Fig. 1. PLAN OF EXCAVATIONS, 1953-4.
Areas within thin broken line cleared to c. 5 ft.; area within thick broken line cleared to c. 13 ft. 6 in. Stanchion holes and drainage trench shown by stripling. P—pit; W—well.
EXCAVATIONS AT
OAKHAM CASTLE, RUTLAND
1953-54

by
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INTRODUCTION

The excavation described in this report was undertaken on behalf of the Inspectorate of Ancient Monuments, Ministry of Works, while the author was a student at the Institute of Archaeology, London University. It was divided into two parts; in the first instance, a sector of the site was "watched" during March and April 1953 while building operations were in progress. In the summer of 1954, a controlled excavation took place in an attempt to answer certain questions raised in the previous year. The report on this work, which lasted for a total period of eight weeks, is set out below.

I am greatly indebted to many people for their assistance both during the excavation and subsequently in the writing of this report. Acknowledgments are due:

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Acknowledgments to those who assisted in the interpretation of finds are to be found in the appropriate sections.

THE EXCAVATION

Oakham Castle is known to students of Norman domestic architecture principally for its fine aisled hall dated to the last quarter of the twelfth century.\(^1\) This building is the only one now surviving of a substantial group, which according to an inquisition of 1340 also included "four rooms, a chapel, a kitchen, a stable, a barn for hay, a house for prisoners . . . a room for the porter, a drawbridge with iron chains, and the castle contains within its walls two acres of ground".\(^2\) The other buildings now show only as irregularities in the ground to the east of the hall,\(^3\) the whole complex\(^4\) (actually covering about three and a third acres) being within a sub-circular bailey, enclosed by a rampart originally about 25 ft. high, but now denuded to between 9 and 23 ft. in height. Remnants of a stone curtain wall are
Fig. 2. Section (A→B) of moat at head post office site.

to be found occasionally. Outside are substantial traces of a ditch, which has
largely been filled in to the south, and, on the north side, modified to form
fish ponds. On the outside of these ponds lies a rectangular court, also
bounded by a bank and ditch, and once used as a garden.

Mr. Raleigh Radford has now shown⁵ that the earliest castle at Oakham had
a motte at the south-east corner of the bailey, today largely cut away, which
may be dated shortly after 1075, when the owner, Edith, the widowed queen
of Edward the Confessor, died, and the castle reverted to the Crown. In
addition, he argues that “the straight eastern side of the bailey and the plan
of the northern enclosure show that the latter is the earlier and that it forms
part of a rectangular fortification, which certainly included the church
and probably extended south as far as the cross street at the end of the
markets. This can only have been a late Saxon burh”⁶. The latter proposal
lies outside the scope of the present report, but the former, the existence of a
motte and bailey shortly after 1075 (or at any rate by c. 1100), is supported
by the results of the excavation.

The excavation was prompted by the demolition of a number of houses
to the south of the bailey, in the angle between Castle Lane and the Market
Square, and the construction of a new Head Post Office in their stead. This
site was a rough rectangle covering about one third of an acre lying astride
the moat (Fig. 1).

Work in 1953

During March and April 1953, it was levelled, and the moat excavated
to an average depth of 13 ft. 6 in., although occasional “stanchion holes”
were dug to a depth of 18 ft. 3 in.⁷ Most of the clearing was done by a
mechanical digger, which, combined with poor weather and periodic flooding,
had an adverse effect on the work, and made the rescue of finds and the
recording of stratigraphy often difficult, and sometimes hazardous (Pl. IIa).

On the northern edge of the site, the outside face of the rampart was
removed, exposing not only its bottom layers but also the old ground surface
beneath (Pl. IIIb). Here were found a number of sherds of the fine quality
whitish, buff or pink ware with yellow, pink or green glaze, now known as
Stamford ware, together with a few sherds of St. Neot’s ware.⁸ The ground
surface showed no other trace of occupation, apart from a small shallow
pit (pit C).

It was discovered that the moat ran at a slight diagonal across the site,
being 37 ft. 6 in. wide at existing ground level, while in stanchion hole VI,
which lay towards its centre, bedrock was reached at 18 ft. 3 in. Unfortunately, it proved impossible to obtain a satisfactory drawing of the
section revealed; Fig. 2 is a sketch drawing at A-B completed after the
face had been exposed to weathering for some weeks, and it therefore makes
no claim to accuracy (see also Pl. I). At the bottom were two layers of silt
which contained a few sherds of medieval wares, and many fragments of
leather. Above this silting, to a depth of c. 4 ft. below existing ground level,
were numerous layers of marl and clay, mixed with ironstone rubble, which
were difficult to distinguish chronologically, some being little more than
isolated spreads of material. The pottery was mostly coarse ware of the
sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, and these layers probably represent
casual dumping of this period. Apparently, the moat was not finally levelled
in this area until the latter part of the eighteenth century, when houses
were built on it.⁹ The levelling is represented by a layer of clay about 4 ft.
thick, cut into by house footings.
Fig. 3 Plan of excavations, 1954.
Showing areas cleared north and south of wall.
Fill of moat at A—B after laying concrete flooring. The base of the moat runs down diagonally to the bottom of the ladders from each side of the photograph. To north-west.
(a) The moat mechanically excavated, with range poles marking its base. To south.

