

## UNCORRECTED ARCHIVE REPORT

### APPENDIX 6 – LATE IRON AGE AND ROMAN POTTERY

**By Lisa Brown with Paul Booth**

#### **Introduction**

The Roman pottery was recorded and a report drafted by Lisa Brown *c* 1980. Resource limitations have not permitted extensive revision of the report, but some cross references to recent work and to current OA pottery recording codes have been added and the discussion updated to take account of the most significant recent developments. A brief discussion of the vessel types has also been incorporated.

Approximately 3000 sherds of late Iron Age and Roman pottery were recovered from the site. The great majority of the assemblage was of 1st-2nd century date and was recovered from large linear ditches (context numbers 3, 50, 51, 501, 504, 513, 534, 537, 754, 755 and 763) and two pits (605 and 674). Various subsidiary ditches, small pits and a few postholes produced smaller quantities. Some residual pottery was found to be associated with Saxon pottery. Large numbers of residual Iron Age sherds were associated with the Roman pottery in several features, notably ditches 50 and 534. It was not possible in every case to confirm whether particular sherds were of pre- or post-conquest date.

The pottery was recorded, using alphabetical and numerical codes, on a form which was adapted from that used to record the Iron Age pottery from the same site. The following information was noted: context, fabric type, number of sherds, weight of sherds, technique of manufacture, surface treatment, part of vessel (rim, body, base, handle etc), form of vessel, decoration and additional comments. The original record sheets along with a key to the codes are preserved within the archive.

It was decided not to record such characteristics as hardness of fabric (apart from a general comment in the fabric description) and sherd thickness because, in the case of well-known pottery types, it seemed unnecessary and, in the case of local coarse wares, the group did not seem sufficiently good to merit such attention. This type of detail would better suit a large, well-stratified collection with large numbers of complete or near-complete profiles. Furthermore, noting the presence of lime deposit and food remains did not seem a productive exercise considering the nature of the Roman period features and the circumstances of deposition of most of the pottery (i.e. rubbish deposit or stray sherds).

A best-fit date for each apparently Roman context was given to the excavator for the main report and can be found in the archive, though they are not all listed in this report, which has a wider aim.

The report includes a description of the fabrics, a discussion of proportions of fabrics and vessel forms, a catalogue and discussion of selected key groups and a general

discussion. An attempt has been made to assess the range of pottery present, the date range represented, and the economic and cultural base implied by the collection.

## Fabrics

Some of the fabrics listed below have been described in detail elsewhere, notably in Young (1977). When this is the case, the descriptions are kept to a minimum. Table 1 indicates the relative quantities of the major fabrics. The most important of these, fabrics Ra and Rb, were subdivided, but quantification of the sub-groups is not given here. Equivalent fabric codes from the current version of the OA pottery recording system (eg Booth *et al.* 1993, 135-6) have been added to allow correlation of the Mount Farm data with those from more recent reports. It should be noted that quantification was restricted to those contexts containing more than ten sherds.

**Table A6:1: Fabric quantification**

<i>Fabric</i>	<i>Summary description</i>	<i>OA code</i>	<i>No. sherds</i>	<i>%</i>
Ra	Grog-tempered reduced fabrics	E80	1550	55.1
Rb	Sand-tempered reduced fabrics	R20 and R30	791	28.1
Rc	Very fine reduced fabric	R11	152	5.4
Rd	Fine reduced fabric	R10	34	1.2
Re	Fine reduced fabric	R10	37	1.3
F	Flint tempered fabrics	E60	41	1.5
Oa	Fine oxidised fabrics	O10	93	3.3
Ob	Sandy oxidised fabrics	O20	22	0.8
Wa	Fine white fabrics	W10	14	0.5
Wb	Sandy white fabrics	W20	15	0.5
C	Oxfordshire red-brown colour-coated ware	F51	6	0.2
BB	Black-burnished ware (BB1)	B11	4	0.1
WC	Oxfordshire white-slipped ware	Q21	6	0.2
BW	Oxfordshire burnt white ware	W23	2	0.1
M	Oxfordshire white mortarium fabric	M22	3	0.1
Samian	Samian ware, all sources	S	10	0.4
Misc	Unclassified sherds	-	35	1.2
<b>Total</b>			<b>2815</b>	

### *Reduced grog-tempered wares Ra*

Ra1 Non sandy fabric with (generally) very sparse tempering of black or grey grog, occasional quartzite, and black iron ore pellets. Coarse and hard, usually fired to dark or light grey colour, or occasionally pink, with paler core. Surface often lumpy. Storage jars, bead-rim jars.

Ra2 Non sandy matrix similar to Ra1 but softer and more heavily tempered. Grog common to abundant, sparse to moderate inclusions of sub-rounded quartz, black or red iron ore, mica, infrequent angular limestone fragments and non-calcareous white inclusions (dolomite?). Usual surface colour black or grey, but occasionally pinkish or light brown. Core darker, often with sandwiched red layer. Storage jars, bead-rim jars, some smaller vessels.

Ra3 Essentially a finer version of Ra1. Contains little tempering apart from grog, which is more finely sorted than in Ra1. Surface colour usually dark to light grey or brown. Core grey with speckled appearance in fracture. Usually burnished, and soft (MOH 1-4). Necked jars and bowls.

Ra4 Finer version of Ra2. Same range of inclusions in a finer, usually burnished fabric. Colour range as Ra2 but core generally black. Necked jars and bowls and dishes.

### *Reduced sandy wares Rb*

Rb1 Similar to Ra1 but contains sand filler in matrix.

Rb2 Major inclusion quartz, usually transparent or white, occasionally pink or grey. Infrequent quartzite, grog or iron oxide. Hard fired. Surface colour ranges from dark to light grey, core white or light grey with dark flecking in fracture (iron oxide). Fracture sometimes laminated pink and grey. Vessels frequently decorated with burnished lattice.

