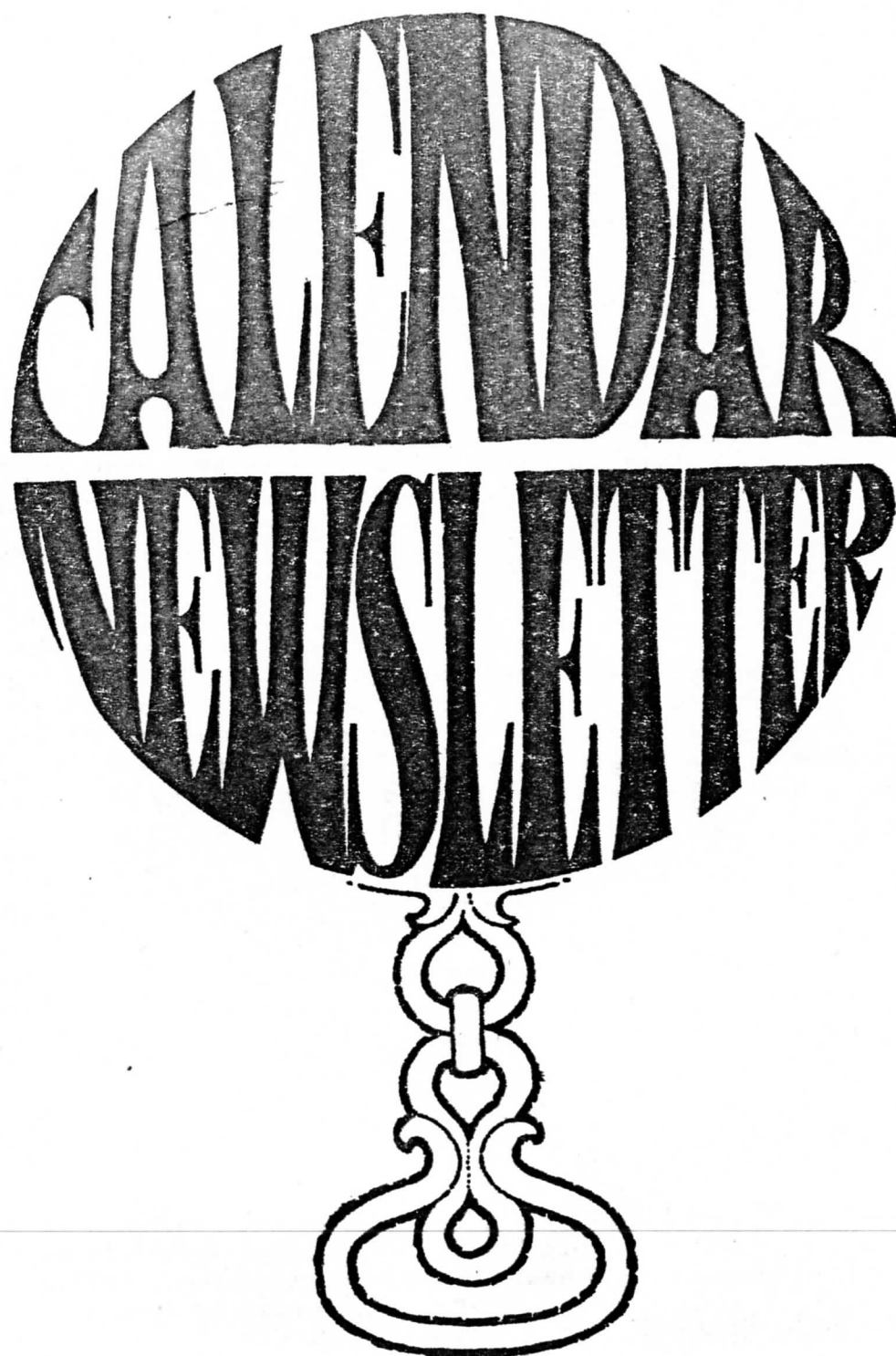


OCT 1977 - MAY 1978

# Northamptonshire Archaeological Society



## NORTHAMPTONSHIRE ARCHAEOLOGICAL SOCIETY

Calendar/Newsletter October 1977 - May 1978

### CALENDAR/NEWSLETTER

This issue of the Calendar/Newsletter is extended to include more news about archaeological work going on in the county and short articles written by members. With the ever increasing cost of printing the Council of the society has decided to try to develop a two-tier system of publication - to continue to include major reports and articles in the society journal 'Northamptonshire Archaeology', and to develop the twice yearly Calendar/Newsletter by incorporating more short notes and articles, in order to keep members more immediately in touch with discoveries being made in the county. Any contributions for the next issue (May 1978 - October 1978) should be sent to the Secretary by early April 1978.

### LECTURE PROGRAMME

The coming year's programme is very varied and interesting. The first meeting on 15 October promises to be well worth attending with talks on Northampton, Norwich and York bringing together the archaeology of three towns of eastern England. In the spring the NAS joins with the Northamptonshire Ironstone Railway Trust for a lecture which combines the interests of both societies: 'Roman mining', by Professor G D B Jones. In response to the many requests from parents enquiring on behalf of their children who are interested in archaeology, it is hoped to arrange a Saturday afternoon meeting specifically designed for children some time in the coming year. We have to plan a long way ahead, so any suggestions for speakers for the 1978-79 programme will be very welcome.

### ESSAY COMPETITION

An essay competition has been organised over this summer in co-operation with the Chronicle and Echo, to encourage the interest of school children in archaeology. The project has been well supported and has produced some interesting pieces of work. It is hoped that a similar competition may be organised next year with the publicity getting off the ground a little earlier, before the schools break up.

### COACH TRIP

A trip has been arranged for 8 October to visit Tewkesbury, Gloucester and Hailes Abbey. At the time of writing the coach is already fully booked - an encouraging start for the first NAS coach trip.

### PUBLICATIONS

A list of back numbers and off-prints is available from the Secretary or Editor. A 'Catalogue of Archaeological Journals available at Institutional and Society Libraries in the County' can be obtained from the secretary (price 20p plus S.A.E. large enough to take A4 sheets).

