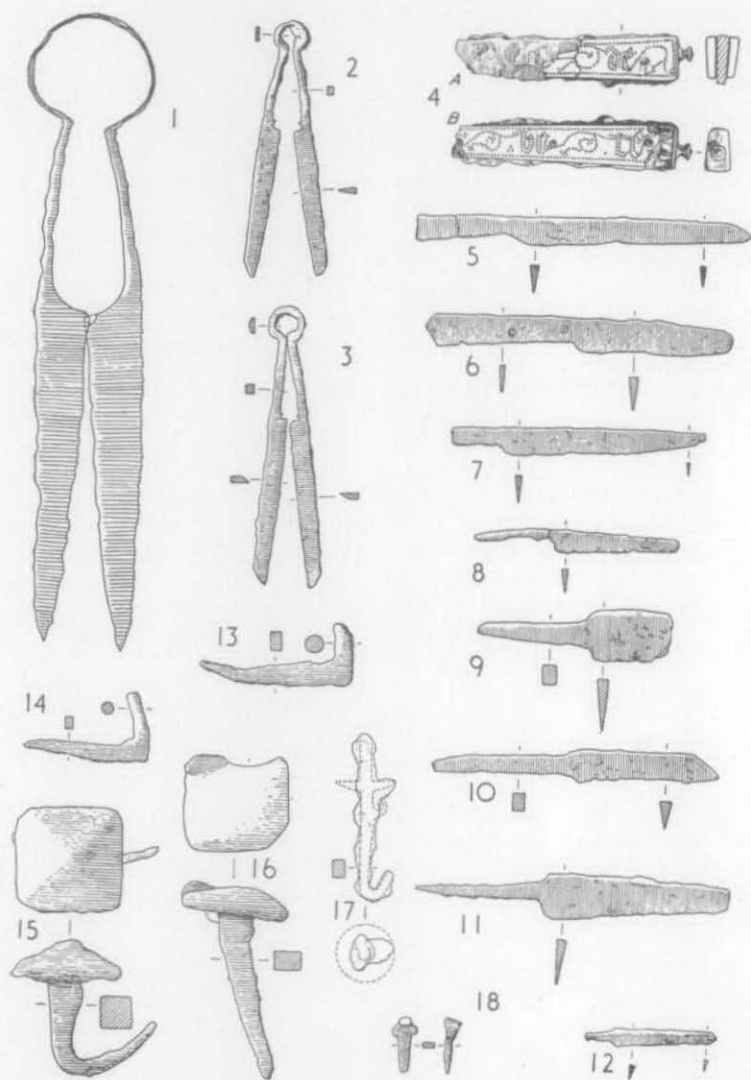


FIG. 29

Iron objects. pp. 172-7. ($\times \frac{1}{2}$; except 4, $\times \frac{3}{4}$).

to butt on each side, starts on FIG. 29, no. 4A; it is continued by turning the knife about its long axis, as shown in FIG. 29, no. 4B. All the decoration (PL. XI B) on the bone scales is carried out in *pointillé*: the inscriptions are contained within straight borders and the word(s) are divided into pairs of letters by floral scrolls which return back upon themselves. It appears from FIG. 29, no. 4B that the scroll nearest the blade returns fully upon itself, thus probably leaving no room for another letter-group on this side; in this case there would only be two letter-groups on the other side (FIG. 29, no. 4A) and the inscription must therefore read . . . DE BO TE. This seems unintelligible, but the object falls into that class known as love- or wedding-knives and an amorous inscription may have been intended, cf. the inscriptions on rings in Dr. Joan Evans' *English Posies and Posy Rings* (1931), 5-15. A fine example of a 16th or 17th century wedding knife is illustrated in *King John's House*, PL. XVIII, no. 11, pp. 16-7; but the present example is much earlier, being securely stratified outside the stone house in Area 4, and thus of mid-14th century date.

The method of decorating the bone scales is of considerable interest: at first sight the method appears to be the *piqué* or 'pin-cushion' technique, in which a metal pin, usually of silver, is driven into the surface of the material to be decorated and broken off at the surface, thus leaving a small spot of metal visible, from which the pattern is ultimately built up. In the present case, although the X-ray indicated, and microscopic examination confirmed, that the *pointillé* decoration on both surfaces contained, in the troughs appearing as dots, a material far more radiopaque than the bone (PL. XI C), and apparently of metallic nature, spectrographic examination of the contents of three of these troughs showed that (though contaminated with iron and calcium, presumed mainly from the other components of the knife) they appeared to consist of substantially pure tin, containing traces only of copper, lead, arsenic and antimony. Although somewhat hardened even by such traces, this material is still considerably softer than silver, and unusable in the *piqué* technique. There is, however, a technique for decorating ivory, in common use in recent times, which consists in wiping over an incised pattern in the (? prepared) ivory with a low-melting solder-like alloy, the metal remaining and solidifying only in the 'valleys' of the decoration. In the present case the decoration could have been produced by wiping with molten tin, or rubbing with a tin block or strip which would have deposited tin in the depressions alone. The rough surface of the metal in each of the troughs supports, perhaps, the second alternative.¹⁸⁵ 1958, Area 4, midden W. of the stone house, sealed by its destruction-level. Before early 14th century to 1400. A.M. 8401.

5. Knife with strip-tang handle from which the grip-plates are missing; only one rivet hole is visible. This knife shows clearly the lack of any shoulder between the back of the blade and the tang, a characteristic of the strip-tang knife. 1958, Area 5, unstratified. Pre-1400.

¹⁸⁵ L.B.; we are grateful to Dr. E. S. Hedges for comments on the properties of such impure tin; to Mr. T. A. Read of the Associated Lead Manufacturers' Research Association for carrying out the spectrographic examination; to Mr. W. W. Robson of the same body for his comments on the decoration of ivory; to Mr. C. C. Oman, Keeper of Metalwork at the Victoria and Albert Museum, for the information on *piqué*, and for his comments on the knife, and to Miss J. E. King for confirming that these scales and other objects were made of bone, although no identifications were possible. Mr. Biek suggests that the inscription may be in German, where BOTE means 'messenger'; this agrees well with the suggestion that the object is a love-knife, but it is difficult to think of a suitable short adjective ending in —DE to precede it.

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6.* Knife with strip-tang, broadening towards the butt, which is angular. The X-ray shows two certain rivet holes (L.B.) and another is clear even from visual examination. 1958, Area 5, *Period II* occupation (section J-K, level 2). 14th century. A.M. 8194.

7. Knife with strip-tang and very flat back to blade and tang. 1958, Area 2, *Period II* occupation. 14th century.

8. Knife with pointed-tang mounted in line with the back of the blade, a feature more characteristic of strip-tang knives, cf. no. 5 above. 1958, Area 4, occupation and destruction rubble of stone house (section A-B, level 8). Mid-late 14th century.

9.* Knife with pointed-tang separated from the blade by prominent shoulders. The blade has a pattern-welded core which is eccentrically placed (PL. XI A), and which consists of (probably) two composite rods in double assembly, standard pattern; probably integral but possibly inlaid (for terminology see *Med. Arch.*, v (1961), 88-9). The pattern is unusually small (L.B.), and this, together with the late context of the object, would support its interpretation as a decorative feature on an object of special character, possibly a gift knife, cf. 4 above. A ?medieval pattern-welded sword comes from Northolt (*Med. Arch.*, v (1961), 288),¹⁸⁶ but otherwise pattern-welding is known exclusively on Anglo-Saxon objects (cf. *Camb. Ant. Soc. Proc.*, xli (1943-7), 73-6; *Med. Arch.*, ii (1958), 12-3, 34); however, this is possibly due to lack of scientific examination. 1958, Area 1, upper fill of ditch A (section G-H, top of layer 4). Mid 13th century. A.M. 8207.

10. Knife, rather massive blade with pointed-tang. In this case the change of angle in the back of the blade as it approaches the point appears to be an original feature and not the result of sharpening. 1958, Area 2, *Period II* occupation. 14th century.

11. Knife with pointed-tang; a much broader and thinner blade than no. 10 above. 1958, Area 1, unstratified. Pre-1400.

12. Small knife with pointed-tang almost in line with the back of the blade, cf. no. 8 above, the blade has a markedly triangular section with a flat back. 1958, Area 3, destruction level of churchyard wall. 14th century.

Structural ironwork (FIG. 29)

13. Pivot for hanging a door or shutter. This is a type commonly found on medieval sites, but it seems to be subject to little development. Presumably the larger examples are door-hangers (cf. an example from Kirkcudbright Castle, *PSAS*, xci (1957-8), 138, FIG. 7, no. 2; and another from *King John's House*, PL. XXI, no. 14), while the smaller ones are shutter-hangers, as the present example and no. 14 below. All the five examples from Seacourt come from *Period II* levels and are of 14th century date. 1958, Area 2, *Period II*. 14th century.

14. Door or shutter-hanger, provenience and date as above no. 13.

15. Large nail with pyramidal head. This type of nail was probably used to decorate the outside of doors cf. *King John's House*, 19, PL. XXII, no. 14; various sizes have been recognized: for a much smaller example cf. *Med. Arch.* III (1959), 268, FIG. 94, nos. 2, 4. Of the three from Seacourt two are the size of the nail under

¹⁸⁶ I am grateful to Mr. J. G. Hurst for this information in advance of publication.

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discussion, the other is larger. In the present example the head is very carefully wrought, but in another example, no. 16 below, the head is domed rather than pyramidal; both come from among the stones of the road on the north side of the church: they are 14th century: yet another comes from Area 1, section E'-F', level 3, and is before mid-13th century. 1958, Area 3, *Period II*. 14th century.

16. Large nail with domed head, for type and provenience see above no. 16. While this may be a doornail, Mr. J. W. Anstee suggests that it is more probably the nail shoeing of a cart wheel, before the days of iron rims; this was a common medieval practice. The find-spot appears to support this identification.

17.* Hooked object which is shown by X-ray examination to have a small nail rusted on half way along the shank, just below the remaining fragment of a 'guard' plate. Use unknown. 1958, Area 5, fill of pit 5. Late 12th-early 13th century. A.M. 8208.

Nails

Apart from the special, probably mainly decorative, nails-described above, as FIG. 29, nos. 15 and 16, the excavations also produced ordinary nails in great quantity. The following types are represented:

1. Horseshoe nails, basically with a semi-circular head (Ascot Doilly Type 1: *Jope*, 1959, 266, FIG. 20, no. 6), but with several varieties:

- i. With a semi-circular head, greatly expanded in elevation but in section only as thick as the shank of the nail; this is the so-called fiddle-key nail which was used with horseshoes of wavy outline and deeply countersunk nail holes (*LMMC*, 112). In some examples the head takes on a trapezoid outline, which introduces the next type.
- ii. With a trapezoid head, which in section spreads out at the top to about twice the thickness of the shank. These nails sometimes come to a wedge-shaped lower end. See FIG. 29, no. 18 and the nails in the horseshoe FIG. 30, no. 19, below.
- iii. With an inverted triangle head, the base of the triangle being the head of the nail, and the sides of the triangle merging into the shank of the nail. In section the head sometimes spreads out as in Type 1, ii above. These were used with horseshoes like the one shown in FIG. 30, no. 18 below, see p. 179.

Type 1 i occurs in levels of *Periods I* and *II* (13th-14th century), although the wavy-edged horseshoe is thought not to occur later than the 13th century (*LMMC*, 115). But two later 13th or 14th century 'fiddle-key' nails come from Lismahon, Co. Down (*Med. Arch.*, III (1959), 162, FIG. 61, no. 5). Type 1, ii occurs in *Period II* (14th century) only; while Type 1 iii occurs in both *Periods I* and *II*.

