

## Excavations at Oxford 1968

### First Interim Report

By T. G. HASSALL

THE Oxford Archaeological Excavation Committee was founded in 1967 in order to carry out a four-year programme of excavations phased with the first stages of the redevelopment of the City. It is intended to publish a brief interim report after each season's excavation and a final report after the fifth year.

The scope of redevelopment within the area of medieval Oxford is limited, and is chiefly confined to the district now known as St. Ebbe's.<sup>1</sup> The area has always been predominantly Town rather than Gown, but, positioned as it is away from the traditional commercial centre of the town, it has never been particularly prosperous,<sup>2</sup> although its proximity to the Westgate must have given it some importance. From the 13th century onwards the district would have been dominated by the Black and the Grey Friars, both of whom established themselves there.

The most important new development in St. Ebbe's will be the construction of the so-called Westgate Centre. The site (FIG. 2) occupies about 13,000 square metres and extends northwards from the presumed line of the City Wall to New Road and is bounded on the west by Castle Street, which is to be realigned, and on the east by St. Ebbe's Street. The project includes the construction of a vast underground service basement, approximately 6 m. deep, which will destroy all but the deepest archaeological features. Building is due to start in January 1970.

The medieval topography of the Westgate site has been reconstructed by H. E. Salter.<sup>3</sup> Until the 13th century tenements fronted on the south side of Castle Street, St. Ebbe's Street, both sides of Church Street and also south of the City Wall which was continuous from Littlegate to Westgate. St. Ebbe's church occupied its present site and the church of St. Budoc stood on a roughly triangular space at the junction of Castle Street and Church Street. In the early 13th century St. Budoc's was pulled down and removed to a site outside

<sup>1</sup> *City of Oxford, Development Plan Review, 1964-1981: Written Analysis*, 120.

<sup>2</sup> H. E. Salter, *Medieval Oxford*, O.H.S., C (1936), Appendix B, Taxations, 136-41.

<sup>3</sup> H. E. Salter, *Map of Mediaeval Oxford*, Map 4.

# OXFORD

ST. EBBE'S SITES 1968

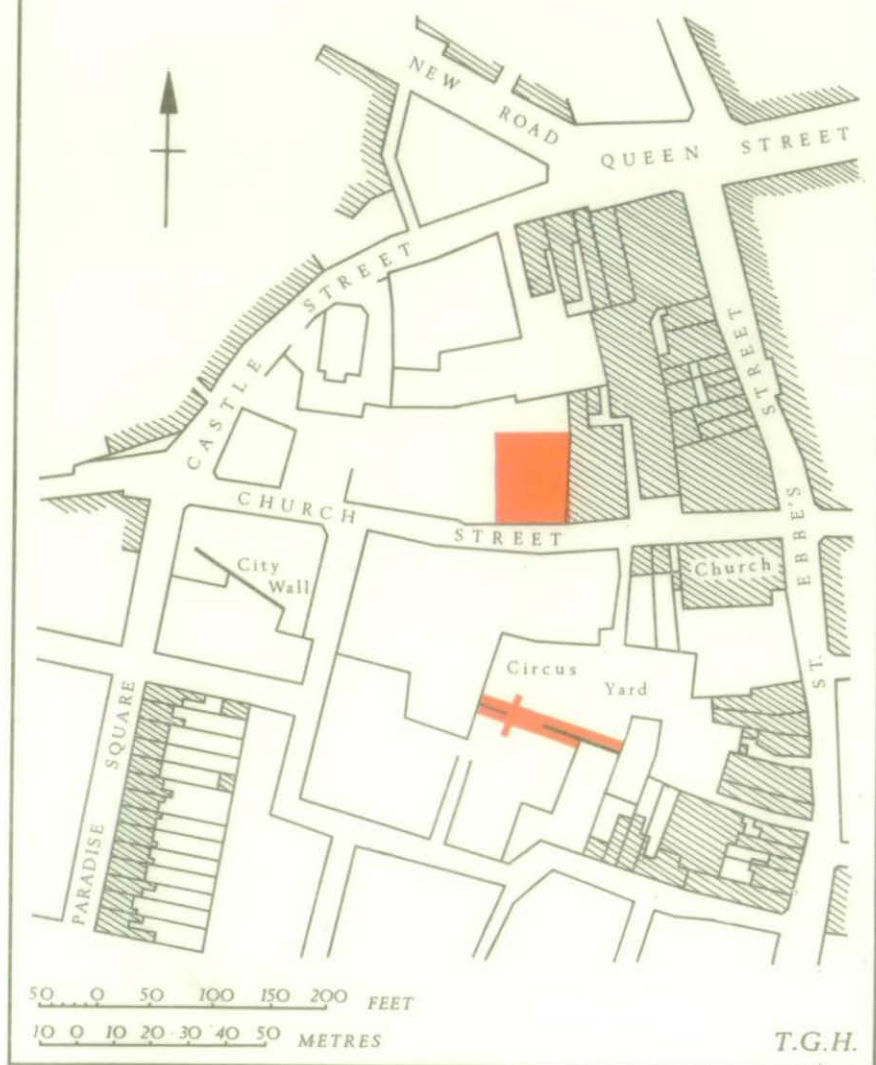


FIG. 2

Based on City of Oxford Central Area 1 : 500 survey, by permission of the City Engineer.