## DO YOU WANT TO HELP?

Excavations, Fieldwork, Finds Processing

Weekley, Kettering (See News). Additional help will be appreciated. The site is open during the week, on Sundays and some Saturdays. Please contact Dennis Jackson at 122 Ardington Road, Northampton, or ring Northampton 35889, preferably in the evening.

Quinton. Upper Nene Archaeological Society. Excavations continue most Sundays throughout the year on the Belgic and Romano-British settlement site at Quinton. Work is currently concentrating on a possible military presence on the site in the 1st century AD. Contact Mr/Mrs Friendship-Taylor, 8 Pinetrees Close, Hackleton, Northants. Tel. Northampton 870312; or Mrs Friendship-Taylor, Central Museum, Guildhall Road, Northampton. Tel. Northampton 34881.

Northampton Museum. Help welcome in processing finds from excavations, and in cataloguing records etc. Contact Mr W R G Moore, Keeper of Archaeology, Central Museum, Guildhall Road, Northampton. Tel. Northampton 34881.

Northampton Development Corporation. Excavations will be continuing from October to June on a Saxon site in the town and on the Neolithic causewayed camp at Briar Hill (see News). Monday to Friday. Help is always required on the excavations. For those with limited time available help is also needed with finds processing at the Archaeological Centre, Thorplands - an odd morning or afternoon will help. Contact Mr J H Williams, Archaeologist, Cliftonville House, Bedford Road, Northampton. Tel. Northampton 46444.

Westfield Museum, Kettering. Help welcome with finds processing. Contact Mr F V Lyall, The Curator, West Street, Kettering. Tel. Kettering 2315.

Northamptonshire County Council Archaeological Unit. Excavation beginning on a Saxon site at Raunds in October (see News). Sundays - Fridays. Volunteers needed. Contact Mr A Boddington on site, or the Archaeology Unit, County Hall, Northampton. Help is also required with fieldwork related to the county Sites and Monuments Record (see News) and in the processing of finds from earlier excavations in the county. Contact the Archaeology Unit, as above.

## LECTURES

Saturday 15 October. NORTHAMPTONSHIRE ARCHAEOLOGICAL SOCIETY joint meeting with Northampton Development Corporation and Council for British Archaeology, Group 9. 'The Early Development of Towns in Eastern England' - A Carter (Director, Norwich Survey), R Hall (Deputy Director, York Archaeological Trust), J Williams (Archaeologist, Northampton Development Corporation). From 3.00-6.00pm. The meeting will be preceded at 2.00pm by the AGM of the CBA Group 9. Northampton Development Corporation Offices, Cliftonville House, Bedford Road, Northampton.

Friday 28 October. Roger Goodburn, 'Roman Villas in Britain'. Upper Nene Archaeological Society. The University Centre, Barrack Road, Northampton. 8.00pm.

Monday 31 October. Brian Dix, 'The Odell Excavation'. Wellingborough and District Archaeological Society. 'Gaywood', 27 Park Road, Wellingborough. 7.30pm.

Friday 4 November. Mr T Smith, 'The History of Brickmaking'. Thrapston and District Historical Society. Middle School, Market Road, Thrapston. 7.30pm.

Monday 7 November. Lynn Dyson-Bruce, 'Recent Excavations in Northamptonshire'. Milton Keynes and District Archaeological Society. Bradwell Abbey Field Centre, Old Bradwell, Milton Keynes. 7.30pm.

Friday 18 November. NORTHAMPTONSHIRE ARCHAEOLOGICAL SOCIETY joint meeting with Peterborough Museum Society (Archaeology Section). Richard Morris, 'History before our Eyes: archaeology and the study of churches'. Peterborough Museum and Art Gallery (Museum Society Room), Priestgate, Peterborough. 8.00pm.

Friday 25 November. Dr Helen Bamford, 'Excavations at Briar Hill, Northampton'. Upper Nene Archaeological Society. The University Centre, Barrack Road, Northampton. 8.00pm.

Friday 25 November. John Steane, 'The Medieval Parks of Northamptonshire'. South Northants. Archaeological Society. The Sponne School, Towcester. 7.30pm.

Monday 28 November. Film, 'Before the Romans'. Wellingborough and District Archaeological Society. All Hallows Church Hall, Wellingborough. 7.30pm.

Friday 2 December. Members Reports Meeting. Thrapston and District Historical Society. Middle School, Market Road, Thrapston. 7.30pm.

Friday 6 January. Miss M Radford, 'A Northamptonshire Alphabet'. Thrapston and District Historical Society. Middle School, Market Road, Thrapston. 7.30pm.

Friday 20 January. NORTHAMPTONSHIRE ARCHAEOLOGICAL SOCIETY joint meeting with Wellingborough and District Archaeological Society. Martin Welch, 'Early Anglo-Saxon England'. Wellingborough Technical College. 8.00pm.

Friday 27 January. Alan Hannan, 'Excavations at Tewkesbury, Glos.'. Upper Nene Archaeological Society. The University Centre, Barrack Road, Northampton. 8.00pm.

Friday 7 February. AGM of Thrapston and District Historical Society. Middle School, Market Road, Thrapston. 7.30pm.

Friday 24 February. Tony McCormack, 'Excavations at Grendon, Northants.'. Upper Nene Archaeological Society. The University Centre, Barrack Road, Northampton. 8.00pm.

Tuesday 27 February. Alan Hannan, 'Archaeology and Local Government'. Wellingborough and District Archaeological Society. 'Gaywood', 27 Park Road, Wellingborough. 7.30pm.

Friday 3 March. NORTHAMPTONSHIRE ARCHAEOLOGICAL SOCIETY joint meeting with the Northamptonshire Ironstone Railway Trust. Professor G D B Jones, 'Roman Mining'. The University Centre, Barrack Road, Northampton. 8.00pm.

Friday 31 March. NORTHAMPTONSHIRE ARCHAEOLOGICAL SOCIETY joint meeting with Upper Nene Archaeological Society. Carolyn Heighway, 'The Origins and Development of Gloucester'. The University Centre, Barrack Road, Northampton. 8.00pm.