Rb3 Finer version of Rb2. Matrix is tighter, quartz grains smaller. Frequent inclusions of black iron oxide. Usual colour mid to light grey, but may be dark grey with brownish grey core. Surface smoother than Rb2 and forms usually finer.

Rb4 Frequent inclusions of quartz, usually transparent or white. Matrix softer and more crumbly than Rb2 and Rb3, and sometimes has an almost 'organic' appearance. Other inclusions rare. Some vessels burnished, others have sandy rough surfaces. Core black, brown, or dark reddish. Necked bowls and other vessels.

Rb5 Hard fired fabric, less sandy than Rb1-Rb4. Matrix has appearance of orange, brown or grey brick. Quartz inclusions white, transparent or grey. Surface usually light brownish-grey and core dark orange or laminated orange and grey. Surfaces smooth, often burnished. Jars, dishes.

### *Fine reduced wares*

Rc Fine, usually non-sandy fabric with few or no visible inclusions. Surface often burnished and may have purplish tinge. Produced in Oxfordshire kilns (eg Allen's Pit and Sandford). Small bowls, beakers and other table wares, a few copying samian ware forms. Late 1st-2nd centuries.

Rd Slightly sandy fabric with 'silty' appearance. Inclusions rare. Often used to produce black-burnished ware copies.

Re Fabric similar to Rd but non-sandy. Jars, some hand-made dishes. May represent

a pre-Roman or conquest period tradition.

### *Flint gritted wares*

F Fine sandy fabric, usually dark brown or grey, containing well-sorted flint temper, 0.5-1.5 mm in size. Vessels often well finished and burnished. Jars and narrow-necked jars.

### *Oxidised wares*

Oa Fine oxidised ware. Hard fired, finely sanded containing little or no visible temper. Usual colour orange but can be red or light buff. Core sometimes grey. Frequently burnished. Table wares, fine forms.

Ob Similar to Oa but coarser, sandier, and usually not as well finished. Used for coarser, utilitarian vessels; jars, bowls.

### *White wares*

Wa Finely sanded, hard fired, little or no visible temper. Colour ranges from white to cream, sometimes overfired to grey. Table wares, fine forms. Some of the fine white wares are Gallo-Belgic imports and it is difficult to differentiate between these and the fine white wares produced at the Churchill kilns.

Wb Similar to Wa but usually coarser, sandier. May contain temper of black or red sand. White to cream in colour.

### *Other fabrics*

BB Black burnished ware 1.

M Mortaria in white fabric from Oxfordshire kilns (cf Young 1977, 56).

C Red colour-coated wares from Oxfordshire kilns (cf Young 1977, 123).

WC White colour-coated wares from Oxfordshire kilns (cf Young 1977, 117).

P Parchment ware from Oxfordshire kilns (cf Young 1977, 80).

BW Burnt white ware from Oxfordshire kilns (cf Young 1977, 113).

### **The key groups**

A number of key groups of pottery have been selected for publication in catalogue form in order to illustrate the range of types present. Unfortunately, few of the Roman features seemed to contain pottery groups of unquestionable contemporaneity, without possible residual and/or intrusive sherds. This problem is represented in the selection below. Groups had to be chosen on additional criteria such as variety of types and the presence of sherds suitable for illustration.

Additional individual vessels were selected for illustration on the basis of their intrinsic interest. It can be said, however, that the groups of contexts below seem to be of reliably

Roman date in spite of the occasional presence of Iron Age and Saxon sherds. Most of the groups are from sections of linear ditches, but one posthole and two pits are also represented. Note that detailed parallels for individual vessels are only quoted when examples are particularly unusual. Many of the vessels have parallels in the Oxfordshire repertoire (Young 1977), while the earliest forms relate to the relatively well-understood late Iron Age types of the region (Harding 1972, plates 69-72).

**Fig 70 Group 1: Ditch 51 i (51/B/1, C/1, B/3, E/2)**

**Table A6:2: Pottery fabrics from Group 1**

<i>Fabric</i>	<i>No. sherds</i>	<i>%</i>
Ra	70	72.2
Rb	18	18.6
Rc	1	1.0
Rd	3	3.1
Re	2	2.0
Oa	1	1.0
Ob	1	1.0
C	1	1.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>97</b>	

(Note also 3 sherds of butt beaker in fabric Wa not included in this table)

1. Cordoned, carinated bowl/jar. Fabric Rb2. Partly burnished, lattice design. Wheel thrown. 51/E/2. 1st C?
2. Bead-rim jar. Fabric Ra2. Wheel thrown. 51/B/1. To 200.
3. Bead-rim jar with rolled rim. Fabric Ra1. Wheel finished. 51/B/1. To 200.
4. Everted rim jar. Fabric Re. Wheel thrown. 51/E/2. To 200.
5. Jar with elongated, slightly indented rim. Fabric Rb4. Partly burnished. Wheel thrown. 51/E/2. 1st-4th C.
6. Neckless jar with everted rim. Fabric Rb2. Wheel thrown. 51/B/1. To 200.
7. Jar rim, coarsely made, resembling fabric Re. Burnished. Handmade. 51/B/1. 1st C.
8. Narrow neck jar. Fabric Ra3. Burnished. Wheel thrown or wheel finished. 51/C/1. 1st-4th C.
9. Necked bowl or jar. Fabric Ra3. Partly burnished. Wheel thrown. 51/B/1. 1st-4th C.

This group contains a number of early types and a predominance of the early fabric Ra. The only reason to assume a date later than the 1st century is the presence of a single sherd of Oxfordshire colour-coated ware (dated late 3rd-4th century), but this could well be intrusive. An unillustrated beaker rim fragment in fabric Oa is not closely dated. It might possibly be as late as the 3rd century, but this seems unlikely.