2. Nails with figure-8 heads (Ascot Doilly Type 3: *Jope*, 1959, 266, FIG. 20, no. 8). There are two certain examples from Seacourt both from levels of *Period II* (14th century), as well as three others possibly of the same type, also from levels of *Period II*. Seacourt may thus be added to the Oxfordshire sites of Ascot Doilly, Deddington and Holton as the only sites in England (as opposed to Ulster) where this type has been recognized.

3. Nails with broad flat tops (cf. Ascot Doilly Type 2: *Jope*, 1959, 266, FIG. 20, no. 7, but the Seacourt nails are not short). There are two main varieties.

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- i. The flat tops are roughly round, with no pretence of rectangularity. These are the commonest nails from the site. Four of these nails are up to $5\frac{1}{2}$ in. long, with rather small heads.
- ii. The flat tops are carefully squared, and in the larger examples very slightly pyramidal.

Type 3 i occurs in levels of *Periods I and II* (13th-14th century) and Type 3 ii only in levels of *Period II* (14th century).

4. Large nails with oblong heads, sometimes markedly triangular in vertical section as in Type 1 ii, otherwise slightly peaked as in Type 3 ii. From levels of *Period II* (14th century).

5. Medium-sized nails with square and rectangular sectioned shanks and heads splayed out on two opposed sides only as in Ascot Doilly Type 4: *Jope, 1959, 266, FIG. 20, no. 9. Probably Periods I and II* (13th-14th century).

6. Nails of which the heads are scarcely marked, being only very slight expansions of the shank, and sometimes slightly wedge-shaped (Ascot Doilly Type 5: *Jope, 1959, 267*). Probably levels of *Periods I and II* (13th-14th century).

FIG. 29, 18. Horseshoe nail of Type 1 ii above. There are rather marked shoulders on the trapezoid head and this produces a cruciform effect which was not observed on any other examples. 1958, Area 4, occupation of stone house (section A-B, level 8). 14th century. A.M. 8430.

Tools (FIG. 30)

1. Pointed tool, the long shank of which has been twisted twice longitudinally, while the upper end has been wrapped round on itself to form a hollow seating possibly for a wooden handle, although the object may have been used in reverse, e.g. as a rush-holder, or some such object. 1958, Area 5, unstratified. Pre-1400. A.M. 8423.

2. Punch, tapering square section passing into a circular section above the widest point. 1958, Area 1, unstratified. Pre-1400.

3. Small gouge. The tang is rather thick and it is possible that there never was a wooden handle, or, more likely, that it was solid enough for use with a hammer. 1958, Area 1, unstratified. Pre-1400.

4.* Chisel with pointed-tang (the only possible type for a chisel) and thin blade with slightly rounded lower end. The tang is placed centrally (as it would have to be) on the shoulders of the blade, unlike the pointed tang knives, where the tang is placed nearer the back of the blade. 1958, Area 5, *Period II*, fill of gully A. 14th century. A.M. 8197.

5. Wedge or cold-chisel, slightly bent in profile and the top burred over presumably from use. 1958, Area 5, unstratified. Pre-1400.

6. Flesh-hook, the ends sharply pointed. The loop is too narrow for a hand-hold and this object is not therefore a baling-hook, a type it superficially resembles. 1958, Area 29, occupation of the stone building. Mid 13th-14th century.

7.* Bar with rectangular section and centrally placed expansion. The use of this object is uncertain; it might be the balance arm of a pair of scales, but it appears that the ends are curved, one upwards and the other down, which would discount this suggestion. It is perhaps more likely a latch or door-bolt and it may be compared with a more elaborate example of c. 1300 from Joyden's Wood, Kent, published and discussed by G. C. Dunning in *Arch. Cant.*, LXXII (1958), 30-1. 1958,

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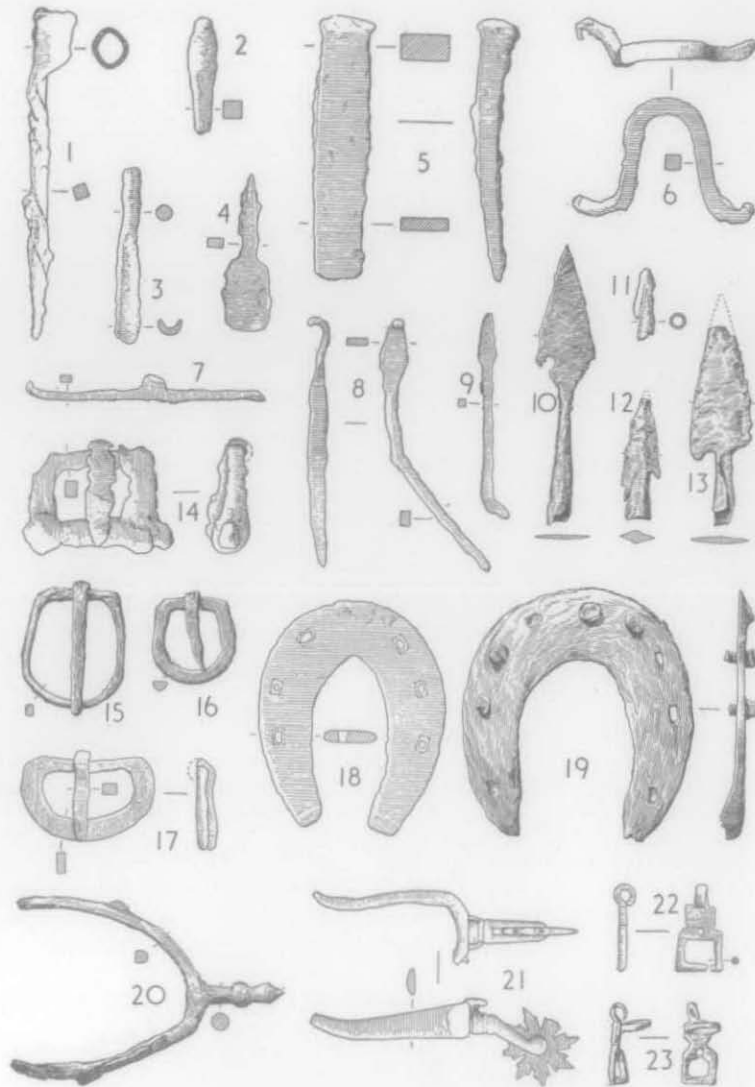


FIG. 30

Iron objects. pp. 177-80. ($\times \frac{1}{2}$; except 10, 12, 13, 15, 16, 20, $\times \frac{1}{4}$).

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Area 5, *Period II*, occupation of building with pebble floor. 14th century. A.M. 8193.

8.* Bar with rectangular section and spatulate end, terminating in a hook. The bend half-way along the shank may be original (L.B.). The use of this object is obscure: it does not have the centrally-placed projection necessary for a door-bolt (see above no. 7), but is carefully worked and clearly reflects some special purpose, not now ascertainable. Cf. no. 9, below. 1958, Area 1, unstratified. Pre-1400.

9.* Bar with square section, expanded end and slight terminal hook. Cf. exactly no. 8, above. 1958, Area 1, occupation of *Period I*. 13th century. A.M. 8195.

Arrow-heads (FIG. 30)

10. Arrow-head, broad, flat blade with marked shoulders and empty socket. Cf. *LMMC*, 66, FIG. 16, no. 1, thought to be 13th century and before. 1939, trench C, 'below stones' (i.e. probably *Period I*). 13th century.

11.* Small arrow-head with empty socket; from X-ray examination (see dotted lines on drawing) it appears that the barbs were probably applied separately to the core of the head (L.B.). *LMMC*, 66, FIG. 16, no. 16; 13th century or later. 1958, Area 1, among the stones of the road. 14th century. A.M. 8432.

12. Larger arrow-head of the same type as no. 11, above. 1939, unstratified. Pre-1400.

13. Socketed, leaf-shaped arrow-head with small barbs, flat blade. 1939, trench Q. Unstratified. Pre-1400.

Horse-furniture (FIG 30)

In the following section large iron buckles have been included among horse-furniture because their use on harness seems much more likely than as items of personal dress.

14.* Large rectangular buckle with very solid loop attached to an even heavier shank (at the bottom of the drawing); the pin swivels around the thinner part of the loop, an impossible arrangement, into which it must have slipped. There is no evidence of plating (L.B.). 1958, Area 5, unstratified. Pre-1400. A.M. 8212.

15. Large buckle with horseshoe-shaped loop and simple pin swivelling around the straight side. 1939, unstratified. Pre-1400.

16. Smaller buckle of the same type as no. 15, above. 1939, unstratified. Pre-1400.

17.* Large buckle with oval loop of rectangular section and simple pin of square section swivelling about the base of the loop. There is no evidence of plating (L.B.). 1958, Area 5, unstratified. Pre-1400. A.M. 8210.

18.* Horseshoe with smooth outline and six rectangular nail holes. This shoe should be closely compared with an example from Moorfields (*LMMC*, 116, FIG. 37, no. 5), which has the same pointed oval opening between the arms of the shoe, but which has eight nail holes. As the Moorfields example shows, horseshoe nails of my Type 1 iii (see above, p. 176) are used with this form of horseshoe, while the semi-circular headed 'fiddle-key' nails (my Type 1 i) were used with the earlier type of wavy-edged shoe with deeply countersunk nail holes. 1958, Area 5, *Period II* occupation outside building with pebble floor. 14th century. A.M. 8422.

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19. Horseshoe with smooth outline and rounded oval opening. The arrangement of the nail-holes is rather unusual: there is one centrally placed at the toe, with three others close to it on either side, while there is another on each side near the calkins. This type is basically similar to no. 18, above, but the nails used are my Type 1 ii (above, p. 176). 1939, trench A, found embedded in the stones of the road. Mid 13th-14th century.

20. Prick-spur, the prick is expanded and seated on a ball moulding; this type of point is not shown in the types proposed and illustrated in *LMMC*, 94-103, FIGS. 28-31. The terminals are missing. The curved arms suggest a 13th century or later date. 1939, unstratified. Pre-1400.

21.* Rowel-spur, with eight-pointed rowel of elaborate shouldered, almost floriated, points. Short shank, sharply angled to the body; terminals missing. There is a well developed platform at the junction of shank and body, cf. *LMMC*, 112, FIG. 35, no. 3. There is some evidence for non-ferrous metal plating (L.B.).¹⁸⁷ This object is difficult to date, but it is probably of the 15th rather than the 14th century; if so it is one of the few objects from Seacourt which appears to be later than the desertion of the village. 1958, Area 5, topsoil. Possibly 15th century. A.M. 8211.

22.* Spur buckle. The loop (at the upper end in the drawing) would pass through one of the terminal loops of the spur, while the lower end of the object forms the buckle, the pin of which swivels through the little hole in the centre. Cf. *LMMC*, 100, FIG. 30, no. 7 (? early 14th century) and, for more elaborate later examples, FIG. 35, nos. 5-7. The X-ray of the Seacourt example shows traces of 'skin' in places, possibly non-ferrous metal plating (L.B.). 1958, Area 2, level of Period II. 14th century. A.M. 8192.

23. Spur buckle, similar to no. 22, above, but with a large loop projecting at right-angles from the buckle-plate, probably to hold the end of the strap after it has passed through the buckle. 1959, Area 1, in make-up of village street (section E'-F'). Mid 13th century.

Locks and Keys (FIG. 31)

The following objects can be divided into two groups: (a) barrel-padlocks and their keys, FIG. 31, nos. 1-5; (b) door-keys and chest-keys, FIG. 31, nos. 6-12.

1.* Barrel-padlock key with wards of Type C (*LMMC*, 146-8, FIG. 44, no. 3), expanded shank with pierced terminal. The pierced terminals of the present example and of no. 2, below, are apparently usually found on keys with wards of Type A (cf. *LMMC*, FIG. 45, no. 1). The present example is unusual in having the wards set in line with the shank and not laterally as is normal; the projecting ridge at the junction of shank and wards is also unusual. There is no trace of plating (L.B.). 1958, Area 6, pit 6, level 5. First quarter 13th century. A.M. 9120.