Friday 28 April. Sally Stow, 'Roman Coins, with reference to Quinton'. Upper Nene Archaeological Society. The University Centre, Barrack Road, Northampton. 8.00pm.

Saturday 6 May. NORTHAMPTONSHIRE ARCHAEOLOGICAL SOCIETY. Annunal General Meeting followed by 'Archaeology in Northamptonshire 1977-78'. Members reports meeting with accounts of fieldwork, excavation and building recording in the county in the past year. Kettering Boys Grammar School. 2.00pm.

Friday 26 May. Christopher Taylor, 'Fields'. Upper Nene Archaeological Society. The University Centre, Barrack Road, Northampton. 8.00pm.

## SOCIAL EVENTS

Friday 9 December. South Northants. Archaeological Society Christmas Party.  
The Sponne School, Towcester. 7.30pm.

Friday 9 January. Upper Nene Archaeological Society Christmas Dinner. 'The Two  
Brewers', High Street, Olney. Contact Mr/Mrs Friendship-Taylor, 8 Pinetrees Close,  
Hackleton, Northants. Tel. Northampton 870312.

## COURSES IN ARCHAEOLOGY

History of Northampton. R L Greenall. 12 meetings, 10.00-11.30am from  
27 September. Fee: £4.80. The University Centre, Barrack Road, Northampton.

An Introduction to Industrial Archaeology. G H Starmer. 22 meetings, 7.30-9.00pm,  
from 27 September. Fee: £8.80. The University Centre, as above.

Fields, Villages and Towns. B J Dunnery. 11 meetings, 7.30-9.00pm, from  
28 September. Fee: £4.40. The University Centre, as above.

Northamptonshire Church Architecture. Bruce Bailey. 10 meetings, 7.30-9.00pm,  
plus 2 Saturday visits, from 28 September. Fee: £4.80. The University Centre,  
as above.

## RESIDENTIAL SCHOOLS AND SATURDAY SCHOOLS IN ARCHAEOLOGY

Stonehenge and Avebury. D D A Simpson, H A W Burl. Residential weekend,  
4-6 November 1977. Knuston Hall.

The Medieval English Village and its Fields. C C Taylor, B K Roberts, A E Brown.  
Residential weekend, 11-13 November 1977. Knuston Hall.

Kingdoms, Counties, Tribes and Towns. Charles Phythian Adams. Saturday School,  
19 November 1977. University Centre, Northampton.

The Art and Archaeology of Ancient India. Miss J Strub. Residential weekend,  
16-18 December 1977. Knuston Hall.

The British Mesolithic (with particular reference to the Midlands). Paul Mellars,  
Mrs W Tutin, Alan Saville, Clive Bonsall. Residential weekend, 13-15 January 1978.  
Knuston Hall.

Archaeology in other societies: recent discoveries in archaeology and ethnography.  
Saturday School, 11 February 1978. Vaughan College, Leicester.

Metalworking in Roman Britain. Henry Cleere, R F Tylecote, Roger Hetherington,  
W H Manning, M G Spratling. Residential weekend, 17-19 February 1978. Knuston Hall.

Neolithic Burial Practices: current problems and possibilities. Ian Kinnes,  
Roger Mercer, D D A Simpson, H A W Burl. Saturday School, 4 March 1978. Vaughan  
College, Leicester.

Field Archaeology and the Landscape. A E Brown, C C Taylor. Residential course,  
31 March - 7 April 1978. Knuston Hall.

Moats in Europe (international conference jointly with Moated Sites Research Group).  
Residential course, 7-9 April 1978.

Statistics for Archaeologists. Clive Orton. Residential weekend, 12-14 May 1978.  
Knuston Hall.

Further details from: A E Brown, Staff Tutor in Archaeology, Department of Adult  
Education, University of Leicester, University Road, Leicester LE1 7RH.

## NEWS

### Thrapston and District Archaeological Society

The society had its usual exhibit in the Conservation Tent at the East of England Show in July. The theme this year was 'Land' and the exhibition included a display of Old Agricultural Implements; bricks, moulds and photos from the now disused Manor Brick Works at Raunds; a display of photos detailing the changes in land use brought about by mining in the Thrapston area and relief models of Woodford Parish in 1731 and 1932, contrasting the open fields of 200 years ago and the enclosed fields of today. During the summer we have had well-attended visits to Boughton House and Langton Hall.

E C Humphries

### South Northamptonshire Archaeological Society

Since no new excavation presented itself this summer, members have continued to work at weekends on the Roman site at Wood Burcote, now being excavated by Roy Turland, in succession to Peter Woods. Others have worked at Deddington Castle with Richard Ivens. On Saturday 18 April we staged an exhibition 'Ancient Towcester Displayed' at the Sponne School in which we assembled and exhibited plans, drawings, maps and materials from all traceable excavations in the area, and George Freestone displayed his collection of ancient crafts. In the afternoon George Lambrick gave a preliminary report on the Park Street dig which was carried out by the Oxfordshire Archaeological Unit on behalf of the Northamptonshire County Council last September. So great was the local interest that at least 300 people saw the exhibition and 160 attended the lecture.

The autumn programme reflects the increasing interest in local history with talks by Richard Chambers on 'Reconstructing Past Landscapes' and by John Steane on 'The Medieval Parks of Northamptonshire'. Les Matthews is making a welcome return visit with some films.

B C Hastings

### Towcester

A large area west of the town is now designated for development and this summer Abbey Homesteads commenced construction work in an area adjacent to the sites examined by Dennis Mynard in 1966 and by Tony Brown in 1974-76. It has been assumed that this was an area where industrial workshops fronted on to the Roman road from Towcester to Alchester.

The earthmoving required for the layout of estate roads revealed a complex of about 25 ditches and gullies which were of three types. Firstly, there were those with a very clean red sandy fill, probably associated with the first occupation of the site. They contained virtually no finds and the odd Romano-British sherd found in them was not dateable. Secondly, there was a series of drainage gullies with silty fills and pottery of 3rd-4th century date. Thirdly, in the area immediately adjacent to Brown's excavations, there were stake and wattle lined ditches,

containing much black industrial waste. Also observed were the remains of round huts, one at least 5m. in diameter with an entrance to the SE and with internal post-holes. In addition, the stylobates of what appears to be a large industrial barn-like building were found, with indications of an underlying large circular building. Another smaller circular hut was observed further down the slope.