**Fig 70 Group 2: Ditch 51 ii (51/F/2, E/1, C/2, B/4)****Table A6:3: Pottery fabrics from Group 2**

<i>Fabric</i>	<i>No. sherds</i>	<i>%</i>
Ra	63	82.9
Rb	6	7.9
Rd	1	1.3
Re	2	2.6
F	2	2.6
Ob	1	1.3
S	1	1.3
<b>Total</b>	<b>76</b>	

10. Jar with elongated bead rim. Fabric Re. Wheel thrown. 51/E/1. To 200.
11. Rim of necked bowl or jar. Fabric Ra4. Burnished. 51/B/4. 1st-4th C.
12. Short necked jar. Fabric Rb2. Wheel thrown. 51/B/4. 1st-4th C.
13. Narrow necked jar. Fabric Ra3. Overall burnish. Wheel thrown. 51/B/4. 1st-4th C.
14. Jar with everted rim. Fabric Rb1. Partly burnished. Wheel thrown. 51/E/1. 1st-4th C.
15. Small fragment of ?wide mouthed jar. Fabric Ob. Partly burnished. Wheel thrown. 51/E/1. 50-400.

Over 82% of the pottery in this group is of fabric Ra, which probably ceased to be used after the 1st century, except for the manufacture of storage jars. Although most of the vessels are not closely dateable, the predominance of the early fabric and the clear lack of strictly late forms would indicate a 1st century date for this group. The presence of vessel No 10 would tend to confirm this date.

**Fig 70 Group 3: Ditch 513/F/5, F/1, A/1, A/5, A/15, B/1, C/1, D/1, E/1, 610/a/1, B/1, B/2, A/1, C/1****Table A6:4: Pottery fabrics from Group 3**

<i>Fabric</i>	<i>No. sherds</i>	<i>%</i>
Ra	189	56.2
Rb	119	35.4
Rc	6	1.8
Rd	4	1.2
Re	2	0.6
F	5	1.5
Oa	7	2.1
Ob	2	0.6
WC	1	0.3
C	1	0.3
<b>Total</b>	<b>336</b>	



16. Storage jar. Fabric Ra. Partly burnished. Wheel thrown. 513/F/1. 1st-2nd C.
17. Globular jar. Fabric Re? Handmade. 513/F/1. Pre-Roman?
18. Bead rim jar. Fabric Ra2. Wheel thrown. 513/E/1.
19. Necked jar or beaker of Young (1977) form O20, cordon on neck. Fabric Oa. Partly burnished. Wheel thrown. 513/F/1. 240-300?
20. Bead rim jar with sharply out-turned, squared bead. Fabric Ra4. Partly burnished. Wheel thrown. 513/D/1. To 200.
21. Beaker with expanded rim. Fabric Ob. Partly burnished. Wheel thrown. 513/D/1. 1st-4th C.
22. Necked jar. Fabric Oa. Partly burnished. Wheel thrown. 513/B/1. 2nd C.
23. Straight-sided dish. Fabric Ra4. Burnished. Wheel thrown. 513/D/1.
24. Jar with sharply out-turned bead. Fabric Ra2. Wheel thrown. 513/A/1. To 200.
25. Thickened everted rim jar or bowl. Fabric Ra2. Wheel thrown. 513/A/1. To 200.
26. Jar with moulded, upright rim. Fabric Ra2. Wheel thrown. 513/A/1. To 200
27. Necked jar or bowl. Fabric Ra2. Wheel thrown. 513/A/1. 1st-4th C.
28. Globular bowl/jar with squat bead rim. Fabric Rd. Turned on slow wheel? 513/D/1. To 150.

A single fragment of a red colour-coated mortarium of Young (1977) type C97 is the only sherd which need indicate a date after AD 240, although Young's type O20 (cf No. 19) is dated AD 240-300. The remainder of the material is consistent with a 2nd century date, however, and the colour-coated sherd may be intrusive.

#### *Fig 70 Group 4: Posthole 575*

**Table A6:5: Pottery fabrics from Group 4**

<i>Fabric</i>	<i>No. sherds</i>	<i>%</i>
Ra	3	37.5
Rc	3	37.5
Ob	1	12.5
WC	1	12.5
<b>Total</b>	<b>8</b>	

29. Short-necked jar. Fabric Rb1. Wheel thrown. 575/A/1. To 200.
30. Necked bowl. Fabric Rb5. Burnished oblique lines. Wheel thrown. 575/A/1. 1st-4th C.
31. Necked bowl. Fabric Rc. Burnished. Wheel thrown. 575/A/1. 1st-4th C.
32. Necked jar. Fabric Ob. Wheel thrown. 575/A/1. 1st-4th C.

A date in the 2nd century would best fit this group (mainly on the basis of the presence

of fabric Rc). The single white-slipped sherd is not inconsistent with such a date.

**Fig 70 Group 5: Waterhole 605/A/2, A/4, A/7, C/2, D/1, D/2**

**Table A6:6: Pottery fabrics from Group 5**

<i>Fabric</i>	<i>No. sherds</i>	<i>%</i>
Ra	74	61.1
Rb	23	
Rc	8	6.6
Rd	1	0.8
Re	2	1.6
Bb	1	0.8
F	3	2.5
Oa	2	1.6
Wb	2	1.6
Samian	2	1.6
Misc	2	1.6
Amph	1	0.8
<b>Total</b>	<b>121</b>	

33. Storage jar with long neck. Fabric Ra2. Partly burnished. Wheel finished. 605/A/4. 1st C+.

34. Pedestal base, ?from carinated jar. Fabric Ra4. Partly burnished. Wheel thrown. 605/A/2.

35. Handled ring-necked flagon, with topmost rings broken off and smoothed. Fabric Wb, probably a Verulamium product. Wheel thrown. 605/A/4.