(b) Rampart as exposed, 1953. Beneath (darker layer), old ground surface. To north.
EXCAVATIONS AT OAKHAM CASTLE, RUTLAND

The most important find from the spoil of the moat, and indeed from the site, was a carved head of Lincolnshire limestone, dating to the third quarter of the thirteenth century (Pls. IV-VI). It represents a young man with carefully modelled features, and may have once graced the exterior of some building within the bailey, if not the hall itself. A detailed account of this interesting piece, kindly contributed by Mr. S. E. Rigold, M.A., is to be found below (p. 36).

Pits and Wells

Ten pits and three wells were discovered, their positions being shown on Fig. 1. The only find of importance from the wells was a sherd of Bellarmine from well 2, and most of the pits were no older than the eighteenth century. There were, however, two pits just to the south of the moat (G and H), which were straight-sided middens, each about 6 ft. wide and 9 ft. 6 in. deep. Both contained small sherds of thirteenth and fourteenth-century wares, as well as later material. Another midden (K) had its supporting timbers still in situ, and yielded sherds of early eighteenth-century Delft ware. The last "pit" of note (J) was actually a ditch, with sloping sides, and a flat base 3 ft. wide, which lay 12 ft. below the existing ground surface. Its filling consisted of black, greasy clay at the bottom, with medieval sherds, and marl and sand above containing post-medieval wares. The purpose of this ditch was obscure, for it did not join the moat, and only some 5 ft. of it was removed during building operations.

Work in 1954

Three tasks were therefore set for the second season's controlled excavation. Firstly, a detailed investigation of the rampart was required; secondly the ground surface beneath demanded searching for traces of earlier occupation. Finally, the opportunity presented itself for a study of the adjoining gateway, to see if the remains of any gatehouse could be found.

The major part of the excavation involved the cutting of a trench C-D across the rampart, in the north-east corner of the site where no major building operations had been allowed to take place (Pl. III). This extended north of the castle wall, and was 22 ft. long, 8 ft. 6 in. at maximum depth, and 3 ft. wide. The make-up was found to consist of layers of marl and clay (2), lying alternately, and rising from north to south, which suggests that the rampart was originally rather higher at this point—Figs. 3 (plan) and 4 (section). The pottery found here consisted of Stamford and St. Neot's wares, and four sherds of early medieval ware. Beneath the rampart was a clean layer of loam (3), the old ground surface, which contained some sherds and bones, but no further trace of occupation.

The stratigraphy of the rampart observed elsewhere on the site in 1953 was therefore confirmed. Moreover, the pottery found has considerable bearing on the argument of Mr. Raleigh Radford quoted above. All the Stamford ware from the rampart and beneath, which must be of one date, lacks the rich green glaze which Mr. Hurst now considers a "developed" feature, found only from c. 1125. The question is, how much earlier can one date the "undeveloped" ware? As is well known, stratified deposits at Thetford carry it back to the late ninth-early tenth century, or possibly slightly earlier, and there it lasts until the late eleventh century at least. At other East Anglian sites it has been found in late Saxon contexts, but its main centre is the East Midlands, where, as Mr. Dunning has shown, it
Fig. 4. Section (C–D) of rampart, 1954

1. Topsoil
2. Post-medieval disturbance of wall
3. Make-up of rampart (yellow clay and mud)
4. Old ground surface (brown soil)
5. Not excavated
was probably made, but, on the other hand, has never yet been found in a pre-Conquest context. As shown below (p. 25), the Stamford ware from the rampart compares closely with that from Alstoe Mount, dated by Mr. Dunning to the early twelfth century.10 There were, also, four sherds of medieval ware, to support this, though these need have little significance. A date nearer to 1150 than 1100 for the construction of the rampart might therefore be suggested. On the other hand, Stamford ware could, a priori, be earlier at both Oakham and Alstoe Mount, while at other sites associations of Saxo-Norman and medieval ware as early as the eleventh century are known.11 Finally, as argued below, some features of the St. Neot’s ware suggest that here too an eleventh rather than twelfth-century date is to be preferred. This compares favourably with the date of the bailey (1075-1100) suggested independently by Mr. Ralegh Radford, and as such provides a dated group of Saxo-Norman wares for the East Midland area.

Considerable clearing took place at each end of section C-D (Fig. 3). To the south, a rectangle 14 ft. by 12 ft. was excavated, on a house site which had disturbed the stratigraphy of the rampart. A number of pits and depressions were found here containing post-medieval wares, one of which (1c) was useful for its association of pottery and clay pipes (see pp. 29 and 33-35). To the north, within the Castle grounds, stripping took place in an area 21 ft. 6 in. by 17 ft. On the rampart was a remnant of curtain wall built up with brick. As it approached the gateway from the west, and 9 ft. from it, the wall turned sharply before joining the gateway itself. At this point, a drystone wall of limestone, five courses high, was discovered, running parallel to the present Castle drive, and abutting on to the curtain wall. It was c. 3 ft. thick and 11 ft. long, and was roughly faced with tooled limestone blocks. Between two of these was found a fragment of clay pipe, a Chester type dated c. 1700. This appears to have been a post-medieval revetment wall to the entrance.