2.* Barrel-padlock key with wards of Type B (*LMMC*, 146-8, FIG. 44, nos. 1-2), expanded shank with pierced terminal (cf. no. 1, above). There is no evidence of plating (L.B.). 1958, Area 1, filling of ditch A (section G-H, level 4). Mid 13th century. A.M. 8204.

¹⁸⁷ For the tinning of iron spurs see E. M. Jope in *Oxoniensis*, XXI (1956), 35; and compare the spur buckle, no. 22, below, which also has evidence of non-ferrous plating.

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3.* Barrel-padlock key with wards of Type B (cf. no. 2, above). Expanded shank, terminal missing. There is no sign of plating (L.B.). 1958, Area 4, midden W. of stone house. Before mid 14th century. A.M. 8206.

4. Spring of a barrel-padlock. Cf. exactly *King John's House*, 19, PL. XXII, no. 8. The spring-leaves were presumably attached to the base by brazing with non-ferrous metal, but no trace of this was observed on the present example, although it was detected on another barrel-padlock spring from Seacourt (A.M. 8203,* not illustrated) (L.B.). The outer face of the back plate is featureless and the left hand of the two drawings shows the placing of the springs on the inner face. See also no. 5 below. 1958, Area 30, unstratified. Pre-1400. A.M. 9121.

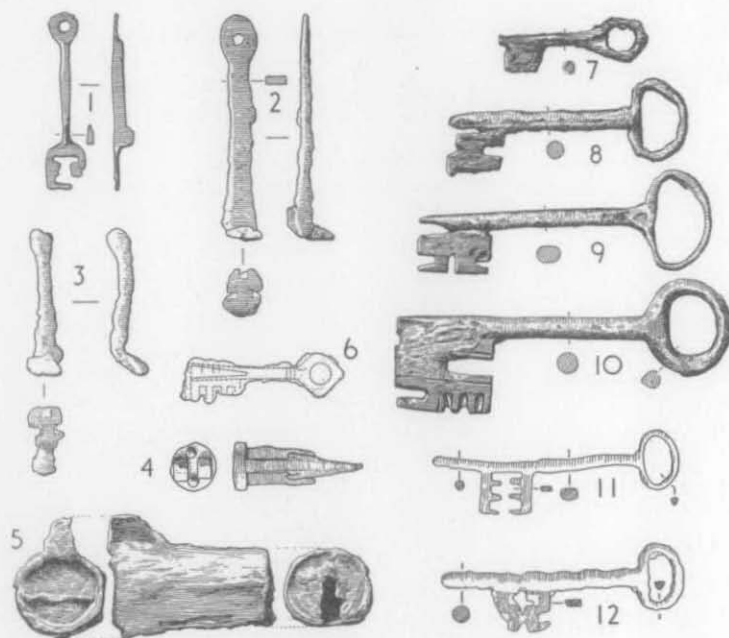


FIG. 31

Iron locks and keys. pp. 180-2. ($\times \frac{1}{2}$; except 5, 7-10, $\times \frac{1}{4}$).

5. Barrel-padlock. The spring (no. 4, above) would fit inside a case such as this, cf. barrel-padlock from Rayleigh Castle, Essex showing the relationship of spring and case (*Trans. Essex Arch. Soc.* n.s. XII (1912), 167, FIG. 3 and Lt. Gen. Pitt-Rivers, *On the Development and Distribution of Primitive Locks and Keys* (1883), PL. V, FIGS. 31c-34c.) 1939, unstratified. Pre-1400.

6.* Key with lozenge-shaped bow and circular central opening. The shank is hollow up as far as the end of the bit in which there are four wards. There are residues of non-ferrous metal plating and decoration, possibly in two contrasting

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metals. The decoration around the shank consists of three lines at the top of the shank and at least three lines above the wards (L.B.). There is a 12th century key decorated with metal inlay from Ascot Doilly (*Jope*, 1959, 265-6, FIG. 20, no. 1), which is interpreted as a chest-key; the present example with its lozenge-shaped bow probably served a similar purpose (*LMMC*, 138). 1958, Area 4, midden W. of stone house. Before mid-late 14th century. A.M. 8202.

7. Small key with round bow, probably a chest-key. 1939, unstratified. Pre-1400.

8. Key with flattened oval bow and wards of *LMMC*, FIG. 42, Type IV. 1939, unstratified. Pre-1400.

9. Key, very similar to no. 8, above, but the bow is more oval. 1939, unstratified. Pre-1400.

10. Large key with round bow, oval internally, and wards of Type IV (*LMMC*, FIG. 42). 1939, unstratified. Pre-1400.

11.* Key with oval bow and wards of Type III (*LMMC*, FIG. 42). No evidence of plating (L.B.). 1958, Area 4, below wall of house (section C-D, level 3). Early 14th century. A.M. 9119.

12.* Key with oval or slightly kidney-shaped bow and wards of Type VII B (*LMMC*, FIG. 42). No evidence of plating (L.B.). 1959, Area 29, unstratified. Pre-1400. A.M. 9122.

OBJECTS OF LEAD (FIG. 32)

13. Lead roundel. Mr. W. W. Robson of the Associated Lead Manufacturers' Research Association comments as follows: 'Probably a cast shape, subsequently slightly distorted by hammering; or possibly an originally cast piece much distorted and re-formed by hammering into the present shape. Almost certainly with the convex surface, the only one which is scratched, used uppermost, perhaps over some wooden plug, or similar cover for some orifice.' Cf. a similar lead object from Ascot Doilly (*Jope*, 1959, FIG. 20, no. 12) which might have been used for the same purpose. 1959, near the site of the supposed manor-house, unstratified. Pre-1400. A.M. 9117.

14. Lead 'wedge', rather like a miniature axe of the so-called 'woodman's' type (*LMMC*, 55, FIG. 11, no. 1). This might be a toy. 1958, Area 5, *Period II*, filling of pit 13. Late 13th century. A.M. 8191.

COINS

A. Roman coins

1. Bronze follis of Galerius Caesar (A.D. 293-305). Obv. MAXIMIANVS NOBIL C, laureate, cuirassed, bust r. Rev. GENIO POPVLI ROMANI, Genius l. M.m. TR (Trier). 1958, Area 5, in a medieval level.

2. Illegible 4th century bronze. Obv. diademed bust r. Rev. standing figure. 1958, Area 4, in occupation level of medieval stone house.

B. Medieval jettons

1, 2. Two pierced bronze reckoning counters to some extent imitative of contemporary silver pennies. Counters of this type are discussed by L. A. Lawrence in the *Num-*

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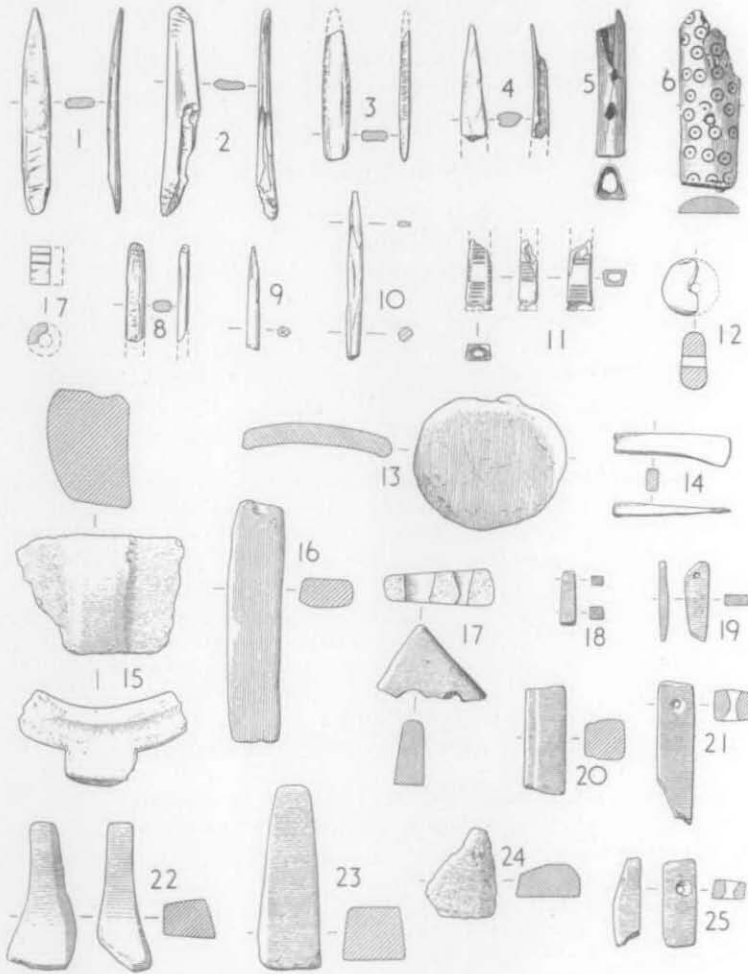


FIG. 32

Objects of bone, glass, lead and stone. ($\times \frac{1}{2}$; except 5, 6, $\times \frac{1}{4}$; 12, 14, $\times \frac{3}{8}$).

ismatic Chronicle, 1938, 165-72. English as opposed to French counters are pierced, as in the examples under discussion. The obverse of one of the counters has a border of alternate strokes and rosettes which is characteristic of counters of Edward I's reign, but the reverses of both have borders of large pellets characteristic of Edward II's counters. They are both closely similar to the counter of Edward II illustrated by Lawrence, *op. cit.*, PL. VII, no. 15; but are both quite unlike the more

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elaborate 'wardrobe counters' of Edward III. These counters are therefore probably of Edward II's reign, though the one with the stroke and rosette border might date from late in Edward I's reign. A date of 1300-27 would therefore probably include both counters. 1939, trench B, unstratified.

OBJECTS OF BONE (FIG. 32)

Small bone tools

Of the following cut and polished bone tools of various types the more pointed and polished were probably used in weaving, for pushing stray threads into place: an identification made by Miss Elisabeth Crowfoot in *Trans. Leics. Arch. Soc.*, xxviii (1953), 50; cf. a late Saxon example from the Clarendon Hotel, Oxford, in *Jope*, 1958, 73 (FIG. 25 c). The blunter and rougher examples may also have been used in some way in weaving, e.g. as very small, light, beaters for very fine materials, but could also be used as polishers on leather or for decorating pottery, though the latter is unlikely as no other evidence of pottery manufacture was noted on the site.

1. Carefully polished bone tool, one end is pointed, the other rounded, but sharp in section. Probably a thread-pusher. 1958, Area 5, unstratified. Pre-1400.

2. Bone tool, only slightly if at all polished. Both ends have been worked, and are much used and battered. Not a weaving tool. 1958, Area 5, section J-K, level 9. *Period I* occupation. 13th century.

3. Carefully polished bone tool; similar to no. 1 above, but the upper part is broken off and the lower end is slightly hollowed on one surface. Probably a thread-pusher. 1958, Area 4, filling of ditch below stone house (section C-D, level 4). Early 14th century.

4. Upper part of a roughly made, but carefully polished bone thread-pusher, cf. nos. 1 and 3 above. 1958, Area 4, occupation and destruction level W. of stone house. Mid-late 14th century.

8. Carefully cut and polished bone tool, roughly rectangular section with blunt end; possibly part of a thread-pusher. 1958, Area 5, unstratified. Pre-1400.

9. Roughly trimmed bone point, with slightly polished shank. Probably a pin. 1958, Area 2, *Period II* level. 14th century.

10. Very roughly trimmed bone point, the upper part slightly flattened in section, the lower end broken off. 1958, Area 4, occupation below stone house (section C-D, level 3). Early 14th century.