36. Decorated body sherd. Fabric Ra2. Partly burnished. Wheel thrown. 605/A/4.

37. Necked jar. Fabric Rc. Wheel thrown. 605/A/2. 80-180.

38. Straight-sided bowl with out-turned rim. Fabric Rc. Burnished. Wheel thrown. 605/A/2. 100-180?

39. Necked jar/bowl. Fabric Rb2. Wheel thrown. 605/A/4. 1st-4th C.

40. Narrow-neck jar. Fabric Rb3. Partly burnished. Wheel thrown. 605/D/2. 1st-4th C.

41. Necked jar. Fabric Rb4. Burnished. Wheel thrown. 605/A/4. 1st-4th C.

42. Straight-sided bowl/dish with beaded rim and chamfered base. Fabric Rc. Burnished. Wheel thrown. 605/A/4. Late 2nd C?

43. Dish. Fabric Re. Burnished design on interior of base. 605/A/4 (joins with sherds from 605/B/1). 1st C?

This group contains a relatively high proportion of reduced fine wares (fabric Rc) and no vessel types which would necessarily post-date the circulation period of those wares (late 1st-2nd C). This date, then, seems a reliable one for the feature.



**Fig 71 Group 6: Waterhole 674****Table A6:7: Pottery fabrics from Group 6**

<i>Fabric</i>	<i>No. sherds</i>	<i>%</i>
Ra	60	25.0
Rb	62	25.8
Rc	80	33.3
BB	4	1.7
S	3	1.2
F	2	0.8
Oa	10	4.2
Ob	1	0.4
Wa	1	0.4
Wb	8	3.3
P	1	0.4
M	3	1.2
C	2	0.8
Misc	3	1.2
<b>Total</b>	<b>240</b>	

44. Storage jar rim. Fabric Ra2. Burnished. Wheel finished? 674/B/1. 1st C onwards.
45. Storage jar rim. Fabric Ra2. Partly burnished. Wheel finished. 674/B/1. 1st C onwards.
46. Necked jar. Fabric Wb/Rb. Wheel thrown. 674/B/1. 1st-4th C.
47. Necked bowl or jar. Fabric Rc. Burnished. Wheel thrown. 674/B/1. 80-180.
48. Necked bowl. Fabric Rc. Burnished design. Wheel thrown. 674/A/1. 1st-2nd C.
49. Necked jar. Fabric Ra4. Burnished. Wheel thrown. 674/B/1. 1st-4th C.
50. Straight-sided bowl with out-turned rim. Fabric Rb5. Wheel thrown. 674/A/1. 100-400.
51. Bowl with out-turned flattened rim. Fabric Wb. Partly burnt outer surface. Wheel thrown. 674/B/1. 2nd C?
52. Beaker with roughcast decoration. Fabric Oa. Partly burnished. Wheel thrown. 674/B/1. 75-105?
53. Bowl with out-turned flat topped rim. Fabric Rc. Wheel thrown. 674/B/1. 80-180.
54. Body sherd decorated with incised lines. Fabric Rc. Partly burnished. Wheel thrown. 674/B/1. 80-180.
55. ?Poppy-head beaker. Fabric Rc. Burnished. Wheel thrown. 674/B/1. 2nd C.
56. Everted rim jar. Fabric Rc. Burnished. Wheel thrown. 674/A/1. 2nd C.

57. Everted rim jar. Fabric Rc. Partly burnished. Wheel thrown. 674/A/1. 2nd C.
58. Neckless jar. Fabric Rb2. Wheel thrown. 674/B/1. To 200.
59. Mortarium rim, similar to Young type M7 but not exactly paralleled. Fabric M. Wheel thrown. 674/B/1. 100-170.
60. Mortarium rim (cf Young type M18.3), but with no grits. Fabric M. Wheel thrown. 674/B/1. 240-300?
61. Necked jar rim. Fabric Rb2. Wheel thrown. 674/A/1. 1st-4th C.
62. Necked bowl. Fabric Rc. Partly burnished. Wheel thrown. 674/B/1. 80-180.
63. Jar rim. Fabric S (late Roman shell-tempered ware). Wheel thrown. 674/B/1.
64. Shallow necked bowl. Fabric Rc. Burnished. Wheel thrown. 674/B/1. 80-180.

The high proportion of fabric Rc and the generally early look of the forms indicate a date in the 2nd century for this group. There are, however, four sherds present which are later than AD 240. These are a white ware mortarium (No. 60), two sherds of Oxfordshire colour-coated ware and one sherd of parchment ware. If these are securely stratified then they must date the waterhole.

*Fig 71 Group 7: Ditch 755/A/1, 775/A/1*

**Table A6:8: Pottery fabrics from Group 7**

<i>Fabric</i>	<i>No. sherds</i>	<i>%</i>
Ra	2	3.5
Rb	44	77.2
Rc	5	8.8
F	1	1.7
OB	2	3.5
Wc	1	1.7
MiscC	1	1.7
Sam	1	1.7
<b>Total</b>	<b>57</b>	

65. Carinated beaker. Fabric Rc. Burnished. Wheel thrown. 755/A/1. 1st C?
66. Short necked jar. Fabric Rb2. Wheel thrown. 755/A/1. To 200.
67. Necked bowl/jar. Fabric Rc. Partly burnished. Wheel thrown. 755/A/1. 80-180.
68. Mortarium, copying Young type M2.9. Fabric Wc. Wheel thrown. 775/A/1. Mid 2nd C.
69. Necked bowl. Fabric Rb5. Burnished decoration. Wheel thrown. 755/A/1. 1st-4th C.
70. Necked bowl. Fabric Rc. Burnished. Wheel thrown. 755/A/1. 80-180.
71. Necked jar. Fabric Ob. Wheel thrown. 775/A/1. 50-400.