This wall, however, had been built over an earlier structure, which had been ruined in the process. When the limestone blocks were removed, a partly preserved oven was revealed, standing directly on the rampart (Pl. IIIb).12 This was strongly made of limestone slabs, with a floor arranged in herring-bone fashion, and when found was semi-circular in shape, its walls standing 2 ft. 1½ in. high, and its base 3 ft. 9 in. wide. Presumably it was once facing inwards, in the external wall of a building, and may be of late medieval or sixteenth-century date. No wall footings were found to the east of the oven, where it is likely that a building would have been situated, but here unfortunately there had been much disturbance. In a layer of rubble piled against the lower courses of the revetment wall, there were medieval and later sherds and tiles and Colleyweston slates, evidence of the levelling which swept away the building to which the oven belonged. Any footings that remain must be under the Castle drive, where it was impossible to excavate. Mr. Ralegh Radford considers that the curtain and gateway date from the same time as the great hall, i.e. 1175-1200.13 If there was any building inside the gate, of which the oven formed a part, it might have been “a room for the porter”, as recorded in 1340.

THE FINDS

In the following catalogue, layer numbers of stratified finds from the 1954 excavation are shown within a circle. All the material has been deposited at the Oakham School Museum.
Fig. 5. Saxo-Norman Pottery—Stamford Ware.
SAXO-NORMAN POTTERY

(a) Stamford Ware

A total of 377 sherds were found, of which most came from the rampart or below. A number were unstratified, and a few sherds were discovered in an isolated pocket of the old ground surface between stanchion holes I and II (Fig. 1). There were 10 rims of cooking-pots, of which one was decorated with rouletting; 10 of bowls (two decorated), and at least 15 of pitchers. 131 sherds were glazed, a rather higher proportion than at Alstoe Mount. Glaze was found on pitchers and bowls. Most of the sherds were of a distinctive buff colour, thin in texture, but occasionally (e.g. where the body of the vessel thickened towards the base) with a grey-black core. Surfaces were sometimes grey or red. Glaze varied in colour from green to yellow (or yellow-brown) and pink, sometimes on one sherd. Six sherds had narrow incised grooves on the outside. Base sherds were of the normal sagging type, often showing the characteristic knife trimming. In form and fabric the Stamford ware at Oakham compared very closely with that from Alstoe Mount, a motte and bailey castle a few miles to the north of Oakham, excavated and fully published by Mr. G. C. Dunning. An extended discussion here is therefore unnecessary.

Cooking-Pots and Bowls

Fig. 5.1. Everted rim of globular cooking-pot, with rouletted decoration on outside. Buff ware, with grey core. From rampart (1953).

Fig. 5.2. Similar rim. Buff ware, with reddish surface. From old ground surface (1953).

Fig. 5.3. Similar rim. Grey ware, smoothed surface. From rampart (1953).

Six other examples (not illustrated) with similar fabric and rims; five can be paralleled at Alstoe Mount, one is an indeterminate fragment.

Fig. 5.4. Cooking-pot, with everted and moulded rim, blackened externally. From base of rampart (1953).

Fig. 5.5. Rim of flanged bowl. Buff ware, with reddish surface, and thin skin of yellow glaze on top of rim. From base of rampart (1953).

Fig. 5.6. Rim of flanged bowl, with angular profile. Grey-buff ware, with reddish surface, and yellow to green glaze. Unstratified.

Fig. 5.7. Rim of flanged bowl, with downbent flange, and rows of squares stamped on top. Buff ware, with grey surface. From old ground surface (1953).

Fig. 5.8. Small fragment of rim of flanged bowl, with downbent flange. Buff ware, with grey core, and stamped rows of squares on top. Unstratified.

There were four other fragmentary examples of flanged bowls; all buff ware, with reddish surface. Two—one from (2c), one from (3)—are similar to No. 5; two—one from (5), one from old ground surface (1953)—are like No. 8.

Fig. 5.9. Rim of small bowl, diameter 5-2 in., similar to an example from Alstoe Mount. Green glaze, thicker than usual. From bottom layer of rampart (1953).

A fragment of a similar bowl, in very thin ware, with a spot of glaze on the inside, was found in the same layer.

Fig. 5.10. Rim of Conical cup, bevelled internally. Hard grey ware, and blackened surface. Unstratified.

Pitchers and Jugs

The larger rim-fragments of these vessels are illustrated in Fig. 5, 11-15. Rims are usually moulded.

Fig. 5.11. Rim of pitcher. Buff ware with blackened surface. From (3).