Miscellaneous bone objects

5. Bone whistle showing the remains of two finger holes. Bone whistles are well known from Saxon and medieval sites in England and the type as a whole, with special reference to prehistoric examples, has been studied by J. V. S. Megaw (see *Ant.* xxxiv (1960), 6-13, especially p. 11 for further references to medieval examples). 1939, unstratified. Pre-1400.

6. Bone plate, semi-circular in section, decorated with ring-and-dot ornament, and pierced in one place for attachment. Probably a plate from the handle of a large knife of the strip-tang variety (see above, p. 172), cf. *LMMC*, 53, PL. XI, no. 8 for the general type, although it has a pointed tang. 1939, unstratified. Pre-1400.

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7. Bone object, probably originally cylindrical, decorated with four incised lines. Probably part of the bone handle for a pointed-tang knife. 1958, Area 2, Period I level. 13th century.

11. Bone handle, probably for a pointed-tang knife. Each side is decorated with incised lines and there is a simple moulding around the end. 1958, Area 4, occupation and destruction of stone house. Mid-late 14th century.

OBJECTS OF GLASS

Fig. 32, 12

Dark red glass bead with central perforation. A large series of Viking and later glass beads has been published from York (*Arch. xcvii* (1959), 94-6, 104, FIGS. 22; 25, nos. 11-22), where such beads seem to have been made, but none of them is red. The present example might be Roman, in view of the various other finds of that date from Area 5, but it might equally well be medieval. 1958, Area 5, in filling of post-hole 49, below the clay hearth. If medieval then late 12th-early 13th century.

Pl. X, D

Dr. D. B. Harden has kindly contributed the following note on this piece: 'Fragment of a cylindrical bottle of blue glass with traces of a design in gilt paint; portions of two concentric circles and of part of a triangle or zigzag alone are visible.

'Surprising as it may seem in respect of a fragment found on the site of a tiny medieval village near Oxford, the vessel from which this piece came seems to have travelled far, for its nearest analogies all have east Mediterranean proveniences.

'The group has been collected together in a recent paper by Mr. A. H. S. Megaw ('A 12th century scent bottle from Cyprus' in *J. Glass Studies* 1 (1959), 59-61). All are of dark glass, mostly blue, and have decoration in cold-painted colours (usually gold and white) fixed by muffle-firing. Megaw's own piece, which came from Kato Paphos and which he could date from its find-spot to before 1222 (perhaps even before 1191), had a cylindrical body with short and very narrow cylindrical neck and bears as parts of its decoration roundels with double concentric borders and also triangle and zigzag ornament. Other bottles of exactly this shape are illustrated in *Glass from the Ancient World. The Ray Winfield Smith collection* (1957), no. 526, p. 261 and G. R. Davidson, *Corinth XII. The Minor Objects* (1952), p. 115, no. 750. The latter has concentric-circle medallions and the ground is again blue, but with decoration in many colours. The Corinth factory site where this piece was found is thought to have been abandoned during the 12th century.

'We clearly need look no further for an elucidation for this Seacourt fragment. There is no other possible milieu in which such a piece could be at home, for its metal is too bubbly to allow it to be late medieval or post-medieval western fabric even if its stratification at Seacourt would permit this (which it probably does not). We can see in it a glimpse of a crusader bringing home a present of some rich Arabic scent for his lady-love.'

1958, Area 5, probably from the pebble scatter N.E. of the building with pebble floor (FIG. 9), in which case from a 14th century level, but the stratification was not very clear as the level is very near topsoil (section J-K, level 2); in any case probably pre-1400 at Seacourt, and in fact clearly 12th century as shown above.

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Not illustrated

A. Tiny fragment of dark blue glass, very slightly bubbly, but otherwise featureless. The metal of this piece is very similar to Roman blue glass, which this sherd may well be. 1958, Area 4, occupation and destruction of stone house. This is a level from which several other Roman finds have come, see above, p. 94.

B. A few fragments of 17th century or later wine bottles were found in various places, all unstratified. These, together with a number of clay pipes, were the only traces of post-medieval activity on the site.

C. A few fragments of window glass were found in and near the church in 1939 and 1958. In 1958 these fragments were found both in the make-up level W. of the church (probably late 13th or early 14th century) and in the rubble around and over the churchyard wall. They appear to be typical of medieval church window glass, but they are too decayed to reveal traces either of the colour of the metal or of painted decoration, if any.

OBJECTS OF STONE (FIG. 32-3)

Mr. G. H. Collins of the Geological Survey and Museum very kindly identified the stone samples sent to him and his report has been used in the description of the following objects. His general comments were:

All, with the exception of A.M. 8358 (FIG. 32, no. 15) and A.M. 8359 (FIG. 32, no. 24) could have been derived from local drift deposits. Some of the sandstones could probably be matched with Carboniferous sandstones from Northern England. A.M. 8348 (FIG. 32, no. 21) matches a specimen honestone from Moel Siabod, Caernarvonshire. The two specimens A.M. 8346 and A.M. 8350 (FIG. 32, no. 16) could have been derived from Scotland or Continental Europe.

The only fragment of coal found (A.M. 8390; 1958, Area 1, *Period I*, filling of ditch A, mid-13th century) is 'probably not Mesozoic coal derived from local formations; it is more likely to be Carboniferous coal, possibly from the (nearest) deposits in the Nuneaton-Coventry area, introduced perhaps by human agency': report kindly prepared by Mr. F. W. Dunning, Geological Survey and Museum.

Fig. 32

15. Fragment of the lower stone of a lugged Purbeck marble quern, with a shallow groove along the top of the rim. This type would probably have had four lugs, set at right-angles to each other, like the more complete example found outside the N.E. corner of Building A, Area A (FIG. 5), which was stolen during the excavation and cannot be illustrated. Two 14th century Purbeck marble querns were found at The More (*Arch. J.*, cxvi (1959), 189, FIG. 22, nos. 24, 26), and similar querns are of fairly common occurrence on medieval sites. 1958, Area 4, occupation and destruction of the stone house. Mid-late 14th century. A.M. 8358.

16. Hone of quartz mica-schist. There is also a fragment of another (not illustrated) from Seacourt. The upper end of the illustrated hone has been broken off, but part of the original hole for suspension can be seen. In both cases the Seacourt hones were found in levels which suggest a 14th century date, but it is possible that they were derived from earlier levels since most mica-schist hones in England seem to be of 12th and 13th century date: see G. C. Dunning in *Jewry Wall*, 230-2. 1958, Area 5, *Period II*, destruction level of building with pebble

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floor. A.M. 8346. The second, un-illustrated, example came from 1958, Area 4, *Period II*, occupation and destruction of stone house. A.M. 8350.

17. Object of medium-grained sandstone, carefully shaped and smoothed, and showing the remains of two piercings, one clearly of hour-glass form; there is also a small marking (on the surface shown in the drawing) where the boring for another hole has been begun, but not carried more than 2 mm. deep. The purpose of this object is not clear, but it might conceivably be part of a loom-weight. 1958, Area 5, *Period II*, fill of gully A. 14th century. A.M. 8360.

18. Small hone of rectangular section. Silty shale with some mica. 1939, unstratified. Pre-1400. A.M. 9112.

19. Small hone of rectangular section, pierced for suspension. Silty shale. 1939, unstratified. Pre-1400. A.M. 9111.

20. Hone with square section, slightly rebated on two faces. Calcareous grit. 1958, Area 5, unstratified. Pre-1400. A.M. 8352.

21. Hone, cleanly made, rectangular section; hour-glass perforation for suspension. Indurated volcanic ash. 1958, Area 1, *Period I*?, overlying gully. Probably 13th century. A.M. 8348.

22. Hone, very irregularly made, fine-grained sandstone. 1958, Area 5, *Period I*, phase 1, fill of feature v. Late 12th-early 13th century. A.M. 8357.

23. Large hone with slightly trapezoid section; brown micaceous sandstone. For hones of this stone from Sunningwell, Berks., see *Berks. Arch. J.*, LI (1948-9), 68-70; and from Alstoe, Rutland *Ant. J.*, xvi (1936), 401. 1939, trench L, unstratified. Pre-1400. A.M. 9115.

24. Small fragment of a quern, probably the upper stone; vesicular basaltic rock of Niedermendig or Mayen type. For the import of these querns see G. C. Dunning in *Dark-Age Britain* (ed. D. B. Harden, 1956), 232. 1958, Area 5, unstratified. Pre-1400. A.M. 8359.

25. Hone with rectangular section and hour-glass perforation for suspension. Micaceous grit. 1958, Area 1, unstratified. Pre-1400. A.M. 8355.

Fig. 33

1. Stone weight, probably of calcareous grit derived from local deposits. This large and heavy object could be either a thatch-weight, or a net-sinker, or even a loom-weight. 1939, unstratified. Pre-1400.

Not illustrated

From the levels of rubble deriving from the demolition of the church in Area 3 came several stone roof-slates of calcareous grit. They are sub-rectangular in shape, 11 in. to 1 ft. long, about 6 in. wide at the base, tapering gradually upwards, the last 3 in. of one side being cut off so that it angles over to form a peak with the other side. Within this 'peak' is the single, drilled (not broken through) nail or peg-hole.

RIDGE TILES (FIG. 33)

2. Fragment of a ridge tile; coarse dark grey fabric flecked with white lime-stone-detritus, reddish-brown surface layers 1-2 mm. thick, and the whole outside surface covered with a poor, patchy wash of greenish-yellow glaze and decorated with scored diagonal lines. The serrations are hand moulded and there might be

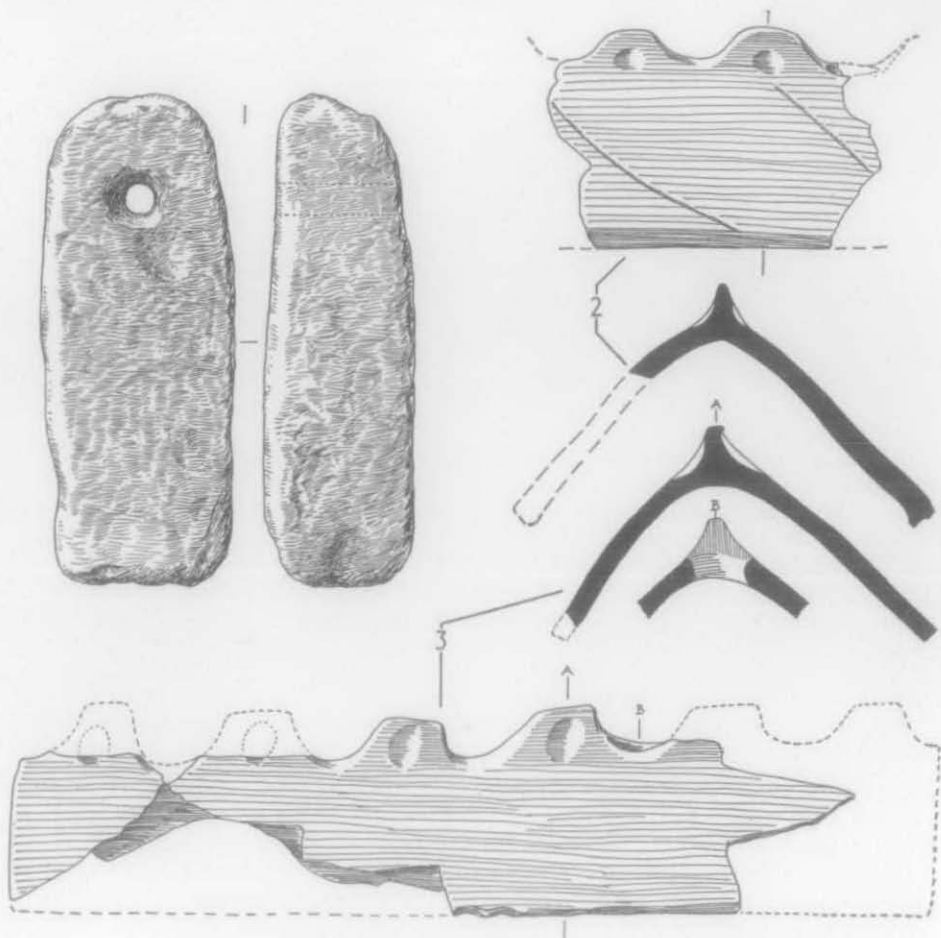


FIG. 33
Ridge tiles and stone weight. pp. 187-9. ($\times \frac{1}{4}$).

some knife-trimming in places between the peaks. There is part of a circular smoke-hole between two of the peaks. 1939, trench J, among the rubble over the church. Pre-1400.