Trenches also disclosed the presence of at least three stone buildings, apparently and in one case certainly, of late second or early third century date. These although ephemeral, all seemed to be of an industrial nature.

An Iron Age farmstead, some 24 metres across (from both points where the enclosing ditch was sectioned) was revealed in the valley by Silverstone Brook on a gravel subsoil and 250m. north of the main group of Romano-British buildings. This is thought to be of 3rd century BC date.

Much pottery, including several virtually complete vessels have been found on the site and material found by private individuals has been recorded including a brooch of Collingwood Type U, and a Roman arrowhead. The majority of the pottery has been recovered from stratified deposits in the various ditches.

The final report from the Geological Museum indicates that the architectural stonework found in recent years from within Towcester, the St Lawrence Road site, Wood Burcote villa and Borough Hill, Daventry, shows a wide spread Roman industry in building stone with sources including Bath, Weldon and the Gloucestershire Cotswolds.

C Woodfield for NCC and DoE

#### Weekley, near Kettering

The many quarry sites in the county continue to be watched and where necessary limited excavation or recording is carried out.

A major excavation has been in progress on an ironstone quarry at Weekley, near Kettering, over a number of years, and to date six enclosures, dating to the 1st century BC or the 1st century AD have been either totally or partially excavated, as well as surrounding areas. Pottery kilns dating to the period and much interesting pottery has been discovered during the excavations. The long term aim of the work is to record a total landscape, which will eventually include the site of a Roman villa. This work will continue during the forthcoming autumn and winter and any additional help will be appreciated (see Do You Want To Help?).

D Jackson for DoE

#### Raunds, Rescue Excavation

The County Council with the support of the Manpower Services Commission and the Department of the Environment is to carry out rescue excavations at Brick Kiln Road, Raunds. An area designated for industrial development contains earthworks which were surveyed by David Hall prior to the cutting of a trial trench in 1975. Andrew Boddington will direct the excavation with help from five assistants recruited under the Job Creation Programme. Excavation will commence in early October and extend through to April 1978. From the evidence of David Hall's trial trench it is anticipated that there are the remains of an Anglo-Saxon church at Brick Kiln Road. Should members of the NAS wish to assist in the excavation on a fairly regular basis they will be welcome at the site which will be open Sundays to Fridays. Please contact Mr Boddington at the site or the Archaeology Unit, County Hall, Northampton.

A Hannan for Northamptonshire County Council

St Mary's Church, Staverton, Northants.

At the request of the Archdeacon of Northampton, the County Archaeological Unit recently carried out a graveyard survey at Staverton. The need for the survey arose due to criticism by the local residents of the implementing of a Faculty for graveyard clearance. It had been demonstrated that the Faculty had been granted on the basis of a plan lacking accuracy and detail. The Diocesan Advisory Committee had recognised the need for an accurate survey prior to carrying out clearance and it is hoped that before any further clearing of churchyards in the county there will be an opportunity for archaeological work well in advance.

The Unit with the help of a small number of volunteers set out (a) to plan the yard including the church, boundary walls and immediately surrounding features; (b) to prepare an inventory of the gravestones, recording on special forms the inscription, the dimensions and by sketching, the form of the stone to augment photographs, together with information relating to current condition, geology, orientation and masons marks.

It is regretted that the survey could not have been requested before some 20-25 stones were displaced. However the plan has been completed and the inventory assembled in draft form. It is hoped that the survey can be finalised as soon as possible and copies submitted to the County Record Office and Diocesan Record Office. Should anyone feel that they could help in the preparation of the completed inventory, please contact the Unit (County Hall, Northampton). The Unit wishes to thank Mrs Foard and Miss Richard for their help in this survey.

A Hannan for the Northamptonshire County  
Council

Northampton Development Corporation Archaeology Unit

Staff. Mike McCarthy has left the Unit to become director of the new Carlisle Archaeology Unit and is already investigating an interesting multi-period site close to the cathedral. Richard Hunter has also left, for the USA. Mike Shaw and Mary Gryspeerdt are joining the Unit shortly. Mike, a Birmingham graduate, has recently been directing excavations in medieval Southampton and takes over the supervision of the Chalk Lane site (see Do You Want To Help?). Mary has just finished post-graduate work at Durham and will be developing our study of medieval pottery in and around Northampton.

J H Williams (NDC)

Briar Hill, October 1976 - June 1977

Excavation of the Neolithic causewayed enclosure has continued during a third extended season. Work has centred on the investigation of the southern half of the inner (eastern) enclosure and on the south eastern part of the inner ditch.

It has now been confirmed that the inner enclosure is formed by an inward spiralling arm of the main inner ditch circuit. Further evidence of extensive recutting has been found in several segments of the inner ditch. Dating evidence from the ditches includes Middle Neolithic pottery from the lower layers and Late Neolithic Fengate ware from the uppermost layers of the fills.

Within the enclosure traces of timber structures, apparently neolithic in date, have now been discovered. These include postholes, in one of which were found sherds of Late Neolithic Grooved Ware, and massive slots defining three sides of a rectangular structure measuring approximately 5m. by 2.5m.

Features relating to the Iron Age occupation of the site have also been investigated, including two rectangular enclosures and numerous pits (see Do You Want To Help? and Lectures - Friday 25 November).

H Bamford (NDC)

## Marefair

Between January and July this year excavations were carried out on a site on Marefair, Northampton, opposite St Peter's Church and adjacent to Barclaycard House. The site was badly damaged by Victorian cellars but the results can be summarised as follows. An area c. 16m. by 12m. was opened, and divided into Trenches A and B.

Trench A: A single house property fronting on to Marefair was excavated from the Victorian floor levels down to its early medieval origin. It could be seen that the building was part of a terrace although its continuation beyond this property had been robbed away. To the rear of the house a sequence of metalled yards and various out-buildings including a 15-16th century malt-roasting oven, and rubbish/cess pits were found.