A mid 2nd century or slightly later date can be suggested for this group.

**Fig 71 Group 8: Ditches 757/A/1, 763/A/2, B/2**

**Table A6:9: Pottery fabrics from Group 8**

<i>Fabric</i>	<i>No. sherds</i>	<i>%</i>
Ra	73	56.1
Rb	36	27.7
Rc	5	3.8
Re	1	0.8
BB	2	1.5
Oa	5	3.8
Ob	1	0.8
Wb	4	3.1
Sam	1	0.8
Misc	2	1.5
<b>Total</b>	<b>240</b>	

72. Storage jar. Fabric Ra2. Partly burnished. Wheel finished. 763/A/2. 1st-4th C.
73. Short everted rim jar. Fabric Rb4. Wheel thrown. 757/A/1. To 200.
74. Narrow-necked jar. Fabric Ra1. Burnished. Wheel thrown. 763/B/2. 1st-4th C.
75. Necked jar. Fabric Rb2. Partly burnished. 757/A/1. 1st-4th C.
76. Necked jar with thickened rim. Fabric Rb2. Partly burnished. Wheel thrown. 755/A/1. 1st-4th C.
77. Bead rim bowl or jar. Fabric Ra3. Wheel thrown. 763/B/2. To 200?
78. Bowl copying samian form Drag 30, decorated with barbotine dots. Fabric Rc. Burnished. Wheel thrown. 757/A/1. Late 1st-early 2nd C.
79. Bowl with upright neck, Belgic form. Fabric Re. Partly burnished. Wheel thrown and knife-trimmed. 763/B/2. 1st C.
80. Dish with bead rim. Fabric Rb2. Wheel thrown. 763/B/2. 1st-2nd C.
81. Storage jar. Fabric Ra2. Burnished. Wheel finished?. 757/A/1. 1st-4th C.
82. Samian (?South Gaulish) form Drag 18/31. 757/A/1
83. Base of bowl copying samian form Drag 18/31. The edge of a potter's stamp is extant. Fabric Oa. Burnished. Wheel thrown. 757/A/1. 100-300.

This group is characterised by a large number of 1st century coarse ware jars. Sherds of BB1 and Nos 82 and 83 suggest a date after *c* AD 120, but the group need not be later than the mid 2nd century. Sherds of an everted rim beaker in a mica coated oxidised fabric (from 757/A/1, not illustrated) also suggest an early 2nd century date.

**Fig 72 Group 9: Ditch 763/B/1****Table A6:10: Pottery fabrics from Group 9**

Fabric	No. sherds	%
Ra	9	27.3
Rb	21	63.6
Rc	2	6.1
Misc	1	3.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>33</b>	

84. Necked jar. Fabric Rb1. Wheel thrown. 763/B/1.

85. Neckless jar. Fabric Ra2. Wheel thrown. 763/B/1. To 200.

86. Straight-sided bowl with out-turned rim. Fabric Rc. Burnished. Wheel thrown. 763/B/1. 100-180.

87. Flange-rimmed bowl. Fabric Rc. Burnished. Wheel thrown. 763/B/1. Late 1st-early 2nd C.

The high proportion of fabric Rb relative to Ra, and the presence of Oxfordshire fine reduced wares indicates a date at least as late as AD 100.

**Fig 72 Group 10: Waterhole 789/A/2, A/4, A/7****Table A6:11: Pottery fabrics from Group 10**

<i>Fabric</i>	<i>No. sherds</i>	<i>%</i>
Ra	3	10.0
Rb	13	43.3
Rc	4	13.3
Oa	4	13.3
Ob	1	3.3
Wa	1	3.3
Wc	4	13.3
<b>Total</b>	<b>30</b>	

88. Bowl copying samian form Drag 18/31. Fabric Oa. Wheel thrown. 789/A/2. 100-300.

89. Necked jar? Fabric Rc. Wheel thrown. 789/A/2. 2nd C?

90. Handled flagon. Fabric Rb2. Burnished stripe decoration. Wheel thrown. 789/A/4.

91. Beaker base and lower body. Fabric Oa. Wheel thrown. 789/A/7. 50-150.

92. Storage jar. Fabric Ra2. Partly burnished. Wheel finished. 789/A/4. 1st-4th C.

93. Carinated beaker. Fabric Oa. An oxidised version of Oxfordshire reduced form R25

(Young 1977, 215-6). Wheel thrown. 789/A/4. 1st C?

94. Flagon. Fabric Wa. Wheel thrown. 789/A/4.

This group looks, on the whole, like a 2nd century collection. There is a low proportion of 1st century coarse fabric (Ra) and a relatively large number of sherds in fabrics Rb and Rc. A small number of white colour-coated sherds (probably Oxfordshire type) which may represent one vessel, are also consistent with a 2nd century date.

### *Fig 72 Miscellaneous vessels*

95. Narrow necked jar. Fabric \*\*. Context 508/B/2.

96. Medium necked jar. Fabric Ra4. Burnished on rim and shoulder. Context 98/A/2.

97. Medium necked jar. Fabric F. Burnished overall. Context 340/A/1 and 341/B/1.

98. Medium necked jar. Fabric F. Context 340/A/1.

99. Medium necked jar. Fabric Ra1. Context 3/A/2, 3/A/3 and 3/B/2.

100. Flask or bottle. Fabric \*\*. Context 98/A/1.

101. Cheese press. Fabric Ra3. Context 605/A/3.

102. Narrow necked jar. Fabric \*\*. Context 173/A/1.

103. Medium necked jar. Fabric Ra3. Context 50/C/1.

104. Medium necked jar. Fabric Ra2? Context 336/A/1.

105. Medium necked jar, with burnished band on shoulder and oblique burnished lines beneath. Fabric Rb2. Context 296/A/2.