3. The greater part of a ridge tile of a ware very similar to no. 2, above, but slightly 'soapy' to touch. There is no scored decoration, but the serrations are identical and there is a circular opening between two of the peaks. On the lower edge there are two finger impressions at what may be the centre-point of the tile.

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On the underside there are V-section oblong impressions below each peak, but these do not appear to have formed a pushed-through key for the peaks, which seem from the evidence of a break to have been simply luted onto the body of the tile. 1958, Area 3, in rubble over and around the churchyard wall. Pre-1400.

Both these tiles are of the same type and they agree very closely with a series published by E. M. Jope in *Oxoniensia*, xvi (1951), 86-8, FIG. 21, nos. 1-4, and in *Jope*, 1959, 265, FIG. 19, no. K8, which are found throughout an area from some miles east of Oxford to Cirencester on the west and northwards to Chipping Norton. They are probably of early to mid-13th century date, and a re-roofing of the church at Seacourt at about this date would agree well with the situation in the rest of the village at this time. The poor glaze on these tiles and the ware itself should be compared with the pale brown white-flecked ware from *Period I* levels shown in FIG. 21 (cf. *Jope*, 1952a, 92-7).

APPENDICES: SPECIALIST REPORTS

I. A NOTE ON THE SCIENTIFIC EVIDENCE By L. BIEK, Ancient Monuments Laboratory

Objects, specimens or samples of fourteen different classes of material were investigated by twenty-two specialists, and altogether 145 items of a scientific or technical nature are in one way or another incorporated in the report, apart from the analysis of the large quantity of animal bones. Such items have in each case been kept distinct from typological and other appraisal, but there have been opportunities throughout to discuss the various aspects fully, and this has to a large extent ensured their integration as far as was possible at this stage.

From the scientific point of view, the variety of erratic rock material is of interest, underlining the 'confluence of drifts' in the area (see above, p. 74). The occurrence of ironstone in the oolitic gravels at Lechlade (p. 192) may well be of wider significance in the region. The development of the ash-layer (A.M. 9128, see below, pp. 193-4) containing carbonised grain, in the course of ignition tests, was a striking addition to experience with these tests; it also indicated the degree of immobility of iron in the soil in these circumstances. The degree and nature of re-oxidation of clay reduvically fired (A.M. 8456, see below, pp. 194-5), in conjunction with its relatively hard texture, is of interest because such weathering has been observed even on pottery from several localities and would at first sight seem inconsistent with such hard firing: relative paucity in organic matter may be a critical factor here.

Despite the sulphury nature of the soil, the state of preservation of the iron objects was uniformly fair, and no sulphide was noted, such as might have accompanied waterlogging. Original outlines were generally indicated quite faithfully, although X-radiography clarified them and added detail in most cases, apart from indicating non-ferrous metal residues and methods of fabrication (pp. 172-82). Perhaps most noteworthy—next to the pattern-welded knife (A.M. 8207, see p. 175, FIG. 29, no. 9)—is the way in which the barb of one arrowhead (A.M. 8432, see p. 179, FIG. 30, no. 11) appears to have been applied.

Objects of copper alloy were uniformly well preserved, relatively speaking, and again signs of anaerobic corrosion were absent. Preservation seemed best in comparatively little-worked, simply-wrought sheet, and less good for (presumed)

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cast and more heavily-worked objects, as also where other non-ferrous metals, such as gold and tin (A.M. 8188, see p. 171, FIG. 28, no. 24) or solder (A.M. no. 8181, see p. 168, FIG. 28, no. 5), were present—as might be expected, although variation due to composition must also be allowed for. An unusual surface was presented, curiously enough, by what was also the most remarkable find to be revealed by X-radiography (A.M. 9719, see p. 172, FIG. 28, no. 25): there was hardly a trace of green; instead, ferruginous and black colours predominated in the corrosion products. Although from other considerations this might be a brass, the corrosive environment appears to have been different from that in which almost all the other objects seem to have been buried.

The examination of the slags has shown clearly how a number of slightly different appearances can yet be due basically to the same micro-structure, of a fayalite matrix (PL. X C), with minor variations in crystal size and (hence, presumably) rate of cooling.

The preservation of leather and fibre residues by contact with copper alloy, especially the recovery of textile and stitching *in situ* (A.M. 8180, FIG. 28, no. 8, p. 168), supports the comparatively mild and uniformly corrosive environment postulated above. There appeared to be no complexities due to excessive mineralization and modern biological interference (mainly roots) such as have been met elsewhere.

Perhaps the most intriguing series of investigations was carried out on the decorated bone handle of the iron love-knife (A.M. 8401, FIG. 29, no. 4, pp. 172-4, PL. XI B, C) where the technique was reconstructed solely on the basis of the material evidence, and as a result of routine microscopic and X-radiographic examination of an object that might at first sight not have warranted such attention.

In the absence of significant buried surfaces, the ecological information is inevitably meagre—though in this case perhaps also less vital than it might have been. In the charcoals, hazel and the rosaceous group are as frequent as oak, the presence of maple and the large quantity of elder indicate open conditions or at least open canopy. The cereal grain seems to provide further support for the accepted balance of crops, although it is interesting to see the results of detailed examination also of the lesser seeds, and of straw.

The direct archaeological usefulness of these scientific investigations is largely self-evident from the detailed descriptions of the objects, the importance of the surface geological setting, and the 'reconstructions' of various kinds which have been made possible. In some specific cases (e.g. A.M. 8188, 8181, 8401; FIG. 28, nos. 24-5; 29, no. 4, respectively) merely the identification of a secondary material served to assess the status or significance of the object; in others (e.g. A.M. 8207, 9719, FIG. 29, no. 9; 28, no. 25) totally unsuspected decoration or construction was revealed by X-radiography and similarly affected typological interpretation.

But perhaps the most noteworthy and obscure benefit has been derived from the correlation of various results at the scientific level. Only by reference to the surface geological background was it possible to interpret the 'daub' and soil evidence adequately, and the latter enabled deductions to be drawn about the 'daub', as well as giving some confidence to postulates about leather residues. Clearly the ecological evidence, such as it is, must also be seen together if it is to be useful.

An archaeological problem involving scientific evidence is the peripheral distribution of cinder and slag in relation to the centre of activity; this was noted briefly at Northolt (*Med. Arch.*, v (1961), 287) where it was much more acute

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than here. Although the present evidence for iron-smelting near the excavated areas was strong the actual site was unfortunately not located.

<i>Serial</i>	<i>Find-spot</i>	<i>Examination of thin section</i>	<i>A.M. No.</i>
1.	Area 1, ? <i>Period I</i> , gully in Building C.	Abundant fayalite intermixed with shattered quartz grains in ? earthy matrix.	8361
2.	Area 3, late 13th century level below make-up W. of church.	Fayalite with iron oxide dendrites which are finer grained and less abundant than in no. 4, below. Brown glass also present.	8367
3.	Area 3, late 13th-early 14th century make-up W. of church.	Largely fayalite as radiating intergrowths. Some glass. Probably derived from 2, above.	8364
4.	Area 3, filling of pit 4, cut into make-up W. of church.	Mostly fayalite with exsolved iron oxide dendrites (? magnetite). PL. IX, c. Probably derived from 2, above.	8365
5.	Area 4, <i>Period II</i> , occupation of stone house.	Brown isotropic glass with occasional quartz grains. (Possibly semi-fused slaggy scum.)	8363
6.	Area 5, unstratified.	Long laths of fayalite interlocking. Opaque ? glass.	8362
7.	Area 3I, 'hearth', but recovered in earth-scraping and in fact unstratified, but pre-1400.	<i>a.</i> Half 'skull' (A.M., X-ray 695): this is non-magnetic; long laths of fayalite set in a glass. Scattered dendrites and small cubic crystals of iron oxide (? FeO) are common. <i>b.</i> Complete 'skull' (A.M., X-ray 696): this is slightly magnetic; fayalite comparatively infrequent. Dendritic iron oxide very abundant. The iron oxide is probably magnetite but most of it has coalesced giving rounded crystals; the crystal structure is rather more obscured than in <i>a.</i> above. The oxide is enclosed in glass which probably contains some iron.	9126A
8.	Area 3I, as above.	Quartzite. (glacial erratic?)	9240

TABLE II: Examination of cinders and skulls, by G. E. Davies (by courtesy of the Director, British Iron and Steel Research Association). Pp. 192-3.

II. MAGNETIC DATING

At the end of the 1958 excavation Dr. M. J. Aitken very kindly agreed to sample the central hearth of the stone house in Area 4 and to make measurements

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of its thermoremanent magnetism. In the present state of research on magnetic dating the results from the Seacourt hearth, which is fairly closely dated archaeologically to *c.* 1325-1350 are of more use in the development of our knowledge of archaeo-magnetism than in narrowing down the date of the structure. In a few years, however, when the framework of archaeo-magnetic dating is more accurately defined, it will be necessary to reconsider the Seacourt samples, from which an accurate date for the last firing of the hearth may then be obtainable. Dr. Aitken has published the results of his tests in *Archaeometry*, II (1959), 17-20 to which reference should be made for the full details. Dr. Aitken now informs me that the discrepancies noted there between the Seacourt results and those from a late 13th century kiln site are more apparent than real and that the values obtained for the Seacourt hearth are in accordance with the results from his recent work on other sites.

Dr. Aitken contributes the following note:

The direction of the thermoremanent magnetization in the hearth was measured by the Oxford Archaeological Research Laboratory. A dozen 4 in. by 4 in. samples of baked clay were removed for laboratory measurements, the orientation of each sample with respect to true North and the horizontal being carefully marked before disturbance. The average values of the remanent magnetic declination (D) and inclination (I) were:

$$D = 7.0^{\circ} \text{ West}, \quad I = 60.0^{\circ} \text{ North}.$$

The 'Fisher Index' at the 95 per cent level of confidence was 2.7° . Because of the historical dating evidence for this hearth, these results constitute a useful fixed point in the establishment of the magnetic dating reference curve for central Britain.

III. SLAGS

Mr. L. Biek of the Ancient Monuments Laboratory has kindly prepared the following note:

During a visit in June 1959, after mechanical scraping had exposed burnt red areas and 'skulls' with cinder, one well-defined hearth area was seen (Area 31; p. 116) and fragments of cinder were observed, both near to it and scattered. A single small solidified droplet of slag was also collected (A.M. 9238), and a quantity of apparently siliceous rock fragments were seen, similarly deep-purple coloured (sample: A.M. 9240), in the hearth area. A proportion of the many pieces of cinder and skull previously found had been collected, but it is likely that the total quantity originally present was rather larger than the present evidence might suggest. The stratified specimens from various parts of the village, and a selection of the fragments collected from Area 31, were kindly examined through the good offices of Mr. H. F. Cleere (Iron and Steel Institute) and by Mr. G. E. Davies, whose report appears in TABLE II.