## EXCAVATIONS AT OXFORD 1968: FIRST INTERIM REPORT

the Westgate, while by the middle of the same century the Grey Friars had acquired the tenements on both sides of the Wall. The first site of St. Budoc's was occupied by a market. For the remainder of the medieval period the topography was unaltered.

All the sites listed above would merit investigation but in 1968 most of the sites were still largely covered by standing buildings whose demolition was not completed until the end of the year. Accordingly the first of the two planned seasons of excavation had to be limited to those sites which had been cleared, namely a fee-paying tarmac-surfaced car park on the north side of Church Street and an area adjacent to the presumed line of the City Wall in Circus Yard (FIG. 2). These sites were kindly made available by Oxford City Council and a special thanks are due to the City Architect and his staff, in particular Mr. P. G. Beresford and Mr. G. F. Spray, and the City Estates Surveyor and in particular Mr. L. R. Flint of his staff, all of whom were closely involved in the negotiations for the sites.

In 1968 excavations continued from early March until Christmas. For much of the time excavation was only possible with a small core of permanent excavators supplemented at times by local volunteers and regular groups from Oxford University Archaeological Society, Westminster College Archaeological Society and local schools. The main season extended for six weeks during the summer when an average of thirty people were working on the site. During this main excavation period the site was supervised by Messrs. J. C. Huntriss, G. Smyth and C. J. Young, while the pottery shed was under the control of the Misses E. S. Leedham-Green and K. J. Lucas, all of whom contributed to the smooth running of the excavation. Mr. G. S. Baker took the photographs. The City Engineer's Department, especially members of the Special Projects Section and the Highways Department constantly advised on practical problems. The financial arrangements were in the hands of Mr. H. C. Bedwell, the County Treasurer, and his staff, in particular Mr. J. H. R. Day and Mr. A. L. Wilkes. The Governors of Christ Church Cathedral Choir School kindly made the school available as a hostel; the Headmaster, Mr. D. M. W. Roberts, assisted in every possible way and Mr. Ian Wren acted as hostel warden. The Excavation Committee is also indebted to many local firms including Ameys Ltd., British Motor Holdings, Curtis and Horn, J.H.B. (Equipment) Ltd., Lovell Plant Hire Ltd., Minns Ltd., Oxford Plant Hire Ltd., for the free use of goods and services.

### CHURCH STREET (PL. 1, FIG. 2)

Immediately after Christmas 1967 a trial trench was dug parallel with the north side of Church Street. Preliminary results were encouraging. Distur-

T. G. HASSALL

bance on the site seemed to be chiefly limited to the very deep footings of the old City Technical School. However, this building does not appear to have had an extensive basement, and few traces of basements belonging to other buildings were encountered. Undisturbed levels were found at depths ranging from 1.0 m. to 2.0 m. producing late medieval pottery. The western end of the car park looked particularly promising, but initially permission was granted for the eastern end of the trial trench to be extended, so that half the car park could remain in use.

In 1968 work was concentrated on the excavation of the greater part of two medieval properties in this area. The documentary evidence for the site has been studied by Dr. H. E. Salter, but Dr. Hilary L. Turner is making a wider search of the evidence in order to guide the excavation on this and other sites, and also to help write a social and economic commentary once the St. Ebbe's excavations are complete.

The site was first cleared mechanically, and then open area excavation was begun using the technique employed at Winchester.<sup>4</sup> Mr. Martin Biddle has been extremely helpful in the initial stages. The system worked well so long as the post-medieval features were under investigation, but in the absence of good, horizontal, medieval stratification the system was not really suited to the investigation of very deep pits and wells.

*31 Church Street, Whitehall*

This property<sup>5</sup> is first mentioned in 1340, when the owner, John Gonwardly ordered his executors to sell his messuage, known as Whitehall.<sup>6</sup> It must have been bought by William le Irmonger who in 1349 left the property to his daughter Alice.<sup>7</sup> It was in the possession of *magister* Robert Slimbridge in 1496,<sup>8</sup> who in the same year acquired the garden to the west, most of which lies beyond the present limit of excavation.<sup>9</sup> It was probably the combined properties which Richard Gunter acquired in 1526,<sup>10</sup> and which he sold to Richard Edgys in 1563.<sup>11</sup> In 1649 the property, then used as a malting house, was sold to Thomas Rowney,<sup>12</sup> and by him to Matthew Martinne in 1661.<sup>13</sup>

<sup>4</sup> Martin Biddle, 'Excavations at Winchester 1964, Third Interim Report', *The Antiquaries Journal*, XLV (1965), 245.

<sup>5</sup> H. E. Salter, *Survey of Oxford*, ed. W. A. Pantin and W. T. Mitchell, O.H.S., N.S. xx (1969), 73 ; SW 82.

<sup>6</sup> H. E. Salter, *Liber Albus Civitatis Oxoniensis* (1909), no. 56.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, no. 280.

<sup>8</sup> *Snape's Formulary*, ed. H. E. Salter, O.H.S., LXXX (1923), 246.

<sup>9</sup> *Liber Albus Civitatis Oxoniensis*, ed. H. E. Salter, no. 280.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*, no. 317.