106. Heavy bead rimmed jar. Fabric \*\*. Context \*\*.

107. Medium necked jar. Fabric F. Context 341/B/1.

### **Discussion** by Paul Booth and Lisa Brown

The Mount Farm pottery assemblage was originally thought to span a date range from the conquest (taking in a few vessels of possible pre-conquest date) to at least the late 3rd century, with a peak of activity on the site from the 1st century to the third quarter of the 2nd century. However, the quantity of grog-tempered reduced (Ra) fabrics (55.1% of sherds) is such that it is likely that the assemblage had a significant pre-conquest component. This is supported by the evidence of vessel forms although, as with the fabrics, distinguishing between pre- and post-conquest examples on an individual basis is problematic.

A good point of comparison is the nearby site of Appleford Sidings, which may have originated shortly before the Roman conquest (Booth and Simmonds forthcoming). Here, out of an assemblage of almost identical size (2860 sherds) to that of Mount Farm, sherds in the broad 'Belgic type' tradition (E wares in the current OA pottery recording system, see eg Green *et al.* 2004, 310-311 for discussion of this group) comprised 31.3%

of the total, of which just over half were in grog-tempered fabrics equivalent to Ra. The remainder were in sand-tempered fabrics, which constitute a significant element of this ceramic tradition in the Oxford region and were presumably present at Mount Farm amongst the material assigned to fabric Rb. Allowing for the fact that at least a small proportion of Rb sherds would now be considered to belong to fabric groups E20 or E30 (fine and coarse sand tempered 'Belgic' type wares), and adding in the flint-tempered (F) sherds which can also be associated with this broad tradition (see eg Nos 97, 98 and 107 above), it is likely that sherds in the E ware category were at least twice as common at Mount Farm as they were at Appleford. While aspects of local pottery supply may account for this difference in part, the simplest explanation is to see it in terms of chronological emphasis, with the implication that Mount Farm contains a significantly larger pre-conquest component than Appleford Sidings. The chronology of the introduction of the 'Belgic' ceramic tradition into the region remains uncertain, however, and it is possible that the earliest elements of this component of the Mount Farm assemblage date to not much more than a generation before the conquest. This question requires further work through detailed consideration of non-ceramic aspects of late Iron Age chronology in the region.

By no means all sherds in the E ware tradition were of pre-conquest date, however, although post-conquest assemblages were probably being supplemented by vessels in more 'Romanised' fabrics within a few decades of AD 43. Nevertheless, common 'Belgic' forms in locally produced grog-tempered fabrics (Ra) continued in use, perhaps well into the 1st century; in some cases the relevant changes in technology were quite gradual. Overall, the assemblage is totally dominated by reduced coarse wares in grog and sand-tempered fabrics (plus the small amount of flint-tempered material), which together comprise 92.5% of the total sherds (93.7% of the classified sherds). The use of fabrics Ra3 and Ra4 is likely to have been confined largely to the pre-Flavian period, but distinguishing between continued use and residual survival of such material at this time is difficult, as for example at Gravelly Guy (Green *et al.* 2004, 332). In contrast, fabrics Ra1 and Ra2 continued in use throughout the Roman period, albeit only for the manufacture of large storage jars. As discussed above, sandy reduced wares (Rb) probably also included a pre-conquest component, but would have become increasingly common through the later 1st century and dominated thereafter.

Finer fabrics may be easier to date but were very few in number. One or two of the butt beaker sherds were possibly of Gallo-Belgic origin, but may more likely have been local copies of such forms, particularly in view of the identification of a probable local production of these vessels, located somewhere in the Abingdon/Dorchester area on the evidence of distribution (Timby *et al.* 1997). A handful of mica-coated sherds from an everted rim beaker in context 757/A/1 may have been products of the early 2nd century kilns at Lower Farm, Nuneham Courtenay (Booth *et al.* 1993, 138). The only 'fine' wares present in significant quantity, however, were in fabric Rc, the fine reduced ware manufactured at Oxfordshire kiln sites and used to make table wares such as small jars, flacons, bowls and beakers, some of them samian ware copies. The manufacture of this fabric is dated to the 'late first and second centuries' (Young 1977,



203), expressed in the catalogue above as the range 80-180, ending at the time of a period characterised by Young as one of apparent recession in major pottery industries (*ibid.*, 235; but cf Going 1992, 99-100, 109-110 for a different explanation). On the basis of form typology, it is likely that fabrics Rd and Re are also, on this site, restricted to the 1st and 2nd centuries. Many of the white wares and oxidised (orange) wares are also of the early period, in particular the butt beakers, of which there are sherds representing about seven vessels. The great majority of the pottery is thus of early Roman date, with a high proportion assigned to the 1st century.

The only pottery definitely belonging to the 3rd century (or possibly later) comprises the Oxfordshire red colour-coated ware, a single white mortarium (No. 60) and perhaps a few dateable vessels in fabrics Rb, Oa, Ob, Wa, Wb and BW. In all, this amounts to no more than 50 or so sherds, if that. Considering the large amounts of red colour-coated ware manufactured after AD 240 as close as Dorchester, the presence of a mere 6 sherds of the ware at Mount Farm points to an obvious dearth of Roman activity during that period, even supposing that mainly coarse, utilitarian wares would have been the mainstay of the collection.