No evidence of copper was seen in any of the cinders from Area 31. The abundance and disposition of fayalite and the iron oxide dendrites can therefore be taken to indicate products characteristic of bloomery-type iron smelting. The associated rock fragments were, however, clearly iron-stained only on the surface and not directly relevant, e.g. as a possible source of iron.

Although suitable local deposits of iron ore are not known, a recent report of ironstone in the oolitic river gravel at Lechlade suggests that similar finds at or

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nearer Seacourt might conceivably have been exploited at the time. Against this, the quartz grains in the cinders might seem to argue a siliceous rather than calcareous matrix for the ore, but are in fact ambivalent in this context.

From a comparison with the results of examining the soil samples and burnt clay specimens (see below, p. 194), the hearth in Area 31 must have been exposed to a temperature of at least 500° C with free access of air. It is, however, not likely to have been a great deal hotter overall for any length of time, to judge by its patchy colouring and variable texture. While the cindery materials, and especially the slag droplet, are not likely to have travelled far from the site of production, this cannot have been in the hearth area examined. Although there is evidence of considerable smelting activity, the absence of a definite feature thus precludes closer interpretation.

IV. THE SOIL SAMPLES

Mr. L. Biek reports as follows:

Four samples were submitted and one (A.M. 9242) taken; all were examined visually and by ignition¹⁸⁸ by Mr. W. E. Lee (A.M.Lab.). Their immediate characteristics are shown below:

<i>Site Reference</i>	<i>A.M. No.</i>	<i>Organic matter</i>	<i>Iron</i>	<i>Relative Interpretation</i>
Area 6, pit 6, level 7. ¹⁸⁹	9127	High	Medium	Could be merely (highly organic) pit filling.
Area 6, pit 6, level 6.	9128	High	V. low	? Ash (i.e. possibly not only due to grain).
Area 5, pit 16, level 4. ¹⁹⁰	9129	High (max.)	Medium	As for 9127.
Area 5, pit 16, level 6.	9130	High	High medium	As for 9127.
Undisturbed, natural clay.	9242	Medium	Fairly high	(Oxford Clay).

TABLE III

In view of the high organic content of all the specific samples, and the fairly high level even in the undisturbed clay, it is not possible from these tests to interpret any remains of definite shape, such as timber framing. The characteristics of the undisturbed clay have proved helpful in discussing the burnt fragments

¹⁸⁸ *Trans. Suff. Inst. Arch.*, xxviii (1958), 26-7.

¹⁸⁹ The positions of the samples submitted are marked by crosses on the section, FIG. 10, Z-Z'.

¹⁹⁰ The positions of the samples submitted are marked by crosses on the section, FIG. 12, V-W.

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(below, p. 195); some of the samples have yielded carbonized grain (below, p. 195)—this would be in agreement with 9128 being an ash, while 9130 which is poor in grain differs in this respect—and the general results have provided some background against which to examine the rest of the finds, especially those of metal. There was no evidence for any depletion of iron in 9127 and 9130, such as is often associated with 'rotting timber'.

V. BURNT CLAYS

Mr. L. Biek kindly examined the specimens submitted to him and has contributed the following report:

The material was examined visually by ignition tests,¹⁹¹ and X-radiographically, and interpreted (as described elsewhere)¹⁹² on the basis of limited experience with comparable material. Whilst, therefore, no firm scientific evidence can be produced at this early stage, the present interpretation can be regarded as adequately reliable.

Three groups of specimens were submitted, one of which contained three fragments of substantially similar material. There were, however, significant differences between the three groups, as follows:

<i>A.M. No.</i>	<i>Hardness</i>	<i>Texture</i>	<i>Colour</i>	<i>Impressions</i>	<i>Firing</i>	<i>Shape</i>	<i>Size</i>	<i>Craquelure</i>	<i>Radiopaque 'Mineral' grains</i>
8455	Very hard	Dense, much fine white grit—at least some calcareous—also sand	Red	Present	Right through	Regular	Medium (1 in. square by 2 in. longest edge)	Negligible	Few
One end									
"									
"									
grading into									
"									
other end	Hard	"	Light brown	"	"				
8456	hard	med. open	choc. brown, (weathered)	Absent	"	Amorphous	Small (ca. 1/4 of previous sample)	Slight coarse	Fair amount
8457	soft	open	brownish pink	Absent	"	Amorphous	Large (ca. twice 8455)	Coarse	Fair amount

TABLE IV—A.M. 8455: Area 5, *Period I/II*, primary filling of N-S ditch (section J-K, level 8); late 13th century. A.M. 8456: Area 5, *Period II*, upper filling of pit 13 (section N-O, level 5); late 13th century. A.M. 8457: Area 3, late 13th century level below make-up levels W. of church.

¹⁹¹ See *Trans. Suff. Inst. Arch.*, xxviii (1958), 26-7.

¹⁹² *Chew Valley Lake*, H.M.S.O. (forthcoming).

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The firing tests show clearly that 8455 and 8457 have been fired in an oxidising atmosphere, and there is little difference between them on that score, or in iron content. 8455 may contain more calcareous material and has probably been to a higher temperature; 8457 may have contained more organic matter but there is no direct evidence of this now.

8456 appears to be a different material altogether: it contains rather more iron and is also (now) rich in organic matter; it has almost certainly been fired, in a predominantly reducing atmosphere—presumably not for long enough and/or not to a high temperature.

All three groups show a marked freedom from any finely dispersed organic matter or the characteristic 'sweep' due to careful working; they are thus not likely to have formed part of a deliberately fired structure such as a furnace. 8455 is almost certainly burnt daub, and the others probably are, too, although the (rather remote) possibility of 8457 being part of a deeply fired thickness of clay, as in an open hearth, since broken up and dispersed, cannot be altogether ruled out.

Comparison with a fired sample of the local (Oxford) clay suggests that this could have been the origin of 8457, and also of 8455 where, however, grit and sand would have been deliberately added. Unless locally richer in iron, or after burial enriched in iron or depleted in calcium, 8456 must be regarded as a material different in origin.

VI. BOTANICAL MATERIAL FROM SOIL SAMPLES

Soil samples were taken from two early 13th century pits, pit 6, Area 6, and pit 16, Area 5, and submitted to the Ancient Monuments Laboratory for examination, mainly in order to ascertain whether or not traces could be detected of the suggested timber linings of the pits (p. 122), but also to clarify the purpose to which the pits had been put. The positions of the samples from pit 6, levels 6 and 7, are marked by crosses on section Z-Z' (FIG. 10); those from pit 16, levels 4 and 6, are similarly marked on section V-W (FIG. 12).

The laboratory was unable to find in these samples any obvious indication of the former presence of wood; the high overall organic content of the samples obscured the issue and made it impossible to make a decision on the basis of the samples provided. On the other hand, two samples were found to contain charred grain and other botanical material; some of this was separated out by Mr. W. E. Lee of the Laboratory and was sent, together with the bulk samples from pit 6, level 6, and pit 16, level 6, from which it had been derived, to Mr. J. R. B. Arthur of Littlehampton, Sussex, who has very kindly contributed the following report:

Area 6, pit 6, level 6 (sample A.M. 9128). A representative sample of about a third of the whole bulk sample from this level was examined and was found to contain the following material: Approx. 60 Wheat grains; approx. 40 Oat grains; Brome seeds; Wild Radish; Straw.

In addition, the material separated out by Mr. Lee consisted of: 30 Wheat grains, many severely damaged; 5 Oat grains; 2 Barley grains; 1 Vetch seed; 2 Brome seeds; Wheat and Oat straw with other extraneous matter.

After allowing for the fact that the first group was derived from one third of the total sample, while Mr. Lee's material was derived from the whole of the sample available, one reaches a proportion, for Wheat to Oats, of about 5:3.

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Area 5, pit 16, level 6 (sample A.M. 9130). Once again one third of the whole bulk sample was examined and produced: 2 whole Wheat grains, rather puffed and damaged; several large fragments of cereal grains difficult to identify; several pieces of extraneous matter.

General comment. This is restricted to the material from pit 6, level 6:

WHEAT

The carbonized wheat grains resemble the Bread Wheat (*Triticum aestivum* L.) and, most probably, Rivet Wheat (*Triticum turgidum* L.). I base my conclusions for the latter form on the following facts, after allowing for the slight distortion which affects the best wheat grains: these wheat grains are inclined to be plump, blunt at the tip, and in some cases show the characteristic 'hump' on the dorsal side. From the few main axes of the ears that were obtainable, it was evident that these were of two distinct types. As for the straw, small pieces of the internode are solid and striate.

OATS

The two forms, Common Oat (*Avena sativa* L.) and Bristle Oats (*Avena strigosa*-Schreb.), were about equally represented. Fortunately not only are the carbonized oat grains well preserved, but also quite a number of large fragments of the lemma and pale, many with the base parts, which are sufficiently strong still to enclose the oat grain.

BARLEY

The barley grains were of the hulled form (*Hordeum vulgare* L.). No main axes of the ears of barley were noted. Presumably the small amount of barley in this sample was merely a chance occurrence.

VETCH

The one Vetch seed, diameter 3.5 mm., would possibly be *Vicia sativa* L.

BARREN BROME

Barren Brome (*Bromus sterilis* L.) was represented by several broken pieces of seed. The presence of this plant may possibly indicate that the crop or crops were grown in a place where the fertility of the soil was low.

WILD RADISH (*Raphanus raphanistrum* L.) was present.

STRAW

It was interesting to see so much straw in the sample, and particularly the pieces of oat straw, some of which were 1 cm. in length and showed clearly the ribbed features. It should be noted that the grains described above were carbonized; the significance of this is discussed above, pp. 122-3.

VII. OTHER BOTANICAL MATERIAL

A series of charcoal samples from the excavation was submitted to Dr. G. W. Dimbleby of the Department of Forestry, University of Oxford, who has very kindly contributed the following identifications.

1. Area 1, overlying gully in building C. ? *Period I*: Hazel branches. 2. Area 4, midden W. of stone house: One large piece of Hawthorn (type). 3. Area 5, *Period I*, filling of p.-h. 62: Fragments of Oak; Hazel twigs. 4. Area 5, *Period I*, filling of

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feature xiv: Elder twigs and branches. 5. Area 5, *Period I*, phase 1, filling of pit 5, level 5: Fragments of Oak; level 7: Large quantity of Elder, some large pieces; Hazel twigs and branches; one piece of Beech; two large pieces of Oak branch. 6. Area 5, *Period I*, filling of pit 11, level 6: Small pieces of Ash; Hazel twigs. 7. Area 5, *Period I*, filling of pit 16, level 3: Very large pieces of Oak from large diameter timber, moderately slow grown—15 rings/in.; also large pieces of Oak, some from smaller timber, 9-20 rings/in. 8. Area 5, *Period II*, filling of pit 9: Fragments of Hawthorn (type) twigs. 9. Area 5, *Period II*, filling of pit 13, level 5: Hazel twigs and branches; moderate-sized pieces of Hawthorn (type); small twigs of *Prunus* (type); ? bark; level 6: One moderate-sized piece of *Prunus* (type); branches of Maple (Field Maple or Sycamore); level 7: Fragments of *Prunus* (type); Hazel twigs; one large piece of Blackthorn (*Prunus spinosa*). 10. Area 5, *Period II*, filling of pit 21: Very large pieces of Oak, probably from gnarled timber.

