



Rutland Local History & Record Society
Occasional Publication No 11

**JOHN BARBER'S
OAKHAM CASTLE
and its archaeology**



Compiled and edited by
Elaine Jones and Robert Ovens

The Rutland Local History & Record Society

Registered Charity No 700273

The Rutland Local History & Record Society originated in the 1930s. Its main aims are to promote all aspects of the history and archaeology of the historic county of Rutland and its immediate area. It does this by holding regular meetings and lectures (arranged jointly with the Friends of the Rutland County Museum & Oakham Castle), and special events. These include an annual full-day meeting in a Rutland village, history walks and visits to other places of interest. It has a small library of local history material, housed at the Rutland County Museum in Oakham, which complements the holdings of the museum and can be consulted by arrangement.

The Society also monitors local planning applications, commenting on them when appropriate, and sponsors the annual George Phillips and Tony Traylen Awards for new-build or restoration projects which make the best contribution to the historic environment of the county.

The Society also has a significant publication programme, ranging from its annual journal, the *Rutland Record*, to substantial volumes such as *The Heritage of Rutland Water*, the culmination of a three-year project supported by a Heritage Lottery Fund grant. Further information about the Society's publications can be found on its website, and they can be ordered either direct from the Society or on-line via www.genfair.co.uk. They are also stocked at the Rutland County Museum and at local bookshops.

Membership is concentrated in Rutland and the immediate area, but also includes people from across the UK and abroad who have an interest in the county and its history or archaeology. Institutional members include academic libraries in Britain, Australia and the USA.

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Website: www.rutlandhistory.org.

Address: Rutland County Museum, Catmose Street, Oakham, Rutland, LE15 6HW, UK.

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AND ITS ARCHAEOLOGY

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Oakham 2014



*Fig. 1. John Barber inspecting his Trench 3 at Oakham Castle in 1956
(JL Barber Archive, Rutland County Museum).*

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*Fig. 2. John Lewis Barber, MA, FSA (1914-1997) in 1996
(Oakham School Archives).*

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Fig. 3. The carved finials at the top of the gables at either end of Oakham Castle Great Hall. The finial above the west gable (left) is a centaur whose bow has broken away. The east finial is a carving of Samson and the lion (Nick Hill).

Contents

Oakham Castle Time Line	6
Introduction and Obituary	7
John Lewis Barber, MA, FSA – His Memoir ¹	9
Oakham Castle: Introduction	11
Inquisition of 1340: Para 1; Para 2;	11
Para 3; Para 4: ‘There is at Oakham a castle well walled...’	12
Para 5: ‘One hall’	18
(a) The exterior	19
(b) The interior	21
1. The roof	21
2. The floor	22
3. The windows	22
4. The west wall	23
5. The east wall	23
6. The columns	24
7. Loose masonry within the hall	25
8. The horseshoes	25
Para 6: ‘Four chambers’	26
Para 7: ‘One kitchen’	28
1. Trench No 1	28
2. Trench No 2	31
3. Trench No 3	32
Para 8: ‘Two stables and one grange for hay’	33
Para 9: ‘One house for prisoners’ and ‘One chamber for the porter’	33
Para 10: ‘Drawbridge with iron chains’	35
Para 11: Additional notes on the bailey	35
Para 12: Bibliography [<i>see</i> p37, References and Further Reading – <i>Eds</i>]	35
Para 13: Postscript	35
Para 14: Jetton	36
Further thoughts	36
References and Further Reading	37
Acknowledgements	38
Appendix A. <i>The Pottery from John Barber’s Excavation</i> , by Deborah Sawday	39
Appendix B. <i>Excavations at Oakham Castle, Rutland, 1953-54</i> , by P W Gathercole Peter Gathercole	49 65
Appendix C. <i>Oakham Castle</i> , by C A R Radford	66
Appendix D. Oakham Castle Excavation Reports	68
Appendix E. The Inquisition of 1340	70
Index	71

¹ The arrangement of the memoir into paragraphs and subsections is JLB’s own.

Oakham Castle Time Line

Based on T H McK Clough, *Oakham Castle: A Guide and History* (4th edition, Rutland County Council, 2008)

Circa 1075	The motte and bailey is constructed.
Circa 1180	The Great Hall is built by Walkelin de Ferrers.
1206	King John visits Oakham.
1219-1258	Henry III visits Oakham at least seven times.
1229	The first recorded assize.
13th century	A gateway and drawbridge and a stone curtain wall are built against the existing earthworks.
1264	The Great Hall is damaged by fire in the Barons' War during Richard Earl of Cornwall's tenure of Oakham.
1300	A garden, fishponds, windmill, water-mill, and deer parks are noted in the inquisition post mortem following the death of Richard Earl of Cornwall.
1307	Edward II issues a general order to fortify all castles, including Oakham. The curtain wall of the inner bailey was probably completed before this date but possibly then improved.
1323	Edward II visits Oakham.
1340	Inquisition – <i>At Oakham there is a certain castle, well walled, and in that castle are a hall, four rooms, a chapel, a kitchen, two stables, a barn for hay, a house for prisoners – the county gaol, a room for the gate-keeper, and a drawbridge with iron chains. The castle contains within its wall an estimated two acres of ground. The same is called the manor of Oakham. Outside the castle is a garden, and fish ponds and a moat.</i>
1361	Inquisition – <i>...worth nothing per annum ... but in need of repair</i> (the Great Hall is now nearly 200 years old and the country is suffering plague, famine, and loss of man-power).
1373	William Flore repairs houses, walls and buildings in the manor.
1373-75	The Great Chapel and the King's two great chambers are pargeted and whitewashed. A chimney is inserted in the chamber by the gate. In the following year a new chapel and chamber are built, with a passageway connecting the chapel to the hall. It has stone walls, a tiled roof, and three glazed windows.
1375	Edward III's last visit to Oakham.
1378	Richard II visits Oakham.
1380	Summer grazing in the small park is granted to William Flore.
1380	Richard II visits: repairs are made to doors, walls and windows, a chimney is made for the King's chamber and a new roasting house is built.
1382	Timber, tiles and slates purchased for repairs at Oakham and Rockingham castles.
1385	5000 Collyweston slates sent to Oakham.
1388	Inquisition – the buildings are in a poor state, suffering from neglect and lack of maintenance.
1388-90	Minor repairs are carried out. Late medieval stock is grazing within the bailey.
1521	Inquisition following the execution of the Duke of Buckingham – <i>there is an old castle, all ruinous...the hall is in the best state of repair, and old fashioned...but reasonable and roofed for the courts held there.</i> Everything else is probably in a state of collapse, never to be resurrected. By the early 16th century the hall probably ceased to be used for any domestic purpose. As Burley on the Hill became the residence of the lord of the manor the Great Hall was kept largely because of its use for court purposes.
16th century	A window is inserted into the east wall.
1584	Robert Johnson's grammar school is established
1621	George Villiers, Duke of Buckingham, now resides in the first big house at Burley on the Hill. He probably: Levelled the ruins around the castle and the old domestic offices at the east and west end; Re-roofed the great hall; Installed a new pediment over the Castle Lane gateway.
1684	James Wright's illustration (fig. 20) shows the Great Hall standing alone within the remnants of the wall.
1730	Buck's engraving (fig. 21) shows a similar condition.
Between 1730 and 1847	The entrance into the great hall is moved.
Early 19th century	Dormer windows are inserted into the north and south aisles.
1872	The gateway is rebuilt.
1911	The Great Hall is restored in memory of the Rt Hon G H Finch, MP for Rutland for 40 years, with extensive repairs to the east wall and the stone flagged floor.
1953-54	Peter Gathercole conducts an archaeological excavation of the moated area to the south of the bailey (Gathercole 1958).
1955-59	John Barber conducts archaeological excavations adjacent to the Great Hall.
1980	The Great Hall is rewired and redecorated.
1989	Josephine Sharman and Deborah Sawday carry out an archaeological evaluation in the outer bailey for Leicestershire Museums.
2011	Terrestrial laser scan and photographic survey of the defence earthworks, the Great Hall interior, and Cutt's Close by Trent & Peak Archaeology (Shepherd & Walker 2011).
2012	Channel 4's <i>Time Team</i> carries out excavations in the Castle grounds (Good & Mephram 2013).
2013	Nick Hill's architectural re-assessment of the Great Hall appears in <i>Antiquaries Journal</i> (Hill 2013).
2013-14	Rutland County Council prepares a bid for a Heritage Lottery Fund award to ensure the future of the Castle and its site.

Introduction and Obituary

In October 1994, nearly three years before his death, John Barber made available his manuscript memoir to read and copy. The main body was on Oakham Castle and contained his personal reminiscences spanning nearly seventy years. These included hitherto unpublished notes on his excavation on the Castle kitchens in 1956 and 1957, which, with the exception of short articles in *The Oakhamian* (Barber 1955-1958) and *Medieval Archaeology* (Wilson & Hurst 1957, 1958 & 1959) – all transcribed in Appendix D below, have remained unrecorded until now, although the finds and excavation archive were deposited in the Rutland County Museum. Consequently the Rutland Local History & Record Society has felt that the publication of these memoirs would be a fitting tribute to his memory, best published as they stand since they reflect his own personality, this despite advances in our knowledge since then. To this memoir the editors have added illustrations and footnotes, as well as a description of the pottery from the excavation, completed in 1999 and updated in 2011 by Deborah Sawday, a freelance specialist in post-Roman pottery found in the East Midlands area.

John Barber would have been fascinated and delighted by recent research on the Castle, including the *Time Team* investigations of 2012 (Good & Mephram 2013), various detailed surveys of the site (eg Shepherd & Walker 2011), and Nick Hill's recent perceptive analysis of the Great Hall incorporating the results of tree-ring dating of its timbers (Hill 2013; Arnold & Howard 2013); he would also have been a keen supporter of Rutland County Council's bid for an award from the Heritage Lottery Fund for work on Oakham Castle.

Many scholars have expressed their views about the original form of the Great Hall and its possible ancillary buildings, often disagreeing one with another. John Barber was not afraid to take issue with them where he did not agree, but at the same time he would have respected their reasoned arguments. In the same way we may think that his interpretation of the building and of the traces of the lost buildings revealed by his excavations was not necessarily always correct, but we readily acknowledge that what he wrote still has a bearing on current thought.



*Fig. 4. John Barber presenting a copy of his book *The Story of Oakham School* to HM Queen Elizabeth II during the school's Quatercentenary celebrations in 1984 (Oakham School Archives).*

John Lewis Barber, MA, FSA (1914-1997), often known as Jack, was a household name in Rutland in all matters to do with the history and archaeology of the county and with its museum, and much more besides. His death in February 1997 left both the Rutland Local History & Record Society and the Friends of the Rutland County Museum much the poorer, as was noted in an obituary in *Rutland Record* **18** (1998), 326.

That notice, slightly adapted, follows here and is likewise also based on that which first appeared in the *Annual Report: Proceedings 1997* of the Society of Antiquaries of London (1998), of which he was a Fellow, and places his life and work in a wider context. We are grateful to the Society of Antiquaries for readily agreeing to its reproduction.

John Barber was born on 23rd May 1914, the eldest son of the Reverend John Barber, then chaplain to Lord William Cecil at Hatfield House. He was educated at Oakham School and in 1933 won a Warren scholarship to St Catherine's College, Cambridge, where he read Classics, played soccer for his college, and won an oar for rowing and a prize for reading lessons in chapel. After graduation he spent a fruitful year at the British School in Athens as the recipient of a travelling scholarship and then, back in England in 1937, began his teaching career. He taught in preparatory schools until the outbreak of war, which he spent as a captain in signals and intelligence, mainly with the Eighth Army in the Libyan Desert. In September 1946 he returned to his old school, Oakham, first as master in charge of the junior school and subsequently, from 1959 to 1974, as housemaster of Wharflands (his old house), and finally as second master for his last two years before retirement.

Barber's enthusiasm for archaeology was passed on to his pupils, with highly rewarding results. Soon after his arrival at Oakham, in collaboration with E G Bolton, headmaster of Casterton Secondary School, Barber organised an excavation at the Roman town of Great Casterton in Rutland, about two miles north of Stamford, the excavators being boys from both schools.

In their first season a complex of buildings was exposed, part of which had a tessellated floor. Such widespread interest was aroused by the dig, especially at the University of Nottingham, that members of its Department of Adult Education arranged a summer school to take over the excavation for its third season in 1950. This phase of the excavation was directed by Dr Philip Corder FSA, with the assistance of Fellows Graham Webster, John Gillam and Maurice Barley. The villa site discovered by Barber and Bolton was placed at the disposal of the professional archaeologists, who continued their investigations until Corder's death in 1960. Several site reports were published, and John Barber was elected FSA on 12th January 1956 for his original contribution to this important research; he had already been instrumental, with E T Leeds, in facilitating rescue work on an Anglo-Saxon cemetery at Glaston (Leeds & Barber 1950).

In the 1960s he took his family for a fortnight every year in August to participate in the excavation of another Roman town, Ancaster in Lincolnshire, directed successively by Maurice Barley, Jeffrey May and Malcolm Todd, again under the auspices of the University of Nottingham.

Publication of John Barber's *The Story of Oakham School* in 1984 marked the quartercentenary of the school's foundation and, on his eightieth birthday in 1994, the Barber Archive Room in the new school library was named in his honour. In addition, he published several articles in the *Rutland Record*, the journal of the Rutland Local History & Record Society, details of which are included in the Bibliography at the end of this publication.

John Barber's commitment to the county of Rutland, its natural history, antiquarian remains and ancient buildings, was as great as his devotion to Oakham School. A dozen silver birch trees were planted on the south shore of Rutland Water in 1995 in recognition of his fundraising activities for the Council for the Protection of Rural England. When the Rutland County Museum was established in 1967 he masterminded the transfer of Oakham School's collection, of which he was curator, to the new museum. He was a member of the special committee set up in 1965 when the riding school became available for conversion to the museum, and was elected Chairman of the Friends' Executive Committee in 1969, an office which he held until 1986, when he was appointed to the honorary position of Vice-President. He died on 8th February 1997, following a fall on black ice.

Elaine Jones & Tim Clough

John Lewis Barber, MA, FSA – His Memoir

*John Lewis Barber,
of 9, Tyne Road, Oakham, Rutland*

*and later of 8 Baines Court,
South Street, Oakham.*

These random jottings made in the years following my retirement in 1979, for all their incompleteness, may be of use to future historians (as the section on Oakham Castle was to Tim Clough when he wrote his booklet on the subject). I would like it kept in the Rutland County Museum, but would like it to be available to Oakham School and to the Rutland Record Society.

Editors' Notes:

The Rutland Record Society later merged with the Rutland Local History Society and the Rutland Field Research Group for Archaeology & History to become the Rutland Local History & Record Society.

Notes, references and illustrations have been supplied by the editors; any additions to the text are shown in [brackets].

The original memoir is believed to be in the possession of JLB's family.

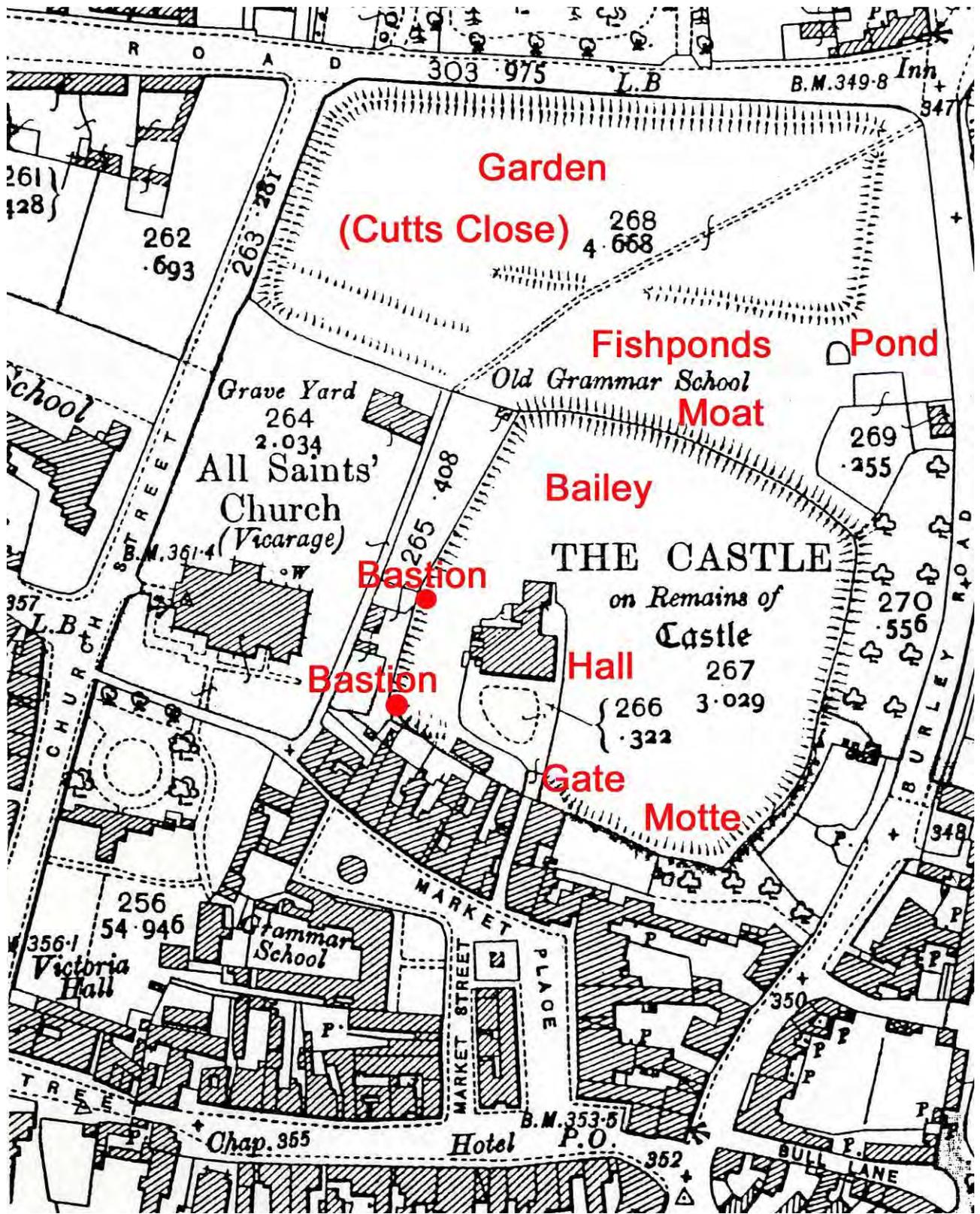


Fig. 5. Annotated map of Oakham Castle area (OS 2nd ed 25" map 1904).

OAKHAM CASTLE

by J L BARBER, MA, FSA

INTRODUCTION

Although I have lived in Oakham ever since the end of the Second World War and although I was a boy at Oakham School from 1928-33, it is no part of my task and intention to give a general history of Oakham Castle (indeed I am not a trained historian and have no qualifications to delve into the written records and historical archives on the subject).² It is my purpose on the other hand to put down on paper all such things as a long acquaintance with the Castle, some field work and a certain amount of practical archaeology (the excavations of Mr P W Gathercole around the entrance gateway in 1953-54³ and those that I myself conducted at the east end of the Castle in 1956-57) have taught me over the years. Most of the assertions that I have made are based upon authenticated facts, but there are times when I have put forward theories or deductions, that only posterity and a more detailed examination of the evidence may prove wrong.

It is with my own excavations on the east end of the Castle that I have the most misgivings. They were begun after the main part of the very extensive excavations on the Roman villa at Great Casterton, where, as at Oakham Castle, I used the voluntary labour of boys from Oakham School. But after only two seasons of excavation on the site, during the summer terms of 1956 and 1957, my own circumstances, upon my appointment as a House-master,⁴ made it impossible to continue. Everything, repeat everything, had to be dropped, and it is only now some twenty-five years later that I have at last, in my retirement, found time to give the whole business further thought. This is absolutely true of my excavations, but less true in respect of some casual field work from time to time and some observation of the site in general over this fallow period.

During those twenty-five years I have moved house twice, and not all the relevant notes that I made at the time have survived. The passage of time has made even the interpretation of such notes and plans that survive no easy task, whilst my own mind has perforce forgotten many of those nuances of meaning, which are clear to an excavator at the time, but which tend to become ever more blurred in the course of the years. Although I have appended a small bibliography,⁵ it must not be assumed that I have at any time undertaken any full historical investigation. I must repeat that most of what I have set down is more in the nature of practical observation, but as such I hope that it will make some contribution to a full and detailed history of the Castle and its immediate surroundings.

INQUISITION POST MORTEM

Circa 1340

Para 1: There is at Oakham a castle well walled, and in that castle there are one hall, four chambers, one kitchen, two stables, one grange for hay, one house for prisoners, one chamber for the porter, one drawbridge with iron chains, and the castle contains within its walls by estimation two acres of land; the aforesaid houses are worth nothing annually beyond reprises, and the same house is similarly called the Manor of Oakham. There is without the castle one garden, which is worth 8/- a year. Stews under the castle, with the fosse, the pasture of which is worth £6. 13s. 4d. a year. The park called the little park contains 40 acres, the herbage of which is worth £6 per annum, and the under-wood 6s. 8d. A windmill and a watermill are worth £8, and the presentation of the free chapel placed within the castle amounts to 100/- (Public Record Office).⁶

Para 2: There appears to be no evidence of occupation at Oakham prior to the late Anglo-Saxon period.⁷ Stray finds of earlier periods (an unfinished Neolithic axe dug up from a drainage trench in Northgate Street is the nearest possible evidence of any earlier occupation) take the form of an occasional Roman bead or a worked

² These footnotes are all supplied by the editors. The historical background and Lords of the Manor are summarised in Clough 2008.

³ Gathercole 1958; see Appendix B.

⁴ Of Wharflands, 1959-74.

⁵ JLB's bibliography is incorporated into the full list of references on pp37-38.

⁶ *Cal Inq Misc* II (1307-49), 418-20, no 1703; The National Archives, reference TNA C145/139/20; see Appendix E.

⁷ An important hoard of Anglo-Saxon coins was found in Oakham in 1749 (Blunt & Lyon 1979).

Neolithic or Bronze Age flint picked up by chance in gardens, allotments or fields in the vicinity of Oakham.⁸

Mr Raleigh Radford has surmised⁹ that the earliest occupation of the site was a late Saxon Burh, encompassed one would imagine by the modern Burley Road on the east, High Street on the south, Church Street on the west, and Station Road on the north. Within this area stand both the Church and the Castle, occupying probably the highest ground in this part of the Vale of Catmose, if one can imagine them standing in isolation before the subsequent growth of the town around them.¹⁰

Para 3: The principal building that now survives of the whole Castle complex, as set out in the 1340 inquisition quoted in **Para 1**, is of course the fine Norman aisled hall dating from about 1180-90, but remnants of the outer bank of the bailey and the curtain wall that stood upon it, the fish stews to the north of the inner enclosure, and banks surrounding the outer enclosure (now known as Cutt's Close) are also to be seen. In addition there are numerous humps and hollows within the sub-circular bailey, which in fact comprises about three and a third acres, and these must surely be evidence of some of those places listed in the inquisition.

It might perhaps serve my purpose best if I named each of the principal items so listed and commented upon them one by one (in the exact order listed) in the light of what is now known about them, at any rate from my own enquiries and observation.

Para 4: 'THERE IS AT OAKHAM A CASTLE WELL WALLED...'

We must be quite clear that the castle described in the inquisition was the castle of the mid-fourteenth century. But that does not mean that this castle (perhaps fortified manor house might be a happier description) was the earliest castle. Indeed Mr Raleigh Radford has shown (in my opinion most conclusively) that an earlier motte and bailey castle stood in the south-east corner of the present enclosure. Parts of the bailey are still to be seen, whilst the surrounding bank of a later date has incorporated the motte into its circuit at this point. This would account for the extra height of the bank here. Moreover there is evidence that the outer part of the motte was cut away, presumably to make room for the moat, and the remaining section revetted with a stone wall to prevent any slide into the moat. The photo [fig. 10] was taken to the west of the motte where once stood a gateway leading from the Castle enclosure into the adjoining farmyard: this gateway has now been stopped up and is gradually fading into oblivion.

Presumably the motte, dating perhaps from the first decade after the Conquest, had a wooden building on top of it, but there is no evidence that the curtain wall of a later period was ever carried over the top of the earlier motte, and perhaps the revetment mentioned above was the curtain wall at this point (in saying this I am quite aware of what Buck's engraving of 1730 [fig. 21] shows in this respect, but surely many of the things depicted by Buck, apart from the hall itself, are representational and in no sense a time picture of the scene). Indeed there are other points where the curtain wall appears to be partly a revetment, the level of the ground on the inside of the surrounding bank often being higher than that on the outside, ie the side next to the moat. Between the motte and bailey castle of the immediate post-Conquest period and the castle of 1180-90, there may well have been some edifice more pretentious than the former and less magnificent than the latter, possibly to some extent built in wood but with stone foundations. My own excavations on the east end of the existing hall give hints and pointers that this may indeed have been the case.

The inquisition uses the term 'well walled', and mentions the fosse or moat, but says nothing of the bank upon which the curtain wall stood. But this bank, although damaged at some points both by the passage of time and by deliberate vandalism, is still more or less intact as the limiting line both of the inner bailey and of the outer enclosure or garden (Cutt's Close). In some places, eg the eastern edge of the outer enclosure, the bank may have been double. Obviously there was a breach in the bank at the main entrance to the Castle near where the 'drawbridge with iron chains' must have stood, ie where the main approach from the Market Place still lies, possibly a way out into the country towards Burley-on-the-Hill at the north-eastern corner of the outer enclosure, and perhaps one or more posterns, one leading to the parish church.

⁸ Since John Barber's 'jottings', new archaeological work around Oakham points to human activity over at least the last 10,000 years. Worked flints left by Mesolithic hunter-gatherers at the end of last ice age have been collected in the surrounding fields, and evidence for Neolithic and Bronze Age occupation has been found. The sites of Roman farms and a villa have been found outside the town while an early Saxon *Grubenhause* was found near to a substantial ditch in South Street in 1994. Its full extent and the date of its cutting are not yet known. Saxo-Norman and medieval pottery has been recovered from small-scale watching briefs and excavation on town developments (eg, Clay 1998; Jones 1996, 2007; annual reports in *Rutland Record*; HER references).

⁹ References are to Radford 1955; see Appendix C. JLB and Radford did not know of the 1830s extension of Church Street to the N (see note 12).

¹⁰ A terrestrial laser scan and photographic survey of Oakham Castle for the Rutland County Council's conservation and development plan was conducted by Trent & Peak Archaeology in 2011 so that issues relating to repairs and restoration and the management of the castle could be considered. The survey included the defence earthworks, the castle hall interior, and Cutt's Close. Richard Sheppard of Trent & Peak Archaeology drew attention to an anomaly running north-south across the inner bailey, suggesting, a possible division or extension at some unknown date, but any confirmation and dating would need below-ground investigation (Hartley 1983; Sheppard & Walker 2011). Dendrochronological analysis of the roof timbers also took place (Arnold & Howard 2013), and in 2012 the television programme *Time Team* undertook a project around the Castle (Hill 2013; Good & Meopham 2013).

The only scientifically explored part of the bank was a small section cut by Mr P W Gathercole¹¹ in 1954 immediately to the west of the main entrance to the Castle; it was a mixture of clay, marl and scattered stones. The banks surrounding the outer enclosure (Cutt's Close) are very unlikely ever to have been crowned by a wall. Although probably correct in their alignment, they must be suspect in their size, as it is said that they were made up to their present dimensions by the addition of much soil dug out during the making of the Melton to Oakham coal canal in the early years of the nineteenth century. They are much more regular in their conformation than those around the inner bailey, and appear to be composed of more homogenous marl than observed by Mr Gathercole. By way of an aside, it is also said that the trees on top of these outer banks were planted at the instigation of Dr John Doncaster, Headmaster of Oakham School from 1808-46, so that the boys might repair there from the Old School (now known as the Shakespeare Centre) in the very hot days of summer to construe their Latin and Greek verses.¹²

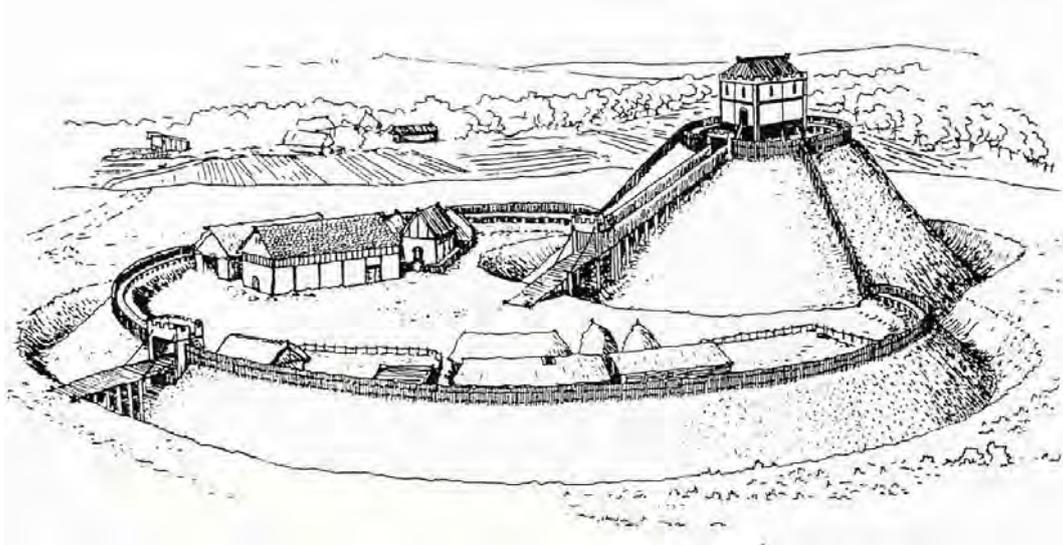


Fig. 6. A conjectural reconstruction of an early motte and bailey.