Fig. 5.12. Rim of pitcher, much worn. Creamy ware, grooved at neck, with a remnant of glaze on the outside. From (2d).

Fig. 5.13. Rim of pitcher or jug. The ware is creamy, almost white, with a very smooth surface. From (2d).

Fig. 5.14. Rim of pitcher or jar. Greyish ware, with blackened surface inside and out. The profile is similar to that of jars from Leicester, where the type was first recognised. From base of rampart (1953). A similar, abraded example was found unstratified.

Fig. 5.15. Rim of pitcher. Creamy white ware, with smooth reddish surface, and remnants of yellow glaze externally. From (3).

Although similar in size to one of the jars from Leicester (No. 6; 7-8 in. compared to 7-2 in.), the rim is analogous to that of a jug with pinched-out lip from South Bond Street, Leicester. It is also worth noting that a glazed sherd from
the bottom of the rampart (1953), of grey fabric, had an irregular grooved decoration, as found on this jug, and on a sherd from Alstoe Mount. Other fragmentary rims, probably of pitchers, came from layer (3) (seven examples); base of rampart (one example); and between stanchion holes I and II (one example).

There were nine fragments of strap handles, mostly from the rampart.

Fig. 5, 17, an unstratified example, shows the normal type from a pitcher.

Fig. 5, 16, an unstratified example, shows the normal type from a pitcher.

Fig. 5, 17, also unstratified, is smaller and thicker, while Fig. 5, 18, from the base of the rampart (1953), has a row of thumb impressions on each side. There was one sherd only of a “developed” Stamford ware jug, a small fragment of a decorated handle, in a fine buff fabric, and a rich green glaze (Fig. 5, 19). This was found well away from the rampart, in the west drainage trench, associated with post-medieval material, and thus has no bearing on the date of the other Stamford sherds.

(b) St. Neot’s Ware

20 sherds were discovered, in most cases within the rampart or beneath it. This is under 5% of the total of Stamford ware, a satisfactory proportion in view of the distribution of the two types. The ware is shelly and wheel-thrown, with a grey or black core, and often but not always a red to purple surface, which has a characteristic soapy feel.

Of eight rims, six were decorated; one of the four bases was footed, and the remainder of the normal sagging type.

Fig. 6, 1 and 2. Cooking-pots with everted rims. No. 1 has a finger-impressed decoration on the external moulding. Both unstratified.

Fig. 6, 3. Cooking-pot with rolled rim, and regular impressed trellis decoration on top. From bottom of rampart (1953).

Fig. 6, 4 and 5. Cooking-pots with strongly everted rim squared outside and hollowed inside. Slight finger impressions on outside of rim. No. 4 from (2d) of rampart; No. 5 unstratified.

Fig. 6, 6. Bowl with hammer-headed rim. Finger-impressed decoration on top, and shallow wavy line on body. From (2b) of rampart.

Fig. 6, 7. Bowl with everted rim, beaded inside. Trellis pattern on top. Thin band of horizontal lines on outside of body. Unstratified near rampart (1953). A small slightly rolled-over rim fragment, from a shallow bowl, was found on the old ground surface beneath the rampart (1953).

As a firm sequence of this ware is at present lacking, it would be rash to attempt any conclusive dating for this group on typological grounds. However, in view of the discussion above (p. 23), which favours a date 1075-1100 for the construction of the rampart, it is interesting to notice that the group has several characteristics supporting this conclusion. Thus, apart from No. 4, the cooking-pots are small or intermediate in size, comparable to several from Cambridge. The hammer-headed bowl, No. 6, recalls a group from Paxton dated to just before the Conquest. Rolled-over rims have been found as far north as Thurgarton (in a possible eleventh century context) as well as at Oakham and St. Neot’s.

OTHER WARES FROM SAXO-NORMAN LAYERS

Roman
One small sherd of Castor ware, from old ground surface.
One sherd of a hard grey ware, from same layer.

Late eleventh or early twelfth century “Medieval” ware
Four sherds of a sandy, gritty ware, with grey core, and orange to red surface, from (2c) and (2d) of the rampart. One of these sherds had a small fragment of iron attached to it. Mr. Dunning, who kindly identified these sherd for me, says that a similar ware was found at Alstoe Mount.
Fig. 6. Saxon-Norman Pottery—St. Neot’s Ware.
MEDIEVAL WARES

There was a disappointingly small amount of medieval pottery discovered on the site, and little requires specific comment. A number of sherds of late medieval grey ware were found between 11 and 13 ft. in the moat. One example, a cooking-pot in a sandy, hard grey fabric, with sharply everted rim, is illustrated (Fig. 7, 1). From here, too, came pieces of thirteenth-century jugs and a sherd of grey ware, with a "corky" fabric, red-buff surface and traces of olive-green glaze. It has a rough criss-cross, stamped decoration, and is of thirteenth-century date (Fig. 7, 2). Of more significance, however, is a rim-sherd of a jug found on bedrock in stanchion hole VI, associated with a leather boot (see below p. 31). The ware is buff in colour and rather sandy, and may perhaps be dated to the early fourteenth century (Fig. 7, 3).