Trench B: In this area no late medieval buildings survived so the upper soil levels were removed by machine down to the early medieval/Saxon levels. A variety of timber structures were found although the exact form of the buildings or fences in most cases was not apparent. The corner of a substantial Saxon timber building apparently aligned on Marefair provided perhaps the most interesting evidence on the site. Part of a similar structure also aligned on Marefair was found below the medieval house discussed above in Trench A.

The results of the excavation are clearly very important in adding to the evidence already gained from the St Peter's Street excavation and the Chalk Lane site, filling out our picture of Saxon and early medieval Northampton. The report will be published in a future volume of Northamptonshire Archaeology. The NDC wishes to thank the Manpower Services Commission for providing the funds for the excavation, and Centros Ltd/NBC for allowing access to the site ahead of development.

F Williams (NDC)

## SITES AND MONUMENTS RECORD FOR NORTHAMPTONSHIRE

When I took up the post of Sites and Monuments Assistant with the newly formed Northamptonshire County Council Archaeology Unit in December 1976 a number of people asked the question whether or not the county really needed yet another pen pushing archaeologist (as the Record catches up with all published information, fieldwork will of course take up far more of my time). Now that nine months are past it seems an appropriate time to try to answer that question. You may well argue that no one is going to say that their job is unnecessary, because they would be arguing for their own redundancy, but believe it or not the following arguments are what I believe, not what I wish to believe.

When I first arrived a simple Sites and Monuments Record was already in existence - the decision had already been made some years earlier that this was to be the main archaeological record centre for the county. However this did not necessarily have to be the right decision, after all were there not adequate records already in existence? A great deal of information was already collected together in the Ordnance Survey archaeological record, copies of the relevant Northamptonshire cards being accessible for consultation in Northampton Museum. In addition a great deal of information was also available at the National Monuments Record (London). Information was also published annually in 'Northamptonshire Archaeology', which meant that up to date information was always available. Above all, the Royal Commission on Historical Monuments was well advanced in its work on an inventory of archaeological sites in the county.

Each of these sources are extremely useful, and can be supplemented by articles in numerous other local and national journals, but I would suggest that there is still a very important place for a county based sites and monuments record. Firstly, the Ordnance Survey record was nationally not county based, and no one closely involved in the archaeology of the county was responsible for updating this record. Moreover for various reasons the Ordnance Survey record was being reorganised as a National Non-Intensive Record dependent on information flow from county based records. Similarly the National Monuments Record is fairly inaccessible for day to day enquiries.

The reports section of 'Northamptonshire Archaeology' makes the results of new fieldwork available to a wide audience, but as many of you realise the retrieval of information from this or any other journal is often extremely difficult. The Royal Commission therefore has done us all the very great service of collating most of the easily accessible published information, information from many air photographs, and also the results of their fieldwork (particularly their very good surveys of medieval earthworks). However, although the Commission volumes provide an important basis for future work, the fact that the information must be trimmed down for publication inevitably sets severe limits on the scope of the inventory. Firstly the addition of new information can only be made through the addenda appearing in later volumes - this immediately means that simple ordering by parish soon becomes mixed up as one must sort through several volumes to make sure that you have all the references for a particular area. Moreover updating will cease when the fourth volume is printed. Finally one must remember that the Commission account is quite restricted, and so for example the condition and status of sites is not generally considered.

Building upon the vast amount of work already presented in these and other sources, the NCC Sites and Monuments Record can provide the most comprehensive Record because it is designed specifically to serve as a system for the storage and rapid retrieval of all available information appertaining to Northamptonshire's Historic Environment. Whether it is sufficiently flexible, efficient, and comprehensive is for those who come to use it to decide; it is certainly easily updated, and will remain as up to date as is possible, because for the first time there is someone whose prime responsibility is to maintain the Record.

This does not seem the appropriate place to detail the structure of the record - a guide to the "Structure, Purpose and Use of the NCC Sites and Monuments Record" is available to anyone wishing to use the record. It is however perhaps worth outlining the use which the Unit itself is making of the record. Firstly, we have established a consultation procedure whereby District Councils notify us of all planning applications which may affect a known archaeological site. This obviously requires that the Unit has easy access to all the most up to date archaeological information for the county. The Unit is also consulted by various departments of the County Council about the archaeological implications of proposed road projects, the construction of new schools, etc. We also use the record in the preparation of archaeological/historical reports which may influence the choice and delineation of Conservation and Development areas designated by the County Council.

Above all else, the existence of a comprehensive archaeological record with a flexible retrieval system will allow us to plan for the future. The main aims of future planning in archaeology are stated in the County Structure Plan:

"..... to establish a hierarchy of sites, based on type, period, current condition and importance, and with reference to national and regional priorities ....."

and to

"..... give priority to the conservation of sites, or groups of sites or landscapes at the apex of this hierarchy; the protection of such sites being affected by the implementation of Ancient Monument Acts and by the fullest use of local authority planning powers".

The Record is not of course only for use by the County Council, in the preparation of reports, or the input of archaeological information into the planning process, it is also available for use by anyone carrying out valid researches on local or national topics - whether for a university thesis or to back up the fieldwork results of local amateurs.

If you would like to make use of the Record you should write to the County Archaeologist, Secretary's Department, County Hall, George Row, Northampton; or phone Northampton 34833 ext. 5236.