<sup>11</sup> City Archives, F 2.1a.

<sup>12</sup> City Archives, F 2.1c.

<sup>13</sup> City Archives, F 2.1f.

## EXCAVATIONS AT OXFORD 1968: FIRST INTERIM REPORT

It was then sold to Thomas Tanner in 1668,<sup>14</sup> and to William Burrows in 1694.<sup>15</sup> William Burrows built five houses on the site, whose frontages are recorded in the Survey of 1772.<sup>16</sup> The easternmost of the five, in part on the site of the former Whitehall was sold by Thomas Burrows to the City in 1811: thereafter it housed the Blue Coat School for Boys, although they may have been in possession earlier since the conveyance states that it was occupied by John Robinson, Schoolmaster.<sup>17</sup>

Apart from two massive concrete footings belonging to the City Technical School there has been no major modern disturbance on this site. In 1968 all the post-medieval features with the exception of these footings and a well were removed. The post-medieval property had the usual layout of a building on the street frontage, a well behind and stone-lined cess-pits in the rear garden area. The latter contained good groups of pottery. A start was made on the excavation of one late medieval building phase but the plan of this building will not be recovered until 1969, and it is unlikely that the front of the structure will fall within the present excavation. During the medieval period the garden area was honeycombed with rubbish pits. No indication was found of any property boundary separating Whitehall from its neighbour to the east.

### 32-34 Church Street, *Domus Mirifeld*

The medieval name for this property was *domus Mirifeld*.<sup>18</sup> By 1266 it was paying a quit-rent to Oseney Abbey, whose officials continued to collect three shillings per year until the Dissolution.<sup>19</sup> The tenement remained in the hands of the Coleshill family for at least three generations, from 1266 until 1325. Its value in 1279 was said to be eight shillings.<sup>20</sup> The house never occupied the whole frontage, since in 1325 when John Coleshill bequeathed the property to his wife with reversion to his son, it was described as a house with a vacant space adjoining.<sup>21</sup> 15th-century rentals describe the area as a garden.<sup>22</sup> The property was acquired by Lincoln College in 1439.<sup>23</sup> It was sold by them to the City in 1922.<sup>24</sup> The frontage was the same as that recorded in the Survey

<sup>14</sup> City Archives, F 2.1g.

<sup>15</sup> City Archives, F 2.1j.

<sup>16</sup> *Surveys and Tokens*, ed. H. E. Salter, O.H.S., LXXV (1920), 27.

<sup>17</sup> City Archives, F 2.2d.

<sup>18</sup> H. E. Salter, *Survey of Oxford*, ed. W. A. Pantin and W. T. Mitchell, O.H.S., N.S. xx (1969), 72-3; SW 81.

<sup>19</sup> *Cartulary of Oseney Abbey*, iii, ed. H. E. Salter, O.H.S., xci (1929), passim.

<sup>20</sup> *Rotuli Hundredorum*, Rec. Comm. 1812-18, ii, 791.

<sup>21</sup> *Liber Albus Civitatis Oxoniensis*, ed. H. E. Salter (1909), no. 3.

<sup>22</sup> *Cartulary of Oseney Abbey*, iii, 265.

<sup>23</sup> Lincoln College Cartulary, 221.

<sup>24</sup> Deeds and plans in City P1/425.

T. G. HASSALL

of 1772 (50 ft. 3 in.), and was divided into three tenements, occupied by Mr. Dandee, Mrs. Franklin and Mrs. Horn.<sup>25</sup>

There has been no modern disturbance on this site at all. Surprisingly little sign was found of the three post-medieval tenements, and only one stone-lined well and one stone-lined cess-pit lie within its bounds. It must therefore be concluded that the occupiers of the three houses shared amenities. The medieval subdivision of the property was apparent from the complete lack of any structure on half the site, and only fragmentary traces of structure on the other (eastern) half. At some stage during the late medieval period it is possible that the property was used for trade purposes since a number of small, simple hearths was found. Most of the excavation of this site was concentrated in what one would expect to have been the garden area. Here a very large number of rubbish pits and wells were excavated. So many of these features had been dug that the natural ground surface was only found in a few places. As is to be expected in Oxford, all these features were simply shafts dug into the ground without any kind of lining. However, one pit differed from its fellows in that it had a stone lining (PL. II). The pit was rectangular in plan, 1.6 m. by 1.2 m. It was 2.75 m. deep and at its bottom it had tapered from 1.0 m. to 0.6 m. The sides of the pit were lined with unmortared rubble and a few tiles. As with the unlined pits there was no indication of a structure having covered the top but its lining would make possible a longer life than the normal unlined pit. This pit could have been cleaned and used again (unlike a normal pit) but the period of its final use seems to have been the first half of the 14th century (see below, p. 14). Presumably the evidence of a lining is not necessarily evidence of wealth, but the idea may have originated because of the unstable nature of the surrounding unlined pits. If this is the reason, it is still surprising that no other lined pits have been found in Oxford although it was noticed that the lining of this pit did in fact collapse soon after the excavation of its fill. Admittedly 1968 was an exceptionally wet summer.