Pits G, H and J were apparently of medieval date. In their upper levels, sherds of Tudor green-glaze often occurred, but below, usually in greasy midden deposits, were fragments of thirteenth and fourteenth century jugs. The ware of the latter is normally grey with a reddish surface; glaze is green (of several shades) or reddish-brown. A rim fragment from pit J is illustrated (Fig. 7, 4), the glaze being apple green.

POST-MEDIEVAL FINE WARES

(a) **Tin glazed ware—English Delft**

Three sherds of Lambeth ware, from pit K, early eighteenth century:
1. A deep dish, diameter 8·75 in. Internal decoration of a lakeside scene with trees and a windmill in blue.
2. A small dish, badly stained with an internal floral decoration on the base, and around the rim a pattern of alternate swags and diamonds.
3. A deep dish, diameter 8·7 in.

(b) **Slip ware**

Two small sherds of brown glazed ware, with design in yellow slip. From (1) of rampart.

(c) **Staffordshire wares**

2. Two rim sherds of brown mottled glazed ware, one ornamented with a double row of dots. Unstratified.

(d) **Rhenish Stoneware—Siegburg**

A frilled base of grey stoneware, with brown glaze. From moat associated with fragments of tygs. Sixteenth century.
(a) Section across rampart, 1954. To north-west.

(b) Rampart north of Castle wall, showing oven, after removal of retaining wall to entrance. To west.
EXCAVATIONS AT OAKHAM CASTLE, RUTLAND

(e) Rhenish Stoneware—Frechen
One rim sherd from well 2, with part of “Bellarmine” mask, which appears to
be of Holmes’ type III,33 but only the upper part of the face survives.

(f) Westerwald
Rim, neck and shoulder of grey stoneware, with typical maroon and blue

(g) English Stoneware—Nottingham
Typical sherds of at least 15 vessels from various parts of the site, all loose.

POST-MEDIEVAL COARSE WARES

(a) “Tudor” Coarse Ware
This ware actually lasts well into the seventeenth century34 (and later for
chamber pots), alongside the brown-glazed red wares. The ware is buff, with a green
glaze. One rim of bowl, with thin wall, pinched into lobes (see B. Rackham, Medieval

(b) Sixteenth and Seventeenth Century Coarse Wares
A large number of sherds of these wares was collected, but stratified deposits
were few, and it is a matter of regret that little can usefully be contributed here
to the study of these neglected pottery-types. Sherds were found in the upper
layers of the moat, in the top of Pit H, in layer (1c) of the rampart associated with
clay pipes dated 1640-80, and in a trench on the western edge of the site (Fig. 1).
It is possible, however, to draw some general conclusions from these assemblages
which seem equally applicable to the material as a whole.

There were three main wares:

(1) Dark red to purple ware, with grey to purple core and treacle-brown to
brown-green glaze, the so-called “sixteenth century transitional coarse
ware”,35

(2) Brick red (occasionally buff) ware, with yellow-brown or treacle-brown
glaze.

(3) Buff ware with yellow glaze.

Three types of pottery ware usually found in varying degrees in each group;
cooking vessels (or storage jars), bowls and dishes.

Group 1

This group has definite medieval antecedents, for two fragments of strap
handles, in the same ware, were found at c. 12 ft., in the moat, and three unstratified
cooking-pots were certainly medieval in type (Fig. 8, 1). Another cooking-pot,
however, has a profile similar to one from Norwich36 with internal bevel and
external cordon.
Storage jars were of two forms:

(a) Biconical with flanged or rolled, often undercut rim, and footed base37 (a
common type);

(b) Globular, with upright rim and collar (Fig. 8, 2). “A handled vessel from
the top of pit H had a squared-off rim and a splash of green-brown glaze
on top (Fig. 8, 3). One bowl, the only example found in this ware, had
an everted, hollowed rim, as at Norwich.”38

Group 2

The forms in this group were often similar to those of Group 1. Thus the
biconical storage jar was again very common (though some were straight-sided),
while the globular jar also occurred, but in a more gritty fabric than is usual in this
group. There were other forms, however, e.g. with upright neck and marked
internal bevel on the rim from layer (1c) (Fig. 8, 4), or with everted, hollowed rim
(Fig. 8, 5). The bowls had either a splayed and hollowed or rolled rim, or were
heavily flanged (Fig. 8, 6), while the only dish had a simple squared-off rim. Fragments
of a skillet-handle, fish-dish and pipkin were also found.
**Group 3**

With the exception of one rim and one footed base of storage jars, this group comprised dishes only. The rims were either flanged or rolled as often in Group 2, or slightly hollowed, as in one example from layer (1c) (Fig. 8, 7).
It will be seen that this material compares very broadly with that from Norwich, for the Oakham wares also show that the heavy rolled or flanged rim was normal on cooking-pots or storage jars, while bowls and dishes usually had splayed everted rims. Rim forms, however, show only a general similarity, with few close parallels (such as the biconical storage jar). Mr. A. H. Oswald considers that some of the vessels in Group 1 do compare with fifteenth-century material from sites in the City of London now in the Guildhall Museum, and this group does appear to be in any case the earliest of the three. It may last, however, well into the seventeenth century, for it was often found with Groups 2 and 3, in one case (in the west drainage trench), in a sealed layer.