VIII. THE ANIMAL REMAINS. By MARGARET JOPE

Animal remains from the deserted village site at Seacourt come from three occupation levels—a Romano-British occupation (mid 2nd-4th century A.D.), *Period I* of the village (late 12th-late 13th centuries) and *Period II* of the village

	Ox		Horse		Red Deer		Sheep/ Goat		Pig	
	L	R	L	R	L	R	L	R	L	R
Maxilla	I	I	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Mandible		I	—	—	—	—	I	—	—	—
Teeth		2	—	—	—	—	2	—	3	—
Atlas		I	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Vertebrae	—	—	I	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Ribs	—	—	I	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Scapula	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	I
Radius	—	—	I	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Ulna	—	I	I	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Metacarpal	—	—	—	—	—	—	I	—	—	—
Pelvis	I	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Femur	2	4	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Tibia	—	—	—	—	—	—	I	—	—	—
Astragalus	I	2	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Metatarsal		I	—	I	—	I	—	—	—	—
3rd Phalanx		I	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
No. Bones	17 (+2)		3 (+2)		I (+2)		5		I	
Total No. Bones					29					
Min. No. Animals	4		I		I		I		I	

TABLE V—Mammals from Romano-British occupation.

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(late 13th-late 14th centuries). Approximate ages of animals have been given when mandibles and upper jaws contained teeth *in situ*. Ages are based on the average periods of eruption of teeth in modern farm animals, but as these vary greatly in different individuals, the ages can only be very approximate.

The Romano-British occupation

This level contained only a small number of bones, all of domestic animals: ox (at least 4 animals), horse, red deer, sheep (or goat) and pig (at least one animal each). The bones were all adult; there were no juveniles. There was no selection of joints as might occur with food being supplied from a distance.

Medieval Period I (late 12th-late 13th centuries)

Animal remains mostly of domestic animals representing food refuse: ox (44.1 per cent), horse (3 per cent), red deer (1 per cent), sheep or goat (38.6 per cent), pig (12.2 per cent), one dog bone from a fairly large animal and one cat bone. All parts of the skeleton were fairly equally represented except that there were high proportions of ox and sheep mandibles. One horn-core was of the goat type suggesting that goats were being kept as well as sheep. The number of deer bones was very small, one antler was from a cast specimen. Immature animals (ox, sheep and pig) were present as well as fully adult ones and one young lamb of about 3 months. The only immature bone apart from jaws was one ox phalanx. The horse teeth suggested an animal of at least 2½ years.

There were a small number of bird bones: domestic fowl, at least 5 birds including one immature bird and one very young chicken, and one bone of domestic or grey lag goose.

Mollusc shells consisted of 3 valves of *Ostrea edulis*, the edible oyster, and a few fragments of marine mollusc shell which might have been from edible shell fish other than oyster.

Medieval Period II (late 13th-late 14th centuries)

Animal bones all from domestic food refuse, except for 1 cat bone; ox (36.3 per cent), horse (2.3 per cent), red deer (2.3 per cent), roe deer (0.9 per cent), sheep or goat (44.3 per cent), pig (13.4 per cent) and hare (0.3 per cent). The number of deer bones was again very small; no actual bones of roe deer were identified but 2 fragments of their cast antler occurred bearing knife cuts. The red deer antler was also a cast specimen bearing a knife cut. The ox, sheep and pig bones represented immature as well as fully adult animals but no very young ones occurred. A sheep metatarsal was the only immature bone apart from jaws. The horse teeth indicated an animal of at least 4-5 years.

Bird bones were of domestic fowl (at least 4 birds including 2 young ones) and one bone probably of wood pigeon. The agreement with wood pigeon was very good but the possibility of woodcock could not be ruled out.

Mollusc remains: *Ostrea edulis*, the edible oyster (8 valves) and one fragment of a marine mollusc.

The percentages of the various animals from *Period II* were very similar to those from *Period I*: In both, ox and sheep were most common, pig moderately so and only a small number of bones of any other animal. The proportion of deer

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	Ox		Horse		Red Deer		Sheep/Goat		Pig		Cat		Dog	
	L	R	L	R	L	R	L	R	L	R	L	R	L	R
Horn-Core/Antler	—	—	—	—	I	—	I	I	—	—	—	—	—	—
Temporal Condyl	I	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Malar ..	2	—	—	—	—	—	I	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Occipital ..	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	I	—	—	—	—	—
Paramastoid process ..	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	I	—	—	—	—	—
Maxilla ..	—	—	—	—	—	—	3	I	2	2	—	—	—	—
Premaxilla	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	I	—	—	—	—
Mandible ..	8	13	—	—	—	—	9	10	3	—	—	—	—	—
Teeth ..	22	—	7	—	—	—	22	—	12	—	—	—	—	—
Atlas ..	I	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Axis ..	I	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Vertebrae	—	—	8	—	—	—	—	—	9	—	—	—	—	—
Ribs ..	—	—	13	—	—	—	—	—	28	—	—	—	—	—
Scapula ..	4	6	—	—	—	I	—	2	I	I	—	—	—	—
Humerus ..	2	2	I	—	—	—	4	3	I	I	—	—	—	—
Radius ..	I	—	I	I	—	—	2	3	I	—	—	—	—	—
Ulna ..	2	I	—	I	—	—	—	I	I	I	—	—	—	—
Carpal ..	—	I	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Metacarpal	3	4	—	—	—	—	4	2	—	—	—	—	—	—
Pelvis ..	2	2	—	—	—	—	2	4	—	—	—	—	—	I
Femur ..	5	I	—	—	—	—	—	3	—	—	—	—	—	—
Tibia ..	—	I	—	—	—	—	4	5	—	3	I	—	—	—
Calcaneum	I	I	—	—	—	—	—	—	I	—	—	—	—	—
Astragalus	I	I	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Cuboid ..	2	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Metatarsal	5	I	—	—	—	—	I	I	I	—	—	—	—	—
Metapodial	—	I	—	—	—	—	—	—	I	—	—	—	—	—
1st Phalanx	—	4	I	—	—	—	4	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
2nd „	—	5	I	—	—	—	I	—	I	—	—	—	—	—
3rd „	—	2	—	—	—	—	4	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
No. Bones ..	87 (+21)		6 (+21)		2 (+21)		76 (+37)		24 (+37)		I		I	
Total No. Bones ..							255							
Per Cent Bones ..	44.1		3.0		1.0		38.6		12.2		0.5		0.5	
Min. No. Animals	13		I		I		10		3		I		I	

TABLE VI—Mammals from medieval Period I.

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bones was not very great but it is likely that any deer coming into the hands of the villagers would have to have been poached. For a considerable distance round Seacourt during the 12th, 13th and 14th centuries there can have been very few areas in which deer could be hunted legally by any except the King, his foresters, the Abbot of Abingdon, barons or country gentlemen. Roe deer was eventually struck off the list of the beasts of the forest as it drove away other deer, but not until the time of Edward III (A. L. Poole, *From Domesday Book to Magna Carta*, (Oxford History of England, 1951), 28-34).

	Ox		Horse		Red Deer		Roe Deer		Sheep/Goat		Pig		Cat		Hare	
	L	R	L	R	L	R	L	R	L	R	L	R	L	R	L	R
Horn-Core/Antler ..		1	—	—	1	—	2	—	3	1	—	—	—	—	—	—
Temporal Condyl ..	2	2	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	1	—	—	—	—	—	—
Malar ..	3	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	2	1	—	—	—	—	—
Maxilla ..	1	1	—	—	1	—	—	—	3	—	2	4	—	—	—	—
Premaxilla ..	—	2	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Frontal ..	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	2	—	2	1	—	—	—	—
Basioccipital ..	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	1	—	—	—	—	—
Parietal ..	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	1	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Mandible ..	18	17	2	1	—	3	—	1	27	18	6	7	—	—	—	—
Teeth ..	82	—	13	—	5	—	—	—	101	—	19	—	—	—	—	—
Atlas ..	1	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	3	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Axis ..	1	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	2	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Vertebrae ..	—	—	17	—	—	—	—	—	7	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Sacrum ..	1	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Ribs ..	—	—	10	—	—	—	—	—	28	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Scapula ..	—	5	—	—	—	2	—	—	2	2	—	4	—	—	—	—
Humerus ..	1	2	1	—	—	—	—	—	17	12	4	3	1	—	—	1
Radius ..	4	3	—	—	—	—	—	—	5	3	—	—	—	—	—	—
Ulna ..	1	—	—	1	—	—	—	—	2	2	—	1	—	—	—	—
Carpal ..	1	1	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Metacarpal ..	5	6	—	—	—	—	—	—	3	3	1	—	—	—	—	—
Pelvis ..	3	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	4	5	1	1	—	—	—	—
Femur ..	1	2	—	—	—	—	—	—	1	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Tibia ..	1	2	—	—	1	—	—	—	12	7	—	1	—	—	—	—
Fibula ..	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	2	—	—	—	—
Calcaneum ..	2	5	—	—	—	—	—	—	1	1	1	—	—	—	—	—
Astragalus ..	1	2	1	1	—	—	—	—	1	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Cuboid ..	1	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Metatarsal ..	3	5	—	—	—	—	—	—	3	2	3	—	—	—	—	—
Metapodial ..	—	2	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
1st Phalanx ..	—	5	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
2nd " ..	—	9	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	1	—	—	—	—	—
3rd " ..	—	4	—	—	—	—	—	—	4	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
No. Bones ..	127(+27)		8(+27)		8(+27)		3(+35)		155(+35)		47(+35)		1		1	
Total No. Bones ..							412									
Per Cent Bones ..	36.3		2.3		2.3		0.9		44.3		13.4		0.3		0.3	
Min. No. animals ..	18		2		3		1		27		7		1		1	

TABLE VII—Mammals from medieval Period II.

MEDIEVAL VILLAGE OF SEACOURT

Occupation Level	Animal	Mandible	Maxilla	Premaxilla	Approximate Age
Romano-British Period I	Ox	—	2	—	2-2½ years
	Ox	1	—	—	< 2½-3
		1	—	—	< 2-2½
		2	—	—	1-1½
		1	—	—	1
	Sheep	1	1	—	1½-2
		1	—	—	< 1-1½
		1	—	—	3 months
	Pig	—	—	1	1-1½ years
		1	—	—	1½
	Horse	Teeth	(Unattached)	—	> 2½
	Ox	3	—	—	< 2½-3
		1	—	—	2-2½
		3	—	—	< 2-2½
Period II		1	—	—	1-1½
	Sheep	1	—	—	> 1½-2
		2	—	—	1½-2
	Pig	1	—	—	18-20 months
		2	1	—	9-10
	Horse	Teeth	(Unattached)	—	> 4-5 years

TABLE VIII—Approximate ages of animals based on average periods of eruption of teeth.

The following remains of birds and mollusca were identified from medieval *Period I*: Domestic fowl (*Gallus* sp.), Humerus 1(L) + 1(R), Ulna 4(R), Femur 1, Tibia 1(L) + 1(R), Tarsometatarsus 1(L) + 1(R). Goose, domestic or Grey Lag (*Anser anser* (L)), Humerus 1(R). *Ostrea edulis* L. 3. Marine mollusc (fragments) 7.

The following were identified from medieval *Period II*: Domestic fowl (*Gallus* sp.), Humerus 1(R), Ulna 1(R), Femur 1(L) + 4(R), Tarsometatarsus 1(L) + 4(R). Wood Pigeon (*Columba palumbus palumbus* L.), Femur 1(R). *Ostrea edulis* L. 8. Marine mollusc (fragment) 1.

PLATE II
THE MEDIEVAL VILLAGE OF SEACOURT, BERKS., FROM THE AIR.
N.



- A. The village, seen here from the S., extended from the copse on the W., down hill to Seacourt Stream on the E. The medieval main street can be seen W. of, and converging with, the former Botley-Wytham road.
- B. Pre-enclosure trackways crossing Wytham Hill; these pass N.W. of Seacourt to join the old road to the W. near Radbrook Common.