In many ways the Church Street excavation has proved disappointing, since so little has been found of structures although it seems probable that some medieval building phases will be at least partially recovered in 1969. There is also the possibility that when the street is closed and the City Engineer allows deeper excavation close to the street frontage, cellar-pits, if not other structures, will be found. In other respects the site with its honeycomb of medieval pits and wells is a very typical Oxford experience and poses two main problems. First, the rate of contamination in the pits seems to be very high, for however

<sup>25</sup> *Surveys and Tokens*, ed. H. E. Salter, O.H.S., LXXV (1920), 27.

## EXCAVATIONS AT OXFORD 1968: FIRST INTERIM REPORT

carefully they are excavated, by their very nature the pottery found in them does not form closed groups. The pottery assemblage from the stone-lined pit is discussed below and clearly demonstrates this point. The contamination naturally is worst in the later pits and for the most part only the bottom of the very early pits seem to have survived. The second problem arises out of the last point, namely the depth to which it has been necessary to dig. A borehole survey carried out on behalf of the City Council for redevelopment purposes indicated that the undisturbed natural gravel should have been encountered at about 3.0 m. below car park level. In fact excavation has shown that the actual original ground surface in the very few areas where it remains undisturbed is to be found at just over 1.0 m. However, the pits themselves often go down to a depth of about 5.0 m., while the wells are even deeper. In such a situation conventional excavation techniques seem inadequate, and planning is extremely difficult.

### CIRCUS YARD (FIG. 2)

The construction of the Westgate Centre will involve the destruction of most of the City Wall where it crosses St. Ebbe's. The alignment of the city wall on the south side of Circus Yard has been questioned, since its footings have been found to include re-used late medieval worked stones.<sup>26</sup> A section was cut through this wall to ascertain its nature and to investigate the difference in ground level, which on its southern side is 3.0 m. lower than its level in Circus Yard. The section showed that the difference in ground level is due to post-medieval build-up. On the inside face of the wall two moulded bases with an adjoining respond at right-angles were uncovered (PL. I). From the moulding, these must be of mid-13th century date.<sup>27</sup> Further mechanical excavation both east and west of the first section showed that these features are on the line of the actual city wall whose footings are still intact to the east. The Greyfriars received permission from the king in 1244 to throw down part of the city wall and to insert their church in the gap; these features must belong to the east end of the church.<sup>28</sup> In 1969 it is hoped to recover a meaningful plan of the building and also to investigate the city wall more fully.

## THE FINDS

A full discussion of the finds will be kept over until the final report. In 1968 the Church Street site produced abundant quantities of all the usual pottery types and fabrics to be found in Oxford, together with small finds

<sup>26</sup> *Oxoniensia*, xxv (1960), 135.

<sup>27</sup> I am extremely grateful to Mr. H. M. Colvin and Dr. W. A. Pantin for their helpful advice.

<sup>28</sup> A. G. Little, *The Greyfriars in Oxford*, O.H.S., xxx (1891), 23.

T. G. HASSALL

including querns, hones, knives, jettons, bone combs and implements. At this stage, however, it seems appropriate to publish two of the most interesting pottery finds together with the material from the stone-lined pit discussed above. I am extremely grateful to Mr. D. A. Hinton for his constant help and advice with the pottery, and for making available the reserve collection of the Ashmolean Museum. I also wish to thank Mr. P. M. Kenrick for drawing the pottery, Mr. Andrew Brown for his work on the plant remains and Professor B. J. Marples for examining the bones.

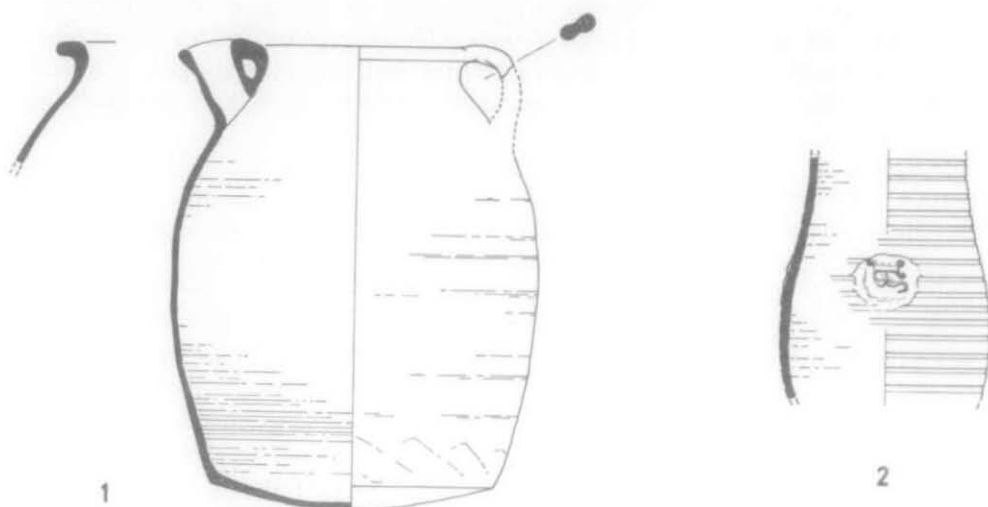


FIG. 3

Early 12th century Stamford ware pitcher and part of the 14th-century jug with stamped initial letter.  
1 : 4. p. 12.