In layer (rc), wares of Groups 2 and 3 were closely associated with pipes dated 1640-80, although it should be noted that a part of this layer had been slightly disturbed by building operations. This was unfortunately the only close dating evidence available for any of the post-medieval pottery, there being no satisfactory associations in layers (1) or (1b) of the rampart.

Tygs

This well-known form comprised the largest single group of post-medieval coarse pottery from the site, sherds from at least 35 vessels—mostly bases—being recovered. No rims were found. Most of the sherds came from a layer at 7 ft. in the moat (Fig. 2). The ware is bright red, grey, or purple, with a manganese glaze, in colour brown, purple or black. There is also a great variation in shape and size. Some of the vessels are tall and cylindrical, but most are squat and globular. One, two or three handles are known. In size, base diameters range from 2 in. to 3·6 in., but no adequate estimation of height can be made. A fine heavy example is illustrated (Fig. 8, 8).

LEATHER OBJECTS

Many fragments of leather, mostly scraps with many knife cuts, came from three different levels of the moat, preserved (in some cases well preserved) in wet or waterlogged layers of silt or clay. These were kept in water for the duration of the excavation, then allowed to dry out slowly, and finally cleaned and treated by Mr. L. Bick and his staff at the Ancient Monuments Laboratory, Ministry of Works, to whom my thanks are due for their excellent work.

The find-spots of the more important fragments were fairly well recorded, for they were sufficiently large and distinctive to excite the interest of the workmen, and on one occasion to stop the mechanical excavator.

Four uppers (two right, two left), one with its sole beneath it, were found in the layer of silt between 13 ft. 6 in. and 18 ft. 3 in. The illustrated specimen (Fig. 9, 1) was lying almost on bed-rock in stanchion hole VI (see Fig. 1) and was associated with a rim sherd of a jug (Fig. 7, 3), dated to the early fourteenth century, i.e. about the same time as the shoe with pointed toe came into general use. As the drawing shows, this upper was cut in one piece from the bend, as probably were the other three. The instep was slit in an obtuse angle, the heel turned, and the upper sewn to itself on the inside of the foot. No stitching remains.

In these examples, there are usually two or three pairs of pierced lace-holes on the inside, and one (the lower) on the outside of the foot. The upper one or two outside pairs, however, are slit, the reason for this being apparent, after cleaning, in one example only. A reconstruction of the method of lacing is shown in Fig. 9, 2. In this case, the laces were grouped in three pairs; the lower pair was made in a similar way to examples from Norwich, described by Mr. J. W. Anstee. A thin strip of leather was cut along its length nearly to one end. Each side was rolled to form a lace, and both then threaded through the two pierced holes, the uncut end forming an effective stop. Only this end-fragment survives in our example, but the creases of the holes on the other side of the boot suggest that this pair was once diagonally laced.

The upper pairs of laces, however, were not arranged in the same way. A lace of rectangular section was doubled and passed through a large slit on the outside flap, the loop being secured by an ornate knot, and perhaps a toggle. The ends were tied on the inside of the boot, underneath the inside flap.
Fig. 9. Leather Objects.
EXCAVATIONS AT OAKHAM CASTLE, RUTLAND

Other specimens from this layer included:

(a) Complete sharply pointed left sole, with narrow heel, slightly broken on right-hand side (Fig. 9, 3). Length 9.3 in., width across foot 2.7 in., width across heel 1.4 in.
(b) Pointed right sole (child's). Length 6.1 in., width across foot 2.1 in., width across heel 1.1 in.
(c) Square-ended left sole, torn on left-hand side (Fig. 9, 4). Length 7.75 in., width across foot 2.75 in., width across heel 1.5 in. A similar specimen was also found in an unstratified layer.
(d) Fragmentary sole, maximum length 4.7 in., maximum width 3.25 in., thickness 0.4 in. This interesting fragment is composed of at least six pieces, which are held together by leather studs (Fig. 9, 5). Apparently waste fragments were saved to thicken the sole in this way.
(e) Right rear upper of a boot (Fig. 9, 6). At the top is a punched decoration arranged in three rows; firstly, the edge is indented, below this is an irregular row of small star-shaped incisions, while at the bottom is a row of larger trefoil-shaped holes. This specimen has been drawn from the inside to show the diagonal line of stitching where a heel-stiffener was attached.

More leather fragments came from a layer of midden material at 8 ft., just below a layer which yielded a number of tyn fragments. Aside from a large number of scraps, these consisted only of soles, of which two are illustrated (Fig. 9, 7 and 8). Both are wide-toed and well smoothed on the inside.

The final piece of note is a large front upper brought up by the grab from about 12 ft., a medieval level (Fig. 9, 9). It has a pointed toe, and is badly torn on the right side. The leather is thick and supple.