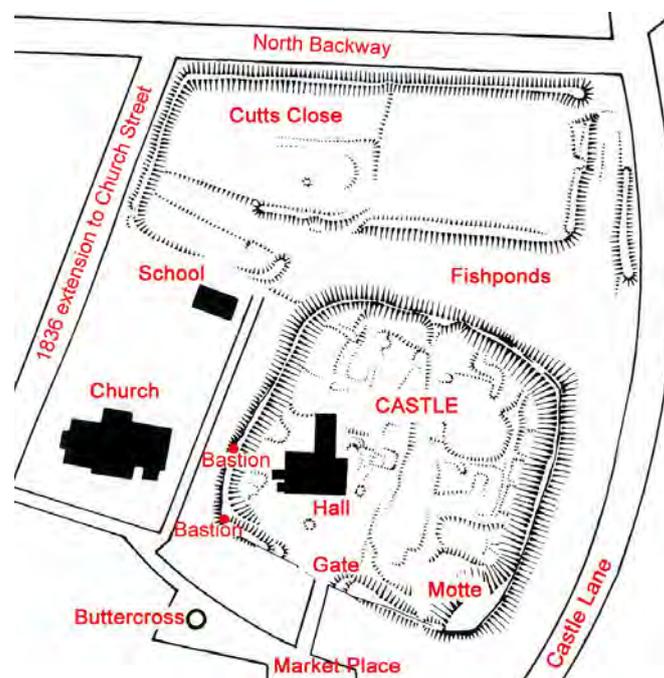


Fig. 7. An annotated map of the Oakham Castle site showing the inner bailey earthworks (after Hartley 1983, 32, fig. 31).

¹¹ Gathercole 1958; see Appendix B.

¹² It is now known, from the evidence of Cullingworth's 1787 map and the 1836 enclosure map, that certainly the western bank of Cutt's Close is a result of the northward extension of Church Street following enclosure in the 1830s; this coincides with Dr Doncaster's headmastership.



Fig. 8. Photograph c1950 of the inner bailey and the motte at Oakham Castle, looking east, taken from the Church tower (Jack Hart Collection, Rutland County Museum).



Fig. 9 (above). The motte at the south-east corner of the bailey in 2011. Note the circular ditch around the base.

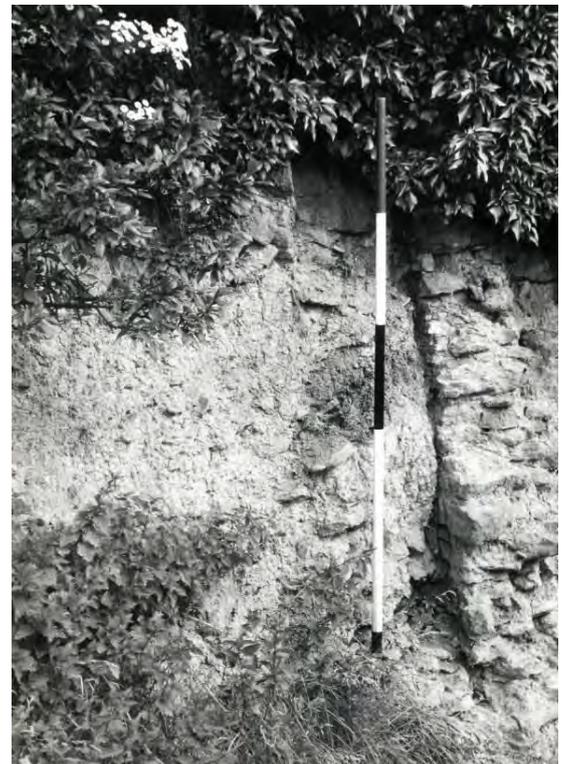


Fig. 10 (right). The wall built to support the motte, which was incorporated into the curtain wall on the south-east corner. The south side of the motte of the earliest castle has been shorn away to make room for the moat (J L Barber archive, Rutland County Museum).

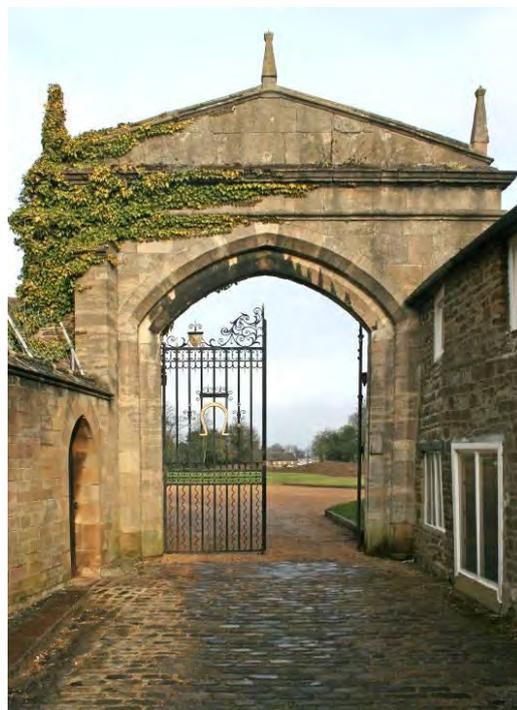
The moat, or rather the remains of it, can be made out at various points even to this day. Probably it ran along the course of Burley Road and the adjacent car park, along the back of the shops and the Post Office on the northern edge of the Market Place, and then along the course of the pathway which leads past the east end of the parish church from Church Passage to Cutt's Close before widening out into the fish stews immediately north of the northern extremity of the inner bailey. At only two points in the present century do I know that it was dug into: firstly when the public conveniences were built between the east end of the parish church and the western side of the Castle bank: and secondly when the foundations for the present Post Office were being prepared.

The latter operation was 'watched' by Mr P W Gathercole on behalf of the Ministry of Works, Ancient Monuments department (as it then was), and he was able to recover certain objects from the jaws of the mechanical diggers (notably leather work now in the Rutland County Museum). There would be no shortage of water to fill such a moat, as there is a plentiful supply emanating from the hills around Oakham, notably Cold Overton Hill, which flows east towards the 'Flooded Fields' and the Burley Fish Ponds, now all part of Rutland Water. Such water was later used to supply the Oakham-Melton canal, and its abundance is attested by the numerous wells that, although now largely sealed off, underlie so many gardens, and indeed even houses, in the Oakham area. At least six wells were found reaching down into the old moat when the Post Office foundations were dug out.

The curtain wall itself poses a number of questions, which might have been more easily answered, perhaps even as recently as say fifty years ago, for there is no doubt that during that time a great deterioration in the fabric has taken place from such varied causes as tree roots, ivy, weather and even deliberate destruction. This curtain wall does not in all probability date from the late twelfth century, when the great hall and its ancillary buildings were erected, but is usually supposed to have been constructed in the time of Richard, Earl of Cornwall, the King's brother, sometime after 1252 when he married Sanchia of Provence, and was granted the Castle.

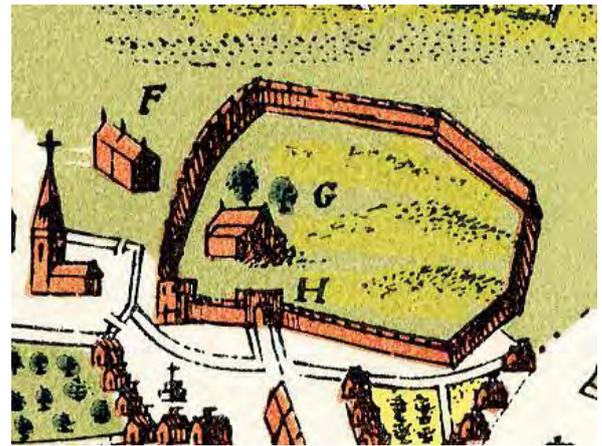
Contrary, however, to this belief, Mr Raleigh Radford¹³ writes: 'The castle bailey was later strengthened with a stone curtain, now entirely ruined (my underlining). The gate with a four-centred arch and two chamfered orders, dates from the time of Earl Richard, but the simple layout of the curtain without flanking towers (again my underlining), suggests an earlier period; it is probably the work of Walkelin de Ferrers. The 13th century gateway was restored with a characteristic pediment early in the 17th century': one might add by George Villiers, Duke of Buckingham, and it is matched by two others of similar design on the Burley estate (one on the now closed off road to Stamford in the vicinity of the old Burley fish ponds, which are now engulfed in the reservoir; the other on a field road about a quarter of a mile after turning out of Exton Avenue towards Burley).

However, it is with the two passages underlined that I would quarrel, with the first in degree, but with the latter absolutely. No one would wish to pretend that the curtain wall is in good repair, but 'entirely ruined' seems too strong a description. Some years ago the local authorities cleared parts of the eastern wall of the inner bailey above the Burley Road car park and revealed some well presented stretches beneath the embrace of the ivy, and the same area has again been cleared during the current year (1979).



Figs. 11 & 12. The 13th century Oakham Castle gateway 'restored early in the 17th century' (above), and the gateway leading to the former Burley fish ponds (below).

¹³ Radford 1955; see Appendix C.



Figs. 13 & 14. John Speed's map of Oakham, c1610, and enlargement of the castle area.

I am certain that Mr Raleigh Radford is in error in maintaining that the curtain wall was 'without flanking towers', whether these were contemporary with the wall or later additions. There has long been a local tradition that there was a tower on the south-western corner of the inner bailey, and the mass of masonry still to be seen at this point in the garden of the house called 'Choir Close', is strong supporting evidence. Nor can we ignore Speed's map of 1610, which clearly shows a massive tower in the area under discussion.

However, this alone might not make the point, but at two further points there is confirmation of projecting towers – on the west curtain wall immediately north of the Public Conveniences¹⁴ and on the east curtain wall, where twice in the last fifteen or so years the ivy has been cleared.

Many years ago I organised a small party of boys from Oakham School to move some of the ivy that cloaked the wall near the above mentioned lavatories, because (as a schoolboy myself) I remember what must have been either a window or a small postern gate at this point in the wall (a short cut for the Lord of the Manor to the parish church across the moat?).¹⁵

This window or postern we did not find, but we found TWO clearly defined corners in the curtain wall, with masonry coming off towards where the moat once lay, and these undoubtedly represented the two sides* of a projecting tower. (*Further clearing has since shown that the tower was rounded (semicircular?) rather than angular.)



Fig. 15. The south-west corner of the inner bailey at Oakham Castle.

¹⁴ By 2012 the Public Conveniences had been closed and transformed into a greengrocer's shop, now also closed.

¹⁵ Pearl Finch's 1903 photograph (fig. 16) clearly shows possible door and window openings at this location.

This discovery, made I might add before Mr Raleigh Radford's paper, is probably the strongest refutation of his assertion. But further supporting evidence came when the eastern wall was cleared of ivy. At no point can any corners or projections, as above, be discovered, but there are traces of at least four butt joints in the course of the curtain wall so placed as to suggest that at some point in history (perhaps at the time when there was a general tidying up of the whole area – we know that the Castle was in ruins as early as 1521 – and the hall was repaired and put in good order as an assize court for the Lord of the Manor, whilst the domestic offices to the east and west and all the outbuildings were razed, probably in the early 17th century), the decaying towers were pulled down and the gaps thus left in the curtain wall made good without too much nicety in bonding the stones together in the places repaired.¹⁶

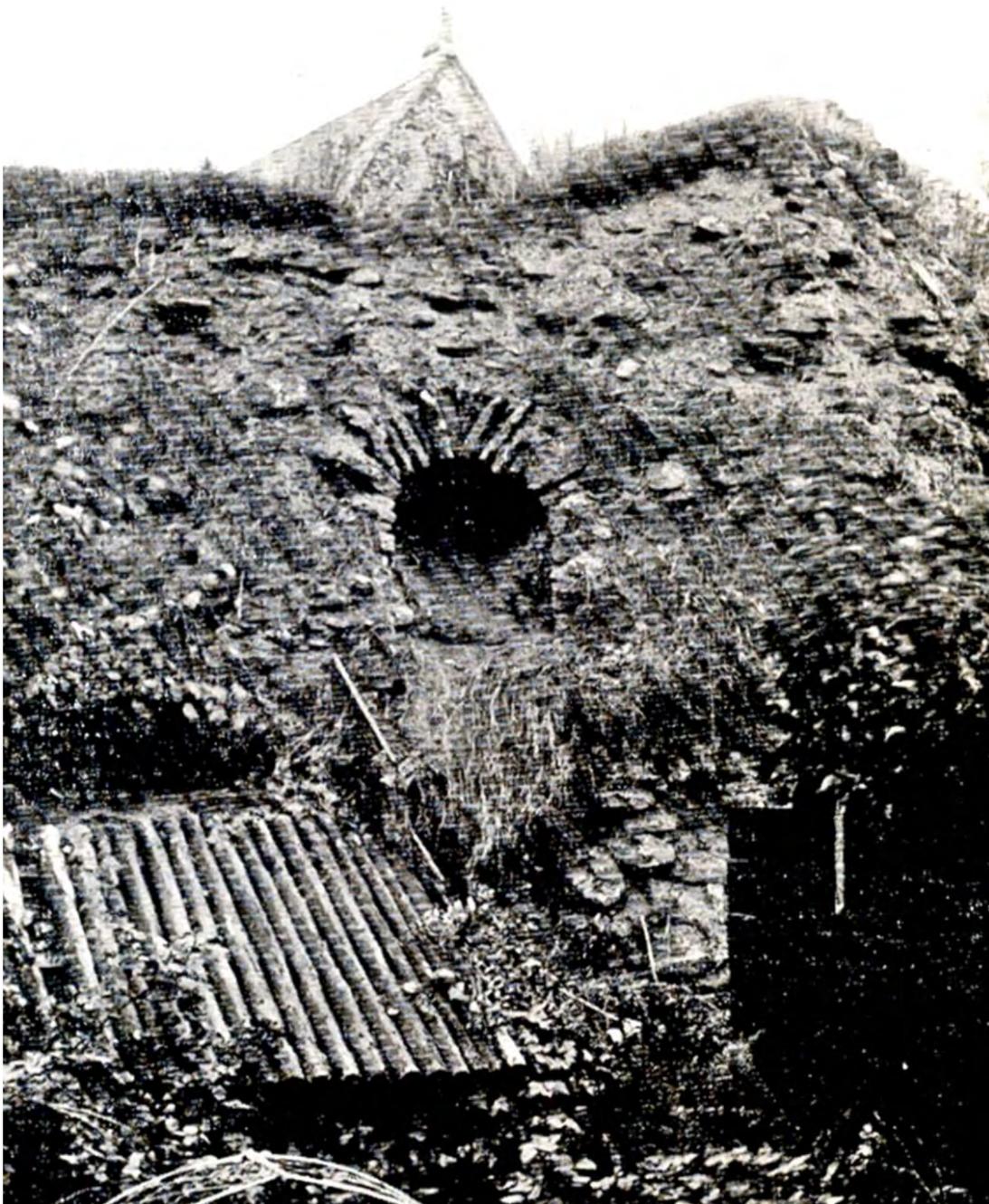


Fig. 16. In 1903 Pearl Finch recorded a 'portion of the wall round the castle, showing a doorway, said to have led to the dungeon'. This photograph obviously relates to John Barber's schoolboy memories (Finch 1903, pl facing p9).

¹⁶ W Cullingworth's Oakham Lordshold map of 1787 (fig. 17) and the Oakham Enclosure Map of 1836 both indicate possible projecting towers, one at the south-west corner and the other nearby on the west curtain wall; their remains are indeed visible today.

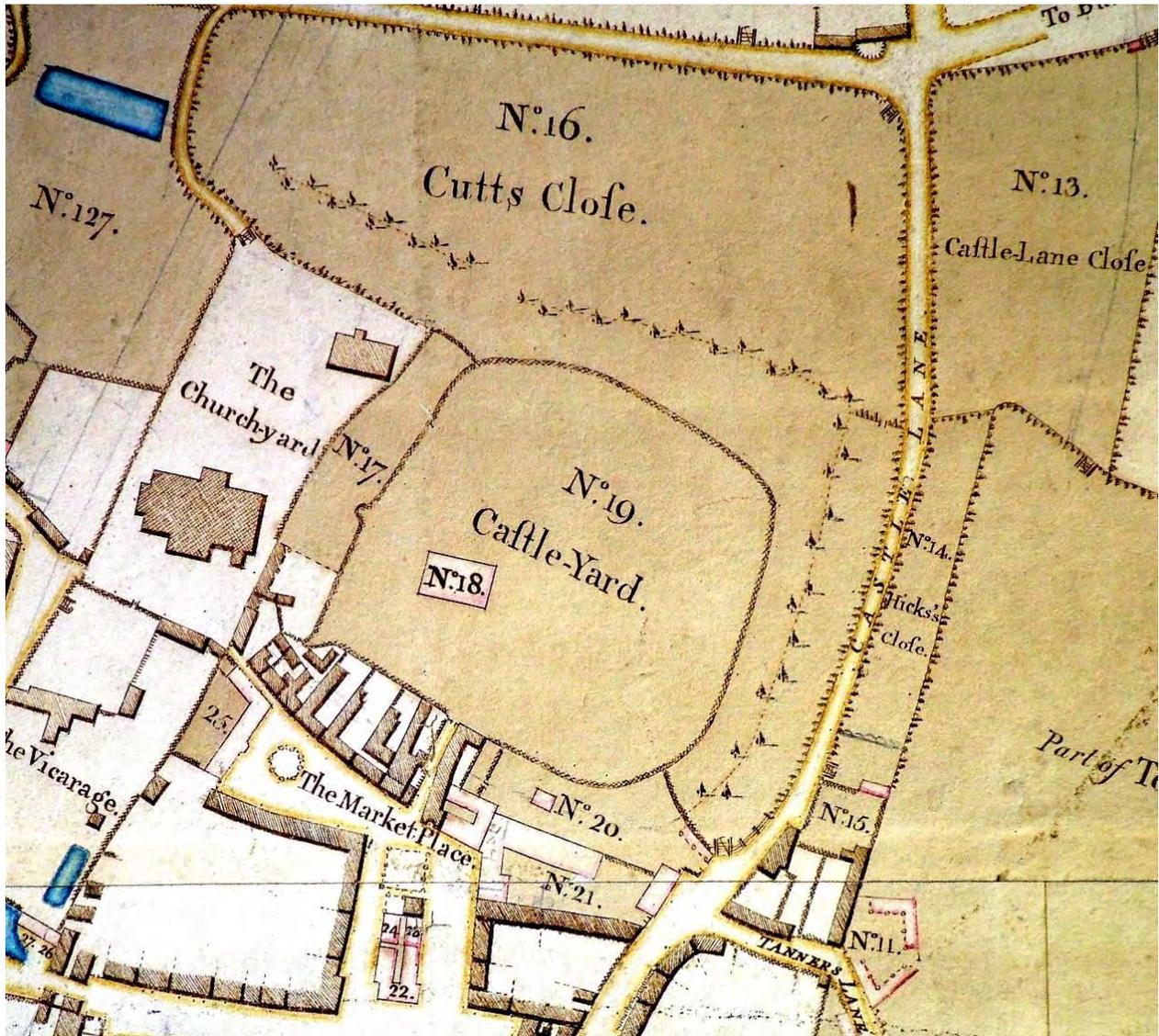


Fig. 17. Section of Cullingworth's 1787 map of Oakham (Record Office for Leicestershire, Leicester and Rutland).

To summarise then, I would hazard a guess that the sub-circular inner bailey had towers at the south-western corner (one), along the eastern wall (two) and along the western wall one for certain and probably two. At the south-eastern corner the height and strength of the revetted motte of the earlier castle may have been sufficient defence, whilst a fortified gateway midway between that and the south-western tower could well have been protection enough on the southern side, where subsequent urban development has most interfered with the bank, walls and moat. On the north side evidence is entirely lacking, but it is possible that, with a garden and fish stews outside the inner bailey, the defences at this point were less impressive.

Para 5: 'ONE HALL'.

The hall is really all that remains in a worthy state of repair, apart from the entrance gateway. As I write it is undergoing a major overhaul, which will do much to enhance its already attractive appearance – rewiring, a new heating system, redecorating and the removal and refurbishing of the entire collection of horseshoes.¹⁷ It is of its kind one of the finest domestic buildings in the country of the Norman transitional period, and despite numerous alterations of one kind or another over the centuries, it retains much of its original appearance.

Without attempting to describe in detail the hall as it now stands, I shall nonetheless endeavour to draw attention to certain aspects of its nature and construction, and this I can only do by considering one feature at a time and by ignoring all modern accretions such as the judge's robing room, the two cells, the boiler house and the three rooms to the north (petty sessions room etc).

¹⁷ This refers to works done in preparation for celebrating the approximate octocentenary of the Great Hall in 1980, and the conservation of all the horseshoes at the Rutland County Museum which was carried out at the same time.



Fig. 18. Oakham Castle Hall in 2011.

(a) The exterior

The stone fabric of the Castle has been so altered over the years that at only one point can we still see anything of the original polychrome masonry (courses of freestone ashlar alternating with bands of ironstone rubble), and that is at the west end of the north aisle. In this aisle only the two westernmost windows survive of the original four: the easternmost one is blocked up and the remaining one is now a doorway leading into the petty sessions room.

On the exterior of both east and west walls there are shallow buttresses, four in all, opposite the line of the interior pillars, and these were probably inserted to give additional strength and support to the hall itself when all the domestic offices (solar on the west end, buttery, pantry and kitchen on the east end) were demolished and levelled out.

We know that as early as 1521, as I have already mentioned in *Para 4*, the castle was in a bad state of repair (no doubt because of the numerous changes in tenancy during the years following its reversion to the Crown in 1204), and it would appear to have deteriorated more and more until, probably in the early 17th century (in the time of the first Duke of Buckingham), the domestic offices were levelled out and the hall refurbished as an assize court for the Lord of the Manor (the selfsame Duke) now resident at Burley-on-the-Hill.

The inscription below Buck's picture of the Castle in 1730 more or less says as much: 'There is nothing remaining but the outer walls facing the Ditch, the Castle having been demolished. The building which stands now where the Ancient one stood, is the County Hall for Assizes and sessions, built with Materials of the former'.¹⁸

This process of rationalisation came to terms with a situation already in existence for some time – a situation which must have given increasing embarrassment up at the big house at Burley. In this paper I shall frequently have reason to refer to this tidying up process, and I shall call the accumulated debris which lies all over the site beneath the present turf 'the destruction level'.

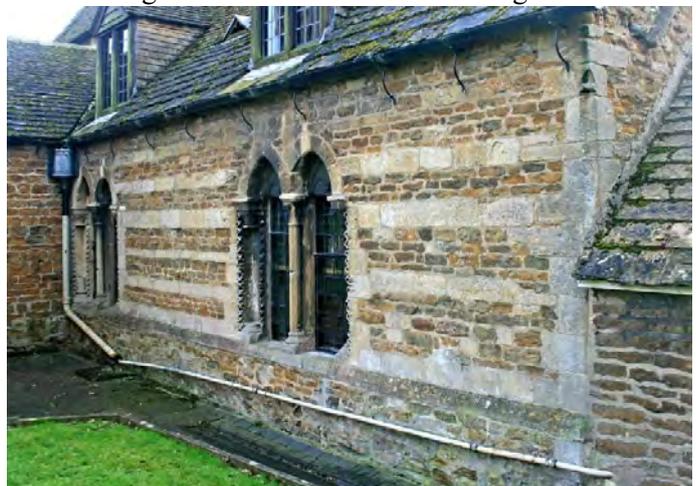


Fig. 19. Original north aisle windows and the only surviving polychrome masonry.

¹⁸ Notwithstanding the evidently poor state of repair of the buildings, the implication that the Great Hall had been rebuilt is patently untrue. However, this statement by the Bucks perhaps refers to the extensive repairs undertaken by the Duke of Buckingham a century earlier.

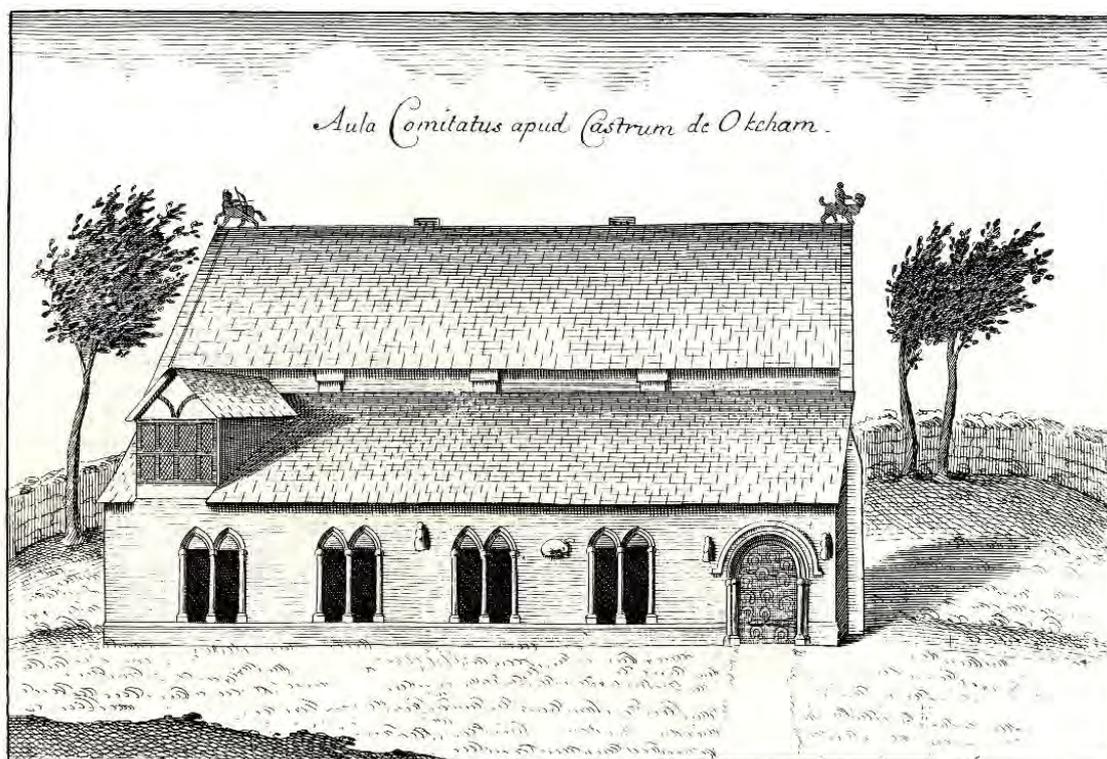


Fig. 20. Oakham Castle Hall in 1684 (Wright 1684, 104).

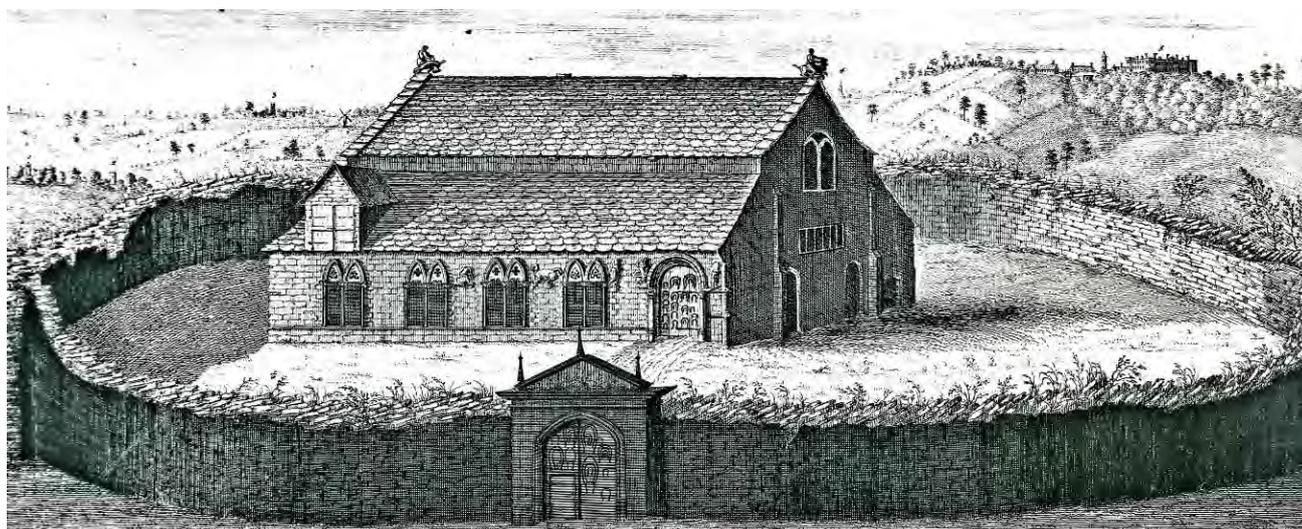


Fig. 21. THE SOUTH-EAST VIEW OF OKEHAM-CASTLE, IN THE COUNTY OF RUTLAND.