Glenn Foard

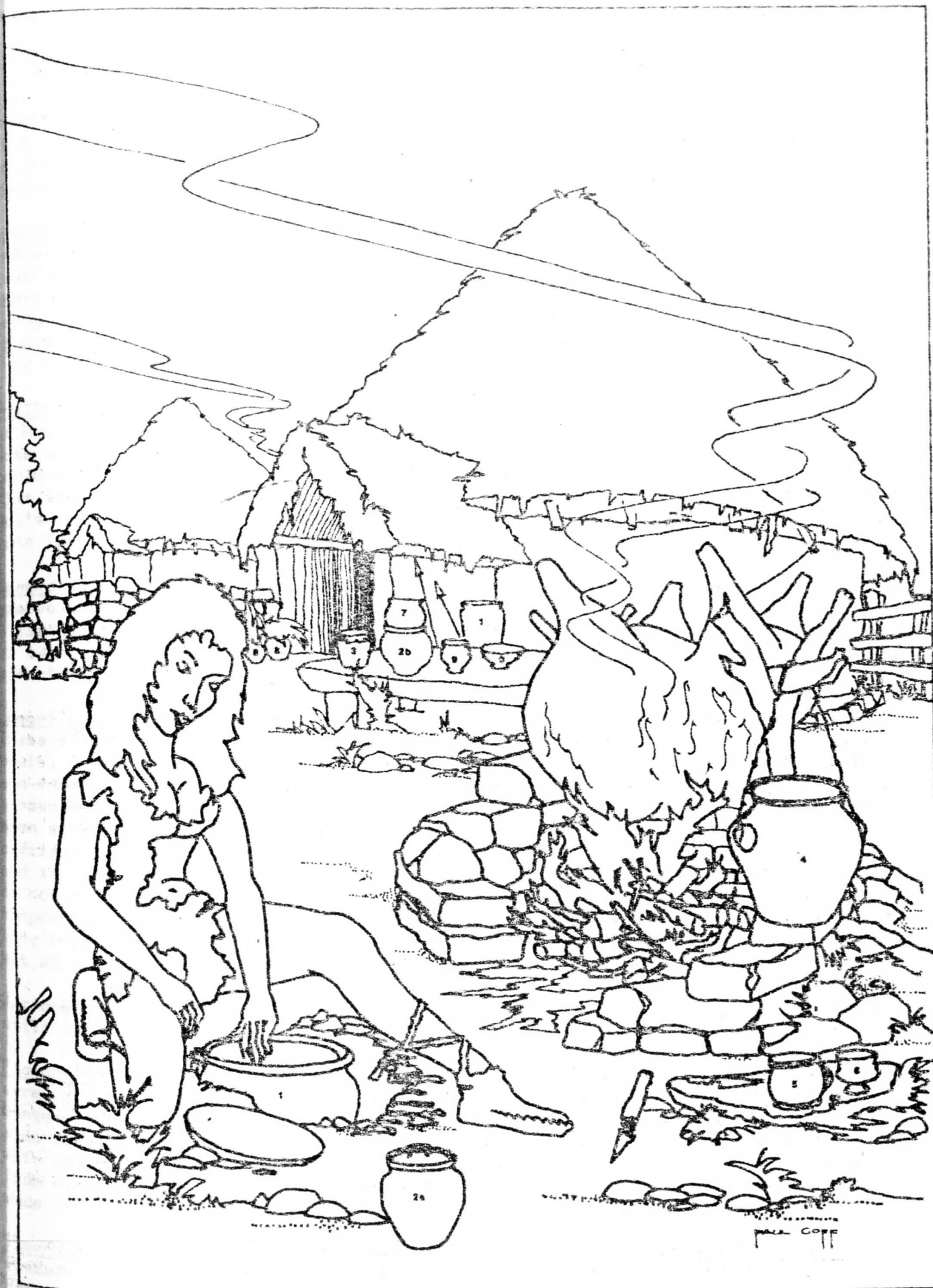
#### THE POSSIBLE DOMESTIC USES OF IRON AGE POTTERY

Pottery, or sherds of pottery, are often the commonest material found on many archaeological sites. This is because pottery is almost indestructable in comparison to such perishable materials as wood, leather, shale and metal. Vessels and containers were made in all these materials, but leather and wood decay easily (except in water-logged conditions) and metals (bronze and iron) when damaged, were melted down for re-use. We can only assume that earthenware vessels fulfilled a host of requirements in the preparation, storage and service of food.

In the study of pottery, most archaeologists are mainly concerned with the fabric of the pottery, the constituent clay and tempering material, and the forms (shapes) in which the clay was formed. The fabrics are analysed and formulated into definitive fabric series and the shapes are analysed and defined into a set of variables of different forms and put into a typological form series. This approach evaluates the pottery on its intrinsic and scientific merits alone and usually evades the real issue - that of the purpose for which each vessel was made. The scientific analyses of material is increasing, and as anyone who reads current archaeological reports is aware these appendices equal and at time outweigh the excavation report. Rarely and then only briefly is the ultimate purpose of all this information mentioned - the reasons why it was there in the first place and the use it served.

Perhaps in the light of this increasing scientific outlook, the archaeologist is the wrong person to look at this information, being too much of a multi-disciplinarian. For the study of the functional use of pottery, it might be better to consult yet another specialist, a potter, whose training and interests lie in this field. However, until such a specialist is available the archaeologist will have to draw his own conclusions on the evidence currently available.

To understand the usage of Iron Age pottery one must assess all the available evidence that is directly and indirectly associated with the material. Not only must the pot's shape be studied, but the possible function it could have served, the household environment, the types of food available, and methods of food preparation and storage. It is the range of possibilities that is important, to build up a range of variables and thereby eliminate those most unlikely, until one has a plausible selection.



## Uses of Pottery

Therefore, what are the pointers if one looks at the pottery itself, in particular the shape, which can give much information on possible use. The amount of time the potter took to finish the vessel indicates the intrinsic value of the pot. Those which are thin-walled, finely made and perhaps decorated, show that they are of higher value than the thicker walled, coarsely made vessels. The former represent the more prestigious tableware and the latter the more utilitarian storage and kitchenware.

Bucket-shaped urns. These coarse and heavy vessels were too heavy to carry around and were therefore probably static vessels, possibly used as storage bins. They could have acted as household stores for parched grain, flour, vegetables or water. There is evidence that some of these vessels were set into the ground rather than being free-standing. This allowed them to be sealed for longer term storage, earth placed on top and thereby creating more room, for they could now be walked over. They were also used as water butts, for the collection of rain water (1).