STAMFORD WARE PITCHER (PL. IIC ; FIG. 3, NO. 1)

Spouted pitcher in very thin, hard, light grey-buff Stamford ware. Body grooved internally and slightly rippled on the exterior. Convex base, slightly knife-trimmed. Short neck, rim crisply turned out, thickened and rounded. Short D-shaped spout, tubular and outward flaring. It rises above and is pressed into the rim. Small, concave strap handle placed opposite the spout. The whole pitcher glazed on all external surfaces, including the base and inside the rim, with a clear, thin, light green-yellow glaze with occasional brown and yellow flecks. Brush marks show on the lower body.

This pitcher is taller and finer than its most obvious counterpart, the pitcher

## EXCAVATIONS AT OXFORD 1968: FIRST INTERIM REPORT

from the Angel Inn, Oxford. See R. L. S. Bruce-Mitford, 'Eleventh and Twelfth Century Pottery from the Oxford Region', *Oxoniensia*, v (1940), 42 ff., fig. 8, no. 3, pl. XI, A-B. For the shape cf. G. C. Dunning, 'Anglo-Saxon Pottery: a symposium', *Medieval Archaeology*, III (1959), 40, fig. 16, no. 1 and 2; J. G. Hurst, 'Saxo-Norman Pottery in East Anglia', *Proc. Camb. Antiq. Soc.*, LI (1958), fig. 1, nos. 1-3. It is presumably slightly later in date and is probably early 12th century. It was found in an unlined pit.

### STAMPED INITIAL LETTER (PL. IIB; FIG. 3, NO. 2)

Fragment of the body of a small jug in fine, sandy, light buff-coloured fabric consistent with a mid-14th century date. It was found in an unstratified context. The fragment has a regular pattern of external rilling. A thin, roughly circular pad of clay applied to the outside makes a slight platform on which has been stamped a single raised letter on its side. The whole is glazed in mottled green. There is some uncertainty as to what letter is represented here. It could be a 'B' (this is the opinion of Mr. P. T. V. M. Chaplais), but a majority view holds that it is an 'R' reversed (the view of Dr. A. B. Emden, Mr. E. C. Hohler, Dr. R. W. Hunt, Mr. N. R. Ker, for whose opinions I am grateful). If the letter is an 'R' it is similar to a letter on the tenor bell at Dorchester-on-Thames which was founded c. 1350 at Wokingham, see F. Sharpe, 'The Church Bells of Oxon.', *Oxfordshire Record Society*, xxx (1950), 125; I am grateful to Mr. Sharpe for his comments. This is consistent with the fabric and type of the sherd. The letter is directly comparable to one on a pitcher from Nottingham, see Bernard Rackham, *Medieval English Pottery*, 23, pl. 63.

This is a rare example of lettering on a jug, and is unique from Oxford. The purpose of the letter is obscure: it could be purely decorative or perhaps it represents a trade or consignment mark (cf. G. Coppack, 'A medieval well and associated pottery from Keighton, Notts.', *Trans. of Thoroton Soc.*, LXXII (1968), fig. 2, no. 6), although it has been convincingly argued that groups of roughly comparable letters may be charms or exorcisms. If the letter can be read as a 'B' then it can perhaps be interpreted as standing for *Benedice*, see G. C. Dunning, 'Late Medieval Jugs with Lettering', *Medieval Archaeology*, XI (1967), 233-41. It is, of course, possible that the letter is a monogram, 'IB' or 'IR'. Whatever its purpose, if the stamp is in reverse then the original matrix cannot have been specially made to produce a meaningful symbol, and it can only have been for decoration. What does seem clear is that the potter who stamped the initial was himself illiterate since otherwise it would not have been applied on its side.

## T. G. HASSALL

### STONE-LINED PIT (PL. IIA)

This pit is important both because of its construction, which is so far unique in Oxford, and because of the fact that the analysis of the pottery assemblage from it allows a good assessment of the extent of contamination to be expected within a single pit. This pit contained a uniform fill which grew noticeably stickier towards the bottom.

### Pottery

The total number of sherds recovered was 407, counting joining sherds as single pieces. The total weight of these sherds is 6,646 gm. (14 lb. 10 oz.). These sherds can be broadly sub-divided into three kinds of fabrics: coarse wares, hard grey sandy wares, and hard buff sandy wares.

*Coarse wares:* A total of 96 unglazed sherds fall within this category; i.e. 23.6% of the total number of sherds. They weigh 909 gm. (21 lb.) or 13.7% of the total weight. It is impossible to estimate the number of pots, but the sherds included 7 different base, and 9 different rim fragments. Two of these rim fragments are illustrated:

FIG. 4, NO. 1. Rim sherd of slightly soapy grey ware, simple, thickened and well-rounded at the top. Possibly 12th century.

FIG. 4, NO. 2. Cooking pot rim of grey coarse ware with brownish red exterior. Everted rim, thickened and slightly rounded. Cf. M. Biddle, 'The Deserted Medieval Village of Seacourt, Berkshire', *Oxoniensia*, xxvi/xxvii (1961/2), fig. 22, no. 4.