The sources of the late Iron Age and early Roman grog-tempered fabrics are not known but are assumed to be local. The existence of locally-based pre-Roman potting traditions may have been a factor in the establishment of pottery production in the area by the later 1st century at the latest, though other factors were also involved (Henig and Booth 2000, 163-4). Whether the production suggested by the group of late 1st century wasters from the Abbey Well at Dorchester (Frere 1984, 166-9) was already seen as part of a wider Oxford region industry conceived as such is unknown, although it included many vessel types falling within the Oxfordshire repertoire defined by Young (1977, 247). Certainly by the early 2nd century the site 2 km north of Dorchester at Allen's Pit (Harden 1936, 83-94) was producing white mortaria in the mainstream Oxford tradition, as well as reduced coarse wares. While the majority of the output from this site may have been of later date, as it included large quantities of colour-coated wares, Allen's Pit could well have been a source for coarse wares used at Mount Farm, including relatively specialised products such as the fine reduced fabric Rc.

The Dorchester sites (Allen's Pit, Abbey well and the possible site at Watling Lane (Young 1977, 248)) lie at the southern limit of the Oxfordshire industry, which extended as far north as the southern fringes of Otmoor, with a focal area of production sites apparently located in east Oxford. The nature of the organisation of the industry, and the extent to which its marketing operated through and was controlled from market centres such as those likely to have existed at Dorchester, are important questions which remain unresolved. Either way, however, the importance of the immediate Dorchester area as a source of pottery supply to Mount Farm and neighbouring sites for most of the Roman period seems assured. Almost the full range of Oxfordshire products, including oxidised and white-slipped fabrics in addition to those already mentioned, is likely to have been produced at Allen's Pit alone. The proximity of Dorchester based production sites does not preclude the possibility that some of Mount



Farm pottery may have come from other Oxfordshire sites producing the same types, but it would seem reasonable to assume that most derived from the closest sources.

Very little of the pottery came from outside the Oxfordshire area. Only the samian ware (10 sherds), black-burnished ware (4 sherds) and possibly a few Gallo-Belgic type beaker sherds would have been imported.

Most of the pottery, even the early coarse fabrics, was produced to a high standard. All but a few of the vessels are wheelthrown or, in the case of large storage jars, wheel-finished or turned on a slow wheel. The exceptions are a few sherds of questionable date (eg Key group 1, No. 7 and Key group 3, Nos 17 and 28). There was a great deal of standardisation and also, perhaps, conservatism of form. The necked jars and bowls forming the basic components of the Belgic form repertoire of the Upper Thames area constitute a large part of the Mount Farm assemblage, especially in fabric Ra in the 1st century. These forms were copied in other fabrics throughout the Roman period.

The Oxfordshire coarse ware repertoire also included copies of samian forms, for example in fine grey ware (fabric Rc), and copies of black-burnished type cooking pots and flanged dishes in other reduced fabrics, but it is unclear how far these developments should be seen as conservatism, rather than the adoption of successful types from elsewhere as part of a process of expansion of the range of products. Equally the production of white colour-coated wares, which imitated some parts of the Oxford white ware typological range, could have been a pragmatic response to the fact that the Dorchester kilns lay at some distance from the only significant source of white firing clay in the industry, at Shotover. Production of these forms using a white slip on an oxidised body would have enabled this valuable resource to be used much more economically than in straightforward white ware production. It is notable, however, that the widespread production of white-slipped mortaria, as opposed to that of other white-slipped vessel types (see eg Booth *et al.* 1993, 191-3, fabric Q21) did not get underway until the mid 3rd century. The occasional earlier white slipped mortarium seen at Mount Farm (eg Group 7, No. 68) may in fact not be an Oxfordshire product.

The breakdown of fabrics can be used to provide an assessment of the character of the Mount Farm assemblage in terms of socio-economic status, particularly as comparative data are now available from a number of other sites in the region (Booth 2004). This study incorporated the Mount Farm data given above, grouping the assemblage with others of early Roman date. The basic premise of the analysis is that an assessment of relative site status can be based on the varying percentages of fine and specialist wares present in broadly contemporary assemblages. In this case the components of the fine and specialist ware group are samian, fine wares (here including the generally intrusive Oxford colour-coated ware sherds, but excluding fine oxidised and reduced 'coarse' wares such as Rc), mortaria, white and white-slipped wares. Together these total some 2% of sherds, a figure which places Mount Farm firmly in a group of rural settlement sites at the lower end of the spectrum of fine and specialist ware representation (*ibid.*, 50, fig. 2, see also Henig and Booth 2000, 173, fig. 6.11), which for comparable sites ranges from a mere 0.2% at Old Shifford to 4.8% at Hatford. Early Roman sites with

higher fine and specialist ware levels are for the most part either nucleated settlements or higher status rural settlements such as the likely 'proto-villas' at Barton Court Farm and Appleford Sidings with levels in the 15-20% range (Booth 2004, 45-6).

The Roman pottery from Mount Farm thus indicates an economic base which was of low status. Unfortunately, there is no good evidence for domestic, agricultural or industrial structures amongst the Roman period features, but the general character of the site can be suggested by the ceramics. Most of the pottery derives from ditches pits, and water holes. This does not tell us where the pottery was actually in use, and so it is difficult to comment on the precise type of settlement in the late Iron Age and early Roman periods, but the character of the material, including groups with relatively large, fresh sherds, indicates that much of it derived from closely adjacent settlement.