Smaller jars and pots. These were probably multi-purpose vessels, serving a variety of household functions. However, some pot forms give a better indication of the pots usage. Pottery with an internally seated rim, indicates that this seating could be functional, to take a lid. Few pottery lids are found (2), and being flat items were probably more easily made of wood or stiffened leather to fit the pot's mouth. Therefore these vessels could have been lidded cooking or storage pots (2a,b).

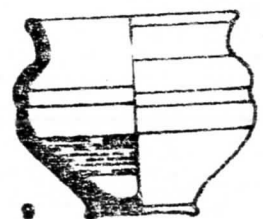
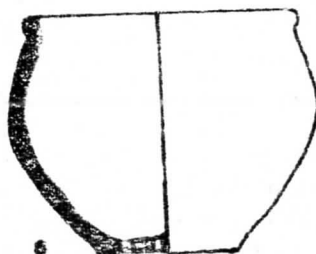
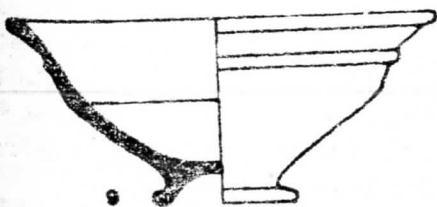
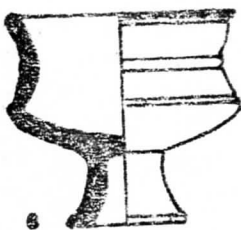
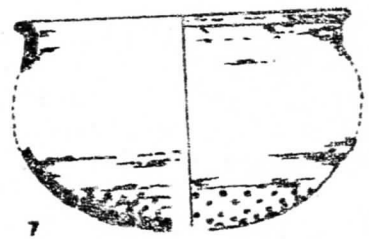
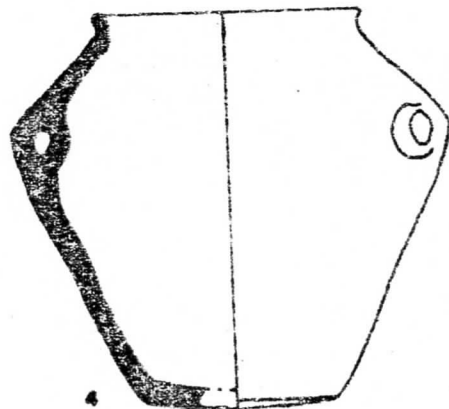
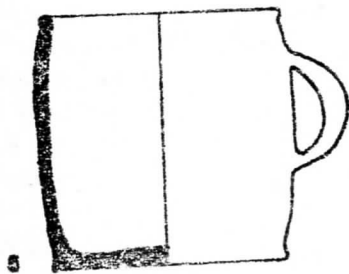
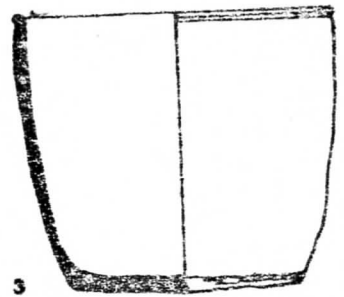
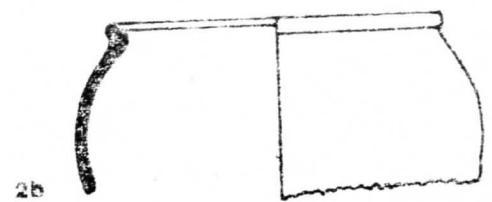
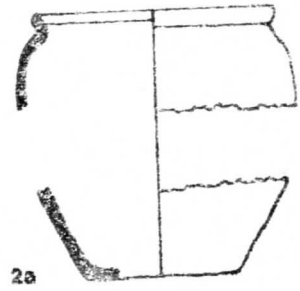
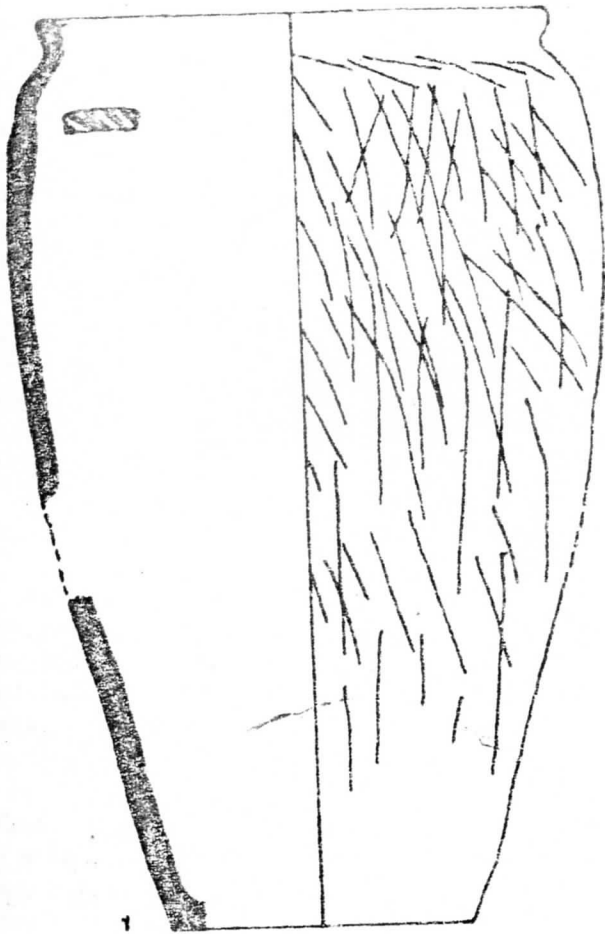
Beaded rim jars. Other pots have external beading, the rim having a pronounced groove beneath, which could have practically served as a seating groove for twine. A leather or cloth cover could be stretched over the top and secured by thonging or twine beneath the head - rather like jam-pot covers. This would have formed an effectively sealed storage pot (3).