THIS Castle was built in the Reign of K. Hen. II by Walkeline de Ferraraijs a Younger Son of the E. of Derby: and continued to be the Residence of the Family, till the Male Issue were Extinct: Since w.^{ch} it hath been in the possession of Divers Royal & Noble Persons (viz^t) K. Hen. III, Ed. II, Ed. III. & VI, the Earls of Cornwall, Kent, Northampton, Oxford, Rutland, L^{ds} Mortimer, Conover, Cromwel & Harrington: also of the Staffords, & the Villers, Dukes of Buckingham; the last of w.^{ch} sold it to the R.^l Hon.^{ble} the E of Nottingham Father to y.^e present Noble Owner. The L.^d of this Castle claims by immemorial Prescription & Custom, a very singular Right of Demanding a Horse-Shoe of every Peer, the first time he passes with.ⁿ his Jurisdiction: and his Bailiff has Power on refusal to take one from y.^e Horse he rides on; but the constraint is seldom if ever us'd: Noblemen choosing to redeem it, and in proportion to y.^e Gift, a Shoe is made larger or lesser, with the Names and Titles of the Doner Stamp'd thereon; and affix'd to the Castle Gate. By this custom w.^{ch} seems to be a kind of Tribute pay'd them and y.^e Name de Ferraraijs or (as at present) Ferrers who were the Founders: we conclude they Presided over certain Royal Iron Works or were Lords of such.— There is nothing remaining but the out walls facing the Ditch, the Castle having been demolish'd. The building w.^{ch} stands now where y.^e Antient one stood, is y.^e County Hall for Assizes, & Sessions: built with y.^e Materials of y.^e former.

(Buck, Samuel & Nathaniel, Views of Ruins of Castles & Abbeys in England, 1730)

On the west wall are certain signs of the solar, which once stood there (see *Para 6*), whilst on the east wall is a blocked late 16th century window of six lights, which is not visible on the inside of the hall. Also in the east wall are two blocked up Norman doorways and the remnants of a third. These will be more fully discussed in *Para 7*, which treats of the kitchen, buttery and pantry. Suffice it to say at this stage that it has always puzzled me how two of these doorways can be rounded in the Norman style on the exterior, and pointed in the later Gothic style on the interior.



Fig. 22. Blocked doors and window in the east elevation of the Hall.

Fig. 23. Roof timbers at the east end of the Hall.



On the south side Buck's drawing shows the door where the eastern-most window now is, and a single dormer window with what look like shutters (instead of the present row of dormers) in the aisle roof at the west end.

The main door originally stood opposite the main gate, and it was only moved to its present position in the centre of the south aisle wall early in this century to bring it opposite to the entrance of the petty sessions room, by the simple expedient of swapping over a door for a window and vice versa.¹⁹

(b) The Interior

1. The roof

No one has really made a full and scientific study of the roof, but it would be most surprising if any of the timbers are original.²⁰ Indeed many of those who have written about the castle suppose that the original hall probably had a hammer-beam roof with a windowed clerestory.

Mr Raleigh Radford writes; 'The present arrangement with a low window-less clerestory dates from the reconstruction of the roof in the early 17th century. Originally the roof of the nave would have been carried on massive semi-circular

trusses springing from corbels set in the spandrels above the piers; one of the corbels, a horse's head bearing a capital, the top slotted to steady the base of the truss, is preserved in the hall.' The underlining of horse's head is my own: it is in fact a crouching beastie, and may possibly be paralleled by a similar figure in the south aisle of Oakham Parish Church, this redundant piece of masonry having been taken perhaps from the Castle.

The red oak king posts are generally believed to have been put in by the first Duke of Buckingham, but the beams in general would seem to be of more than one period. The whole problem of the roof is a very difficult one. Although one has the greatest respect for Mr Radford's scholarship, in spite of two proven errors in his written record ('the horse's head' and 'the curtain without flanking towers'), there is no surviving evidence in the spandrels above the piers of any corbels, and the musicians found there are manifestly decorative and never intended to carry any weight. *Traces of a pointed arch, spanning the whole width of the nave, have recently (November 1979) been detected in the interior of the west wall of the hall (there is no corresponding sign on the exterior) during cleaning operations, and may be a possible clue to an earlier roof line. (* Note by Tim Clough:²¹ 'These traces, on close inspection, proved to be decorative work, formed in the plaster only, and the design was in no way structural. The 'arch' would have been drawn on a single radius, not pointed.')

¹⁹ Sir Henry Dryden's plan accompanying C H Hartshorne's article shows the main entrance still at the east end of the south elevation (Hartshorne 1858, 141), so it seems clear that the alteration was made in the middle years of the nineteenth century.

²⁰ Dendrochronological analysis has now shown JLB's pessimism to be unfounded, and that some original timbers do survive: see Hill 2013, 189-193.

²¹ Such notes were made by Tim Clough, then Curator of the Rutland County Museum, on the original draft when it was first shown to him by JLB.

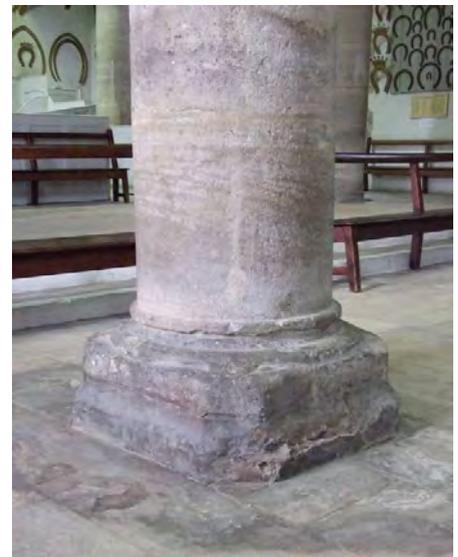
2. The floor

No part of the present floor is original, and perhaps the earliest floor was no more than beaten earth, strewn periodically with fresh straw. Nor is the whole of the greater part of the floor at the correct level: the correct level is that part of the floor to the east of the two steps, which run from north to south across the whole width of the building. To the west the bases of all the columns are almost totally concealed, and only to the east can one see and appreciate their full height.



Fig. 24 (left). The floor at the west end of the Hall where it has been raised to the top of the column bases. The original floor level is that part of the present floor to the east of the two steps, which run across the building from north to south.

Fig. 25 (below). The column bases are exposed at the east end of the Hall where the floor is lower.



It is alleged that it was on the suggestion of Mr W L Sargent, Headmaster of Oakham School from 1902-29, that part of the floor was restored to its original level. It had been intended to lower the whole floor, but when the work was only partially completed, it was realised that any further pursuance of the policy would lead to flooding through the doorway, as the present ground level outside the hall is well above that which existed in the heyday of the Castle. It is generally believed that the lowering of the floor and the installation of the main door in its present (incorrect) position* date from the same period, probably in the first twenty years of this century. (*The doorway was certainly in its present (central) position before 1862, since it is shown thus in an engraving from a periodical dated April 12th, 1862 – comment by Tim Clough).²²

3. The windows

Of the original eight windows in the aisles, only six survive, and only five are in their original positions, as I have already indicated in earlier pages. It should be noted that the windows in the north aisle are more widely spaced than those in the south aisle, as the latter also had to accommodate a door. The only other original window is that high up in the eastern gable, but as the gable has been reconstructed at least once, this window may also have been dismantled and rebuilt (see also *Para 7*).

Below it is a blocked-up late 16th century window of six lights, which presumably gave extra light to the minstrel gallery above the screens [see fig. 22]. The aisle roofs now carry a series of late dormer windows, whilst Buck's drawing of 1730 shows only one dormer-type opening, namely that on the western end of the south aisle. I say 'dormer-type opening' because in Buck's representation it resembles less a window than a shuttered unloading bay at high level for some commodity or other, which makes one wonder whether the hall had, at some period, been used for the storage of grain or hay.

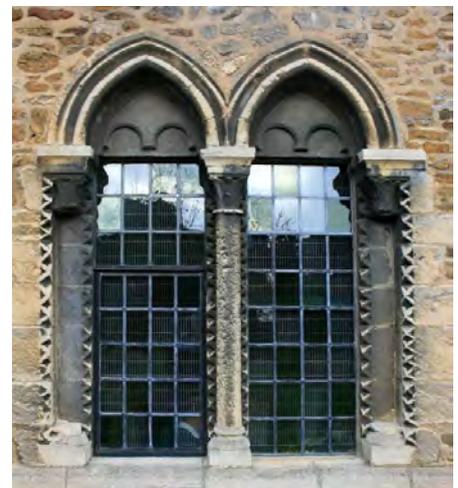


Fig. 26. One of the original windows on the south elevation of the Hall.

²² See also note 19 above.

4. The west wall

Some years ago I noticed between the obscuring horseshoes on this western wall a kind of raised cross-hatching, forming a pattern of adjacent lozenges with sides of approximately eight inches. This is even more clearly visible now (November/December 1979) that most of the horseshoes have been temporarily removed for cleaning. I imagine that it must have been some kind of plaster or stucco decoration, perhaps picked out in colour, and possibly in imitation of woollen tapestries hung against the western wall behind the dais. No clear traces remain of any windows in the west end of the hall (unless breaks in the continuity of the cross-hatching are indicative of openings), but it is just possible that there might once have been small apertures to enable the hall to be viewed from the solar. The recent cleaning of the hall has also thrown up one new and previously unnoticed feature – the outline of a pointed arch (see under ‘**The roof**’ above with reference to ‘arch’. This work is of similar character – comment by Tim Clough). There can be no doubt that this was the important end of the hall and that the dais stood here close to the solar and as far removed as possible from the screens and service doors on the east end, in the normal medieval manner.



5. The east wall

[Viewed from the inside] This wall has, besides the blocked up late 16th century window already mentioned, four blocked up doorways, three at ground level and one above the northernmost of these three. Two of the four doorways have rounded Norman arches (matching the big unblocked window in the gable end), but the two nearest to the south aisle have pointed arches – even though they appear on the exterior as rounded arches.

The two doors nearest to the south aisle presumably led to the service areas, whilst the third must have taken one via a staircase (spiral?) and via the blocked up upper doorway to the minstrel gallery (though Holland Walker writes: ‘Tradition points to the lower of these doors as being the entrance to the chapel, while the upper one led to the priest’s room’). Whatever the purpose of the two doors under discussion, the ledge on the north wall of the hall between the east wall and the easternmost window (blocked up) of the north aisle, makes it virtually certain that there must have been a gallery, and presumably below it, the wooden screens separating the hall from the service areas. Holland Walker finds some difficulty with the idea of a gallery because there is no corresponding ledge in the south aisle to support it. Indeed there never could have been, as originally the main door was there.²³

Fig. 27 (above). The two blocked-up doorways to the north of the east elevation of the Hall.



Fig. 28 (right). All four blocked-up doorways on the inside of the east wall of the Hall.

²³ See Holland Walker 1924.

It is worth noting the difference in the fenestration of the two aisles, those in the northern aisle being so arranged as to accommodate the ledge for the gallery floor, and those in the southern being placed closer together to allow spaces for the main doorway. My own thinking still tends to favour a gallery above the screens, but it must have stopped short of the main doorway, where perhaps there was a small vestibule to the width of the southern aisle. More about these blocked doorways will be discussed later in *Para 7*.



Fig. 29. The interior of the north wall of the Great Hall. The ledge to which JLB refers is to the right of the doorway, with the upper row of horseshoes resting their feet on it.

6. The columns

These are in such an excellent state of preservation that they might have been carved but yesterday. It is a great pity that most of their bases are hidden, and that the unnatural level of the floor detracts from their well planned proportions. The capitals are very much in the same style as those at Canterbury Cathedral and at nearby Twyford Church, and they must have been carved by the same school of craftsmen. Each line of columns supports four rounded arches, but there are no responds on the east and west walls. Instead we find corbels, presumably as these saved space at both dais and screens ends. The heads on the corbels at the eastern end (south side) have been tentatively identified as those of Henry II and his Queen, Eleanor of Castile, and those on the north side as those of Walkelin de Ferrers (the builder of the Castle) and his wife. In the spandrels immediately above the columns are the decapitated figures, either human or animal, of six musicians.²⁴

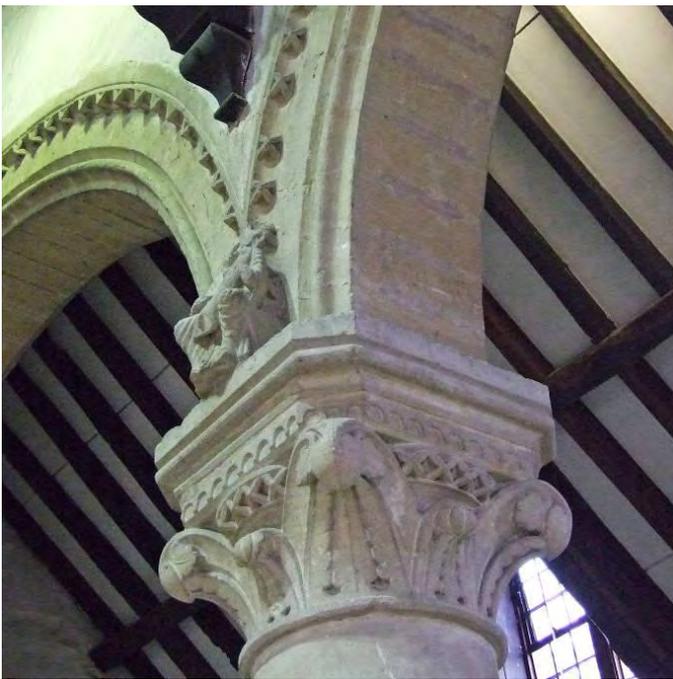


Fig. 30 (above). One of the six column capitals which support the rounded arches.

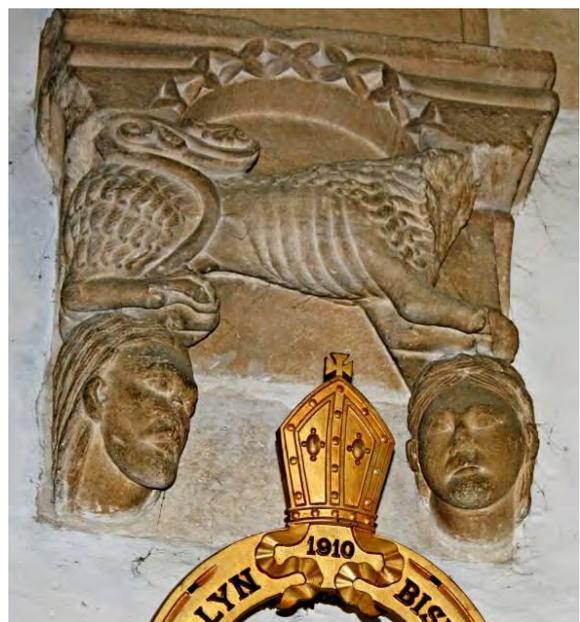


Fig. 31 (right). Heads on the corbels at the eastern end (north side) have been tentatively identified as those of Walkelin de Ferrers (the builder of the Castle) and his wife.

²⁴ See Appendix C and Emmerson 1981 for discussion of the sculpture.

At this point it might not be inapposite to mention that I believe that a sculptured head in the Rutland County Museum belongs to the westernmost minstrel in the north arcade. When it first came into my hands, I clambered up a ladder and tried it on all six of the minstrels, and I feel pretty certain that my assignation is correct despite grudging agreement from Mr S E Rigold on stylistic grounds.²⁵ The head was recovered from the debris moved from the moat when the foundations for the Post Office were being dug out in 1953-54, and its discovery was quite fortuitous.



Figs. 32 & 33. The head recovered from the moat, and the musician on the west column of the north aisle to which it may belong, photographed c1980 (Rutland County Museum).



Although Mr P W Gathercole was ‘watching’ the site on behalf of the then Ministry of Works, the head escaped his notice and was carted off in a lorry in the usual manner. But this particular load was not dumped as levelling material for the Roads and Bridges department of the County Council, but found its way to the garden of Pickwell Rectory. The driver of the lorry in question lived in this village, and the rector at the time had asked him for a load of good soil for his rose-beds. It was whilst spreading this unofficial load of soil that the rector came across the sculptured head, luckily little further damaged than when first severed from its body. We do not of course know who decapitated the musicians (Cromwell’s men perhaps?), but what more natural than to toss the loose heads into the moat? (In general perhaps Cromwell’s men did less harm in this than in many others, although we presume it was the Puritans who were responsible for the decapitations in the Castle, and we know that Oakham School’s library was ‘rifled’ during the Civil War (*Wase Papers* – pp107-113).²⁶ This happier state of affairs is usually attributed to the personality of Fairfax, the Commonwealth commander in the area, and to the fact that he was father-in-law to the 1st Duke of Buckingham. No doubt also he exerted some influence in seeing that Buckingham regained his land at the Restoration).

7. Loose masonry within the hall

In addition to the beastie mentioned at an earlier point, there are a number of pieces of Roman masonry preserved. There was no room for them in the Oakham School Museum, and I won permission for them to be lodged in the Castle. They came from some rescue excavations conducted for the Ministry of Works by Mr E Greenfield to the north of the Market Overton to Thistleton road, and were probably part of a large villa or even a temple complex. The stone with a hole in it was a column base with a secondary usage as a well-head, whilst the remainder are column drums.²⁷

8. The horseshoes²⁸

This is a subject about which I know very little, and throughout my enquiries about the Castle it has been the subject that least aroused my interest. Having said that, I feel disposed nonetheless to make just three observations. Firstly, I do not believe that Queen Elizabeth I ever visited Oakham nor that the ascription of a large horseshoe to her is correct.²⁹ she may never have come nearer to Oakham than Burghley House. Secondly, over the doorway into the petty sessions room is a small horseshoe, to which is attached an amusing little story.

²⁵ Emmerson (1981) is in accord with JLB on this matter.

²⁶ See J L Barber, *The Wase Papers* in the Bodleian Library, *Rutland Record* 6 (1986), 212-13.

²⁷ This Roman masonry is now in Rutland County Museum.

²⁸ See T H McK Clough, *The Horseshoes of Oakham Castle* (1999).

²⁹ Indeed the horseshoe referred to is now thought most likely to have been put up by Edward IV in 1470 (Clough 1999, 8-10).

Fig. 34. The horseshoe over the doorway to the Magistrates' Court belonged to a horse called 'Clinker' (see Rudkin 1905-06).



At one time it was stolen from the Castle by an Oakham School boy and hidden under the floor of his study in School House. The boy who stole it would seem, without much doubt, to have been R N Jackson (at Oakham School 1845-47). After graduating at Sidney Sussex College, Cambridge, he became a Chaplain in the Royal Navy. From 1871-78 he was Vicar of Winchcombe in Gloucestershire. He was also godfather to Cecil Rhodes. Messing Rudkin in the *Rutland Magazine* Vol II March 1906 tries to give us a clue without openly

breaking confidence.³⁰ He writes: 'Suffice it to say, that the one who took the shoe bore for a Christian name the surname of the other, and from my knowledge of the history of Leicestershire, I believe them both to have been descended from a very old Leicestershire family of NOBLE character, if not of lineage'. The two men referred to were: Robert Noble and Robert Noble Jackson. The shoe was stolen in 1846 and returned in 1858 (the year that the great Dr Doncaster died and the year in which the old Hospital of Christ was pulled down and the new School House erected). When he left school he became a clergyman in the Church of England and had a parish down in the West Country. Eventually his conscience got the better of him and he returned the shoe, along with some doggerel verse to the Castle, where it has hung ever since.



Thirdly, a good deal of doubt seems to shroud the origin of what has now become something of a sentimental and picturesque custom. To my mind the most likely explanation is that the surrender of a horseshoe was not so much a due in itself as a pledge. Peers of the realm, who had occasion to visit Oakham, were probably accommodated by the Lord of the Manor, and a shoe was removed from their horse or horses overnight as a guarantee of payment before they left, and then restored to the horse by way of a receipt, as it were. Throughout all my years in Oakham the vast majority of the horseshoes have been made by local farriers.

Fig. 35. Part of the horseshoe collection in the Great Hall.

Para 6: 'FOUR CHAMBERS'

These would undoubtedly have been located at the west end of the hall, i.e. at the end furthest removed from the kitchen and service quarters, which we know to have been on the east end, both by general usage and by my own excavations in this area (see *Para 7*). Mr Raleigh Radford writes about this part of the Castle: 'Patching and fragmentary remains at the west end show that there was a two-storied solar block of the same width as the nave. It was entered by a door in the end of the north aisle and seems to have been flanked by a pent-roofed passage on this side'. This doorway is still visible, leading as it now does to two modern cells, whilst on the exterior of the west wall there are clear indications of the slope of the roof of this passage. It is just possible that there was a similar arrangement leading from the south aisle into the solar.³¹

Fig. 36. The doorway which JLB and others thought may have led to a former solar, and which now leads to two relatively modern prison cells.



³⁰ See Rudkin 1905-06; for clarification, there were two schoolboy thieves, R N Jackson and his brother, but when Rudkin says 'them both', he is referring to R N Jackson and another cleric, Robert Noble, in the context of a much later visit to the Castle; it is JLB who emphasises 'NOBLE'.

³¹ Although JLB, C A R Radford and others believed that there was a two-storey solar block at the west end of the Great Hall, Nick Hill has recently shown that this is not likely to have been the case, postulating instead a substantial lean-to structure at each end as the original design (Hill 2013).



Fig. 37 (left). Indications of the slope of the roof of a now lost adjoining lean-to structure.

Fig. 38 (below). A photograph of the Great Hall c1924 showing a small gabled room at the west end of the south aisle (Jack Hart Collection, Rutland County Museum).

A photo of the Castle taken not later than 1924 shows a very small gabled room to the west of the west end of the south aisle, which although set back some fifteen inches or so from the south wall, has the string course below the windows following through. It is constructed of rubble ironstone with freestone ashlar quoins, a Collyweston roof and a small pointed window to the west. The ironstone appears to have been of a better quality than that which composes the outer wall of the south aisle, and it may be that this small room was no more than a lavatory of comparatively late date and had no connection with the original layout. It was in any case removed to make room for the present judge's robing room.



High up on the west wall, at about the level where the gable end takes off, is an ashlar bracket, which must have carried a plate-beam for a roof sloping towards the west. (This is the arrangement whereby the roofs of the two aisles are attached to the nave). Moreover the conformation of the masonry on the west wall at the same level as the bracket (the single remaining bracket?) postulates a former roof line.

I imagine that this bracket (supposing that it really is in its original position in the obviously rebuilt gable end) would be set high enough up in the wall to have allowed of Mr Radford's 'two-storied solar', especially if one takes into consideration several feet of destruction rubble and humus which overlies the area of the solar. Some years ago a trench was dug in a long curved sweep from near the entrance to the Castle grounds to carry a fuel-oil pipe to the boiler house on the north side of the Castle. This cut right across the ground where the solar once lay, and revealed the same 'destruction level' stratification (rubble, stones, Collyweston tiles etc.) that I myself had found earlier on the east end of the hall. From this it would appear that the ground floor rooms of the solar would have been several feet lower than the existing level of the ground in this area. Indeed it could



be further argued that had the solar not been on two levels, there would hardly have been space enough between the west wall of the hall and the tail of the surrounding bank for the inclusion of 'four chambers' on the same level. The appearance of the ground cut through by the above-mentioned fuel-oil pipe suggests that scientific excavation on the west end of the Castle could fairly readily solve any remaining doubts about the size and nature of the solar.³²

Fig. 39. The west wall, showing the one surviving bracket for supporting a timber wall plate, which JLB thought was evidence for the roof of a solar.

³² Despite the efforts of Channel 4's *Time Team* (which found a demolished wall with an adjacent floor) and others such evidence remains elusive.

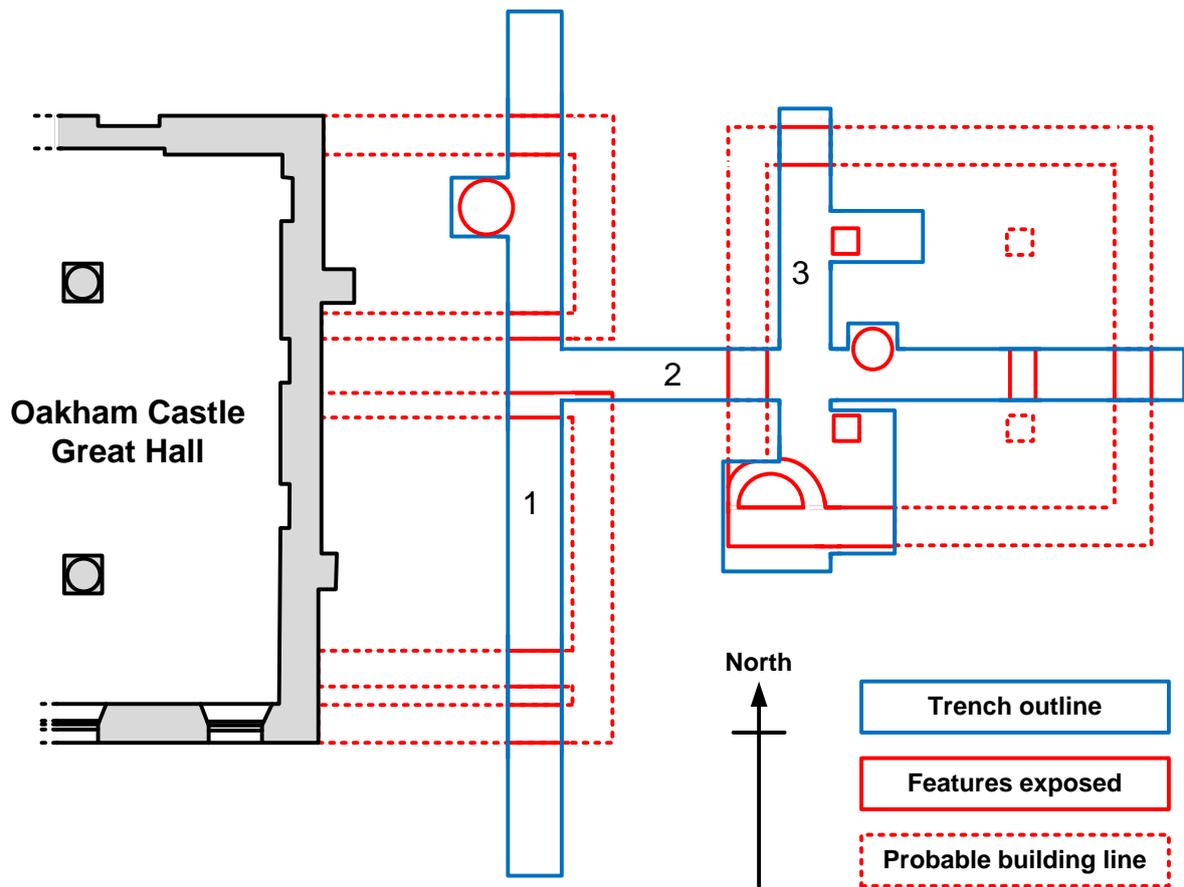


Fig. 40. Diagram A – the Trench Plan showing trenches 1, 2 and 3.
Based on a drawing prepared for John Barber by L R Revell.

Para 7: ‘ONE KITCHEN’

In the 1340 inquisition no mention is made of the buttery or pantry, but I feel sure that both must have existed and that my excavations have shown the whereabouts and dimensions of both. Perhaps they were deemed of too little importance or too obvious to include as separate items.³³

Therefore under the heading of ‘kitchen’ I shall consider not only the kitchen itself but also the buttery, the pantry and the associated passageway. At this point I feel bound to emphasise once more that my excavations were conducted a long time ago, and that what I remember of them should be taken more as a pointer to what lies beneath the ground at the east end of the hall than a full and definitive account. All this should be studied in conjunction with diagrams A, B, C, D and E, which were drawn, from my own measurements and sketches, by Mr L R Revell, at that time a junior in the County Surveyor’s office, and now working in a more senior capacity in Oxfordshire. To him I am greatly indebted. The excavations were limited in scale, and the work force was unskilled and not always available in the strength required.

Nonetheless the work done was sufficient to indicate what there was to be found, but was not on a large enough scale to vitiate a full and detailed enquiry in the future, if ever time and money allow.

Three main trenches were dug, each one four foot wide, but each had lateral extensions to facilitate the answering of certain cogent questions. I will consider each trench separately and what it revealed:

1. Trench No.1 (Diagram C):

This was some seventy foot long and its western edge was fifteen feet from the east wall of the hall: it extended beyond the line of the north and south walls of the hall, and was dug in the summer of 1956. It was laid out to try to determine the north and south dimensions of the Castle to the east of the east wall of the hall, whether there were any walls in line with the buttresses, and into what the three blocked up doorways led. The findings, not all fully understood it must be admitted, are shown in diagram C. The walls marked 11 and 13 are both earlier walls, and may relate either to an earlier phase of the existing castle or to an altogether earlier edifice (see *Para 4*).

³³ This area was reinvestigated as part of the *Time Team* project in 2012 (Good & Mephem 2013); see also Hill 2013.

Robbed wall 9 and robbed wall 17 denote the outer walls of the Castle to north and south but may not have been exactly in line with the walls of the north and south walls of the aisles of the hall, as there is evidence in the string course at all but the north-west corner of the hall (where the modern cells obscure the issue) that perhaps the buttery/pantry complex on the east end, and the solar on the west end, were set back a foot to fifteen inches.

Fig. 41. The stone-lined well found in Trench No 1 (JL Barber Archive, Rutland County Museum).



The robber trenches would allow of this, even though my diagrams A and B do not show it. On mature thought perhaps the plans should show a set-back line for these rooms, even though the overall picture is altered but little. The substantial wall 10 (later, I think the robbed wall 11), each probably three foot wide, and the narrower (two foot) wall 14 represent the north and south limits of what must surely have been the buttery, entered from the hall by the southernmost of the three blocked up doorways.

Fig. 42. The view along Trench No 1, looking south (JL Barber Archive, Rutland County Museum).



The robbed wall 17 (probably three foot) and the robbed wall 15 (two foot) would define what one imagines was the pantry, strategically placed on the sunless north of the Castle. Between walls 14 and 15 there was a four-foot wide passageway in line with the middle blocked up doorway. It must have led east to the detached kitchen, but whether it gave access to the buttery to the south, and to the pantry to the north, cannot be said in the present state of our knowledge. If the northernmost blocked up doorway led to the gallery above the screens alone (see *Para 5*), it would seem that there must have been some way into the pantry from the passageway. Other features on the diagram are as follows:

- 2: General destruction level, with the turf and humus above, called 1.
- 3: An ironstone floor, overlying blue lias clay, called 4, outside the south wall of the buttery (this probably was part of a large paved courtyard, see also *Para 10* later).
- 5: Occupation levels.
- 8: Denotes a burnt level outside the north wall of the pantry, and must not be confused with the 'cement' floor of buttery, pantry and passageway, marked 6 and 7, even though the diagram makes them look similar.
- 12: A hearthstone?
- 16: A well, we explored fruitlessly until the water level and lack of proper pumping equipment made deeper excavation impossible. The trench just clipped the edge of the well and was cut back at that point to enable the well to be examined.