Nearly all the sherds can probably be dated to the 12th or early 13th century and they include 6 decorated with wavy horizontal combing, and 1 jug neck fragment decorated with straight, discontinuous combing. Cf. Fabian Radcliffe, O.P. 'Excavations at Logic Lane, Oxford', *Oxoniensia*, xxvi/xxvii (1961/2), fig. 13, no. 1; *ibid.*, 'Seacourt', fig. 18, no. 8.

*Hard Grey Sandy Wares:* These accounted for 102 sherds, i.e. 25% of the total number of sherds. Their weight is 1,140 gm. (2 lb. 8 oz.) or 17.2% of the total weight. The majority of sherds (77, 18.9% of the whole, 852 gm. (1 lb. 14 oz.) 12.8% of the total weight) are unglazed and include 10 different base and 10 different rim fragments. One of the rim fragments is illustrated:

FIG. 4, NO. 3. Bowl rim of hard sandy grey ware. The rim is very expanded.

The 25 glazed sherds, the majority of which must presumably be derived from pots of the tripod-pitcher type, include 1 rim sherd

EXCAVATIONS AT OXFORD 1968: FIRST INTERIM REPORT

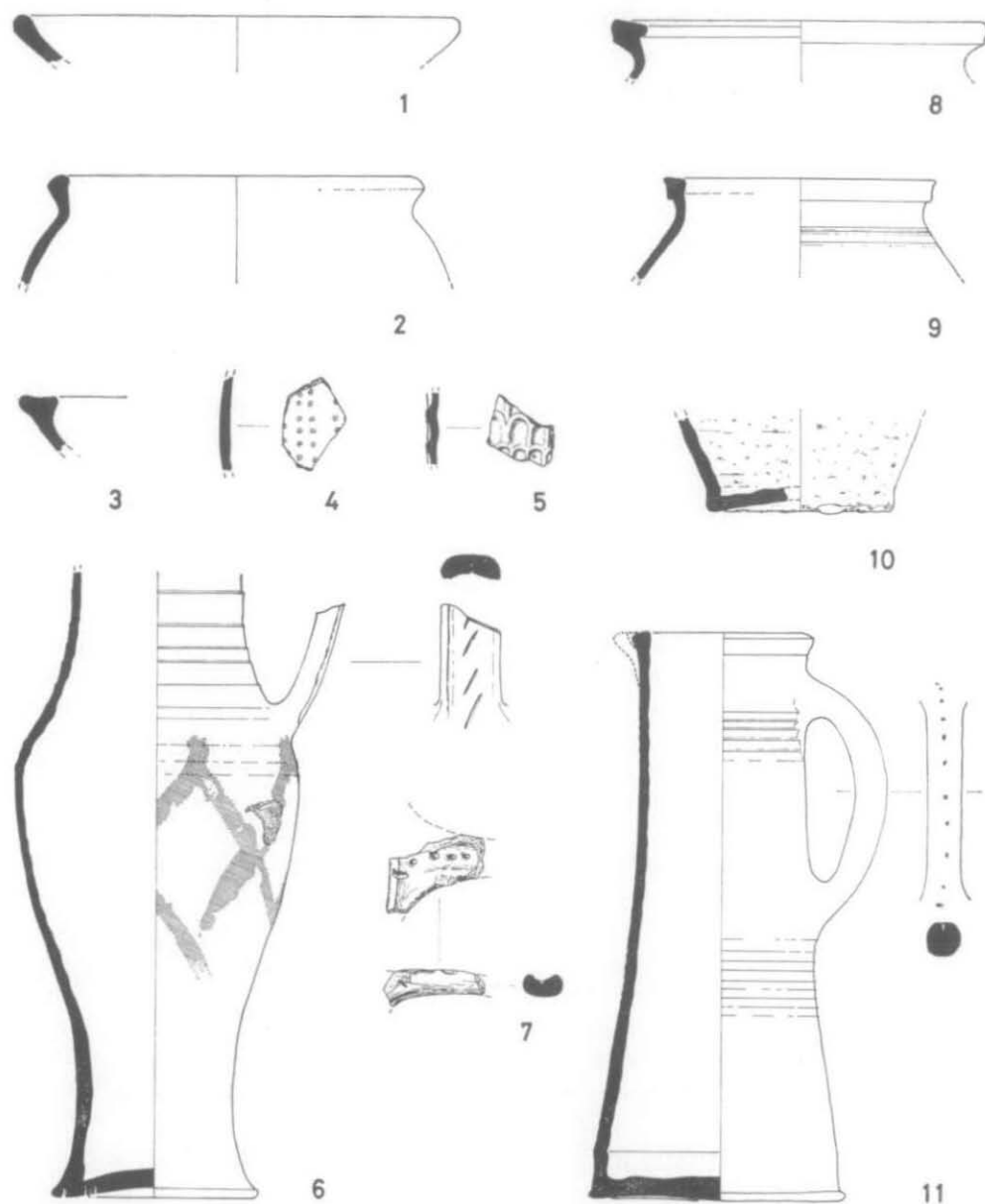


FIG. 4

Late 12th-early 13th century pottery from stone-lined pit, 1 : 4. pp. 14-17.