This specimen has six buckle holes between 1.5 in. and 2 in. from the inner edge. The main point of interest, however, lies in the method of fastening, which was by means of a simple strap and metal buckle. The latter is held in place by a strip of leather, the ends of which are threaded through each other on the underside of the specimen. Continual use of the strap has creased the centre of the leather.

METAL OBJECTS

A few objects were found at about 13 ft. in the moat, the most important being:

Fig. 10, 1. Knife, surviving portion 7 in. long, stamped W (?).42
Fig. 10, 2. Knife, surviving portion 5 in. long, stamped L (?). The concave end suggests that this is a currier's knife, used for working leather after tanning.43
Knife (not illustrated), surviving portion 3½ in. long (blade ⅔ in.).
A small fragment of iron was found attached to a sherd, from (2c) of the rampart.

THE CLAY PIPES

A. H. Oswald, M.A., F.S.A., F.M.A.

As can be seen from the attached table, the pipes all came from the top layers of the rampart, or were found unstratified in 1953. The majority of them conformed to the well-known types,44 and few required detailed comment. As a whole, the pipes show mainly London and East Anglian influence, with probably only three ascribable to Bristol, and perhaps one to Broseley or the Potteries area.

Fig. 10, 3. Type 4a. Marked B C on base, single-stroke roulette on rim.
Duplicates: British Museum, and from Bankside, London (Guildhall Museum),
Fig. 10, 4. Same type. Marked BC on base, different dye, but similar roulette. Duplicates: Bankside, and Belfast. Similar marks at Guildhall Museum, and Hughes Collection, British Museum. Probably a London maker (not known).
Fig. 10, 5. Same type, also marked BC, but different dye, and wedge-shaped roulette.
Fig. 10, 6. Type 4d. Similar Nottingham. Similar embossed tree, Derby and Hanley. Identical, Leicester.
One example of 4c/6a has an incised T on the base, and is probably a Bristol type. Of the later types, one bowl, type 11b, had a decoration of oak leaves, and another, type 9b/11a, with a scroll decoration, was made by James Tailor of Yarmouth (1844-53). A useful piece of dating evidence for the final stage of the retaining wall was a fragment of decorated stem, of Chester type, dated c. 1700, which was found within it.
Fig. 10. Metal Objects, Clay Pipes, Stone, Flint, and Bone Objects.
EXCAVATIONS AT OAKHAM CASTLE, RUTLAND

LOCATION OF CLAY PIPES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>(1)</th>
<th>(1b)</th>
<th>(1c)</th>
<th>Loose</th>
<th>Wall</th>
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<tr>
<td>2</td>
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<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>—</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4a</td>
<td>1600-40</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>—</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4c</td>
<td>1630-50</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>1</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>4d</td>
<td>1640-70</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>*1</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>—</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4c/6a</td>
<td>1650-70</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>I</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>—</td>
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<tr>
<td>6a/b</td>
<td>1660-80</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>I</td>
<td>—</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>6b/7a</td>
<td>1660-90</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
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<td>I</td>
<td>—</td>
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<td>7a</td>
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<td>I</td>
<td>—</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9a</td>
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<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>I</td>
<td>—</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chester</td>
<td>c. 1700</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>I (stem)</td>
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<tr>
<td>9b/11a</td>
<td>c. 1750-1800</td>
<td>*1</td>
<td>—</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>11b</td>
<td>1780-1840</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>I</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>11a</td>
<td>1820-50</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>I</td>
<td>—</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* = variant

STONE AND FLINT

The character of worked stones found in the course of excavation has been discussed above. Other stone objects were:

1. Two whetstones, one considerably used (Fig. 10, 7), both of micaschist. The illustrated example was discovered in the debris layer abutting on the entrance retaining wall. The other, a fragment, came from an unstratified layer of the moat.

2. Numerous pieces of Colleyweston slates, from same layer as stratified whetstone. By a fortunate coincidence, similar slates were being laid on the roof of the new Post Office when these were discovered. The two series were almost identical, although the excavated ones were rather thicker (up to 0.7 in.), but this may have no significance. Slates from this area have been used since Roman times.

A total of 17 pieces of flint were discovered both in the rampart and on the old ground surface beneath. Of these, six were fragments of blades or flakes, two of which are illustrated. One of two nodules found may have been used as a rough end scraper, but most of the pieces were naturally fractured.

BONE OBJECT

An awl, 4.9 in. long, was found loose in the moat. It is perforated at the upper end, and has been resharpened (Fig. 10, 10).

THE ANIMAL BONES

Although considerable quantities of bones were found in the moat, none of them were datable to stratified deposits. Few bones were found in 1954, a total of thirty fragments only, all either in the rampart or on the old ground surface beneath it, and most of these were small and insignificant. The following is a list of the most important pieces:

Rampart (2c): Horn core of young ox (in fragments); phalanx of sheep.
Rampart (1953): Canine of boar (fragments); antler of roe deer, two to three years old.
Old ground surface (3): Scapula (right) of ox; scapula (left), humerus (right), tibia (fragment) and carpal (fragment), with knife cuts, of sheep; mandible of dog.