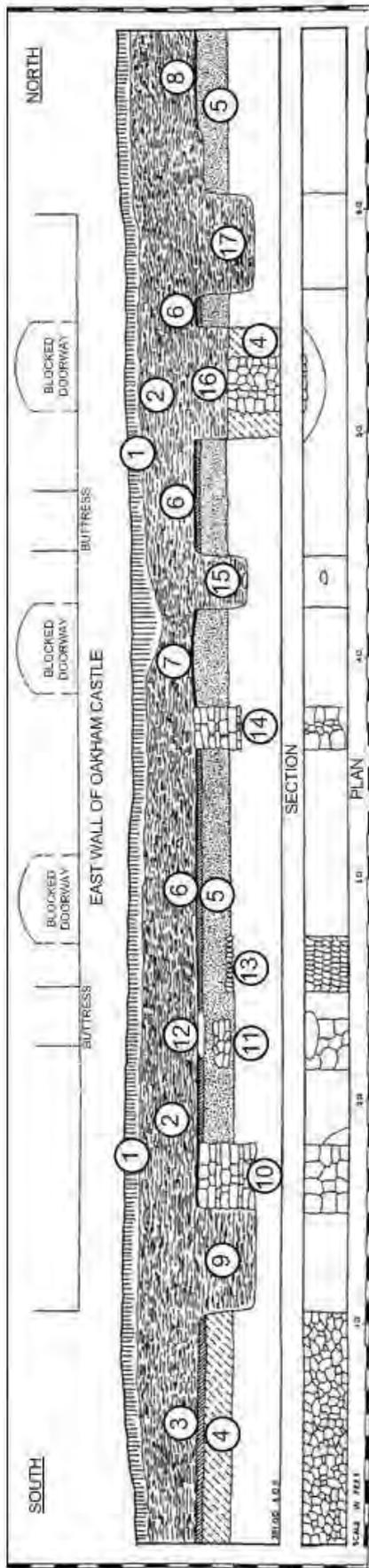


Fig. 43. Diagram C - Trench No 1 (JL Barber Archive, Rutland County Museum).

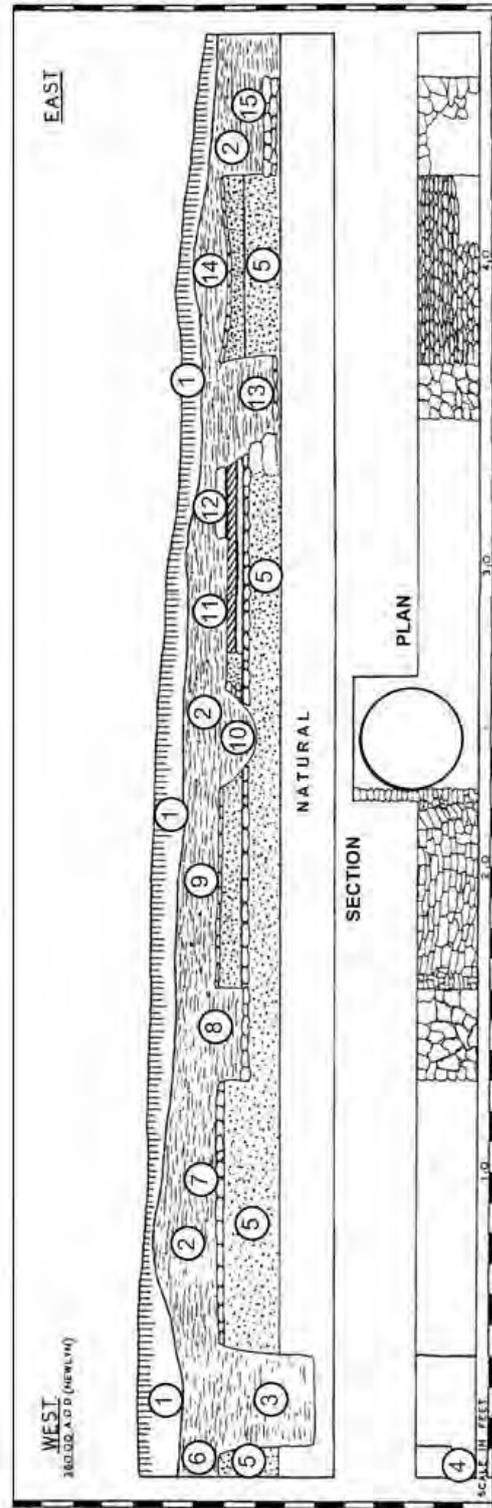


Fig. 44. Diagram E - Trench No 2 (JL Barber Archive, Rutland County Museum).

2. Trench No.2 (Diagram E):



This was an east-west trench from a point on the eastern edge of Trench No.1 above, roughly in line with the middle of the three blocked up doorways in the east wall of the hall: it was some forty-eight foot long, and like Trench No.3, was dug in the 1957 season. It was laid out in such a manner as to determine the eastward extent of the two rooms and the passageway, which the excavations of the previous year (ie Trench No.1) had revealed, and to discover what, if anything, lay even further to the east.

Fig. 45. Paved area exposed in Trench No 2 between the east wall of the buttery/pantry/passageway complex and the west wall of the kitchen (J L Barber Archive, Rutland County Museum).

The easternmost limits of the buttery, pantry and passageway were soon fixed, showing that the pantry had internal dimensions of slightly under twelve feet (north to south) by twenty-three feet (external) or twenty-one feet (internal) from east to west, the

buttery had the same east/west dimensions, and was eighteen feet, later twenty-one feet (internal dimensions) from north to south, and the passageway between them was slightly over four foot wide.

To the east of this complex came a gap of nine feet, all paved, and then a detached kitchen some thirty-two foot square (external dimensions) or twenty-six foot square (internal dimensions). It was a common medieval practice and fire precaution to have a separate kitchen, long before members of the N F S [National Fire Service] were there to advise on such matters. The key to diagram E has somehow been lost, but I will hazard a guess as follows:

- 1: Turf and humus.
- 2: General destruction level.
- 3: Robber trench for the eastern wall of the buttery/pantry/ passageway area.
- 4: Robber trench for the northern wall of the buttery/southern wall of the passageway.
- 5: Occupation levels.
- 6: ?
- 7: The large paved area between the east wall of the buttery/pantry/passageway complex and the west wall of the kitchen.
- 8: Robbed west wall of kitchen.
- 9 & 14: Paved area of kitchen floor.
- 10: Pit in kitchen floor.
- 11: ?
- 12: Perhaps a hearthstone.
- 13: Robber trench: meaning not clear.
- 15: Remains of east wall of kitchen.



Fig. 46. The view along Trench No 2 looking east, showing the pit in the kitchen floor (J L Barber Archive, Rutland County Museum).

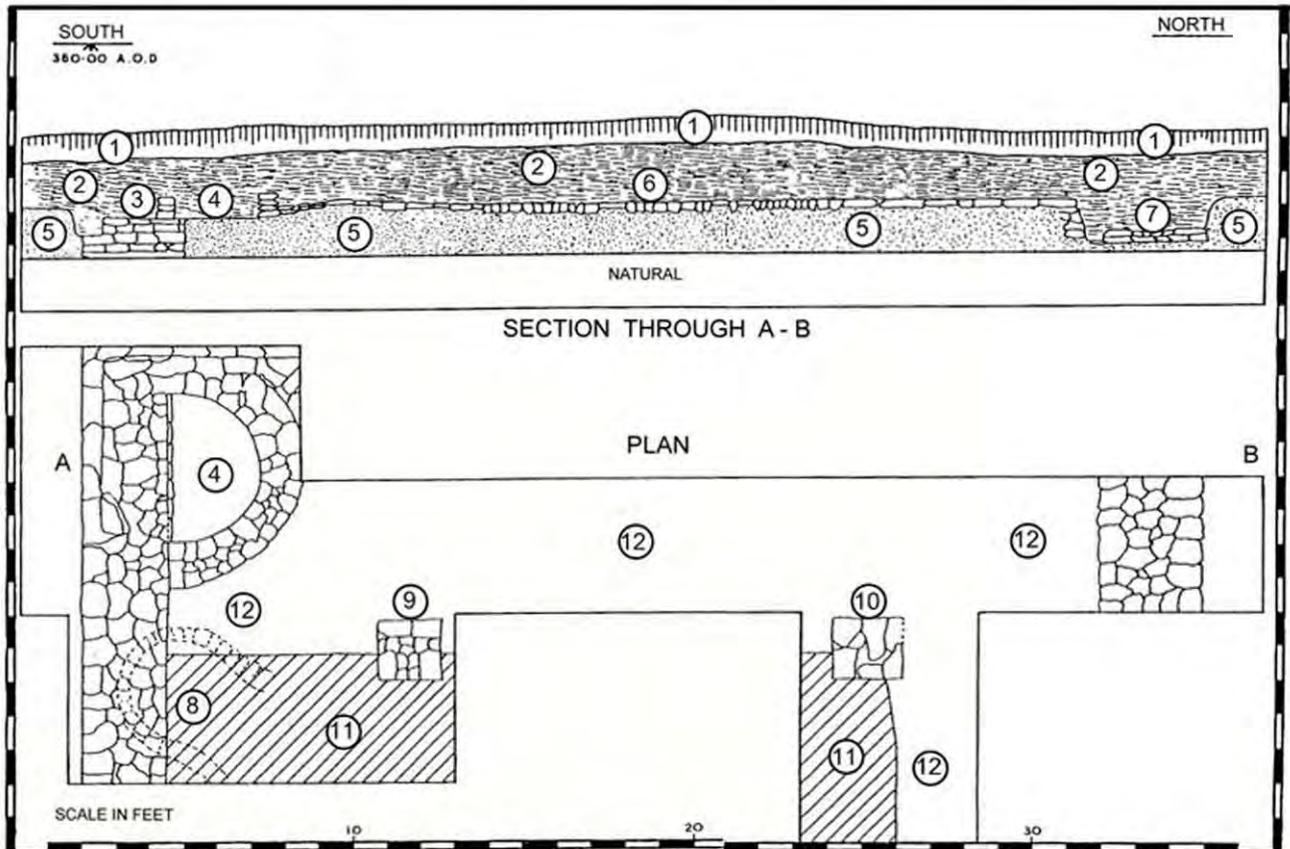


Fig. 47. Diagram D – Trench No 3 (JL Barber Archive, Rutland County Museum).

3. Trench No.3 (Diagram D):

The third trench, also part of the 1957 season's work, ran parallel to Trench No.1, about seventeen feet further east, and was a mere thirty-six feet long. It was dug to discover more about the kitchen, whose east-west dimensions had been identified by Trench No.2. It turned out to be thirty-two foot square (internal), with a baking oven in the extreme south-west corner, remains of an earlier one nearby, two stone column footings (presumably we should have found four had more ground been uncovered) and a well paved area around the central (cooking?) floor. As with diagram E, the key to diagram D has been lost, but I will again chance my arm, as follows:

- 1: Turf and humus.
- 2: General destruction level.
- 3: Three-foot wide south wall of kitchen.
- 4: Baking oven.
- 5: Occupation levels.
- 6: Paved flooring.
- 7: North wall of kitchen.
- 8 & 11: ?
- 9 & 10: Column footings.
- 12: ?



Fig. 48. The baking oven found in Trench No 3 (JL Barber Archive, Rutland County Museum).

My general recollection of the kitchen is that it was square, with its northern wall in line with the northern wall of the pantry. There were probably four columns, supporting a roof with louvres along the column tops. Perhaps the central area was open to the sky and the four aisles covered. The four aisles were certainly better paved and better finished than the central area.



Trodden into the floor we found some egg shells and skeleton of a carp (no doubt reared in the Castle's own fish stews). Also discovered in this area was a pierced skimmer with the handle missing (see also **Postscript**).

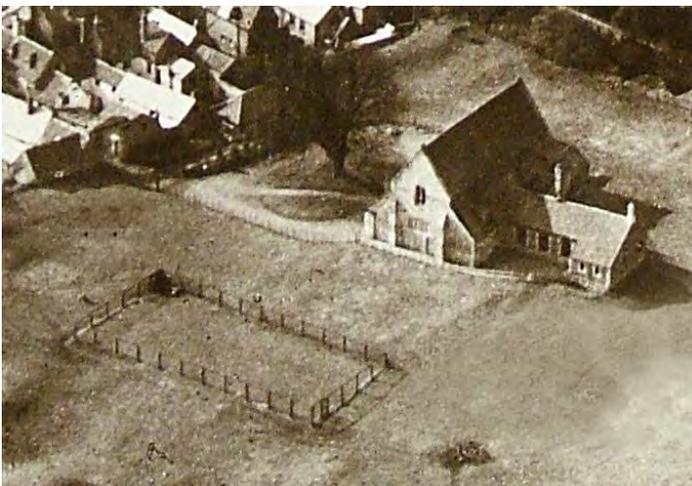
There is nothing to show what the roof of the buttery/pantry complex looked like, but it was probably attached to the hall by a plate-beam, as was the solar at the west end, and a roof sloping downwards from west to east. There is nothing to show whether it was a one-storey or a two-storey building, but the former seems more likely. It would have been low enough not to have obscured the large Norman window, wherever it may originally have been sited, but the late 16th century window can only have been added when the buttery/pantry complex was already in some state of decay or even dismantled.

Diagram A [fig. 40] shows the three trenches in relation to one another and the extent of the excavations, all delineated in blue, whilst diagram B [fig. 51] shows the new discoveries in relation to the existing hall. The pottery in general covers a span from the late 12th century to the early 14th century, and consists mostly of late Stamford ware and St Neots ware.³⁴

*Fig. 49. View along trench No 3
(J L Barber Archive, Rutland County Museum).*

Para 8: 'TWO STABLES AND ONE GRANGE FOR HAY'

Far too little work has been done on the Castle demesne to make the location of such places anything but guesswork. It is unlikely that they would be joined onto the main building any more than the kitchen. Such places as stables and a grange for hay are likely to have been situated somewhere to the east of the Castle, as far removed from the solar and hall as possible. There are plenty of humps and hollows covering the probable site



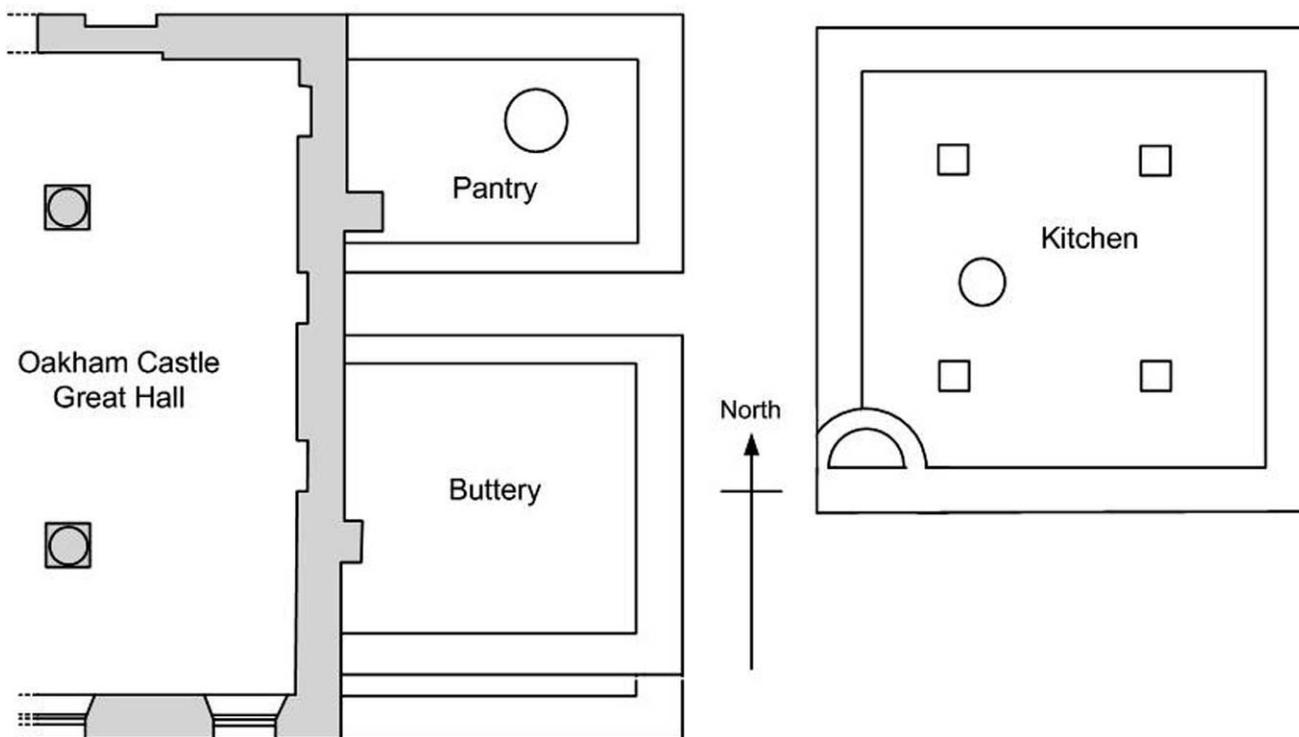
of such outbuildings, whilst the fall in the level of the ground within the inner bailey from west to east is further argument for the buildings, whether in stone or in wood, having stood in the general area east of the kitchen. I might at this point add a warning to future investigators, namely that the conformation of the ground to the east of the hall is probably a reasonably accurate indication of what lies beneath, EXCEPT that at one time earlier in the present century, the ground immediately to the east of the kitchen was levelled out to form a tennis court, whose outline can still be recognised.

*Fig. 50. The former tennis court at Oakham Castle
(Jack Hart Collection, Rutland County Museum).*

Para 9: 'ONE HOUSE FOR PRISONERS' and 'ONE CHAMBER FOR THE PORTER'

The fact that the gaol or dungeon is described as a 'house for prisoners' makes it likely that it was a free-standing building, possibly also containing 'one chamber for the porter', who might likewise have been the janitor. This building might well have been close to the main gate, and Mr Gathercole's excavations, though carried out in a very limited area and much hampered by the disturbed nature of the ground around the Castle entrance, brought to light an oven there. It is just possible that the building, to which the oven belonged, and which was levelled out (in the general tidying up to which I have several times alluded) was none other than 'one house for prisoners' or 'one chamber for the porter', or even both these things.

³⁴ Actually Stamford and Lyveden Stanion / Coarse Shelly Ware: the pottery is described by Deborah Sawday in Appendix A.



*Fig. 51. Diagram B – The 'New Discoveries' at the east end of the Great Hall.
Based on a drawing prepared for John Barber by L R Revell.*



*Fig. 52. The horse chestnut tree and the old shambles at Oakham Castle circa 1915
(Jack Hart Collection, Rutland County Museum).*

Para 10: 'DRAWBRIDGE WITH IRON CHAINS'

Of course no trace of these survives, though it is just possible, were a full investigation possible, that something of the stonework on either side of the moat might still lie in Castle Lane and within the castle courtyard.

We know a little of the courtyard that must have lain to the south of the buttery, whilst the horse chestnut tree (removed in 1979 because it was dangerous) had leaves which always curled up and withered prematurely in a long dry spell. Many visitors noted this and even imagined that it was some rare and unusual species of horse chestnut tree. But in my own opinion this was due to the fact that its roots could find no way through the ironstone floor beneath and consequently lacked moisture. It is to avoid interference with what lies below that no new tree has been planted. The tree recently felled was, it is said, at least the second to have occupied that site in front of the main entrance door.³⁵ The paving in the courtyard and that around the edges of the kitchen was very substantial, being made of stones lying on edge rather than flat, much as one often sees them in old stabling to this day.

Para 11: ADDITIONAL NOTES ON THE BAILEY

I do not propose to comment further on the 1340 inquisition, but I have a few additional observations to make about the bailey and the hall, as follows:

(a) A concrete slab to the north-east of the hall covers the place where there was once a water supply for the cattle that grazed there. There is no evidence to show whether this was an ancient or a modern well, or whether modern farmers made use of an ancient supply in an area where an outbuilding of the Castle may well have stood, eg 'the two stables'.

(b) For many years the old shambles stood to the west of the main gateway, that is at the back of the Post Office, but they gradually fell more and more into disrepair and were eventually dismantled (some time in the last thirty years). They had been moved from their original site in the Market Place in 1880. There remains little in the area west of the main gateway of the bank surrounding the Castle, and my guess is that it was levelled down to form a platform for the shambles. The present raised lawn at this point is therefore most likely a vestige of the bank.

(c) On the string course of the hall at the south-eastern corner there are various notches in the stone. They have no antiquarian interest, but were inserted to take the sneck of a small iron gate, which led round to the back of the hall when most of the Castle grounds were fenced off as a cattle field. In parenthesis I remember vividly the enlargement of my vocabulary, when one of the Captain Cecil Ball's cows broke through the barbed wire and fell into my first trench!³⁶

(d) The Castle bailey, inside the bank on the north-eastern corner, is said to be one of three 'Daneweed Stations' in Rutland (others are at Great Casterton and on the Barrowden-Seaton road). The plant, which is not unlike elder, and which is alternatively called 'Danewort' or 'Bloodwort', is said to grow where a Dane fell in battle.³⁷

Para 12: BIBLIOGRAPHY

Editors' note: JLB included a list of eleven titles in this section. To avoid duplication these have been included in the main bibliography below, where they are marked with asterisks.

Para 13: POSTSCRIPT

(To be read in conjunction with **Para 7**). Since I wrote this section of **Para 7**, I have further studied the east end of the hall. At a point roughly where the gable takes off there is a line of stones, all ironstone except for one piece of freestone, which are a better quality than the rubble ironstone above and below. There is no sign of any bracket, as on the west end (see **Para 6**), but if it had corresponded exactly with that at the west end, it would in any case have had to be removed to make way for the large Norman window. This course of stones runs right across the east wall, except for the fact that it is interrupted by this large window. This seems to me to give some clue to the line of the roof, which covered the buttery/pantry complex, and to be further evidence that the large Norman window is not in its original position.

³⁵ The sequence of chestnut trees can be established with the aid of old photographs.

³⁶ Captain Ball farmed what had been the home farm of Catmose House; he also had a farmyard adjacent to the south-east corner of the Castle earthworks, with a gateway that enabled cattle to be brought in to graze in the inner bailey.

³⁷ See Sargant (nd) for an account of Daneweed.



Para 14: JETTON

(December 1979) Found on the paved area to the south of the buttery. It is English or Aquitainian, 14th century (mid-2nd half), diam. 20mm, pierced as usual, cf. Barnard Pl II, 36:

Obverse: Stylized Agnus Dei with a border of paired semi-circles.
Reverse: Cross fleury; three pellets in each quarter and one between each pair of fleurs.

Fig. 53. Jetton (Barnard 1917, Pl II, 36).

FURTHER THOUGHTS

(June 15th 1991): Further thoughts, some eleven years later, see **Para 4**. All that I am about to add now could reasonably easily be checked by archaeological research and some adequate funding. I would hazard a guess that there were about NINE bastions or interval towers on the curtain wall, all of them rounded rather than squared in outline, as follows, from the present gateway in clockwise progression:

- 1 & 2. Flanking the present entrance and the drawbridge. No visible remains.
3. In the garden of ‘Choir Close’, the red brick house on the corner of Church Passage and the path leading to Cutt’s Close. The tower here I can remember, but it had been interfered with at various times, having been ‘landscaped’ into the garden. The house belongs to Oakham School.
4. Adjacent to the (much vandalised) Public Lavatories. This I remember seeing clearly delineated, and I recall its rounded profile.
5. East of the Old School (now known as The Shakespeare Centre). No evidence, but the wall must have turned east hereabouts in any case and have formed the southern edge of the moat along the reach that widened out to form the fish stews, where the Cottesmore hounds so often meet on Boxing Day.
6. At the north eastern corner, where a large sycamore now grows. Little evidence, except that the wall must have turned south at this point (just opposite the now vanished ‘Tipples’³⁸). There may also have been a tower between 5 and 6, which I will call 7. No evidence.
7. See under 6.
8. Half-way along the eastern wall. These butt joints provide, in my mind, the strongest evidence of the interval towers, being evidence of the towers having collapsed (into the moat?) and the walls made good without them. There might even have been TWO towers along this eastern stretch of wall.
9. The motte in the south-eastern corner of the enclosure, however that was incorporated into the scheme of things. Certainly it has been cut back in no uncertain manner – to make way for the moat? – and various ornamental features cut into it when it formed part of the garden of the house on the other side of Burley Road, which I always knew as ‘Grannie Bradshaw’s house’. [Bradshaws were] the coal/corn merchants in Mill Street/South Street.

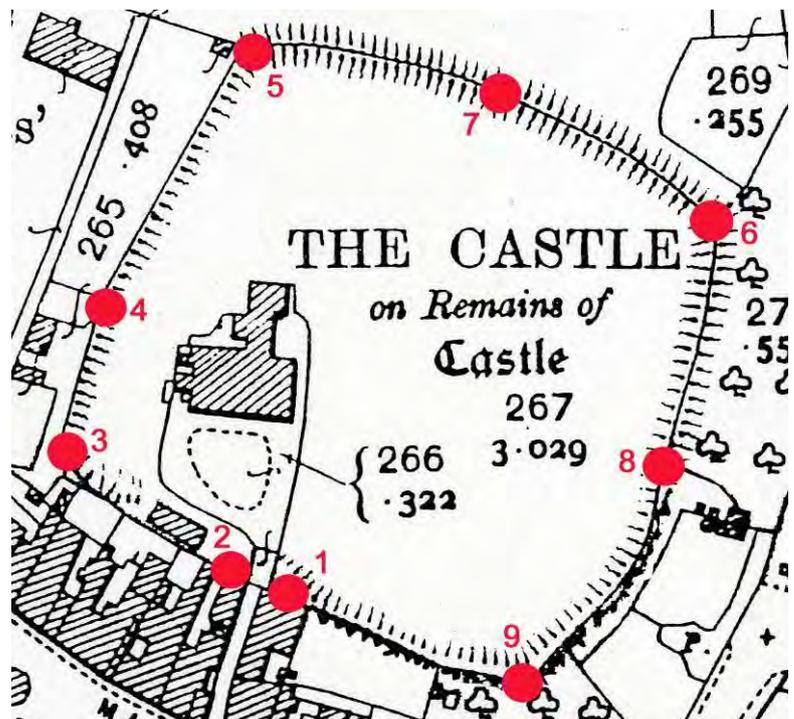


Fig. 53. John Barber’s thoughts on the locations of the bastions on the curtain wall of the Castle site, shown on the OS Second Edition map of 1904.

³⁸ As far as can be determined from enquiries made locally, this refers to one or more sets of railings along Burley Road, made of metal tubes and concrete posts on which children used to play, often ‘tipping’ off, similar to but not the same as those which surround Cutt’s Close today.

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This section includes entries from John Barber's Bibliography in his *Para 12* above; these are indicated by asterisks. It also includes articles by him which appeared in *Rutland Record*, as mentioned in the Introduction.

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All additional photographs and other illustrations are by the editors unless otherwise acknowledged.

Elaine Jones and Robert Ovens

Appendix A

The Pottery from John Barber's Excavation

by Deborah Sawday

Editors' note: The fabric references in this report, originally written in 1999, were updated by the author in May 2011.

All the pottery (226 sherds, 4478 grams) and ridge tile (18 fragments, 1331 grams) was examined under a x20 binocular microscope and catalogued by fabric, vessel form and context. Quantification was by sherd/fragment numbers and weight (grams) (Tables 1 and 2).

<i>Fabric</i>	<i>Common Name/Kiln & Fabric Equivalent where known</i>	<i>Approx Date Range</i>
ST2	Stamford ware: fine, fabrics G B/(A) ⁽¹⁾	c.1050–12th C
ST1	Stamford ware: very fine, fabrics B/C ⁽¹⁾	c.1150–13th C
PM	Potters Marston ware: Potters Marston, Leicestershire ⁽²⁾	c.1100–c.1300/50+
CS	Coarse Shelly ware (includes sherds previously catalogued as Lyveden/Stansion A ware): ?Northants CTS fabric 330 ⁽³⁾	c.1100–1400
LY4	Lyveden/Stansion type: Northampton fabric T6 (11), Lyveden/Stansion 'A' ware, Northants CTS fabric 319 ⁽³⁾	c.1100/50–1400
LY1	Lyveden/Stansion type: Lyveden/Stansion 'B' ware, Northants CTS fabric 320 ⁽³⁾	c.1200/1225–1400
NO1	Nottingham Early Green Glazed ware fabric NOTGE ⁽⁴⁾	c.1210–c.1250
NO2	?Nottingham Coarse Sandy Ware NCSW ⁽⁴⁾	c.1230–c.1280
NO3	Nottingham Light Bodied/Reduced Green Glazed ware NOTGL/NOTGR ⁽⁴⁾	early/mid 13th C – c.1350
BO2	Bourne A/B wares/type ware ⁽⁵⁾	c.1250–1450
BO1	Bourne D ware/type ⁽⁵⁾	c.1450–1650
MS/MS2	Medieval Sandy ware 2: misc. coarse soft fired quartz tempered fabrics, including coarse Chilvers Coton fabrics A/Ai ⁽⁶⁾ and ?Nottingham, Burley Hill/Allestree, Derbyshire and Staffs ⁽⁷⁾	Early/mid 13th C – 1400
CW2	Cistercian ware 2: ?Nottingham/Ticknall, Derbyshire ⁽⁵⁾	c.1450/1475–1550
MB	Midland Blackware: ?Ticknall, Derbyshire ⁽⁸⁾	c.1550–1750
EA6	Earthenware 6: Black Glazed Earthenware ⁽⁸⁾	16th C–18th C
SW7	Black Basalt: Etruria, Staffs	c.1770/80+

⁽¹⁾ Kilmurry 1980, Leach 1987

⁽²⁾ Haynes 1952, Davies & Sawday 1999

⁽³⁾ Northants CTS

⁽⁴⁾ Nailor & Young 2001, Nailor 2005

⁽⁵⁾ Healey 1973, Young *et al* 2005

⁽⁶⁾ Mayes & Scott 1984

⁽⁷⁾ Coppack 1980, Cumberpatch 2002-03, Nichol & Ratkai 2004

⁽⁸⁾ Spavold & Brown 2005

Table 1. The Pottery and Tile Fabrics.