T. G. HASSALL

and 2 different base sherds. Two decorated body sherds are illustrated :

FIG. 4, NO. 4. Fragment of the wall of jug or pitcher in hard sandy grey fabric, glazed externally with yellow-green glaze, decorated with regularly applied white slip dots. Cf. R. L. S. Bruce-Mitford, 'The Archaeology of the Bodleian Extension', *Oxoniensia*, IV (1939), 119-21, pl. X, no. 8. 'Seacourt', *Oxoniensia*, XXVI/XXVII (1961/2), 143, fig. 19, no. 7, 144. Early 13th century.

FIG. 4, NO. 5. Fragments of the body of ? tripod-pitcher in thin hard sandy fabric. Orange glaze and a suspicion of white slip decoration. The entire fragment decorated all over with rows of light depressions, each smudged up to a ridge at the top end. Cf. 'Bodleian Extension', *Oxoniensia*, IV (1939), 98, fig. 22, E, 112. Early 13th century.

The sherds within this category of fabric range in date from the late 12th through the 13th century.

*Hard Buff Sandy Wares*: The largest group from this pit. There is a total of 209 sherds including the two almost complete jugs, FIG. 3, NOS. 6 and 11, described below and together this pottery represents 51.4% of the total number. These sherds weigh 4,601 gm. (10 lb. 2 oz.) or 69.2% of the total weight of sherds. There are 154 miscellaneous body sherds, all but 15 being glazed: 32 of these sherds have two-colour decoration and some of these have rouletting. It is again impossible to estimate the number of different pots represented by these sherds, but in addition to the two almost complete jugs there are 5 strap handles, 4 rod handles, 21 different bases, 2 of which have no glaze, and 18 different rims, 4 of which are unglazed. There are also 3 fragments of double-shelled lamps and 1 skillet handle, described below. The pottery illustrated is as follows:

FIG. 4, NO. 11. Cylindrical jug complete except for three-quarters of rim in hard, grey-buff fabric, pinkish surface. Splayed base, slightly concave in profile. Flat-topped rim sloping to the outside and slightly expanded. The rod handle has a single row of stabbing, there are two groups of circumferential grooves. Mottled green glaze. Cf. 'Bodleian Extension', *Oxoniensia*, IV (1939), pl. 12, no. 6, 110, fig. 26D, 126. Early 14th century.

FIG. 4, NO. 6. Baluster jug of developed form, top of the handle and rim missing, in very hard sandy buff ware over-fired to a purple brown on the outside. Slightly concave base with a slight foot-ring. Strap handle, 3.2 cm. wide, with diagonal slashing between slight flanking

## EXCAVATIONS AT OXFORD 1968: FIRST INTERIM REPORT

grooves. The jug is decorated with an open trellis work of criss-crosses in red clay pigment: wide grooves on the neck. Glazed with an almost clear orange glaze, having a greenish tinge on the underside of the base. The glaze is smudged in three places on the body where this jug was resting against other pots in the kiln. Early 14th century.

FIG. 4, NO. 8. Cooking pot rim of buff-grey sandy fabric with light brown exterior. Everted rim with square, clubbed flange with internal undercutting. Cf. 'Seacourt', *Oxoniensia*, xxvi/xxvii (1961/2), 152, fig. 23, no. 23 for the shape. Late 13th century.

FIG. 4, NO. 9. Cooking pot rim and shoulder of very hard, fine, sandy buff-coloured fabric. Practically upright rim, square and outward folded with the undercutting characteristic of the Brill kilns. Rillings on the shoulder. Cf. E. M. Jope, 'Some Recent Finds of Medieval Pottery', *Oxoniensia*, vii (1942), 74-5, fig. 18. Early 14th century.

FIG. 4, NO. 10. Base of a pot of hard sandy buff-grey ware, very well glazed internally with slightly mottled greenish-yellow glaze. Also glazed on the exterior and under the convex base. Cf. 'Seacourt', *Oxoniensia*, xxvi/xxvii (1961/2), 146, fig. 20, no. 7. The glazing of this piece is interesting since although it is glazed on both sides, from the context of the pit as a whole this piece must date to the first half of the 14th century.

FIG. 4, NO. 7. Skillet handle of smooth sandy ware, with light buff core and pinkish surface. The handle has a single row of stabs on top between flanking grooves and tooling on its underside where it joins the body. There are a few splashes of almost transparent orange glaze. Early 14th century.

It is clear from the evidence of the pottery as described above that this pit must have been in use during the last years of the 13th century or more likely during the first half of the 14th century. The base with glazing on both sides points towards the later date. Nevertheless, as has been shown, there are significant quantities of earlier pottery, most of which must be considered as contamination derived from the garden soil used to fill the pit when it finally fell out of use. This underlines the difficulties of dating pottery from pit-groups by association, since even in this stone-lined pit there was such wide discrepancy between the earliest and the latest sherds.

### *Plant Remains*, by ANDREW BROWN

Investigation of plant remains in the form of fruits and seeds was initiated on the Church Street site by taking preliminary soil samples of 18th- to 19th-

T. G. HASSALL

century date and examining them for their contents. As well-preserved fruits and seeds were found, although not plentiful, it was decided to take soil samples from every metre square and from every definable layer including individual layers within rubbish pits. If layers could not be defined in pits then samples would be taken at every 15 to 30 cm. This procedure was one which would be as comprehensive as possible in finding generally distributed fruits and seeds, bearing in mind that it was likely that they would have a very non-random distribution. However, it was felt that the site, being of reasonably well-aerated nature would not lead to good preservation, and what was preserved might be quite unrepresentative of the general vegetable detritus due to differential decay.