The quantification of general vessel types provides another way of characterising the assemblage. Unfortunately the method of quantification used to produce Table 12 was not based solely on rim count (some diagnostic base and body sherds were also used) and therefore does not provided data that compare exactly with other assemblages recorded in that way, much less those in which EVEs, the measure preferred as a basis for such comparative calculations, have been employed. The Mount Farm figures are broadly comparable with those from other sites in the region, showing an assemblage dominated by jars (*c* 59%), with open forms (bowls and dishes etc) comprising *c* 24% of vessels and beakers 11.5%. Other vessel classes are of minor significance. While the relative importance of the main vessel classes is typical of the region the absolute numbers are not. Sites occupied principally or exclusively in the early Roman period, like Mount Farm, characteristically have assemblages dominated by jars to an even greater extent than is seen at Mount Farm; commonly 80% or more, as for example at Gavelly Guy (91.9% EVEs, 91.5% rim count; Green *et al.* 2005, 312) or Yarnton (81.2% EVEs, Booth forthcoming), with the proportion of other vessel types correspondingly reduced (see Booth 2007 for more comparative data from the Upper Thames Valley; the figure for nearby Appleford is 68.1%, based on EVEs). The broad chronological trend through the Roman period, here as elsewhere in southern Britain, is for the proportion of jars to decrease with time, while other types become more common (Millett 1979, 37; Evans 2001, 28). The Mount Farm vessel type figures are closely comparable to those from the nearby site at Wally Corner, which produced *c* 59% jars, 25.5% bowls/dishes and 7% beakers (figures based on rim count) from a slightly smaller assemblage (Booth 1995, 20-21). The difference between the two sites, however, is that Wally Corner had minimal very early Roman activity and in effect constitutes principally a middle Roman assemblage. On present evidence it is almost certain that the Mount Farm figures are anomalous because of the non-standard quantification technique, which would have discriminated against jars.

Aspects of the evolving character of early Roman assemblages can be seen at Mount Farm although they have not been quantified systematically. As would be expected the grog tempered Ra fabrics contained a higher proportion of jars (*c* 82%) than other fabrics, almost all the other vessels in these fabrics being open forms (bowls and dishes),

with only a single beaker. Amongst this material were a number of well-finished necked bowls and jars, sometimes decorated with cordons and frequently burnished. There were fewer jars in the sand-tempered Rb fabrics, but at c 72% they were still dominant in this fabric group, demonstrating the importance of this vessel type through the later 1st and 2nd centuries when Rb fabrics were the main component of the assemblage. Diversification of the reduced ware form repertoire from the late 1st century onwards is indicated most clearly by fabric Rc, used mainly for beakers, bowls and dishes. The emphasis on such forms is also seen in fine reduced fabrics Rd and Re, but to a lesser extent. Given the almost complete absence of samian and other fine wares (apart from the odd sherds of early fine beaker, probably confined to the pre-Flavian period) these fabric Rc vessels, in particular, probably served as table ware, a role that they may have continued to fill through the 2nd century, supplemented by a small number of vessels in corresponding fine oxidised fabrics (Oa). These fine oxidised and reduced fabrics were of course readily available from the Dorchester kilns, such material being well-represented in the Abbey well assemblage, for example (Frere 1984, 166-169, eg nos 110-114, 136-137, 139-140 and 144-145). The relative scarcity of white wares at Mount Farm, which contributes to the low fine and specialist ware representation at the site, discussed above, is probably indicative of the apparently minor importance of these wares in Dorchester area pottery production (in contrast with the situation at Oxford sites a little further north), and emphasises the extent to which pottery supplies at Mount Farm were drawn from immediately local sources.

This point is significant when considering the later Roman period. Red colour-coated ware was being produced in large quantities by the Dorchester kilns by the second half of the 3rd century, but only half a dozen sherds of this ware were recovered from the site. In effect, occupation of the excavated area had ceased by this time, if not earlier, as discussed above. In almost every case where the pottery suggests a late Roman date for a feature this is based on the presence of perhaps only one or two late sherds. Many of these may have been intrusive; at best they indicate low-level activity of a non-domestic character. This is consistent with a local pattern of discontinuity of settlement, or shifting settlement foci, evidenced by assemblages of pottery with differing chronological emphases. A typical sequence of such assemblages, though not necessarily relating to successive stages of the same settlement, can be seen to start with the late Iron Age and early Roman material from Mount Farm (supplemented by the small assemblage of the same date from the excavation by Myres (1937, 37-9)), while at Wally Corner, less than 1 km to the south, successive concentrations of middle Roman (Booth 1995) and late Roman pottery (Sutton 1961/2, 14-18) are noted.

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**Table A6:12: Fabric and vessel type correlation, quantification mainly by rim count**

Vessel Type	Fabric																				TOTAL			
	C	M	P	Wa	Wb	W C	Oa	Ob	Ra1	Ra2	Ra3	Ra4	Rb1	Rb2	Rb3	Rb4	Rb5	Rc	Rd	Re		F	BB	Misc
Flagon	1			2	1	1	1											2						8
Bottle							1																	1
Narrow necked jar									2		6			3	2	1						4	3	21
Bead rim jar									10	39	1	3	6	11	1	6			1	3	1			82
Necked jar (a)									1	4			2	10	1	10	1	3			3			35
Necked jar (b)				1	1		5	5	1	4	5	8	2	7	1	8	2					1		51
Necked jar/bowl										2	5	10	1	2		7		4			1	1		33
Carinated jar											2	1						1	1					5
Jar BB ware copy																3	2	1	4	2		1		13
Storage jar									9	23														32
Jar unspecified			1																					1
Beaker	1			9	4		10	5		1				2		1		19					1	53
Bead rim bowl										4		1				1				1				7
Necked bowl											3	5			2	4	2	7	1	1	1			26
Bowl/dish	2				1		7	1		1	6	6		3	3	9	3	27	3	4	1	1		78
Platter																					1			1
Mortarium	1	6				2																		9
Lid														2		1								3
Colander														1										1
Cheese press											1					1								2
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>78</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>34</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>41</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>52</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>64</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>462</b>