The Stratigraphic Record (Tables 2 & 3)

The earliest stratigraphic level with pottery, from below the north wall of the kitchen, context A (5),¹ produced a single sherd of very fine Stamford ware (fabric ST1), dating between c.1150 and 1250. Another copper glazed sherd in the same fabric was found under the floor of the kitchen, context B (5), together with eight sherds of hand-made pottery in the Lyveden/Stansion fabrics LY1 and LY4 and Coarse Shelly ware, fabric CS. Fabrics LY4 and CS date from the 12th century, and LY1 is dated from c.1225. A residual sherd of fine Stamford ware, fabric ST2, dating from c.1050+, and

¹ For JLB's context numbers, see Tables 2 and 3.

36 sherds in Nottingham, Bourne, Lyveden/Stanion, Coarse Shelly and Medieval Sandy wares, with a terminal date in the late 13th or early 14th century, were recovered from the occupation level outside the south wall of the kitchen, context C. The identifiable vessels in fabric LY1 included a minimum of four highly decorated jugs. Also present was a ridge tile fragment in the Bourne fabric BO2, dating from the mid 13th century.

Sixteen pottery sherds were recovered from the well, including three sherds of glazed Nottingham ware, fabric NO2, dated c.1230-1300, at the lowest recorded level, context K. Nine sherds of Lyveden/Stanion type ware, fabrics LY1 and LY4, and Coarse Shelly wares, fabric CS, dating from the 13th century, were also present in the two lower levels, contexts K and L. Four glazed sherds of pottery in the Nottingham fabric NO3 and the Medieval Sandy ware MS2, all thought to date from the 14th century, were recovered from the upper levels, Context M.

However the bulk of the material was recovered from the general destruction levels, contexts D – J (2), and dated from the Saxo-Norman to the 18th or 19th century, though most of the pottery and ridge tile lay within a late 12th, 13th and 14th century date range.

The Ceramic Record (Tables 4 to 6 and Figs 1 & 2)

The five sherds of Stamford ware, fabrics ST1 and ST2, date from the mid 11th to the 12th or possibly early 13th century. The limestone tempered Coarse Shelly wares and Lyveden/Stanion types wares, fabrics CS, LY1 and LY4, dating from the late 12th to the 13th or early 14th centuries, were the most common, accounting for 51% and 63% of the pottery recovered from the site by sherd numbers and weight respectively. All these wares are thought to originate from both known and unknown kilns on the Jurassic limestone in east Northamptonshire and Bedfordshire. Most of this pottery was hand made, and included 12th and 13th century cooking pots/storage jars and bowls in CS and LY4, whilst typically many of the vessels in fabric LY1 were jugs decorated with applied white clay slip and grid stamped pads under the transparent lead glaze. The Nottingham ware fabrics NO1, NO2 and NO3 accounted for 18% and 14% of the pottery totals by sherd number and weight. Most of the Nottingham ware sherds were glazed, and were probably all from jugs, with a date range from the 13th into the 14th century. The Bourne fabrics BO1 and BO2, dating from the 13th to the mid 17th century, were equally common, and again, like the Nottingham wares, were mostly glazed jugs, though at least one cistern was recognised in the later medieval or early post medieval fabric BO1. Also present was a single sherd of 12th or 13th century Potters Marston ware. Medieval Sandy ware dating from the 13th and 14th centuries, and fragments of late medieval or early post medieval pottery in Cistercian and Midland Blackware, probably both of Midlands origin, were also present.

Of the 18 fragments of ridge tile recovered from the site, seven were in the Lyveden/Stanion fabric LY1, and eleven in the Bourne ware fabrics BO1 and BO2.

Discussion

Most pottery, save the occasional import, was of low status in medieval England, and wealthy households, as here at Oakham Castle, would have used metal as a first choice, especially as a table ware. Pottery and wooden vessels would generally have been used by the servants for their own needs, and for the preparation and storage of food in the kitchen and elsewhere. Hence the range of fabrics present here is typical of that found across the region, and is also very similar to other material recorded by the author at Oakham Castle. This is a reflection not only of the status of pottery but the generally local trade and distribution patterns of pottery in the medieval period.

In terms of the fabrics, Stamford was a major pottery making centre from the late ninth to the early to mid thirteenth centuries, followed by sources dating from the twelfth and thirteenth centuries and later which included the Lyveden/Stanion complex of kilns in north Northamptonshire and elsewhere on the Jurassic System, Bourne in Lincolnshire and Nottingham. One fragment of Potters Marston, from south-west Leicestershire, was recorded, whilst the origins of the Medieval Sandy and Cistercian/Blackwares wares are less certain, although one possibility is kilns at Nottingham, or production centres in the east Midlands, notably Warwickshire and Derbyshire.

Similarly the pottery vessels are typically domestic in nature, with jars, jugs and bowls all present. Whilst it is tempting to assume that the highly decorated Lyveden/Stanion jugs in particular may be indicative of a well-to-do household, in fact these pots are found on all types of sites from hamlets to urban centres. However, there is no doubt that the potters were copying decorative motifs used in leatherwork, for instance, to make their products more attractive in the market.

<i>Barber's context numbers (see Table 3)</i>														
<i>Pottery</i>	(5)	(5)	–	(2)	(2)	(2)	(2)	(2)	(2)	(2)	–	–	–	<i>Fabric totals</i>
	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M	
ST2			1/17					2/12						3/29
ST1	1/4	1/2												2/6
PM							1/10							1/10
LY4/CS		6/98	5/137			9/451	20/676	25/306	2/58	6/215	1/6	7/140		81/2087
LY1		2/17	15/303			5/200	7/146			5/82		1/15		35/763
NO1			2/11						2/6	4/37				8/54
NO2										1/8	3/32			4/40
NO3			10/90				2/20		9/327	7/120			2/17	30/574
BO2			2/52				1/18		3/41	3/80				9/191
BO1				29/336		1/6	5/110							35/452
MS2					1/10								2/102	3/112
MS			2/26				2/32		1/3	4/30				9/91
CW2							1/10			1/28				2/38
CW/MB				1/15										1/15
EA6							2/11							2/11
SW7							1/5							1/5
<i>Site Totals</i>														226/4478
<i>Ridge tile</i>														
LY1				1/37					4/215	2/153				7/405
BO2			1/44	1/20		1/37			2/110	2/108				7/319
BO/BO1										4/607				4/607
<i>Site Totals</i>														18/1331

Table 2. The pottery and ridge tile by number of sherds or fragments / weight (grams), by context.

<i>Barber's context number</i>		<i>Barbers' description on boxes</i>	<i>Sawday's reference number</i>
(2)	General destruction levels D–J:		
	D	floor of kitchen near north pillar	3
	E	near well, pantry floor level	5
	F	footings level outside north wall of kitchen	8
	G	above kitchen floor	4
	H	destruction level to the north of north wall of kitchen	7
	I	destruction level kitchen, south wall	9
	J	cf. pot from kitchen floor	U/S
(5)	A & B		
	A	under north wall of kitchen	1
	B	inside north wall of kitchen & under kitchen floor	2
	C		
	C	occupation level outside south wall of kitchen	6
	Well K–M		
	K	6–7 feet down	12
	L	4½–5 feet down	11
	M	1–3 feet down	10

Table 3. Concordance of John Barber's context numbers and Deborah Sawday's reference numbers, as used in the detailed analysis in Table 6.

<i>Fabric</i>	<i>Sherd nos.</i>	<i>% of sherd nos.</i>	<i>Weight (gm)</i>	<i>% of weight</i>
<i>Pottery</i>				
ST2	3		29	
ST1	2		6	
subtotal	5	2.2	35	0.7
PM	1		10	
LY4/CS	81		2087	
LY1	35		763	
subtotal	116	51.3	2850	63.6
NO1	8		54	
NO2	4		40	
NO3	30		574	
subtotal	42	18.5	668	14.9
BO2	9		191	
BO1	35		452	
subtotal	44	19.4	643	14.3
MS2	3		112	
MS	9		91	
subtotal	12	5.3	203	4.5
CW2	2		38	
CW/MB	1		15	
EA6	2		11	
SW7	1		5	
subtotal	6	2.6	69	1.5
Totals	226	99.3	4478	99.5
<i>Ridge tile</i>				
LY1	7		405	
BO2	7		319	
BO/BO1	4		607	
Totals	18		1331	

*Table 4 (left).
The pottery and ridge tile site totals in approximate chronological order by fabric sherd numbers and weight.*

*Table 5 (below).
Key to the pottery illustrations (figs 1 & 2) (Elaine Jones).*

<i>Illus. no.</i>	<i>Context</i>	<i>Fabric</i>	<i>Description</i>
1	unlabelled	LY4	hand made cooking pot/jar, reduced black throughout
2	outside wall to north of kitchen	LY4/CS	hand made rim shoulder of a cooking pot/jar, the rim top is thumbbed, and the body decorated with applied and notched clay strips – the strips are in the same fabric as the body
3	above kitchen floor	LY4/CS	hand made bowl rim
4	as above	LY4/CS	hand made bowl rim with internal thumbing
5	kitchen destruction level	LY4/CS	hand made & externally thumbbed bowl rim, glazed internally
6	above kitchen floor	LY1	hand made jug body, decorated with applied white clay slip under the glaze
7	above kitchen floor/outside wall to north of kitchen	LY1	wheel thrown jug rim, body and base, decorated with applied white clay slip and with white clay pads with grid stamps under the glaze
8	unlabelled	NO3	wheel thrown jug base, with stacking evidence of a jug rim and pouring lip with glaze underneath
9	as above	NO3	wheel thrown jug base, with stacking evidence including glaze underneath
10	near well, pantry floor level/well first 3'	MS2	wheel thrown bowl
11	kitchen floor	BO1	wheel thrown jug rim and base, glazed
12	above kitchen floor	BO1	wheel thrown cistern rim
13	unlabelled	CW2	wheel thrown, splayed base, crudely finished underneath, glazed
14	as above	BO/BO1	hand built ridge tile with serpentine crest, glazed

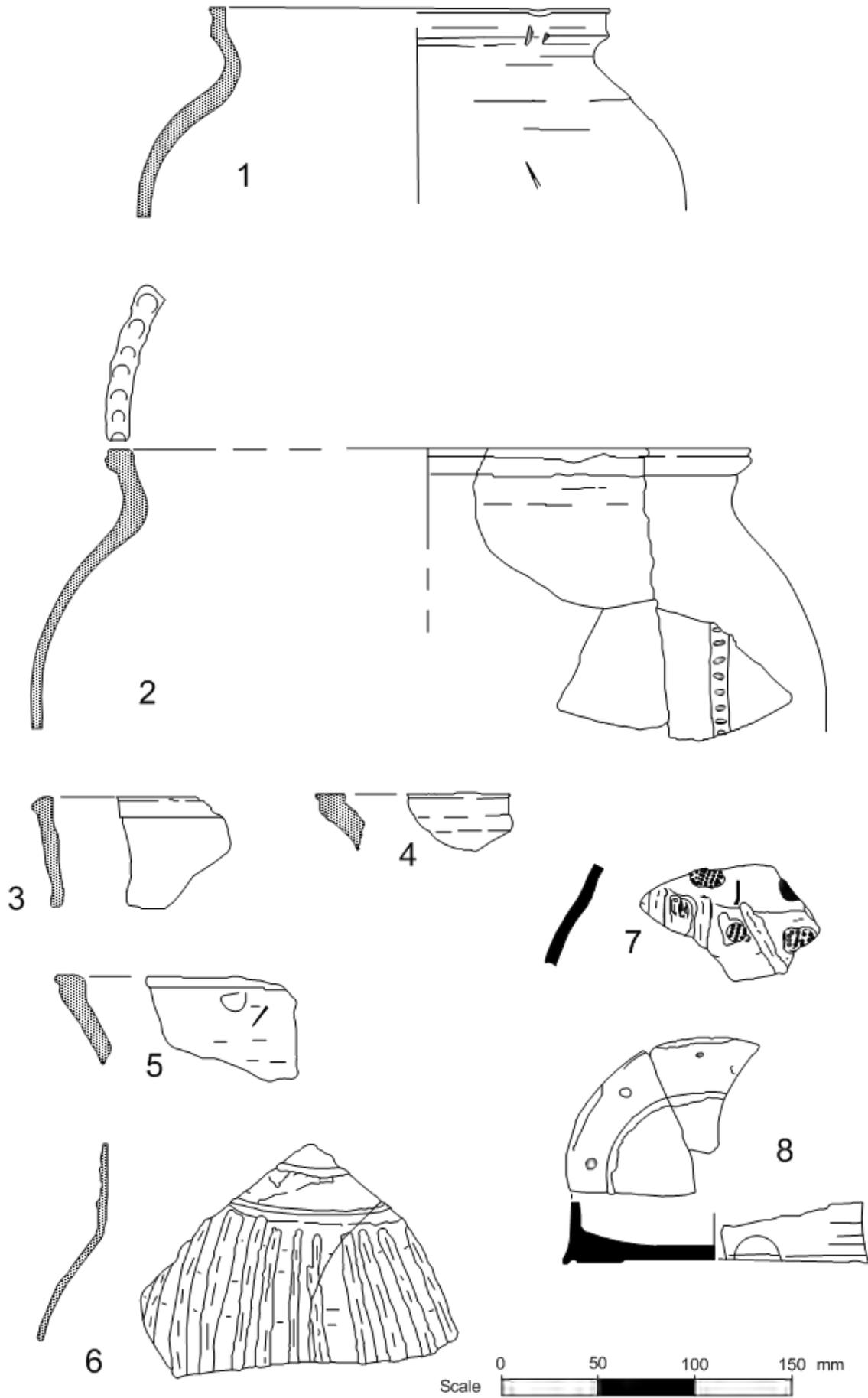


Fig. 1. Pottery illustrations (see Table 5) (Elaine Jones).

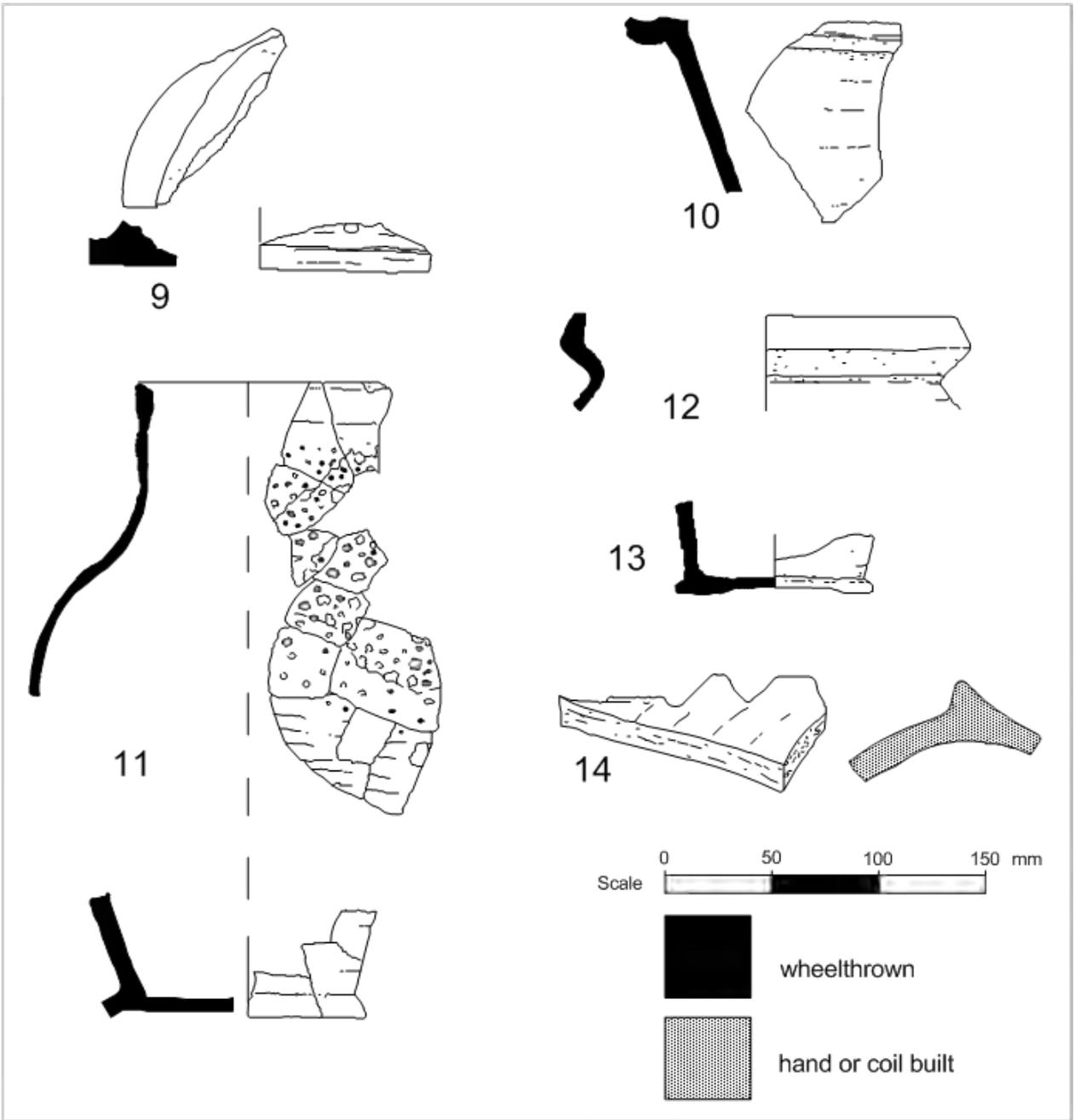


Fig. 2. Pottery illustrations – continued (see Table 5) (Elaine Jones).

Table 6. Analysis of the pottery from John Barber's excavations.

The pottery has been given the following context reference numbers. For a concordance of these numbers and John Barber's context numbers allied to the written descriptions on the boxes see Table 3:

- (1) Under north wall of kitchen
 - (2) Inside north wall of kitchen and under floor
 - (3) Floor of kitchen near north pillar
 - (4) Above kitchen floor
 - (5) Near well, pantry floor level
 - (6) Occupation level outside south wall of kitchen
 - (7) Destruction level to the north of north wall of kitchen
 - (8) From outside wall to the north of kitchen, footings level
 - (9) Destruction level kitchen, south wall
 - (10) Well: first 3 feet
 - (11) Well: 4½–5 feet down
 - (12) Well: below gravel, 6–7 feet down
- U/S Unlabelled: cf. pot from kitchen floor (& bronze nutcracker)

Ref. no.	Fabric	Ware	No. of sherds	Weight (gm)	Comments
Pottery					
(1)	ST1	Stamford ware 1	1	4	random knife trimming exterior, c.1150-c.1250
(2)	ST1	Stamford ware 1	1	2	speckled lead and copper glaze exterior, c.1150+
	LY4	Lyveden/Stanion 4	6	98	hand built, all exterior sooted, 12th century
	LY1	Lyveden/Stanion 1	2	17	hand built, later 12th/early 13th century
(3)	BO1	Bourne Ware 1	29	336	minimum of two vessels, one a glazed jug, with an externally thumbled splayed base, and a thumbled pouring lip, c.1450-c.1650
	CW/MB	Cistercian/Midland Blackware	1	15	glazed ?cup fragment, c.1475-c.1650
(4)	MS	Medieval Sandy ware	1	7	brown glaze exterior, ?14th century, links with (6) and (9)
	NO3	Nottingham ware 3	2	20	both green glazed (with black inclusions), lightly reduced interior, later 13th century
	LY4	Lyveden/Stanion 4 CS – Coarse Shelly	20	676	hand built, thickened bowl rim with interior thumbing with body & base fragments, similar to pottery from Lyveden (Steane 1967, fig 8.a-b), a simple everted bowl rim & body with external sooting. Bowl paralleled at Northampton (McCarthy 1979, fig. 83.112) where dated from c.1100+, and similar forms in Lincolnshire dated from later 12th/early 13th century (Adams Gilmour 1988, fig 47.35), so possibly residual here. Minimum of two vessels, one with convex base & external sooting, the other sooted internally & externally, all hand built (min. 4 vessels in total)
	LY1	Lyveden/Stanion 1	7	146	5 sherds glazed, 4 decorated also with vertical applied white clay strips, one also with applied grid stamped white clay pads; minimum of 4 vessels, probably all jugs, all hand built, save a wheel thrown jug body which joins with (8), later 13th or early 14th century (Bellamy 1983)
	PM	Potters Marston	1	10	hand built, 12th/13th century
	BO2	Bourne ware	1	18	13th century +
	MS	Medieval Sandy ware	1	25	wheel thrown, red bodied, brown glazed, links with (6) & (9)

	BO1	Bourne ware 1	5	110	ridged strap handle, and cistern rim (diameter c.18cm) not paralleled at Bourne, but range of kilns producing Bourne D ware limited at the kiln site (Healey 1973), possible similar to early 16th century D ware from Lincoln (McCarthy & Brooks 1988, fig. 255.1835), links with (8)a
	CW2	Cistercian ware 2	1	10	glazed ?cup handle, c.1475-1550
	EA6	Blackware	2	11	2 joining strap handle fragments from a cup or mug, c.1550-c.1750
	SW7	Black Basalt ware	1	5	stoneware with machined decoration, late 18th/early 19th century
(5)	MS2	Med. Sandy ware 2	1	10	pink bodied, orange/yellow glaze interior, bowl, joins with (10), ?14th century
(6)	ST2	Stamford ware 2	1	17	greenish yellow lead glaze & combed wavy line & straight line decoration on exterior, c.1050-c.1200
	NO1	Nottingham ware 1	2	11	one sherd green glazed & rilled externally, glazed jug rim, 13th century form at Nottingham (Coppack 1980)
	NO3	Nottingham ware 3	10	90	flat jug base with glaze spots underneath, minimum of 4 vessels all glazed, some with external rilling, including a jug rim with pouring lip similar to late 13th century forms at Nottingham (Coppack 1980, fig. 78.164)
	BO2	Bourne ware	2	52	cordoned jug neck with brownish glaze & green glazed sherd, 13th century +
	MS	Med. Sandy ware	2	26	both wheel thrown, red bodied, brown glaze exterior, one, a jug rim with pouring lip, links with (4) and (9), ?14th century
	LY1	Lyveden/Stanion 1	15	303	all hand built, 11 sherds glazed, 7 also decorated with applied white clay strips, mostly vertical, and one also with a conical applied clay pad, remains of 2 rod handles, decoration paralleled at Stanion, late 13th/early 14th century (Bellamy 1983)
	LY4	Lyveden/Stanion 4 CS – Coarse Shelly	5	137	2 convex hand built base fragments - unsooted
(7)	ST2	Stamford ware 2	2	12	one sherd, a flat knife trimmed base with a thin yellow lead glaze, residual c.1050-1200
	LY4	Lyveden/Stanion 4 CS – Coarse Shelly	25	306	minimum of 5 hand built vessels, two straight edged bowl rims paralleled at Northampton (McCarthy 1979, fig.81.60, and two upright & thickened cooking pot/jar rims, one with internal thumbing, also paralleled at Northampton (McCarthy & Brooks 1988, fig. 172.1028), plus an unglazed sherd with inscribed wavy line decoration. Probably all early forms: 13th century at Northampton (McCarthy 1979)
(8)	LY1	Lyveden/Stanion 1	5	200	wheel thrown decorated jug fragments, with applied vertical and horizontal white clay strips or slip under glaze, including a ‘developed’ rim, diam. c.11cm, paralleled at Stanion (Bellamy 1983, fig 3.2), late 13th/early 14th century, one sherd joins with (4)
	LY4	Lyveden/Stanion 4 CS – Coarse Shelly	9	451	1 vessel, hand built, ?finished on a turntable, moulded upright jar rim with thumbing on inner top of rim, and a vertical notched applied strip on the body; unusual pattern of sooting under base, possibly vessel stood on a trivet over the fire
	BO1	Bourne ware 1	1	6	glazed, links with (4), c.1450-c.1650

(9)	NO1	Nottingham ware 1	2	6	green glazed, pink bodied, c1250-1300
	NO3	Nottingham ware 3	9	327	7 sherds green glazed & one with external rilling, 2 jug bases show typical stacking evidence underneath, including the impression of a jug with a pouring lip, glazed sub-oval rod handle, some sherds lightly reduced interior, mid/late 13th century
	BO2	Bourne ware 2	3	41	2 sherds brown glazed, 1 green with applied white clay slip decoration under the glaze, 13th century+
	MS	Med. Sandy ware 2	1	3	glazed, links with (4) & (6), ?14th century
	LY4	Lyveden/Stanion	2	58	hand built crudely made simple everted bowl rim, thumbled exterior, similar to Lyveden pottery (Steane 1967, fig.8.a-b), 13th century +
(10)	?NO3	?Nottingham ware 3	2	17	very hard fired, one sherd green glazed, possibly early 14th century
	MS2	Med. sandy ware 2	2	102	wide mouthed bowl, yellow/orange internal glaze, joins with (5), ?14th century
(11)	LY1	Lyveden/Stanion 1	1	15	base & lower wall, unusually fine, wheel thrown, sooted and knife trimmed exterior, ?late 13th century
	LY4	Lyveden/Stanion 4 CS – Coarse Shelly	7	140	hand built, all one vessel, sooted externally, 13th century
(12)	NO2	Nottingham ware 2	3	32	patchy brown glaze runs ext c.1230-1300
	LY4	Lyveden/Stanion 4 CS – Coarse Shelly	1	6	hand built
U/S	NO1	Nottingham ware 1	4	37	green glazed, pink bodied, 1 sherd with external rilling: joins with (9)
	NO3	Nottingham ware 3	7	120	5 sherds glazed, jug rim with thumbing at top of strap handle, reduced brown glaze (similar to Coppack 1980, fig 78.164) ?late 13th century; 2 sherds with yellowish green glaze, one a rod handle, the other a rilled jug neck. The latter has a lustrous yellowish green glaze, similar to Brill/Boarstall ware (Farley 1982), but the fabric appears to be too coarse
	MS	Med. Sandy ware	4	30	wheel thrown, orange body, brown glaze exterior, links with (6) (4) and (9), ?14th century
	BO2	?Bourne ware 2	3	80	greenish brown glaze exterior, one sherd a jug body with 3 external cordons
	LY1	Lyveden/Stanion 1	5	82	hand built, glazed, 3 sherds also with applied white slip – one a jug neck & body – with diagonal strips and applied grid stamped pads, links with(4)
	LY4	Lyveden/Stanion 4 CS – Coarse Shelly	6	215	hand built, includes 3 totally reduced (black) sherds from a ‘developed’ upright cooking pot jar rim (diam. c.20cm) thumbled on top of the rim – late 13th, early 14th, similar to pot from the Stanion kilns, where both hand made and wheel thrown pottery was manufactured (Bellamy 1983, fig 4.42). The vessel is also sooted externally & on the rim top & rim interior
	CW2	Cisterican ware 2	1	28	thick walled splayed base, c.10cm diam., unusual with glaze ‘lumps’ attached to base, including ooliths, c.1475-1550
	?NO2	?Nottingham ware 2	1	8	burnt exterior

Ridge tile					
(3)	LY1	Lyveden/Stanion 1	1	37	speckled green glaze; the tile is stabbed underneath, and has slashing on the upper surface, evidently near the crest. Mortar is present underneath the tile. The perforations, presumably to prevent warping during firing in the kiln, are found at both the Lyveden and Stanion kilns (Steane 1967, fig.9.a-c; Bellamy 1983, fig.4.48), dating from the later 13th or early 14th century
	?BO2	?Bourne ware 2	1	20	orange/brown glaze with ?serpentine crest, traces of mortar underneath
(6)	BO2	Bourne ware 2	1	44	green glazed, traces of mortar underneath
(8)	BO2		1	37	green glazed
(9)	LY1	Lyveden/Stanion 1	4	215	green glazed joining fragments, occasional perforations underneath – this technology paralleled at both the Stanion and Lyveden kilns; traces of mortar underneath and along one edge; later 13th/early 14th century
	BO2	Bourne ware 2	2	110	green glazed
U/S	LY1	Lyveden/Stanion 1	2	153	one fragment speckled light/dark green, links with kitchen floor; the other is greenish brown. Both are stabbed underneath & show evidence of mortar
	BO2	Bourne ware 2	1	52	greenish glaze
	?BO2	?Bourne ware 2	1	56	yellowish brown glaze - ?serpentine crest, with thumbing at the end of the crest - crest paralleled at Bourne (Healey 1973)
	?BO/BO1	?Bourne ware unclass./or Bourne ware 1	4	607	2 fragments yellowish green glaze, 1 yellowish, 1 greenish glaze, all with serpentine crests, a type similar but not identical to those found at the Austin Friars, Leicester, where the tiles are dated from the latter half of the 14th onwards (Allin 1981). Clay body looks like Bourne, but with crushed shell added: the crests are similar to those recorded at Bourne (Healey 1973). All the tiles show evidence of mortar underneath

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Appendix B

Excavations at Oakham Castle, Rutland 1953-54

by P W Gathercole

Editors' note: John Barber conducted his excavations at Oakham Castle some two years after the investigation described here by Peter Gathercole. The text and images are from Gathercole, P W, *Excavations at Oakham Castle, Rutland, 1953-54*, *Trans Leicestershire Archaeol Hist Soc* 34 (1958), 17-38, and are reproduced by kind permission of the Leicestershire Archaeological & Historical Society.