The stone-lined pit contained the following :

<i>Potentilla cf. palustris</i>	Marsh cinquefoil
<i>Epilobium lanceolatum</i>	Spear-leaved willow herb
<i>Carex</i> spp.	Sedges
<i>Sambucus nigra</i>	Elder
<i>Rubus</i> spp.	Blackberry/Raspberry
Carbonized wheat	

*Potentilla palustris* is very indicative of wet conditions as could be the *Carex*, while *Epilobium lanceolatum* is indicative of disturbed habitats.

There is not a clear indication of stratification in this pit with regard to plant remains probably because of :

- (1) Poor preservation and decay of much material.
- (2) The non-random distribution of the original material.
- (3) The small samples (c. 400 c.c.) used for examination.

The general indication is of selective preservation of seeds with very thick walls, or of those that have been carbonized. All cereals that were found were carbonized and this seems to be a general trend in other sites. The elder seeds were either found singly or in great quantity. This might indicate that trees grew in back gardens, dropping occasional fruits, but that fruits were also harvested for making beverages, and then discarded in bulk. Elders are generally indicative of disturbed or highly nitrogenous soils, both of which would be expected here.

*The Bones*, by Professor B. J. MARPLES

Some of the identifications are still tentative. It is noticeable that the bones are broken, often into small fragments. In the whole collection of cow, sheep and pig, only some foot bones and one pig's ulna are intact. Some bones show traces of having been chopped, and the vertebrae are cut up but not

## EXCAVATIONS AT OXFORD 1968: FIRST INTERIM REPORT

neatly into halves as is done today. The general impression is of the making of soup or stew. There are the distal ends of limbs and chopped up vertebrae, but a shortage of proximal long bones, unless smashed into fragments. They might have been bought as bones for stewing, not as meat. Four of the bone fragments showed signs of having been burnt, and three of having been chewed by dogs. There are 81 bone fragments and 14 rib fragments (8 large, 6 small) : HORSE. A single incisor tooth of a horse about 5 years old.

COW. 1 tooth. 13 fragments of vertebrae. Distal end of a humerus and a fragment of one of another individual. 1 proximal end of an immature femur. 1 calcaneum and fragment of another. Half an astragalus. 6 phalanges, one terminal. Many fragments.

SHEEP. 2 jaws. 3 skull fragments. 2 distal ends of humeri. 1 distal end of radius. 2 fragments of femora, one immature. 2 proximal and 2 distal ends of tibiae. 1 calcaneum. 5 distal ends of metapodials, one immature. 3 scapulae. 2 sacra. 9 vertebral fragments. 2 phalanges. Many fragments.

FIG. The number of pig bones seems unnatural, perhaps others were not recognized among the fragments. Maxilla with teeth. 2 loose teeth. 3 ulnas of 3 individuals.

? DEER. 1 tooth. 3 phalanges, one terminal. 3 proximal ends of metapodials.

CAT. A young animal : 1 scapula, 1 humerus, 1 radius, 1 ulna, 2 femora, 1 tibia, 1 calcaneum, 1 vertebra. The distal end of the humerus of another individual.

? DOG. 1 os innominatum. 2 fragments of vertebra. 2 ribs.

GOOSE. Fragments of sternum. Fragment of clavicle. 2 coracoids, apparently of 2 individuals. 1 ulna. 1 metacarpus. 1 terminal phalanx.

FOWL. Fragment of sternum. Fragment of tarsus with spur.

BIRD. Like fowl but seems too small, ? pheasant. 1 coracoid. 1 femur. 2 tibiae. 2 tarsi. 1 humerus. 2 ulnae. 1 carpus. The tarsi seem to belong to 2 individuals. 9 fragments of bird bones possible, including other species.

FISH. A large fish. Fragments of skull and 1 vertebra.

OYSTER SHELLS. 24 upper shells and 28 lower shells.

### *Miscellaneous*

The pit also contained sixty-eight pieces of tile and twelve metal objects, mainly nails. These have not yet been subjected to analysis.

T. G. HASSALL

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PLATE I



A

GENERAL VIEW OF THE EXCAVATIONS ON THE NORTH SIDE OF CHURCH STREET, ST. EBBE'S, LOOKING NORTH. WHITEHALL OCCUPIED THE LEFT-HAND SIDE OF THE SITE AND IS DIVIDED FROM THE *DOMUS* MIRIFELD BY A POST-MEDIEVAL STONE WALL



B

CIRCUS YARD : BASE PIERS AND RESPOND FROM THE GREYFRIARS

Scale = 50 cm. p. 11

*Photos: G. S. Baker*



A  
EARLY 14TH-CENTURY STONE-LINED PIT, FROM THE NORTH  
Scales = 50 cm. and 2 m. pp. 10, 14



B  
STAMPED INITIAL LETTER ON  
14TH-CENTURY JUG  
1 : 1. p. 13



C  
EARLY 12TH-CENTURY STAMFORD  
WARE PITCHER  
1 : 4. p. 12

*Photos: G. S. Baker; M. R. Dudley*