Phh.: G. W. G. Allen



A



B



C

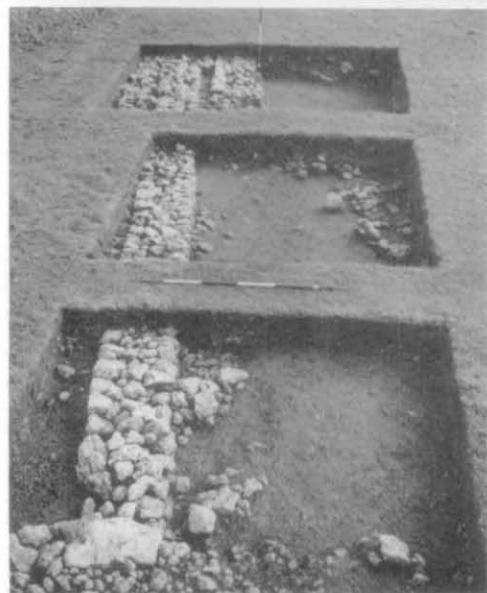
- A. General view, looking N., of the 1958 excavations on the E. side of the former Botley-Wytham road. Area 4 is in the middle distance, with Area 5 beyond.
- B. Area 1, looking W. across the mid 13th century main street of the village to the N. ends of Buildings A and B beyond (p. 87).
- C. Area 1. Stone-built drain below the village street (p. 87).



A



B



C



D

- A. Area 1. Building B looking S. as seen in 1959 during earth-scraping work for the new by-pass (p. 87).
 B. Area 1. Building A as excavated in 1939, looking S. (p. 87).
 C. Area 3. The N. wall of the churchyard from the W. The end of the wall can be seen in the foreground (p. 90).
 D. Area 3. The W. termination of the churchyard wall, showing the pebble surface on the W. (p. 90).



A



B

- A. Section X-Y. Looking S. to the flat platform which may be the site of the manor house, and to the church (Area 3) in the background (p 91).
 B. Area 4. Looking S. across the 14th century house with central hearth to the ditch beyond (p. 93).

Phh.: Martin Biddle

PLATE VI



A



B

A. Area 4. The 14th century house seen from the S.W. (pp. 93-6).

B. Area 4. The house seen from the E. (pp. 93-6).

Phh.: Martin Biddle

PLATE VII



A



B

N.B. In A and B the excavation of the ditch and beam-slot on the W. side of Area 5 is unfinished (p. 101, Note 126).

A. Area 5. The early 13th century wooden buildings of *Period I, Phase 2*, from the S. In the foreground the site of the house, overlying Pit 5; in the middle distance and background the post-holes and beam-slots of the barn-byre (p. 100).

B. Area 5. The wooden buildings of *Period I, Phase 2*, from the N. The barn-byre is in the foreground and the site of the house beyond. The upright ranging rod stands in Pit 5 (p. 101).

Phh.: Martin Biddle

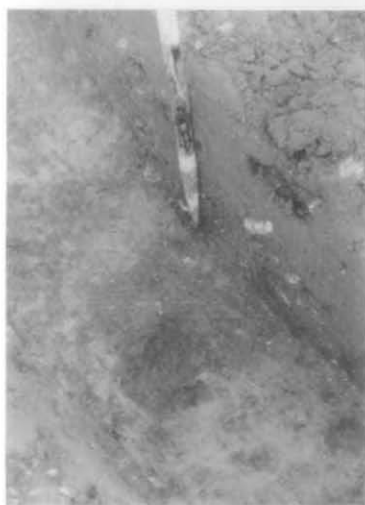
PLATE VIII



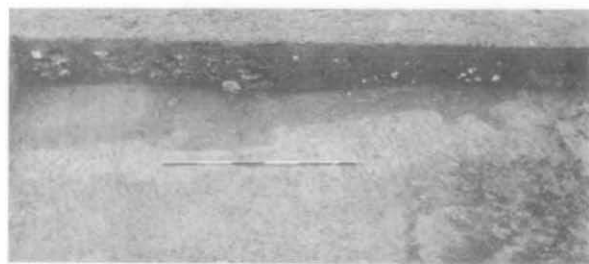
A



B



C



D

- A. Area 5. Pit 5 overlain by the clay hearth (below foot-rule) of the *Period I, Phase 2*, house. The stone support for one of the posts of this house can be seen cutting into the fill of Pit 5; cf. FIG. 12, section L-M (pp. 98-101).
- B. Area 5. The central part of Area 5, showing the S. end of the barn-byre and the N. wall of the house of *Period I, Phase 2*, from the W. (pp. 101-1).
- C. Area 5. The fill of the N.-S. ditch of *Period I/II* overlying the truncated W. beam-slot of *Period I, Phase 2*, in which can be seen the outline of a post-hole (p. 101).
- D. Area 5. The N. beam-slot of the *Period I, Phase 2*, barn-byre, cut by Pit 22 (p. 101).

Phh.: Martin Biddle

Phs.: A and C Martin Biddle, B Fabian Rodcliffe



A



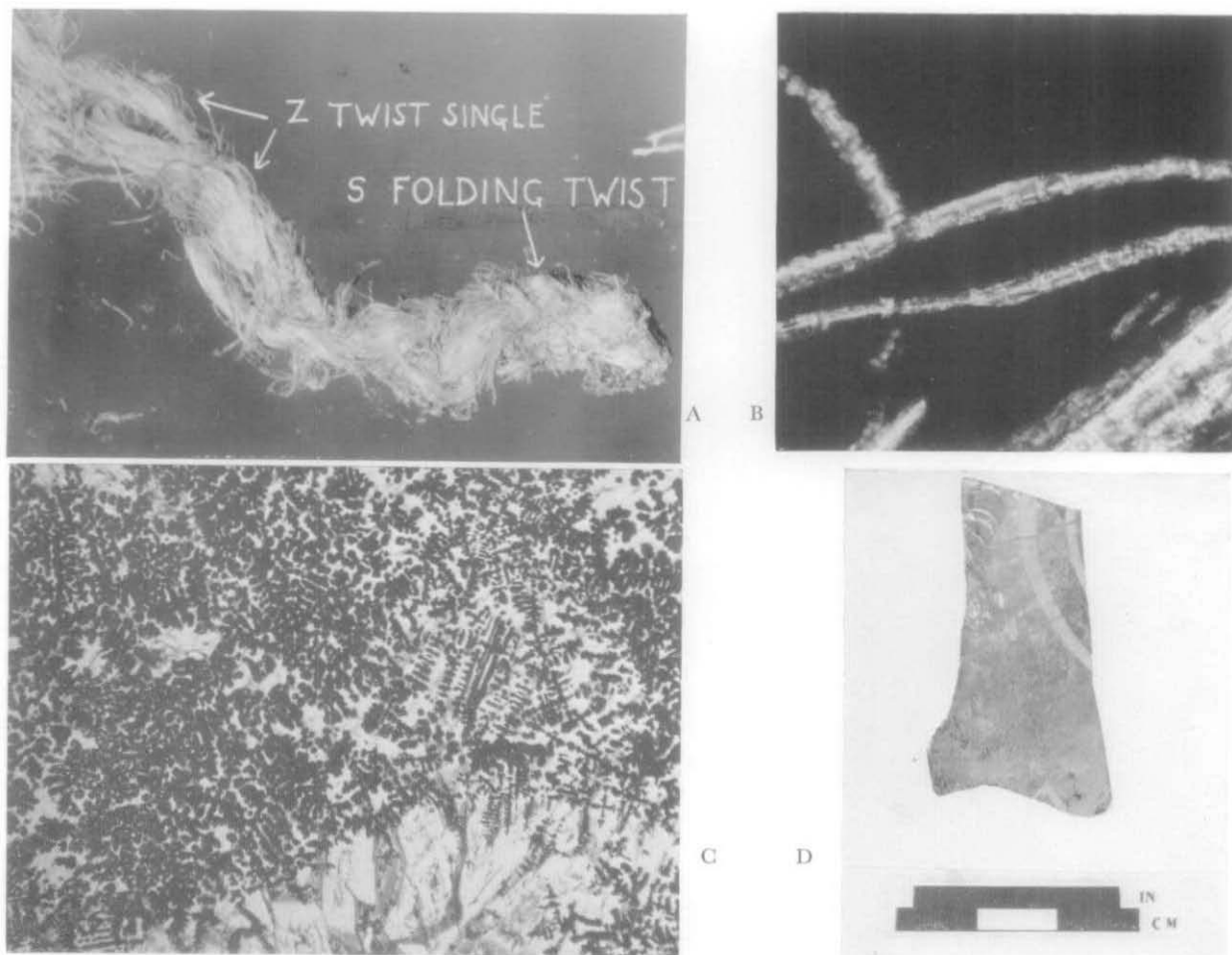
B



C

- A. Granary on stables at the old Home Farm by the White Hart, Wytham (p. 108).
 B. Area 11. The semicircular foundation from the W. (p. 111).
 C. Semicircular staircase projection at Charlton-on-Otmoor; cf. FIG. 15 B (p. 128).

Pls.: A, B Shirley Institute, C B.L.S.R.A., D L. P. Morley

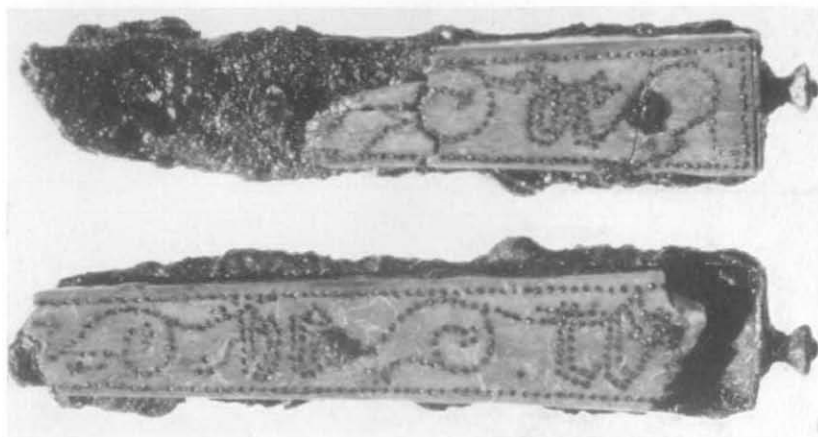


A. Photo-micrograph ($\times 10$) of two-fold yarns from the stitching of leather found inside a 13th century buckle plate (cf. FIG. 28, no. 8; p. 169). B. Photo-micrograph ($\times 200$) of the ultimate fibre from the yarns shown in A. Polarized light showing cross markings due to transverse nodes (p. 169). C. Slag. Thin section of no. 4 (TABLE II, p. 191), showing laths of fayalite (light) and iron oxide dendrites (dark). Plane polarized light, $\times 40$. Probably 14th century. D. Fragment of blue glass with gilt paint decoration, east Mediterranean, 12th-early 13th century (p. 185).

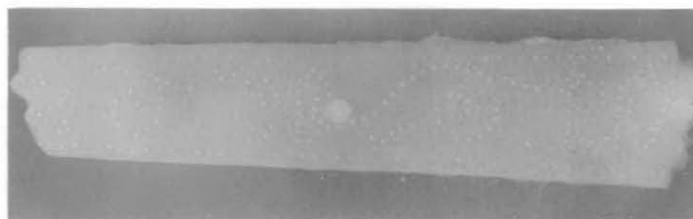
PLATE XI



A



B



C

- A. X-ray photograph (about $\times 1.7$) of iron knife blade showing the pattern-welded core (cf. FIG. 29, no. 9; p. 175). From a mid 13th century level.
 B. Late 13th-14th century knife handle with decorated bone scales on either side of the iron tang (cf. FIG. 29, no. 4 A, B; pp. 172-4).
 C. X-ray photograph (about $\times 1.7$) of the knife handle shown in B, above.

Phh.: Ministry of Works