Two complete dog skeletons were found, both buried into the top of the rampart and well dated to the nineteenth century.
THE STONE HEAD
S. E. Rigold, M.A.

This is a head of Oölite, about half life-size, broken off at the top of the neck. Both head and what remains of the neck are fully modelled in the round. The underpinning is long, which suggests that the original position was upright, or even raised. At the back of the head is attached the stump of a narrow, horizontal rib. The head was definitely neither a hood-mould terminal, nor a corbel, but possibly part of an almost free-standing figure. There is no trace of colouring nor of a gesso surface, but a slightly greater weathering or decomposition on the upper surface—not enough to suggest prolonged exposure. The head represents a fairly young, clean-shaven male, the hair is not tousured but falls just below the ear-lobes, in the fashion of the early and middle thirteenth century. There are no attributes of rank or office.

The preservation is generally good, allowing for the coarse texture of the stone. The nose shows ancient mutilation and there are recent bruises on chin and cheeks. The modelling is good, particularly in the planes of the cheeks, and the features are individual. The face is squarish with a firm chin, the mouth small and tense, and the forehead tapering. The treatment is serious and in no sense grotesque. It is hard to find any close parallels in local work (e.g. after a careful examination of relevant photographs in the N.B.R.) The obvious comparison is with existing heads in the Castle Hall, and here there are certain tantalising resemblances and divergencies. The relevant and more conventionalised features of the head are these: the hair is parted into fairly regular rib-like locks, radiating from the crown; the eyes are bulging and the epicantic folds fall unbrokenly from the eyebrows to the eyelids; the ears are stylised and the earholes deeply drilled. All these features are archaic—in the Romanesque tradition. But the smile and the deep drilling round the ends of the mouth as well as the sensitive gradation of the cheeks suggest the middle or third quarter of the thirteenth century—one might compare some details of Henry III’s work at Westminster. This impression is shared by several medievalists I have consulted.

With these details in mind, it is necessary to compare the existing incidental sculpture in the Castle Hall. This comprises:

(a) the paired heads on the responds of the arcades;
(b) the six musicians seated on the capitals of the “nave”;
(c) the heads attached to square blocks which formerly served as corbels for the aisle roofs.

Of these (a), (b) and the north aisle corbels of (c) are all strongly Romanesque in manner. The corbel-heads in the south aisle are much more Gothic, perhaps the work of a younger man, but hardly akin to the head in question. Certain of the mannerisms in this head, the bulging eyes and the treatment of the ears, are not unlike those in the paired heads (a)—the pair on the north-east respond even include one with some suggestion of drilling at the corners of the mouth, but on any account the head would look strangely advanced in this company. The musical figures, reading from the east, are: north arcade—(i) a goat playing a rebeck, (ii) a man (with pipes?), and (iii) a man with a tromba marina; south arcade—(i) a lion with a harp, (ii) a man with a dulcimer, (iii) a man with a very advanced three-stringed viol. All the heads are gone, but these were attached by short ribs similar to that on the head in question. The only figure where it could possibly have fitted is the western one (iii) of the north arcade. Here, though the fit is not perfect, it is by no means impossible, allowing for further chipping. The size of the head is about right, but the neck would be rather long. The chief objection remains one of style—the drapery on all the human musicians is very stylised and seems archaic compared with the advanced head, but such anomalies are not unparalleled in late Romanesque sculpture. It is unlikely that the destroyed east end would have had a free capital for similar figures. In any case, though we must be prepared to accept a date after 1200 for the Hall, in spite of the archaism of some of the sculpture, a date as late as the 1250s or 1260s is out of the question, and if the head belongs to the building the advanced features must be fortuitous.
Limestone head from moat.
Limestone head from moat.
Limestone head from moat.
34. See a valuable note by Mr. I. Noel-Hume in *Norfolk Archaeology*, loc. cit., 62-4.
35. I have included this ware in this section, rather than treat it separately, as it was normally associated with the other two wares.
36. *Ibid.*, Fig. 18, 4.
37. *Ibid.*, 62, and Fig. 21, 8.
38. *Ibid.*, Fig. 21, 1 (in red ware, as Group 2).
39. *Ibid.*, 76-82. It also supports the view there expressed that this pottery “may fall into local groups which to a large extent exclude each other”.
41. Four similar unused specimens, 8.5 in. long, were found unstratified.
45. For an important discussion on these subjects, see G. C. Dunning, *Jewry Wall*, 230-32, and Figs. 64-5.
47. For an account of flint implements found in Rutland, see *V.C.H.*, i. 82-4.
48. Acknowledgement is made to Mr. L. Bilton, M.Sc., F.I.S., F.R.E.S., Keeper of the Department of Natural History, Birmingham Museum and Art Gallery, for advice on this section.

It should be added that this Report was prepared in 1955, but its publication has been unavoidably delayed.