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:

For continual guidance to Mr J G Hurst, MA. For permission to excavate within the Castle grounds, to the Rutland County Council. For co-operation on the building-site, to the contractors, John Cawley and Sons, of Nottingham. Particular thanks are due to Mr Jack Downes (General Foreman), for unstinted practical advice. For local help, I am particularly indebted to Mr J L Barber, MA, FSA, and to Mr de la Rue, the County Planning Officer. For excavation: Messrs Draycott and Stimson (Contractors), Mr J Hunter, Mr C Newton, Mr J Dobney, Mr G Draycott, Miss Jean Smalley, Master Robert Lewis and Master Christopher Knowles. I would like to thank Mrs M F Pursall and Mr Brian Roberts for drawing most of the pottery, and Miss Rachel Hunt for typing the manuscript.

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 [for footnotes to this article, see p63 - Ed] 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 complex⁴ (actually covering about three and a third acres) being within a sub-circular bailey, enclosed by a rampart originally about 25ft high, but now denuded to between 9 and 23ft. in height. Remnants of a stone curtain wall are 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 13ft 6in, although occasional 'stanchion holes' were dug to a depth of 18ft 3in.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).

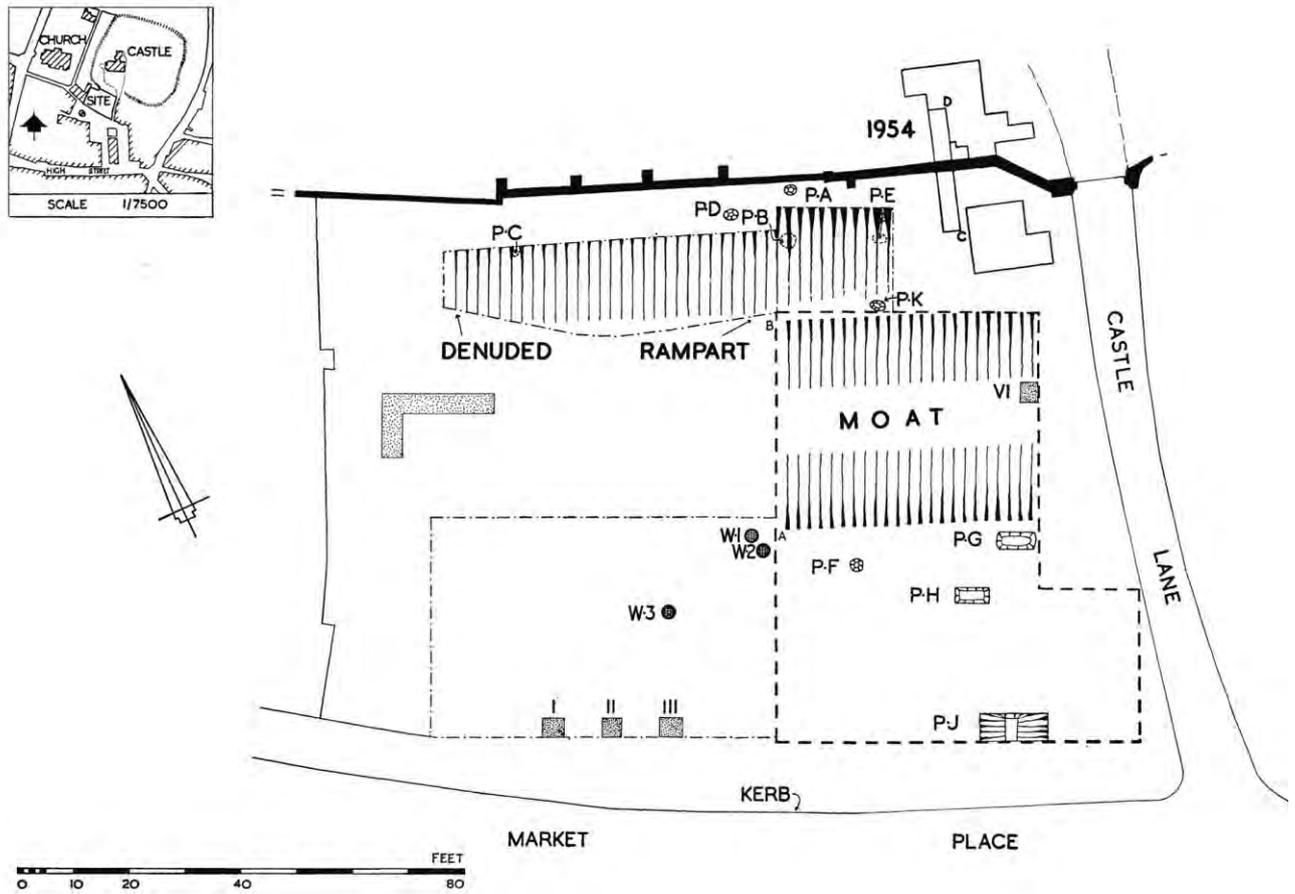


Fig. 1. Plan of Excavations, 1953-4. Areas within thin broken line cleared to c. 5ft.; area within thick broken line cleared to c. 13ft. 6in. Stanchion holes (I-IV) and drainage trench shown by stippling, P (A-K) - pits; W (1-3) - wells.

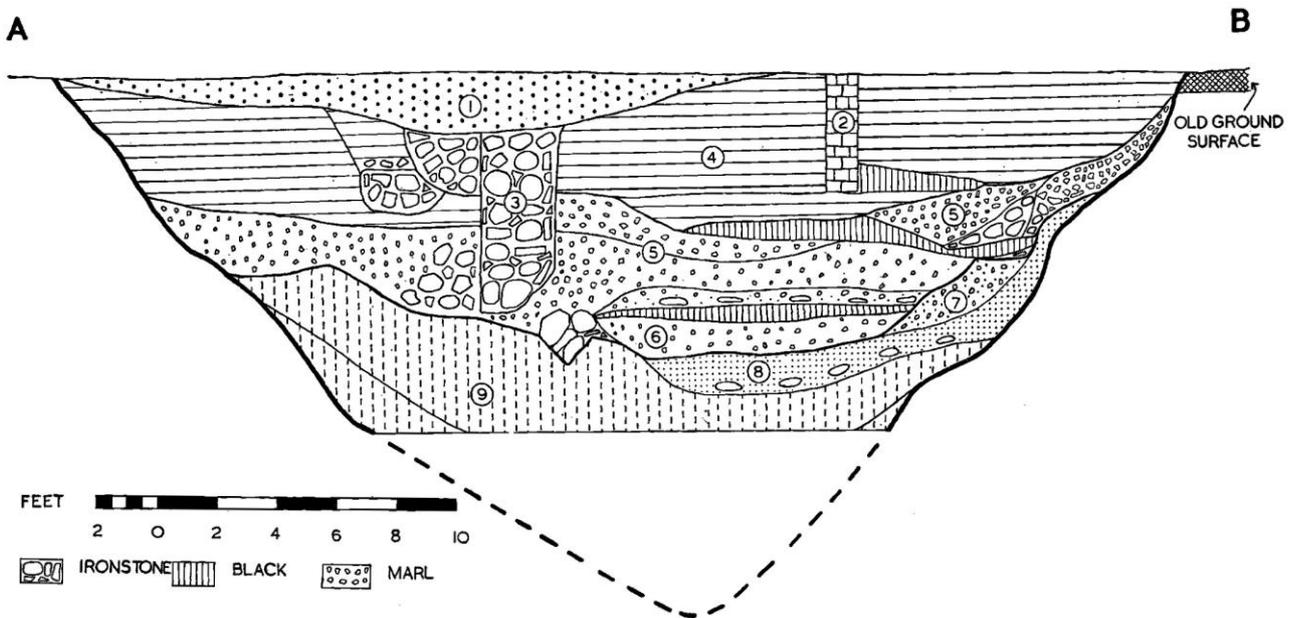


Fig. 2. Section (A-B) of moat at Head Post Office site. 1 - Soil; 2 - House footing; 3 - Pit-filling; 4 - Heavy clay; 5 and 6 - Post-Medieval filling of marl, yellow clay and ironstone; 7 and 8 - Medieval filling of marl and clay; 9 - Silting.

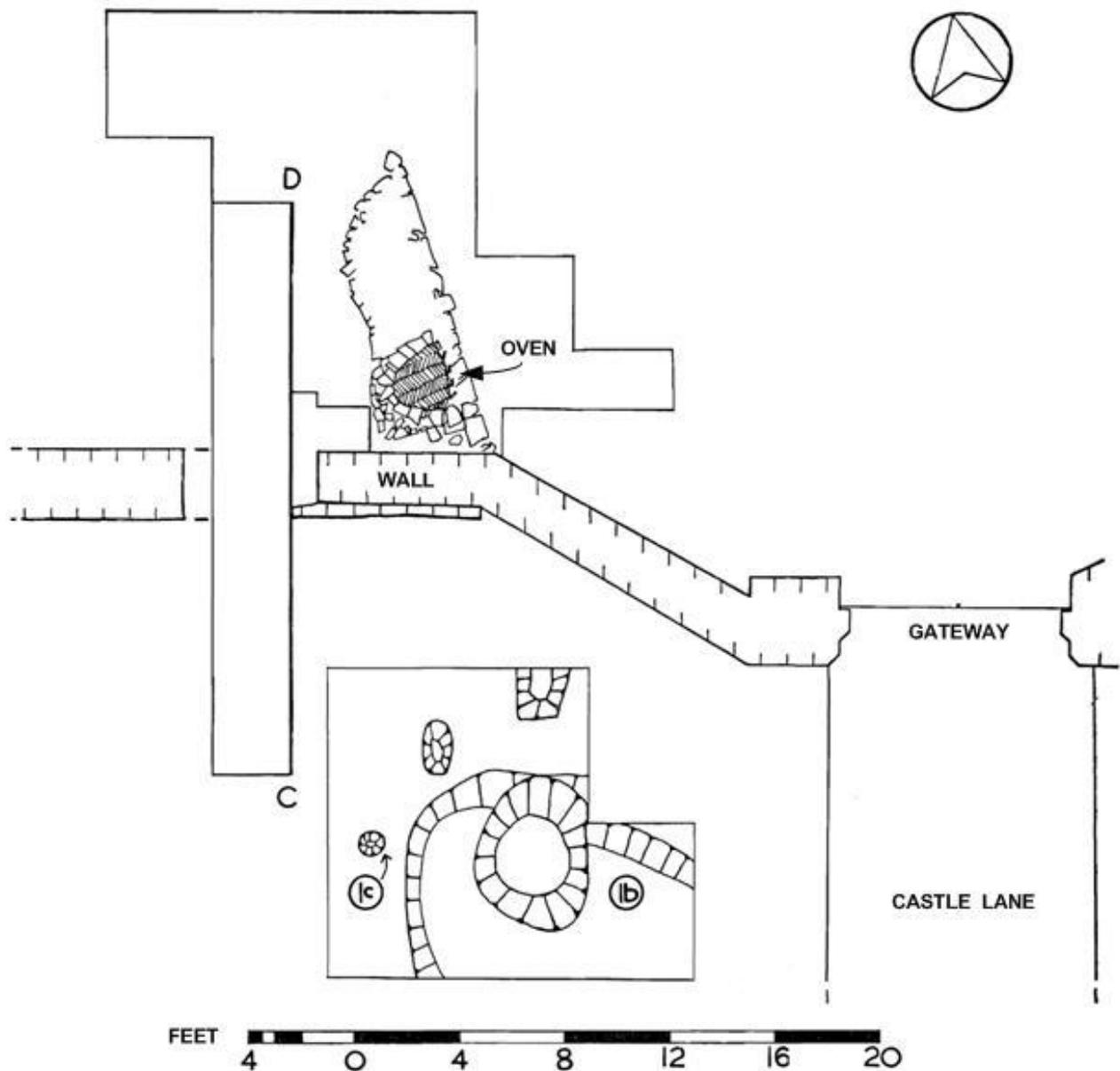


Fig. 3. Plan of excavations, 1954. Showing areas cleared north and south of the wall.

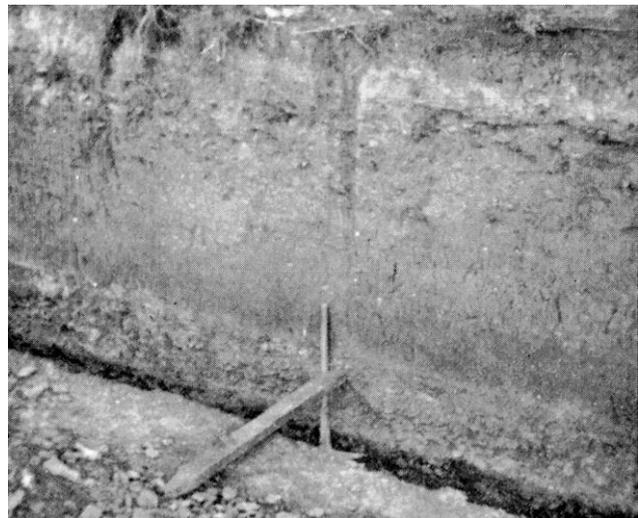
On the northern edge of the site, the outside face of the rampart was removed, exposing not only its bottom layers but also the old ground surface beneath (Pl. IIIb). Here were found a number of sherds of the fine quality whitish, buff or pink ware with yellow, pink or green glaze, now known as Stamford ware, together with a few sherds of St Neots 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 37ft 6in wide at existing ground level, while in stanchion hole VI, which lay towards its centre, bedrock was reached at 18ft 3in. 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.* 4ft 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 4ft thick, cut into by house footings.

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



*Pl. I. View looking south-west. 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.*



*Pl. IIa (above left). The moat mechanically excavated, with range poles marking its base.
Pl. IIb (above right). The rampart as exposed in 1953. Beneath (darker layer), the old ground surface.*

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, MA, is to be found below (p 61).

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 9ft 6in. 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 3ft wide, which lay 12ft below the existing ground surface.

Its filling consisted of black, greasy clay at the bottom, with medieval sherds, and marl and sand above containing

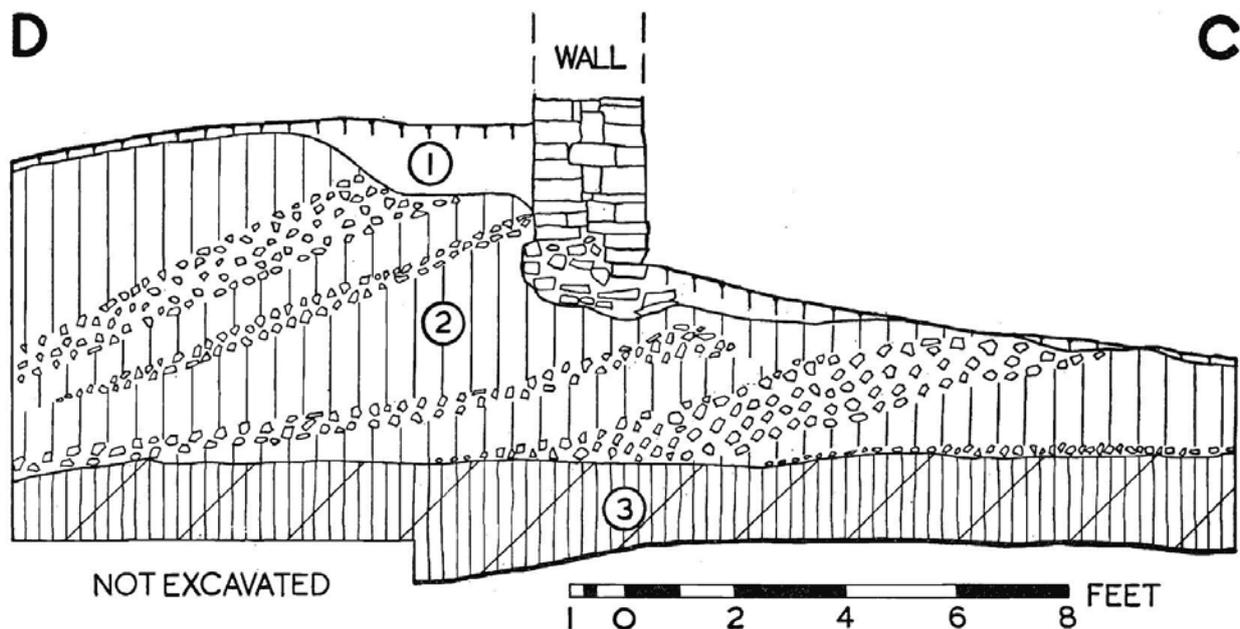


Fig. 4. Section (C-D) of rampart, 1954. 1 – Topsoil, and post-medieval disturbance of wall. 2 – Make-up of rampart (yellow clay and marl). 3 – Old ground surface (brown soil).

post-medieval wares. The purpose of this ditch was obscure, for it did not join the moat, and only some 5ft 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; and 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 22ft long, 8ft 6in at maximum depth, and 3ft 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 – Fig. 3 (plan) and Fig. 4 (section). The pottery found here consisted of Stamford and St Neots 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 to 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 was probably made, but, on the other hand, has never yet been found in a pre-Conquest context.

As shown below (p 54), 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 Neots 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 Raleigh 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 14ft by 12ft 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 (pp 54, 57, 59, 60). To the north, within the Castle grounds, stripping took place in an area 21ft 6in by 17ft. On the rampart was a remnant of curtain wall built up with brick. As it approached the gateway from the west, and 9ft 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.* 3ft thick and 11 ft long, and was roughly faced with tooled limestone blocks. Between two of these was found a stem 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 herringbone fashion, and when found was semi-circular in shape, its walls standing 2ft 1½in high, and its base 3ft 9in 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 Raleigh Radford considers that the curtain and gateway date from the same time as the great hall, that is, 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. [The archive is now at Rutland County Museum – *Ed*]

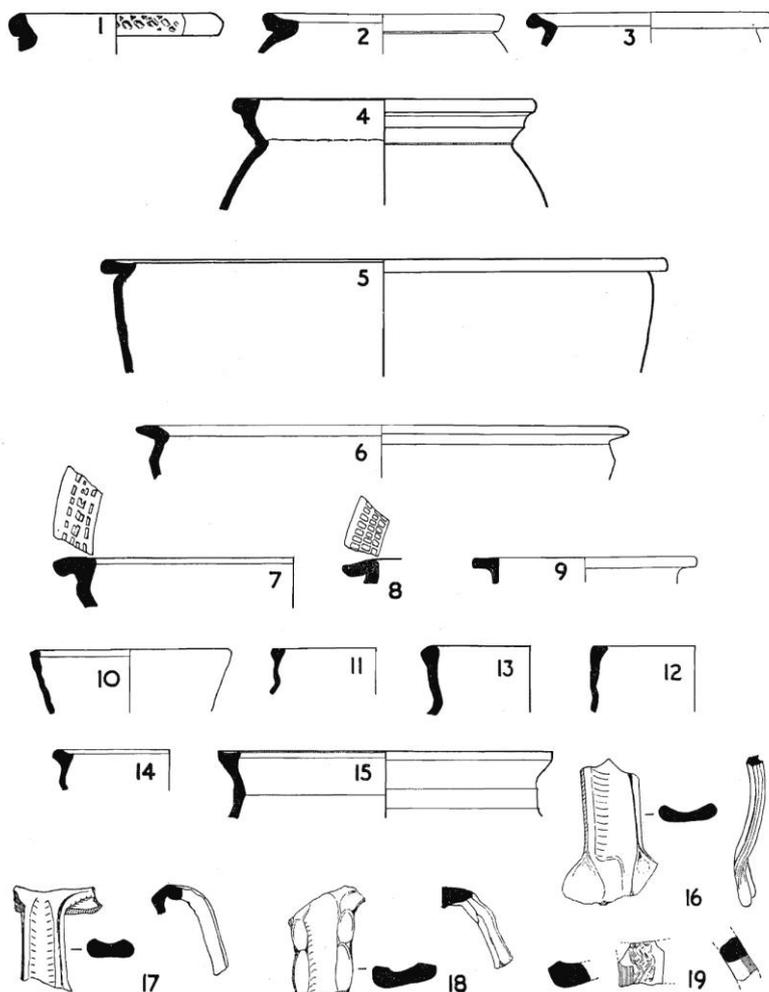
SAXO-NORMAN POTTERY

(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),¹⁴ and at least 15 of pitchers. 131 sherds were glazed, a rather higher proportion than at Alstoe Mount.¹⁵ Glaze was found on pitchers and bowls. Most of the sherds were of a distinctive buff colour, thin in texture, but occasionally (for example, where the body of the vessel thickened towards the base) with a grey-black core.¹⁶ 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 Dunning¹⁷. An extended discussion here is therefore unnecessary.

Fig. 5. Saxo-Norman Pottery:
Stamford Ware.



Cooking-Pots and Bowls

Fig. 5.1: Everted rim of globular cooking-pot, with rouletted decoration on outside. Buff ware, 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,¹⁸ one is an indeterminate fragment.

Fig. 5.4: Cooking-pot, with everted and moulded rim, blackened externally.¹⁹ 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 down-bent flange, and rows of squares stamped on top. Buff ware, with grey surface. This was from the 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), and one from (3), are similar to No 5; the other two, one from (3), 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.²⁰ Green glaze, thicker than usual. From the bottom layer of the 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 Figs. 5.11 to 15. Rims are usually moulded.

Fig. 5.11: Rim of pitcher.²¹ 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.²² 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 a pinched-out lip from South Bond Street, Leicester.²³ 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.²⁴

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. 5.16: an unstratified example, shows the normal type from a pitcher.

Fig. 5.17: also unstratified, is smaller and thicker than Fig. 5.16.

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).²⁵ 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 Neots Ware

Twenty 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 were of the normal sagging type.

Figs. 6.1 and 6.2: Cooking pots with everted rims. Fig. 6.1 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).

Figs. 6.4 and 6.5: Cooking pots with strongly everted rim squared outside and hollowed inside. Slight finger impressions on outside of the rim. Fig. 6.4 from (2d) of rampart; Fig. 6.5 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 49), 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 Fig. 6.4, the cooking pots are small or intermediate in size, comparable to several from Cambridge.²⁶ The hammer headed bowl, No.6, recalls a group from Paxton²⁷ 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 Neots.²⁸

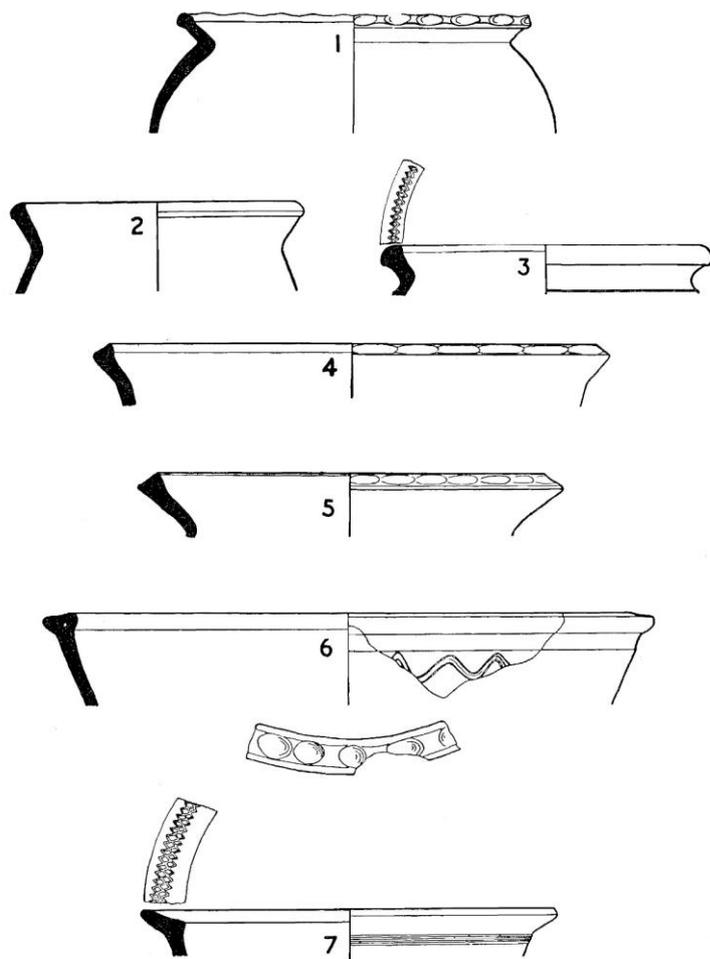


Fig. 6. Saxo-Norman Pottery – St Neots Ware.

OTHER WARES FROM SAXO-NORMAN LAYERS

Roman

One small sherd of Castor ware, from the old ground surface.

One sherd of a hard grey ware, from same layer.

Late 11th or early 12th 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 sherds for me, says that a similar ware was found at Alstoe Mount.

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 13ft. 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 crisscross, stamped decoration, and is of thirteenth-century date (Fig. 7.2).²⁹ Of more significance, however, is a rim sherd of a jug found on bedrock in stanchion hole VI, associated with a leather boot (p 59). 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.³⁰

POST-MEDIEVAL FINE WARES

(a) Tin glazed ware – English Delft

Three sherds of Lambeth ware³¹ from pit K, early eighteenth century:

1. A deep dish, diameter 8.7in. 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 8.7in.

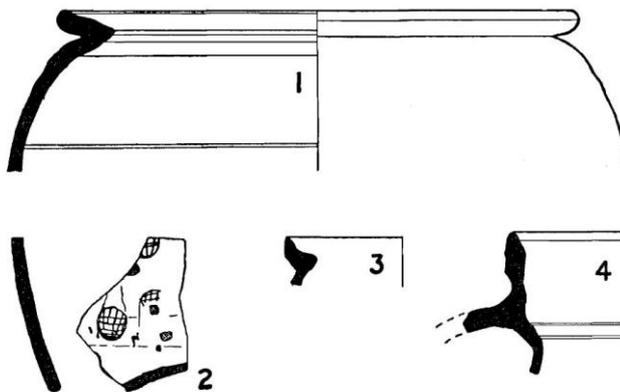


Fig. 7. Medieval Wares.

(b) Slip ware

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

(c) Staffordshire wares

1. Sherds representing at least ten dishes, with frilled and scalloped rims. Buff ware, with yellow glaze and dark brown lines, mostly combed. From top of rampart (1953). Common type (see B Rackham, *Early Staffordshire Pottery*, Pl. I).
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.³² From moat associated with fragments of tygs. Sixteenth century.

(f) Westerwald

Rim, neck and shoulder of grey stoneware, with typical maroon and blue decoration, unstratified on rampart (1954). Probably eighteenth century.

(e) Rhenish Stoneware – Frechen

One rim sherd from well 2, with part of ‘Bellarmine’ mask, which appears to be of Holmes’ type 111,³³ but only the upper part of the face survives.

(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 English Pottery*, Pl. 44). Unstratified.



Pl. IIIa (left).
Section across
rampart, 1954.



Pl. IIIb (right).
Rampart north
of Castle wall,
showing the
oven, after the
removal of the
retaining wall to
the entrance.

(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-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 Norwich,³⁶ 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, for example 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, a fish-dish and a 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,³⁹ 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

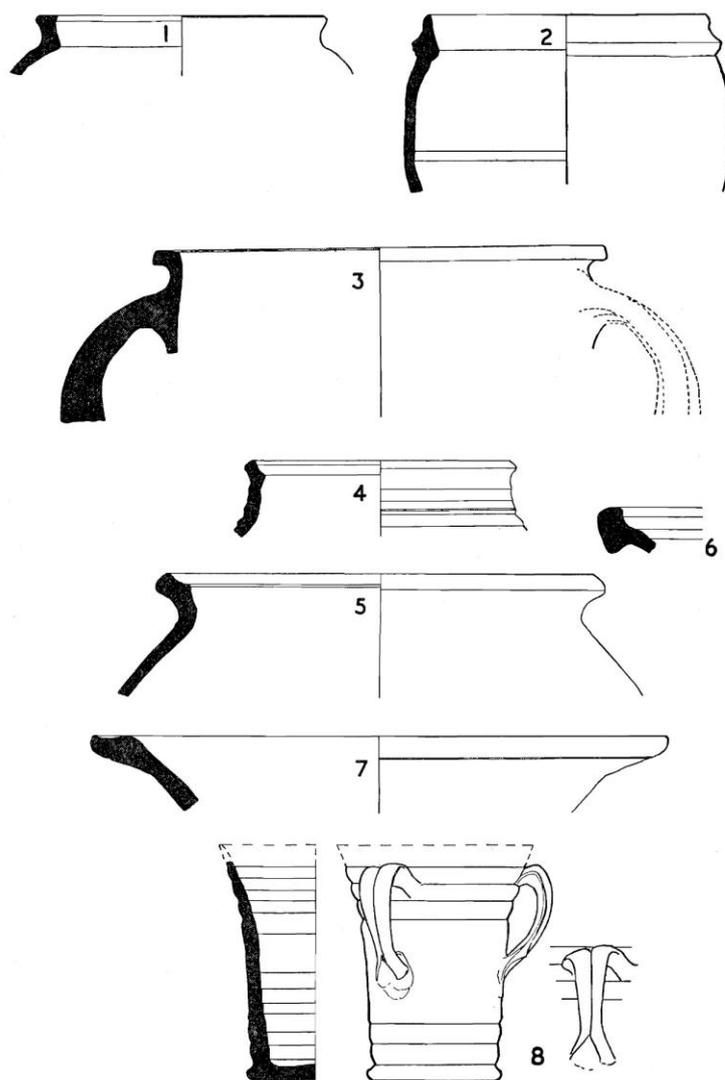


Fig. 8. Post-Medieval Coarse Wares.

with Groups 2 and 3, in one case (in the west drainage trench), in a sealed layer. In layer (1c), 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 7ft 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 2in to 3.6in, 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 Biek 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 13ft 6in and 18ft 3in. 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, that is, 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,⁴⁰ 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.