Lugged pots. Some pots have lugs (two three or four) around or below the neck. These seem to fall into two categories, heavy thick jars and lighter and finer bowls. This reflects the potter's ability, the period in which the pot was produced, and function. The lugs, whether horizontal or vertical, show that the pot was suspended. This could have been for a variety of purposes. The pot could have been suspended over an open fire (as a stock-pot for stews, soups and gruels) or for carriage, by a person or an animal. In the former a flat lid could have been used and in the latter a stretched cover would have been more practical. These pots do not necessarily have a flat base, which implies that they were continuously suspended. As most of the later Iron Age pottery is flat-based, this implies that they were used on flat working surfaces - table tops etc. for round bases are easily set at a level on rough or uneven ground (4).

Various pottery shapes were made with a precise function in mind and were less utilitarian in function.

Flagons/Amphorae. These were made to store and pour liquids and the finer vessels were used for wine and beer. The consumption of wine and beer is attested in contemporary Roman sources who commented on the Celts' capacity for alcohol. They also drank their wine undiluted in contrast to the Romans who drank wine mixed with water, and this was thought to be a most barbaric custom. Beer (fermented from different grains, eg. rye, wheat, oats, barley) was drunk out of tankards made of pottery and leather specially for this purpose (5&6).

Sieves or Collanders. These were specially made and they tended to be carinated vessels, some fairly shallow and others with long necks with very finely perforated bases. These could have been used to strain the curds from whey in the preparation for cheese (soft or hard cheese) (7). The distribution pattern of strainers and stock raising are similar and their mutual occurrence implies that this was the primary function for these vessels. They could also have been used as wine presses,



to express all the fermented juices from the fruits and berries. Similarly, they could have acted as strainers for the grain in beer production. Some vessels were re-used by having holes (one to six or more holes) drilled or pecked through the pot base. These holes are much larger than the purpose-made strainers and therefore must have been used for some other function. They could simply have been old pots turned into "flowerpots" for the cultivation of herbs to add flavourings to the foods prepared (8). It has even been suggested that they were used as hives for controlled bee-keeping. Honey was an important item in the diet, being the only available sweetening agent.

Salt Pots. Specialised earthenware containers were made for the packing and transportation of salt. These were thick-walled bowls which were packed with the salt and sold or exchanged with the salt in them. Salt was difficult to obtain and an expensive commodity, and had to be obtained from the Fens and Essex, where the flat land were used for the evaporation of salt.

### Surface Treatments

Apart from looking at the basic shape, one can look at the surface treatments to try and ascertain the pot's function. The Iron Age potter could only manufacture earthenware which is porous and therefore unsuitable for the long-term storage of liquids. There are certain surface treatments that can be done to render the pot less permeable. However, it is difficult at times to discern whether the treatment is purely decorative or functional. Before the pottery was fired it could be burnished or self-slipped to make the surface more "watertight". Therefore pots treated in this way were probably for containing liquids. Another way of sealing the pot's surface is to take the pot, whilst still warm from firing and swirl the interior with milk. The pot absorbs the fats from the milk and therefore renders the pot surface less permeable.

Pottery which has been finely made and the surface elaborately and carefully decorated indicates that the pottery was more valuable and probably used as fine tableware for the presentation and serving of food (9). The finer and more expensive items also indicate that the owners were more wealthy than some of their contemporaries. Haematite coated vessels were pottery imitations of the highly prized bronze situlae, bowls, cauldrons, etc. and were probably used in a similar manner. Therefore they were probably regarded as prestigious items and used as tableware.

### Foodstuffs and Diet

Another way to look at pottery is to consider the diet and the range of items requiring containers. One must bear in mind the possible ways of preparing the foodstuffs for consumption and storage, which would be facilitated by a pottery vessel. From archaeological and documentary evidence the diet consisted of the basic grains (wheat, barley, rye and oats), wild grains, seeds, nuts, vegetables and herbs. Meat would have been provided by domesticated animals (cattle, horse, sheep/goat, pig, fowl) and wild animals (boar, deer, fowl). There was dairy produce (eggs, milk, butter, cream, cheese) from the goats and cattle. Grains would have been milled to produce a coarse granary style flour which could have been used to make bread (leavened and unleavened), beverages, gruels and as thickening agents. (The stomach remains of Tollund Man from Denmark shows that the last consumed meal was a gruel of wild and cultivated seeds and grains). Meats could have been roasted (roasted on a spit or on stones), baked (in a clay or pastry case), boiled, pot-roasted, or been preserved by being smoked, dried, salted, or in fat. Fish and molluscs supplemented the diet and the former could have been preserved by drying, smoking or pickling. They no doubt knew the basic methods of meat and food preservation as practised by housewives in this country before the advent of modern-day food preserving techniques, eg. freezing, freeze-dried foods etc. Eggs could have been used in all the conventional ways that we use them. Milks (sheep/goats and cows) could have been used fresh,

skimmed for cream to make butter, or the milk curdled with rennet into curds and whey to make a whole range of soft and hard cheeses. Therefore, for many of these stages of food preparation and storage pottery vessels could have been used. Many of the forms present in the Iron Age assemblage would have adequately served for the above purposes.

### Ethnographic Parallels

Ethnographic parallels also give further insight into the usage of pottery. This is done by studying a comparable ethnographic group, which has a similar environment, cultivation and agricultural practices and has attained a similar cultural level. The comparison of similar techniques of pottery production and the study of its use can give much valuable information which is not preserved in the archaeological record. The Yoruba tribe in Africa, made their porous earthenware impermeable by boiling the pottery in oil after firing. Therefore the Iron Age potters could have employed a similar technique by boiling the pottery in fats and/or oils. These comparisons must be carefully used and in many instances can only be tentative. It has been shown by modern ethnographic comparisons that various pottery forms served an extremely wide variety of needs and functions, within and between cultural groups.

No matter which way one studies pottery, of any period, it is extremely difficult to assign specific purposes or functions to any pottery form with any confidence. Therefore any interpretation on pottery's functional use is purely speculative. (Imagine the difficulties of assigning the true function to any present day kitchen utensil if only the broken fragments were left with the surviving refuse associated with a household!) Although there will never be any really reliable evidence on the usage of pottery, this approach must be made as it is the functional aspects of archaeological material which is of ultimate importance. It is perhaps ironic for the archaeologist that the most important information - that of the vessels usage and function - is the most elusive.

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