Other specimens from this layer included:



Fig. 9. Leather objects.

- (a) Complete sharply pointed left sole,⁴¹ with a narrow heel, slightly broken on right-hand side (Fig. 9.3). Length 9.3in, width across foot 2.7in, width across heel 1.4in.
- (b) Pointed right sole (child's). Length 6.1in, width across foot 2.1in, width across heel 1.1in.
- (c) Square-ended left sole, torn on left-hand side (Fig. 9.4). Length 7.75in, width across foot 2.75in, width across heel 1.5 in. A similar specimen was also found in an unstratified layer.
- (d) Fragmentary sole, maximum length 4.7in, maximum width 3.25in, thickness 0.4in. 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 8ft, just below a layer which yielded a number of tyg fragments. Aside from a large number of scraps, these consisted only of soles, of which two are illustrated (Figs. 9.7 and 9.8). 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 12ft, 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 1.5in and 2in 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

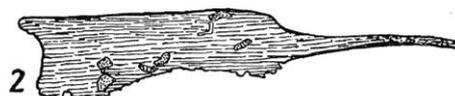
A few objects were found at about 13ft in the moat, the most important being:

Fig. 10.1: Knife, surviving portion 7in long, stamped 'W' (?).⁴²

Fig. 10.2: Knife, surviving portion 5in 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 3½in long (blade ¾in).

A small fragment of iron was found attached to a sherd, from (2c) of the rampart.



THE CLAY PIPES

by A H Oswald MA, FSA, FMA

As can be seen from the table below, 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^SC' on base, single-stroke roulette on rim. Duplicates: British Museum, and from Bankside, London (Guildhall Museum).

Fig. 10.4: Same type. Marked 'BC' on its 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.

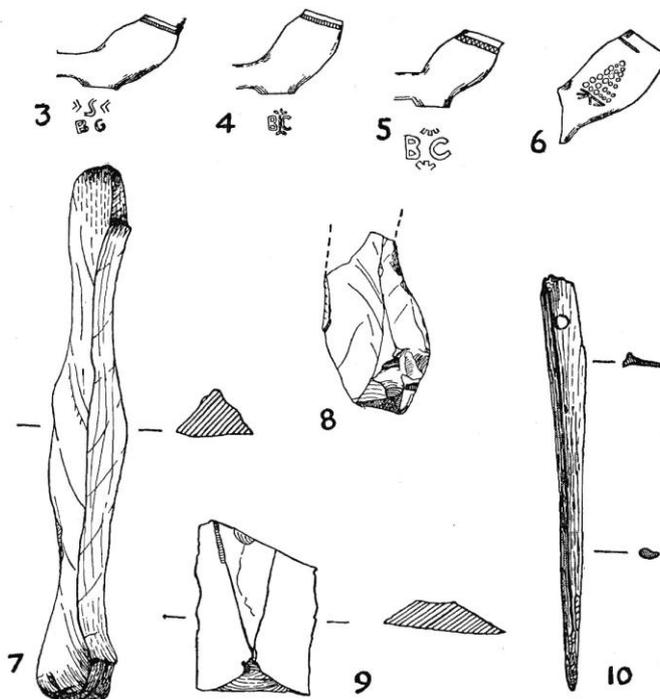


Fig. 10. Metal Objects, Clay Pipes, Stone, Flint, and Bone Objects.

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.

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,⁴⁵ 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 0.7in), but this may have no significance.⁴⁶ Slates from this area have been used since Roman times.

LOCATION OF CLAY PIPES						
Type	Date	1(a)	1(b)	1(c)	Loose	Wall
2	1600-30	-	-	-	1	-
4a	1600-40	-	-	-	6	-
4c	1630-50	-	-	-	1	-
4d	1640-70	13	1	1*	4	-
4c/6a	1650-70	1	-	1	2	-
6a/b	1660-80	3	-	1	-	-
6b/7a	1660-90	1	-	-	-	-
6b	1670-90	1	1	-	3	-
6c	1670-90	1	-	-	-	-
7a	1670-1700	-	-	-	1	-
9a	1690-1730	-	-	-	1	-
Chester	<i>c</i> 1700	-	-	-	-	1 (stem)
9b/11a	<i>c</i> 1750-1800	1*	-	-	-	-
11b	1780-1840	-	-	-	1	-
11a	1820-50	-	-	-	1	-

(* = variant)

A total of 17 pieces of flint⁴⁷ 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, 4.9in long, was found loose in the moat. It is perforated at the upper end, and has been re-sharpened (Fig. 10.10).

THE ANIMAL BONES⁴⁸

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); phalange 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

by S E Rigold MA

This is a head of Oolite, 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 underchin 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, but not enough to suggest prolonged exposure. The head represents a fairly young, clean-shaven male, the hair is not tonsured 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 NBR). 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 epicanthic 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.

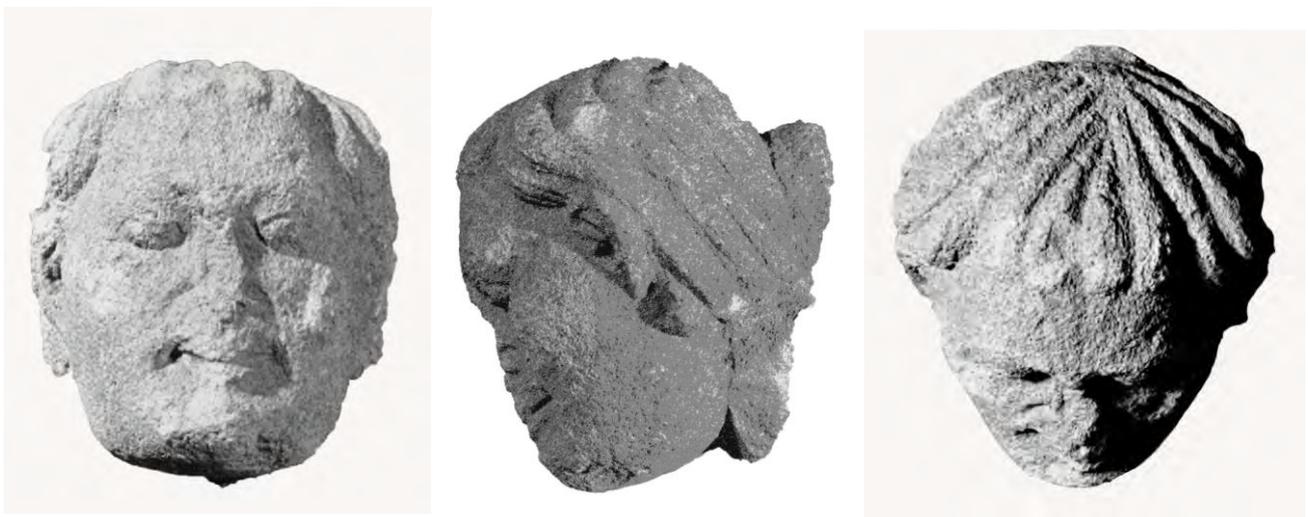
With these details in mind, it is necessary to compare the existing incidental sculpture in the Castle Hall. This comprises:

- (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: (a) a goat playing a rebec
- (b) a man (with pipes?)
- (c) a man with a tromba marina
- south arcade: (a) a lion with a harp
- (b) a man with a dulcimer
- (c) 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 [*see* Appendix C]. 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.



Pls. IV to VI. Three views of the limestone head from the moat.

Notes

1. For detailed description and earlier references, *see*:
 - (a) Margaret Wood, *Arch. J.* xcii (1936), 201-3;
 - (b) C A Raleigh Radford, *Arch. J.* cxii (1956), 181-4.I must thank Mr Raleigh Radford for permission to see this before publication, and for his valuable criticisms of a draft of this report.
2. *VCH, Rutland*, i. 218.
3. Now under investigation by Mr J L Barber. *Med. Arch.* i (1957), 157 and ii (1958).
4. For plan, *see VCH, Rutland*, i. 115.
5. *Op. cit.*, 182-3.
6. *Ibid.*
7. Shown by stippling in Fig. 1. All depths were calculated after *c.* 2ft of humus and modern rubbish had been removed from the site.
8. For a discussion on Stamford ware, *see* G C Dunning in *Dark-Age Britain: Studies presented to E T Leeds* (ed. D B Harden), 228-31, and J G Hurst, *Proc. Cambridge Antiq. Soc.*, li (1957), 37-65. For a full review of St Neots ware, *see* J G Hurst, *Proc. C.A.S.* xlix (1955), 43-70.
9. For this information I am indebted to Mr G E Glazier, of the Bedford County Library, whose father had lived in one of the houses. Towards the south edge of the moat was a concentration of ironstone which was probably a pit-filling.
10. *Ant. J.* xvi (1936), 402.
11. Hurst (1955), 51.
12. I am indebted to Mr M W Barley, MA, FSA, for advice on the character and date of this structure.
13. Section C-D was cut at a doorway through the curtain wall constructed when a house existed there. The disturbance meant that no satisfactory relationship of wall and rampart could be determined at this point. Elsewhere, the wall appeared to rest directly on the rampart. It was impossible to check this, however, as further excavation would have endangered both wall and excavators.
14. A proportion of one: six compared to one: three at Alstoe Mount.
15. Three: ten compared to one: ten.
16. For the probable source of clays used, *see* G C Dunning, in *Dark-Age Britain*, 229.
17. *Ant. J.* xvi (1936), 396-411.
18. *Ibid.*, Fig. 3.8 (one example from old ground surface (1953); 7 (two examples from rampart (1953); 2 (one example from (2b) of rampart); 3 (one example from (2b) of rampart).
19. Hurst (1957), Fig. 2, 21-6.
20. Dunning, *Ant. J.*, *loc. cit.*, 26.
21. For a complete example from Stamford, *ibid.*, Fig. 6.16.
22. Dunning, in K M Kenyon, *Excavations at the Jewry Wall Site, Leicester*, 226, and Fig. 59.5 and 59.6.
23. *Ibid.*, Fig. 61.2.
24. Dunning, *Ant. J.*, *loc. cit.*, Fig. 4.30.
25. Hurst (1957), 54-7.
26. Hurst (1955), Fig. 4, and p. 53. Ascribed to not much earlier than the eleventh century. Nos. 4 and 5 are similar to a large specimen from Cambridge, *ibid.*, Fig. 4.12.
27. *Ibid.*, Fig. 7, 4 and 5.
28. H M Hodges, *Transactions Thoroton Soc.* lvii (1954), 29, Fig. 4.2.
29. This ware has a Midland distribution centred on Northamptonshire, *see* Rackham, *Medieval English Pottery*, Pl. i. 68, and G C Dunning, *Jewry Wall*, 243-4.
30. Similar to a jug from Thurgarton, Hodges, *loc. cit.* (Fig. 5, II), and sherds from the Parliament Street kilns, Nottingham, in the Campion Collection, at the Birmingham Museum and Art Gallery.
31. I am indebted to Professor F H Garner, Department of Chemical Engineering, Birmingham University, for the identification of these sherds. This and following sections owe much to the analyses of post-medieval wares in 'Excavations at St Benedict's Gates, Norwich, 1951 and 1953' by J G Hurst and J Golson, *Norfolk Archaeology*, xxx (1955), 1-112.
32. *Ibid.*, Fig. 17.4.
33. *Ant. J.* xxxi (1951), 174-5.
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'.
40. *Ibid.*, 101.
41. Four similar unused specimens, 8.5in long, were found unstratified.
42. Compare Guildhall Museum Catalogue, Pl. LXXXIII, 16. Sixteenth century.
43. *Ibid.*, Pl. LXXXIV, 4. Same date.
44. *Archaeological News Letter*, v (1955), 243-50.
45. For an important discussion on these subjects, *see* G C Dunning, *Jewry Wall*, 230-32, and Figs. 64-5.
46. *See* Freda Derrick, 'Stone Building in Stamford (7). The World and Collyweston' in *Illustrated Carpenter and Builder*, 16 Feb. 1951.
47. For an account of flint implements found in Rutland, *see VCH*, i. 82-4.
48. Acknowledgement is made to Mr L Bilton, MSc, FLS, FRES, Keeper of the Department of Natural History, Birmingham Museum and Art Gallery, for advice on this section.

[The following photographs were not included in the original report]

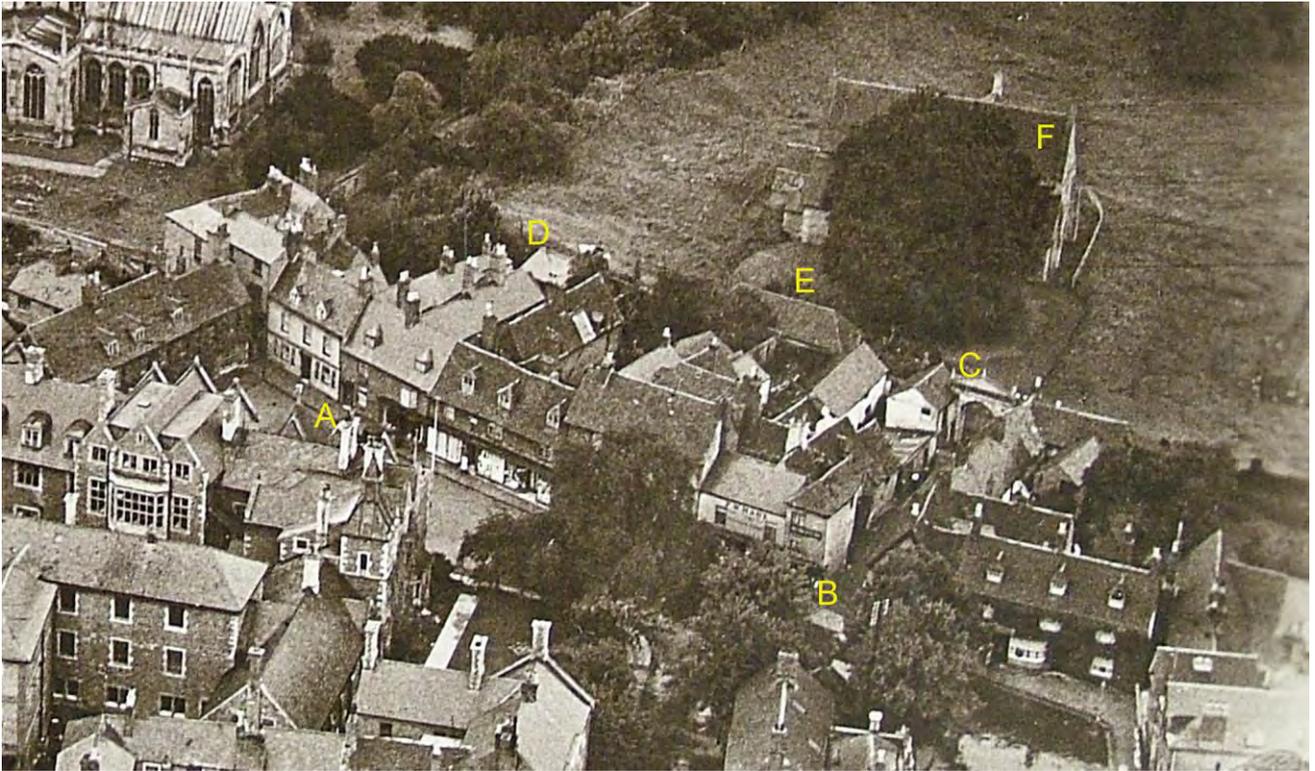


Fig. 11. The buildings shown within the area A B C D on this 1920s aerial photograph of Market Place, Oakham, were demolished sometime before January 1947 when a RAF aerial photograph (Rutland County Museum) shows that the site had already been cleared . Peter Gathercole conducted his archaeological investigation on this site in 1953 and 1954 prior to the erection of the new Post Office building. E is the Shambles and F is the Great Hall of Oakham Castle (Jack Hart Collection – Rutland County Museum).



Figs. 11 (left) and 12 (right): 1920s photographs of the shops which formerly stood on the land now occupied by the Post Office building in Market Place, Oakham (Jack Hart Collection – Rutland County Museum).

Peter Gathercole (1929-2010)

Peter Gathercole was born on 27th March 1929 in Tilney St Lawrence, in the Norfolk fens, into a family of grocers. He attended St Paul's Cathedral Choir School, London and Clifton College, Bristol. St Paul's was evacuated during the War to the Cathedral School in Truro, and this move began his life-long association with Cornwall.

Peter did his army national service between 1947-49, serving in Egypt where he was eventually promoted to the rank of Warrant Officer in the Army Education Corps. His subsequent education was at Peterhouse, Cambridge, where he studied History and Archaeology (1949-52), and the Institute of Archaeology, University of London (1952-54) where he gained his Postgraduate Diploma in European Prehistoric Archaeology under the direction of Vere Gordon Childe. It was whilst at the Institute that he carried out his archaeological investigation at Oakham Castle (1953-54).

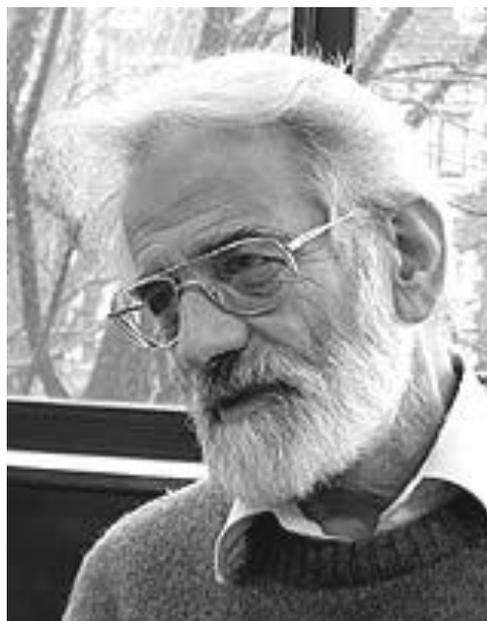
He then trained under Adrian Oswald as a curator in the Department of Archaeology, Ethnology and Local History, at Birmingham Museum & Art Gallery (1954-56), at the same time undertaking various rescue excavations. Then he spent two years at Scunthorpe Museum before moving to New Zealand to teach at the University of Otago (1958-68), also working at the Otago Museum. There he is well remembered for helping to establish a fully functioning Department of Anthropology and Archaeology run jointly by the Museum and the University. The teaching and practice of modern archaeology in New Zealand owes much to Peter's expertise and enthusiasm, recognised by his appointment to an honorary fellowship.

Peter returned to England to work as Lecturer in Ethnology at Oxford, jointly with the Pitt Rivers Museum, until he became the Principal Curator of the Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology in Cambridge (1970-81), subsequently taking up the position of Dean at Darwin College from which he retired as an Emeritus Fellow in 1994. He became the first chairman of the UK Museum Ethnographers Group in 1975, and maintained a continuing research interest in the Pacific region, drawing particularly on European collections.

Peter retired to Cornwall, where he served a term as President of the Cornwall Archaeological Society and contributed significantly to that Society's activities. He made his home at Veryan, and died on 11th October 2010.

For a perceptive and more detailed obituary, see

<http://www.worldarchaeologicalcongress.org/component/content/article/1-latest/520-peter-gathercole-1929-2010-a-life-well-lived>



Appendix C

Oakham Castle

by C A R Radford

Editors' note: John Barber makes a number of references in his memoir to this article by C A Raleigh Radford. It was published in the journal of the Royal Archaeological Institute just before he started his excavations at Oakham Castle. The text and images are from: Radford, C A R, Oakham Castle, *Archaeological Journal*, CXII (1956), 181-4, and are reproduced by kind permission of the Royal Archaeological Institute.

INTRODUCTION

Oakham belonged to Edith, the widowed queen of Edward the Confessor, till her death in 1075, when it reverted to the Crown. It was granted by Henry I to Henry de Newburgh or his son Roger, who succeeded his father as Earl of Warwick in 1123. William, a younger brother of Robert de Ferrers (created Earl of Derby 1138, died 1139), was already holding Oakham as sub-tenant. In 1131 it had passed to his son, Henry de Ferrers, who died before 1137. Henry's son, Walkelin, succeeded as a minor and held Oakham till his death in 1201. Oakham was forfeited to the Crown in 1204. None of the grantees in the early 13th century held the property for long. In 1252 the Castle was granted to Richard, Earl of Cornwall, the king's brother, on the occasion of his marriage to Sanchia of Provence. From Richard it descended to his son Edmund and Edmund's widow Maud.

The earliest castle at Oakham had a motte at the south-east corner of a sub-circular bailey. The motte has largely been cut away, but part of the mound and the hollow of the ditch towards the bailey remain. The bailey is enclosed with a substantial earth bank and ditch, the latter widened on the north side to form fish ponds. Beyond these ponds is an outer court, also enclosed with a bank and ditch and formerly used as a garden. The motte and bailey are typical of early Norman castles and probably date from shortly after 1075, when the Crown resumed possession. The straight eastern side of the bailey and the plan of the northern enclosure show that the latter is the earlier and that it formed 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. The castle bailey was later strengthened with a stone curtain, now entirely ruined. The gate with a four-centred arch and two chamfered orders, dates from the time of Earl Richard, but the simple layout of the curtain without flanking towers, suggests an earlier period; it is probably the work of Walkelin de Ferrers. The 13th century gateway was restored with a characteristic pediment early in the 17th century.

The Great Hall, one of the finest Norman domestic buildings in the country, was built by Walkelin de Ferrers. The copious use of dog-tooth and other transitional detail and the style of the capitals and carvings indicate a date in the last quarter of the 12th century. It formed the centre of a group of buildings, of which slight traces remain in the inequalities of the ground at either end. The original polychrome masonry, with courses of freestone ashlar separating wider bands of ironstone rubble, can best be seen at the west end of the north aisle. The hall, long used as a court room, is aisled in four bays. The entrance, now in the centre of the south side, was originally at the east end of this wall. It led into a passage some 9ft. wide running across the east end of the building. The position of this passage, and of the wooden screens towards the hall, is marked by a stone projection of the north wall. Two doors in the nave led east to the service quarters. In the north aisle is a third door which gave access to an external stair leading to the gallery above the screens. This gallery seems later to have been enclosed; it was provided with a late 16th century window of six lights, inserted below the original two-light window in the gable.

The arcades of the hall have massive circular columns of stone with moulded bases and acanthus foliage on the capitals. The arches are of two orders, decorated towards the nave; they spring from richly ornamented corbels in the end walls. The side walls of the nave now rise barely 1ft. above the top of the aisle roofs. But the substantial character of the arcades implies that they were originally designed to rise as a clear storey with a range of windows lighting the nave.⁴⁰

This is borne out by the present roof, which has the tie-beam cutting the apex of the east window. This is a reconstruction of the early 17th century, when the outer surface of the nave walls was refaced above the aisle roofs with a single course of ashlar. The original roof probably had tie-beams, each supported by a semicircular arch

⁴⁰ A barn construction with a continuous roof over nave and aisles needs only posts with comparatively slight braces supporting the tie-beams and longitudinal timbers, eg. the Tithe Barn at Harmondsworth (*Royal Commission on Historical Monuments: Middlesex*, p 61). The timber-posted hall of the 12th century in Leicester Castle has been restored in this way, but the present tie-beam cuts across the decorated 12th century windows in the south wall, showing that it was originally at a higher level. In this case the reconstruction is probably based on 14th-century work, as there is considerable evidence of the roof having been reformed at that date.

springing from corbels 3 or 4ft. above the capitals. A corbel in this position occurs on the wooden posts of the 12th century hall in the Bishop's Palace at Hereford,⁴¹ and its scale, similar to those carrying the arches of the arcade, suggests that it carried a heavy arch rather than a brace. The existing gables are partly rebuilt with the ornamental copings reset.

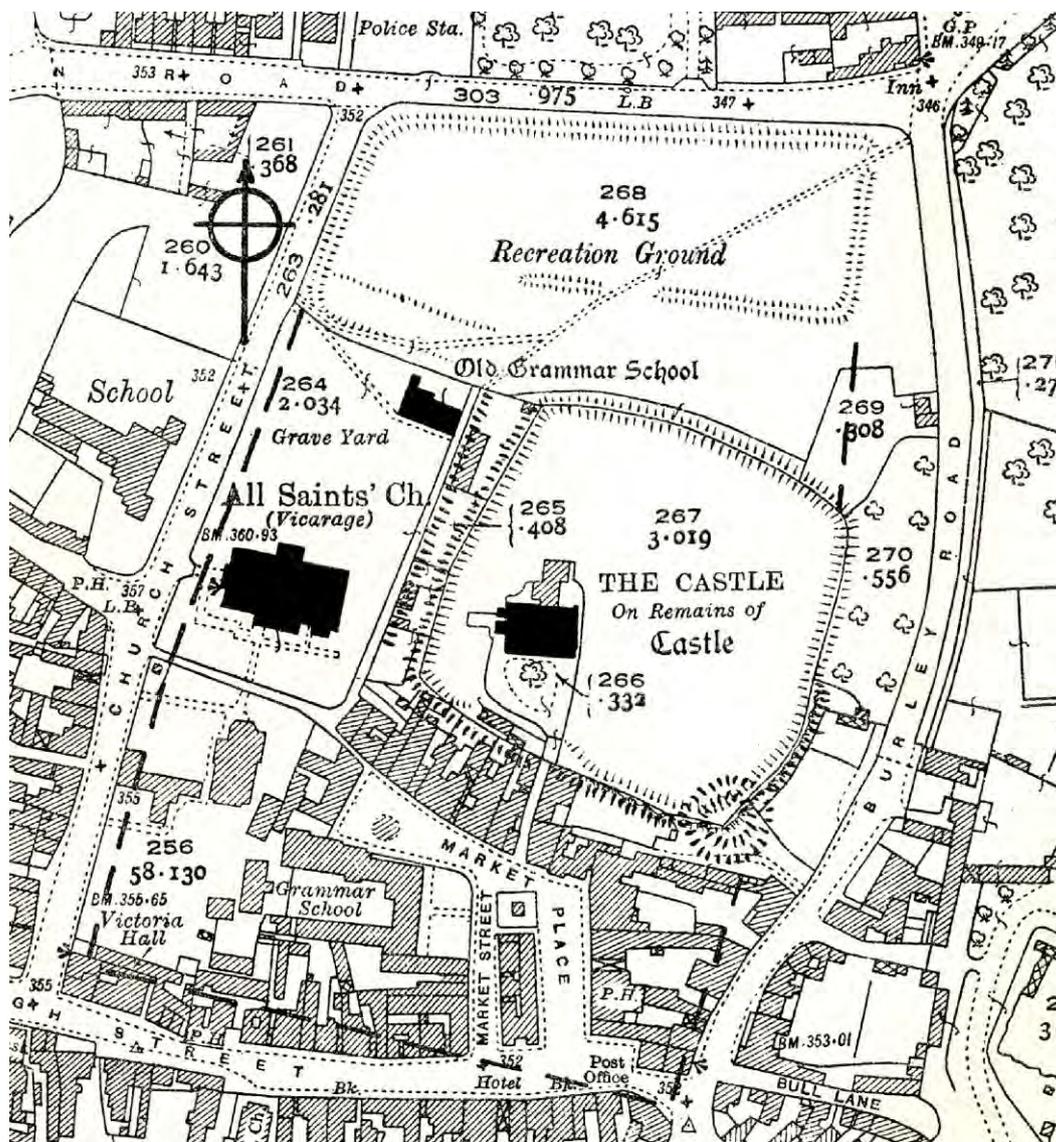
Patching and fragmentary remains at the west end show that there was a two-storied solar block of the same width as the nave of the hall. It was entered through a door in the end of the north aisle and seems to have been flanked by a pent roofed passage on this side.

Mr Gathercole, who recently conducted excavations for the Ministry of Works on the site of the new Post Office, informs me that Stamford ware and a little St Neots ware of late Saxon type was found both in the material of the south bank of the bailey and on the old surface soil below the bank.

References:

VCH, Rutland, i, 115-7, ii, 8-10.

Arch Journ, xc, 398-9; xcii, 201-3 (with references to older literature).



Conjectural line of pre-Conquest bank

Fig. 1. Oakham Castle. Motte shown at SE corner of Court (based on the Ordnance Survey second Series 25 inch map, 1904).

⁴¹ *Ibid*, Herefordshire, i, pl 24.

Appendix D

Oakham Castle Excavation Reports

Editors' note: Between 1955 and 1959 there were regular reports on the progress of the excavations at Oakham Castle in Oakham School's magazine, *The Oakhamian*, and in *Medieval Archaeology*. The text of these reports is reproduced here by kind permission of the School and of the Society for Medieval Archaeology.

J L Barber, *The Oakhamian*, LXX, Easter Term 1955

In the course of the Summer term it is hoped to continue with the excavations at Great Casterton (now in their seventh year) and to do some preliminary work on the vanished portions of Oakham Castle.

J L Barber, *The Oakhamian*, LXXI, Summer Term 1956

EXCAVATIONS

We ... have turned our attention to matters nearer home and have opened up a long trial trench to the east of Oakham Castle. Both the conformation of the ground and a mediaeval inquisition suggest that at one time there was far more of the Castle than we can at present see. It was not long before expectation was turned to reality, for our trial trench has clearly shown that all the evidence is there: it merely awaits the spade. Both outside walls of what was once the area of the buttery, pantry and kitchens have been identified, and a corridor, in perfect alignment with the northern doorway in the east wall of the castle, has been brought to light. This corridor from the main hall gave on to at least two rooms, the floors of which have been clearly recognised. Despite 'robbed' walls and intrusions of a later date, all this is perfectly clear. But two earlier walls have also been found beneath the floors of the later period in the room south of the corridor, and their lay-out has not yet been clarified. The pottery suggests that these two earlier walls are contemporary with the original building of the Castle in the late twelfth century, and that modifications or improvements were made later, perhaps in the thirteenth or fourteenth centuries. Present indications are that once the pottery has been fully studied, it should be possible to date all phases of construction, and perhaps to identify them with known tenants of the Castle.

A number of boys have taken part in the work and shown an enlightened interest in what they were doing. Many of them have acquired patience and accuracy in their work, and an incipient ability to interpret the evidence which their spades and trowels have revealed.

J L Barber, *The Oakhamian*, LXXII, Summer Term 1957

OAKHAM CASTLE EXCAVATIONS

We have again had a most successful season's digging, and this year's work has crossed the 't's and dotted the 'i's of what we undertook a year ago. A forty-eight foot long trench was dug from east to west at right angles to the seventy foot north-south trench we dug last year. It very soon served to show us the eastern limits of the buttery and the pantry, whose northern and southern edges we were able to define last season. Opposite to the passageway between the two and about six feet to the east of where the passage door must have stood, we have come across the kitchens, a building which nearly always stood on its own as a precaution against the all too prevalent fires of medieval times. We are not yet sure of its length, but we have firmly plotted the width. It has a paved surround with a central floor of mortar, overlaid by a thick level of hard-baked clay at the eastern edge, where evidently the cooking took place. Let into the mortar floor is a mortar-lined pit which it would seem once held a lead tank, whose purpose is unknown. The kitchens had been rebuilt at least once, as there is a thick layer of burning beneath the present levels.

A number of boys of all ages have taken part, and some of them have begun to show a real appreciation of the technique of archaeology and of the problems involved. The Headmaster has once more acted as official photographer, whilst L Revell has very kindly drawn the finished plans. The finds have been almost entirely of pottery, but this, when fully studied, should help to sort out the dating of the various phases.

J L Barber, *The Oakhamian*, LXXII, Christmas Term 1957

EXCAVATIONS

It has now been possible to draw the plans and to study the evidence from our two seasons digging at the Castle, and the general pattern is beginning to emerge quite clearly. Before the tumble-down domestic offices at either end of the Hall were levelled out and the Hall itself restored early in the 17th century (of which there is both documentary as well as archaeological evidence), there stood at the east end a pantry 12ft across by 20ft long, separated, by a corridor 4ft across and 20ft long, leading to the kitchens, from a buttery which was at first 18ft across and 20ft long but was later widened to 21ft. The kitchens were 9ft east of the pantry-buttery wall, and were originally 19ft across and later extended to 27ft.

Their length has not yet been determined. No excavation has yet taken place at the west end, but the digging of a trench to feed oil to the boiler suggests that in due course we should be able to trace the outline of the solar block. There seems little doubt that the buildings we have unearthed at the east end of the Hall date from the late 14th

century (probably we shall find the same is true of those on the west end also), and represent the last building phase before disintegration in the next two centuries.

J L Barber, *The Oakhamian*, LXXIII, Summer Term 1958

CASTLE EXCAVATIONS

Despite the difficult weather, work has continued on the east end of Oakham Castle, and once more the results have fully justified the excellent work put in by a small band of devoted workers. After last season we knew only the width of the kitchen: we now know its length as well. Thus in three seasons we have established the full dimensions of the buttery, the pantry, the kitchen and the passageway leading between the buttery and the pantry to the kitchen, which was some nine feet away from the main building. There are traces of earlier buildings beneath the complex which we have unearthed, but most of our discoveries date from the late 14th century, when there must have been extensive alterations and improvements. Our evidence also shows clearly that the domestic offices on the east end (and no doubt on the west end also, as we hope to prove in subsequent seasons) were levelled out in the early 18th century. The reason is not far to seek. By that time the great house at Burley-on-the-Hill had been built and Oakham Castle was beginning to fall into serious disrepair. It was evidently decided therefore to scrap the domestic offices at either end of the Castle and to restore the Hall as an assize court.

Work on the kitchens is not yet complete and no plans have yet been drawn, but it seems certain that the general plan was as follows. A six-foot pavement surrounded three sides of the kitchen (not four sides as we at first surmised), and in the centre was an unpaved area, very heavily burnt, where all the cooking was done. At the four internal angles of the pavement were pillars, which supported a roof that must have been generously pierced either by louvres or by some other means to allow the smoke to escape. In the south-west corner we have come across a small hearth, which was quite separate from the main cooking area in the centre of the kitchen, and appears, from the way it is set back into the west wall, to have had its own chimney. Quite an amount of pottery has been found in the kitchen area, quantities of bones and the brass bottom of a colander.

At the same time work has been carried on at a well in the pantry, whose outside edge we found three years ago. It is carefully built of stone and grows larger as it goes down. Water looks like stopping our investigations beyond about nine feet, but, although we may not have the pleasure of finding priceless treasures on the bottom, we have at least found enough pottery to show that the well was also filled in and levelled up in the early 18th century.

D M Wilson & J G Hurst, 'Medieval Britain in 1956', *Medieval Archaeology*, I (1957), 157

RUTLAND: OAKHAM (SK/863087).

At the meeting of the Royal Archaeological Institute in July, 1956, C A R Radford said that the original motte is still to be seen at the S-E corner of the enclosure. He also suggested that the northern enclosure was part of the defences of the Saxon burgh (*Archaeol J*, CXII (1955), 181-4) and made some suggestions as to how the original hall was roofed. All that remains of the castle today is the 12th-century aisled hall, but documentary and structural evidence, as well as the conformation of the ground at the E and W ends of the hall, prove that it was once much larger.

As a first stage in what is hoped will be a thorough investigation of the buildings of the castle by excavation and survey, J L Barber, with a party of boys from Oakham School, dug a trench across the E end of the castle, opposite the three blocked-up doorways. Opposite the most northerly of the three a pantry was discovered 12ft. across, into which at a later date a well had been cut. S of the pantry and in line with the centre doorway lay a 4ft. passage, which must certainly lead to the kitchens. To the S, and giving access to the hall through the third blocked-up doorway, was a buttery, at first 18ft. wide but later extended to 21ft. The floors were of thin cement on top of hardcore of ironstone rubble, but the walls, where they had not been robbed, were mostly of ironstone bonded together with clay. None of them stood above the original ground level. Under the floor of the buttery two earlier walls were found, representing two earlier phases, of which little can be said at present. The latest phase, consisting of pantry, passage and buttery, date from c. 1200-1300. The buildings, both on the E end and on the W, would appear to have been pulled down and levelled early in the 18th century, when the hall was restored.

D M Wilson & J G Hurst, 'Medieval Britain in 1957', *Medieval Archaeology*, II (1958), 195

RUTLAND: OAKHAM (SK/863087).

Excavations were continued (cf. *Med Archaeol*, I (1957), 157) at the E end of the hall by J L Barber. Despite considerable stone robbing, the E wall of the buttery and pantry was recognized, making the pantry 12ft by 20ft, and the buttery at first 18ft by 20ft, but later 21ft by 20ft. These two rooms were separated by a passage 4ft wide, leading to the kitchens, which lay 9ft further to the E and were at first 19ft across, but later extended to 27ft: the N-S dimensions are still uncertain. The kitchens had a 6ft-wide ironstone floor alongside the W and E walls, whilst the central cooking area had a clay floor into which a 3ft-wide mortar-lined pit was set. All the buildings noted above appear to belong to the last phase of the castle's development, the second half of the 14th century.

D M Wilson & J G Hurst, 'Medieval Britain in 1958', *Medieval Archaeology*, III (1959), 308

RUTLAND: OAKHAM CASTLE (SK/863087).

Exploration of the kitchen was continued by J L Barber (cf. *Med Archaeol*, II (1958), 195). All 4 walls were identified. Two baking ovens were found in the SW corner, one succeeding the other within the same building.

Appendix E – The Inquisition of 1340

John Barber refers to an Inquisition of 1340. This was an inquiry, held at 'Bradecroft' (near Stamford, although the exact location remains uncertain), into the extent of the castle and manor of Oakham and shrievalty of Rutland carried out for Edward III, to whom the reversion belonged after the death of Hugh de Audley, earl of Gloucester, and his wife Margaret. The king had promised this property, amongst others, to William de Bohun, earl of Northampton, and his heirs. The original document is at The National Archives, reference TNA C145/139/20, and is summarised in *Cal Inq Misc 1307-49*, pp418-20, no 1703.

The Oakham Castle extract from the original document of 1340 (by permission of The national Archives)



Transcript of the original document with expanded abbreviations

Item dicunt quod est apud Okham quoddam castrum bene muratum et in castro illo sunt i aula iiij camera / i capella i coquina ij stabule i grangia pro feno i domus pro prisonariis i camera pro janitore unus pons tractatinus / cum catenis ferri et continet castrum infra muros duas acras terre per consuetam estimationem Et dicunt quod predictae domus nihil / valent per annum autem aysiamenti et ultra consuetam reprisam et dicunt quod eodem domus scilicet vocantur manerium de Okham / Dicunt coque [?] quod est ibidem extra castrum unum gardinium quod valet per annum cum fructu et herbagio viij s Est ibidem unum / vivarium sub castro cum fossato quod valet per annum iij s iiij [d].

Translation into English

Item they say that there is in Oakham a certain castle well walled and in the said castle are one hall four chambers / one chapel one kitchen two stables one grange for hay one house for prisoners one room for the janitor one drawbridge / with iron chains and the castle contains within the walls two acres of land by customary estimation. And they say that the said house is worth nothing / per annum beyond easements and other customary reprises and they say that the same house is called the manor of Oakham. / They say [??] that there is in the same place outside the castle one garden worth per annum with produce and grazing eight shillings There is in the same place one / fish stew below the castle with a ditch worth per annum three shillings and four pence.

General Index

Compiled by Robert Ovens

Place-names without county attributions are generally county towns or in Rutland

- acanthus foliage 66
Agnus Dei 36
Alstoe Mount 53, 55-6
Ancaster, Lincolnshire 8
Ancient Monuments Laboratory 59
Anglo-Saxon cemetery 8
Anglo-Saxon coins 11
Anglo-Saxon period 11
Anstee, J W 59
Antiquaries Journal 6
Army Education Corps 65
Audley, Hugh de 70; Margaret de 70
awl 61
Ball, Captain Cecil 35
Bankside, London 60
Barber, John Lewis 2, 3, 6, 7, 17, 28, 36-8, 49, 66, 68, 70
Barley, Maurice W 8, 63
Barons' War 6
Barrowden 35
Bedford County Library 63
Belfast 60
Bellarmine 52
biconical storage jar 58
Biek, L 59
Birmingham Museum and Art Gallery 63, 65
Birmingham University 63
Bishop's Palace, Hereford 67
black basalt ware 39, 46
black glazed earthenware 39
blackware 46
Bloodwort 35
boar canine tooth 61
Bodleian Library, Oxford 25
Bohun, William de 70
Bolton, E G 8
bone objects 60
bones 53, 60-1
Bourne ware 39, 40, 46-8
bowl 55-6, 58
Bradecroft, Stamford, Lincs 70
Bradshaws corn merchants, Oakham 36
Brill/Boarstall ware 47
Bristol 60-1
British Museum 60
British School, Athens 8
Bronze Age flint 12; occupation 12
Broseley, Shropshire 60
Buck, Samuel & Nathaniel 6, 12, 19, 20, 21, 22
Buckingham, Duke of 6, 15, 19, 20, 21, 25
buckle 60
Burghey House, Stamford, Lincs 25
Burley Fish Ponds 15
Burley on the Hill 6, 12, 19, 69
Cambridge 56
Canterbury Cathedral 24
carp skeleton 33
Casterton Secondary School 8
Castor ware 56
Cathedral School, Truro, Cornwall 65
Cecil, Lord William 8
centaur 4
Channel 4 6, 27
Chester 61
Chester clay pipe 54
Childe, Vere Gordon 65
Cistercian ware 40, 46-7
City of London 58
Civil War 25
clay pipe 53-4, 60
Clifton College, Bristol 65
Clinker (horseshoe) 26
Clough, Tim 6, 8, 9, 21, 38
coarse shelly ware 33, 39, 40, 46-7
Cold Overton Hill 15
Colleyweston slate 6, 27, 54, 61
Condoer, Lord 20
Conquest, [Norman] 12, 53, 56
cooking pot 40, 42-48, 55-6, 58
Corder, Dr Philip 8
cordon 58
Cornwall Archaeological Society 65
Cornwall, Earl of 20, 66
Cornwell, Lorraine 38
Cottesmore Hounds 36
Council for the Protection of Rural England 8
County Planning Officer 49
Cromwell 25; Lord 20
cross fleury 36
Cullingworth, W 13, 17, 18, 38
Daneweed Station 35
Danewort 35
Darwin College, Cambridge 65
deer park 6
Delft ware 52; English Delft 57
dendrochronological analysis 7, 12, 21
Department of Adult Education 8
Derby 60
Derby, Earl of 20, 66
Derrick, Freda 63
dish 57-8
dog mandible, skeleton 61
Doncaster, Dr John 13, 26
Downes, Jack 49
Dryden, Sir Henry 21
drystone wall 54
dulcimer 62
Dunning, G C 53, 55-6, 63
East Anglia 60
Edith, Queen 49, 66
Edward the Confessor 49, 66
Edward II 6, 20
Edward III 6, 20, 70
Edward IV 25
Edward VI 20
egg shells 33
Egypt 65
Eighth Army 8
Eleanor of Castile 24
Elizabeth I 25
Elizabeth II 7
English Delft 57
Fairfax, Thomas 25
Ferrers, Henry de 66; Robert de 66; Wakelin de 6, 15, 20, 24, 66; William de 66
Finch, Rt Hon G H 6; Pearl 16, 17
flint tools 60-1
Flore, William 6
fortified manor house 12
freestone ashlar 19, 27
Friends of the Rutland County Museum 7, 8
Frisby, Mike 38
Gamer, F H 63
Gathercole, Peter W 6, 11, 13, 15, 25, 33, 49, 64-5, 67
Gillam, John 8
Glaston 8
globular storage jar 58
Gloucester, Earl of 70
Gothic style 21
Great Casterton excavations 8, 11, 68; Daneweed 35
Greenfield, E 25
Guildhall Museum, London 58, 60, 63
hand made pottery 40, 42-48
Harmondsworth tithe barn, Middlesex 66
harp 62
Hartshome, C H 21
Hatfield House, Hertfordshire 8
Henry I 66
Henry II 20, 24
Henry III 6, 20, 62
Heritage Lottery Fund 6, 7
herringbone floor 54
Hill, Nick 6, 7, 26, 28
Hodges, H M 63
Hughes Collection, British Museum 60
Hurst, J G 49, 53, 63, 69
Inquisition of 1340 6, 11, 28, 35, 49, 68, 70
Inspectorate of Ancient Monuments 49
Institute of Archaeology 49, 65
ironstone rubble 19
Jack Hart Collection of Postcards 14, 27, 33-4, 38, 64
Jackson, Robert Noble 26
jetton 36
John, King 6
Johnson, Robert 6
Jones, Elaine 8, 38
jug 40-48, 55-6
Kent, Earl of 20
Kenyon, K M 63
lacing 59
Lambeth ware 57
leather objects 15, 51, 56, 59-60
Leeds, E T 8
Leicester 60;
Austin Friars 48
Castle 66
Jewry Wall 63
South Bond Street 55
Leicestershire Archaeological & Historical Society 38, 49
Leicestershire Museums 6
Libyan Desert 8
Lincoln ware 46
Little Park 6, 11
Lord of the Manor 6, 16, 19, 26
Lyveden/Stanton ware 39, 40, 46-8
Manor of Oakham 6, 11, 70
Market Overton 25
May, Jeffrey 8
Medieval Archaeology 7, 68-9
Medieval sandy ware 39, 40
Melton to Oakham Canal 13, 15
Mesolithic hunter-gatherers 12
micaschist 61
Midland blackware 39, 40
Ministry of Works 15, 25, 49, 59
Mortimer, Lord 20
Museum Ethnographers Group 65
Museum of Archaeology & Anthropology, Cambridge 65
National Fire Service 31
Neolithic axe 11; flint 12; occupation 12
Noble, Robert 26
Noel-Hume, I 63
Norman castle 66
Norman hall 12
Norman style 21
Norman transitional period 18
Northampton, Earl of 20, 70

- Norwich 58-9
Nottingham 60
Nottingham ware 39, 40, 47
Nottingham, Earl of 20
nutcracker 45
Oakham:
 Burley Road 12, 15, 36
 Castle Lane 6, 35, 49, 55
 Catmose House 35
 Church 12, 14, 21, 49
 Church Passage 15, 36
 Church Street 12, 13
 Cutt's Close 6, 12, 13, 15, 36
 High Street 12
 Hospital of Christ 26
 Market Place/Square 12, 15, 35, 49, 64
 Mill Street 36
 Northgate Street 11
 Post Office 15, 25, 35, 49-50, 61, 64, 67
 Riding School, Catmose 8
 South Street 12, 36
 Station Road 12
 Wharflands 8, 11
Oakham Castle:
 aisle roof 21-2, 62, 66
 aisles 6, 21-2, 24, 29, 49, 62, 66, 69
 arcades 62, 66
 assize court 6, 19, 69
 bailey 12, 13, 15, 49, 52, 66-7
 baking oven 32, 54, 57
 bastions 16, 18, 36, 66
 boiler house 18, 27
 buttery 19, 21, 28-9, 31-6, 68-9
 buttresses 19, 28
 carved finials 4
 carved limestone head 25, 51, 61-2
 centaur sculpture 4
 chambers 11, 26
 chapel 6, 11, 23, 49, 70
 clerestory 21
 columns 24, 66
 corbels 21, 24, 67
 courtyard 35
 curtain wall 12, 15
 domestic offices 6, 19
 doorways 21, 23, 28, 31, 68-9
 dormer window 6, 21
 drawbridge 6, 11, 35-6, 49, 70
 dungeon 17, 33
 earthworks 6, 13, 35
 east wall 23
 excavations 6, 26, 28-33, 45, 49, 50-3, 68-9
 fish ponds/stews 6, 11, 12, 15, 18, 33, 36, 49, 66, 70
 floor 22
 four-centred arch 15
 gallery 23, 24, 66
 garden 6, 70
 gatehouse 53
 gatekeeper 6
 gateway 6, 11, 15, 18, 35-6, 54, 66
 grange for hay 6, 11, 33, 49, 70
 Great Hall 4, 6, 7, 18, 19, 20, 25-6, 27, 34, 62
 ground conformation 33
 hammer-beam roof 21
 horse chestnut tree 34-5
 horseshoes 18, 20, 23, 25-6
 inner bailey 6, 14, 16, 33, 35
 ironstone floor 29
 judge's robing room 18
 King's chambers 6
 kitchen 6, 7, 11, 19, 21, 26, 28, 31-35, 40-2, 45, 49, 68-70
 Magistrates' Court 26
 midden 52, 56, 60
 minstrel gallery 23, 25
 moat 6, 15, 35-6, 51-2, 58, 61
 mortar-lined pit 68
 motte 6, 12, 13, 14, 18, 36, 49, 55, 66-7, 69
 musician sculptures 21, 24-5, 62
 nave 21, 66
 new discoveries 34
 Norman arches 23; doorways 21; window 33, 35
 north wall 24
 pantry 19, 21, 28-9, 31-5, 41, 42, 45, 68-9
 paved courtyard 29
 pent-roofed passage 26
 petty sessions room 18, 19, 21
 piers 21
 pits 52-3
 polychrome masonry 19, 66
 porter/janitor 70
 porter's chamber 33, 49, 54
 postern 12, 16
 priest's room 23
 prison 6, 11, 18, 26, 29, 33, 49, 70
 ramparts 49, 51-58, 60
 roasting house 6
 robbed walls 29, 31
 roof 21-2
 Samson and the lion sculpture 4
 screens 29
 sculptures 24, 25, 62
 shuttered unloading bay 22
 site map 13
 solar 19, 21, 23, 26-7, 29, 67-8
 spandrels 21
 stables 6, 11, 33, 35, 49, 70
 stone fabric 19, 29, 66
 stone flagged floor 6
 tenants 68-9
 tennis court 33
 Time Line 6
 wall 53, 57
 water supply 35
 well 15, 29, 40-2, 35, 45, 50, 52, 69
 west wall 23
 windows 6, 19, 21-2, 66
Oakham map 13, 16, 17, 18, 38
Oakham School 7, 8, 9, 11, 13, 16, 22, 25-6, 36, 68
 Archives 7, 38
 Barber Archive Room 8
 magazine 7, 68-9
 Museum 25, 54
 Old School 13, 36
 Shakespeare Centre 13, 36
 The Oakhamian 7, 68-9
Oswald, Adrian H 58, 60, 65
Otago Museum, New Zealand 65
Ovens, Robert 38
ox horn core 61; scapula 61
Oxford University 65
Oxford, Earl of 20
Parliament Street kilns, Nottingham 63
Paxton, Cambridgeshire 56
Peterhouse, Cambridge 65
photographic survey 6
Pickwell Rectory 25
pipkin 58
pitcher 55
Pitt Rivers Museum, Oxford 65
plague 6
Potters Marston ware 39, 40
pottery identification 39-48
Public Record Office 11
Puritans 25
Pursall, M F 49
Radford, C A Ralegh 12, 15, 16, 17, 21, 26, 27, 49, 53-4, 63, 66, 69
Record Office for Leicestershire, Leicester & Rutland 18, 38
Revell, L R 28, 34, 68
Rhenish Stoneware 57
Rhodes, Cecil 26
Richard II 6
Richard, Earl of Cornwall 6, 15, 66
ridge tile 39, 40, 42
Rigold, S E 52, 61
Roberts, Brian 49
Rockingham Castle, Northamptonshire 6
roe deer antler 61
Roman bead 11; farm 12; masonry 25; temple 25; tessellated floor 8; villa 6, 11, 12, 25
Romanesque sculpture 62
Royal Archaeological Institute 38, 66, 69
Royal Commission on Historical Monuments 66
Royal Navy 26
Rudkin, Messing 26
Rutland County Council 6, 7, 12, 28, 49
Rutland County Museum 8, 9, 15, 18, 21, 25, 27, 29-34, 38, 54, 64
Rutland Field Research Group for Archaeology & History 9
Rutland Local History & Record Society 7, 8, 9, 38
Rutland Local History Society 9
Rutland Magazine 26
Rutland Record 8, 12, 25
Rutland Record Society 9
Rutland Water 8, 15
Rutland, Earl of 20
St Benedict's Gates, Norwich 63
St Catherine's College, Cambridge 8
St Neots ware 33, 51, 53, 55-6, 63, 67
St Paul's Cathedral Choir School, London 65
Samson and the Lion sculpture 4
Sanchia of Provence 15, 66
Sandy ware 46-8
Sargant, W L 22, 35
Sawday, Deborah 6, 7, 33, 38-9
Saxon burh/burgh 12, 49, 66, 69
Saxon Grubenhau 12
Saxo-Norman pottery 12, 53-4, 56
Scunthorpe Museum, Lincolnshire 65
Seaton 35
Second World War 11
shambles 35, 64
Sharman, Josephine 6
sheep bone, phalange 61
Sheppard, Richard 12
Sidney Sussex College, Cambridge 26
skillet handle 58
skimmer, pierced 33
slip ware 57
Society for Medieval Archaeology 38, 68-9
Society of Antiquaries 8, 38
Speed, John 16
Staffordshire ware 57
Stamford ware 33, 39, 46, 51, 53-5, 63, 67
Stamford, Lincolnshire 8
storage jar 40, 58
strap handle 55, 58
Tailor, James of Yarmouth 61
tanning 60
terrestrial laser scan 6, 12
The National Archives 11, 70
Thetford, Norfolk 53
three stringed viol 62
thumbing 42
Thurgarton, Norfolk 56
Tilney St Lawrence, Norfolk 65
Time Team 6, 7, 12, 27-8
tin glazed ware 57
Todd, Malcolm 8
tree-ring dating 7, 12, 21
Trent & Peak Archaeology 6, 12
tromba marina 62
Tudor coarse ware 56-7
Twyford Church, Leicestershire 24
tygs 59-60
University of London 49, 65
University of Nottingham 8
University of Otago, New Zealand 65
Vale of Catmose 12
Veryan, Cornwall 65
Villiers, George 6, 15
Waites, Bryan 38
Warren scholarship 8
Warwick, Earl of 66
Wase Papers 25
watermill 6, 11
Webster, Graham 8
Westminster 62
wheel-thrown pottery 42-48, 55
whetstone 61
Wilson, D M 69
Winchcombe, Gloucestershire 26
windmill 6, 11
Wright, James 6, 20

Rutland Local History & Record Society publications

The Society's publications consist of the *Rutland Record*, a series of Occasional Publications, and the Rutland Record Series of research reports. *Rutland Record* is the Society's annual journal, an A4 publication of 40-48pp, issued free to paid-up members; it normally contains a selection of historical and archaeological articles and the annual reports of local organisations whose work is connected with the heritage of the historic county. Occasional Publications, which are not included in the membership subscription, are published at irregular intervals, and are normally dedicated to a single subject; they are usually A4 in format and vary in length. The Rutland Record Series, also not included in the membership subscription, are more substantial research publications normally on a single subject or theme relating to the county of Rutland, and may be softback or hardback. Some issues of *Rutland Record* and some Occasional Papers are out of print, but may be available to consult free of charge on the Society's website. All available publications can be purchased in person at the Rutland County Museum, ordered from the Society by post (enclosing a cheque to include p&p), or ordered on-line (using a credit or debit card) from GENfair. Full details, including lists of contents, can be found on the Society's website, www.rutlandhistory.org, or on www.genfair.co.uk.

Occasional Publications

4. *The History of Gilson's Hospital, Morcott*, by David Parkin (1995). The story of this small charity, founded in 1612 and still operating, its almshouse, trustees, clerks, agents and beneficiaries, and its farm at Screddington, Lincs; foundation deed; George Gilson (£3.50, members £2.50, p&p £1.50).
6. *The History of the Hospital of St John the Evangelist & St Anne in Okeham*, by David Parkin (2000). Published to celebrate the still-flourishing 600-year old charity, founded in 1399 and revived in 1597: its history, chapel and archives; schedules of trustees and beneficiaries (£3.50, members £2.50, p&p £1.50).
7. *The 1712 Land Tax Assessments and the 1710 Poll Book for Rutland*, ed T H McK Clough (2005). Introduction by Dennis Mills; commentary on this rare Land Tax survival and the 1710 Rutland poll book, transcripts for each parish (prepared by the Village Studies Group for Rutland), indexes of clergy, trades, field and place names, personal names (£5.00, members £3.50, p&p £2.00).
8. *Common Right and Private Interest: Rutland's Common Fields and their Enclosure*, by Ian E Ryder (2006). How Rutland's enclosures evolved, with historical background, case studies of Greetham, Lyddington, Caldecott & Uppingham, and Thorpe-by-Water, gazetteer, indexes (£5.50, members £4.50, p&p £2.00).
9. *Who Owned Rutland in 1873? Rutland Entries in Return of Owners of Land 1873*, by T H McK Clough (2010). Full transcript of the 564 Rutland entries, with introduction analysing who the landowners were, where they came from and what they did. Special sections on the parish of Lyddington and on a mysterious link with Chipping Campden in Gloucestershire. Notes about individual owners, index of their addresses (£7.50, members £6.00, p&p £2.00).
10. *Medieval Property Transactions in Rutland: abstracts of feet of fines 1197-1509*, by Bridget Wells-Furby (2013). Introduction, discussion and detailed calendar of all 355 Rutland feet of fines, fully indexed £10.00, members £8.00, p&p £2.00).

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5. *The Heritage of Rutland Water*, ed Robert Ovens & Sheila Sleath (2nd impression 2008). Publishing the results of a Heritage Lottery Fund supported project to study the area of Rutland Water in detail, recording its history, archaeology, people, villages, buildings, landscape, geology and natural history; chapters on the construction of the reservoir, sailing, fishing, birdwatching, flora and fauna; bibliography and index (full colour throughout, hardback, 680pp. £15.00, members £12.00, p&p by courier £7.00).

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JOHN BARBER'S OAKHAM CASTLE AND ITS ARCHAEOLOGY

Rutland Local History & Record Society Occasional Publication No 11



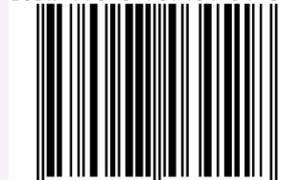
*John Lewis Barber MA FSA
(Oakham School Archives)*

In the 1950s, John Barber carried out excavations adjacent to the Great Hall of Oakham Castle with the assistance of boys from Oakham School, where he was a master. Circumstances conspired against his being able to produce a detailed excavation report at the time, but he subsequently wrote extensive notes about the Great Hall and the castle site. These have remained unpublished until now, but in view of renewed interest in the history and archaeology of the Castle – one of England's most important Romanesque vernacular buildings – and in the context of plans to safeguard and develop the site with the aid of a substantial grant from the Heritage Lottery Fund, the Rutland Local History & Record Society has decided to publish John Barber's notes in its Occasional Publications series. The opportunity has also been taken to include an up-to-date assessment of the pottery from his excavations by Deborah Sawday, and to republish Peter Gathercole's rescue excavation report relating to the adjacent Oakham Post Office site and summary reports of John Barber's excavations which appeared at the time. Although more recent research undertaken with the benefit of modern techniques has amplified our knowledge and understanding of the Castle, sometimes challenging John Barber's ideas in the process, his work is by no means diminished as a result, and these notes and reports remain important and informative background material for any study of Oakham Castle, Rutland's most important ancient monument.



*Time Team's re-excavation of one of John Barber's trenches at Oakham Castle in 2012
(photo: Robert Ovens)*

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