

UNCORRECTED ARCHIVE REPORT

APPENDIX 5 – LATE BRONZE AGE TO MIDDLE IRON AGE POTTERY

By George Lambrick

Introduction

The pottery, together with limited stratigraphic relationships, forms the basis of the chronology with the choice of samples for radiocarbon dating being intended to test to interpretation of the pottery and to provide a more definite absolute timescale, with other artifacts providing only general supporting evidence.

The pottery was analysed in the early 1980s using methods partly based on previous work at Farmoor (Lambrick and Robinson 1979) and Ashville (De Roche 1978), but significantly expanded to cover other aspects of pottery. The analysis formed the basis of a paper on the interpretation of late prehistoric ceramics (Lambrick 1984) and strongly influenced the thinking behind the then fledgling Later Prehistoric Pottery Research Group's general policy statement of guiding principles for later prehistoric pottery research (PCRG 1991). The analysis predated (though to some extent influenced) the more detailed PCRG guidelines for pottery analysis (PCRG 1992) and the methods of analysis and presentation of results would now be somewhat different, although the basic approach was much the same. The analysis in turn strongly influenced the approach adopted to the recording and analysis of the major Iron Age pottery assemblage from Gravelly Guy (Duncan et al 2004) and had also influenced approaches to pottery analysis at Mingies Ditch (Wilson 1993), Watkins Farm (Allen 1990, 32-46) and other sites.

In some respects the Mount Farm methodology, based on detailed hierarchical classifications of different aspects of the pottery, was over-elaborate, but it was also not as rigorous in terms of fabric descriptions as would now be the case. Nevertheless a review of the results suggested that the analysis was thorough in terms of the topics that have become standard under the PCRG guidance, and that the results were generally sound, so it has not been considered necessary to undertake any fresh analysis.

The final report on the pottery was not completed at the time of the analysis but several aspects of the pottery were published in a separate paper (Lambrick 1984). For the purposes of this report a brief summary of the methodology is presented together with a summary of the principal findings already published and some more detailed results. In particular, the illustrations of the pottery itself represent a series of key context groups covering the chronological sequence and character of the pottery assemblage, while drawings of the occurrence of cooking residues illustrate the analysis outlined in 1984 and described in more detail in the main report. Although the occurrence of such

residues has since become a more regular topic for pottery reports, the results are very seldom illustrated.

Methodology

A basic distinction was made in the initial identification of pottery between contexts assignable to the Neolithic to middle Bronze (see Appendix 4), those with distinctively late Iron Age to Roman wares and forms (see Appendix 6) and those assignable to the Saxon period (see Appendix 7). In analysis it was found that some earlier prehistoric pottery was present in later assemblages, and in some Romanised assemblages there were sometimes significant amounts of earlier pottery - often for example distinctively early Iron Age forms. But it is possible that some pottery characterised as 'middle Iron Age' could have had currency alongside more distinctively late Iron Age forms, but this was not analysed in detail. It is also possible that some Saxon contexts contained Iron Age sherds that were not definitely distinguished.

The following attributes of the later prehistoric pottery in each context were recorded:

- Fabric (type, number and weight of sherd(s))
- Technical attributes of manufacture (method of pot formation, surface treatment, sherd thickness)
- Form (general profile, base, body, neck, rim handle, rim diameter)
- Decoration (technique, design recorded by location on rim, neck, shoulder, body or base)
- Firing characteristics (hardness, colour recorded by external, core and internal surfaces)
- Comments (recurrent comments – eg to note cooking residues, seed impressions, holes, cross joins etc, and free text comments)

The recording was carried out with the assistance of a hand lens and low powered microscope and dilute hydrochloric acid to test for calcareous inclusions in fabrics. Different typological characteristics within the non-quantitative attributes were recorded using numerical codes which in most cases consisted of a hierarchy of two or three single digits, the first to indicate a broad category, the second to denote a sub-category and the third to cover specific recurrent variants. The sherds from each stratigraphic context were sorted by fabric and then the details of each sherd or group of sherds sharing the same characteristics across all attributes were recorded. Those with an element of form shape (rim, shoulder or base) or decoration were sketched on the back of the sheets.

Analysis of the data was carried out by hand, with a wide range of different quantifications and listings carried out despite the lack of computerisation. The data thus generated has remained the basis of this report, which only highlights some of the

more useful results of the analyses attempted.

Size and Character of the Assemblage

A total of 5,332 later prehistoric sherds weighing 81.468kg was recovered and recorded. The condition and fragmentation of the pottery was very variable.

Average sherd sizes for context groups of over 10 sherds varied from 8gm to 50gm unsieved and 4gm to 30gm sieved (see Lambrick 1984 for further details on sieving results). Most unsieved context groups fell within the range 12 to 25gms. There was no obvious correlation between average sherd size and type of feature (average sherd weight in 34 pits ranged from 8 to 50 gms; 25 gullies and small ditches 9 to 31 gms; 7 larger ditches 9 to 22 gms; 4 waterholes 14 to 49gms and 2 layers 11 to 15gms).

A number of contexts produced complete profiles, and a few nearly complete pots. In addition to fragmentation, signs of abrasion were also variable.

Redeposition is an issue. Some of the larger middle Iron Age assemblages (perhaps most notably penannular gully F200+203 and ditch F206) contained significant quantities of early Iron Age sherds alongside rather few definite middle Iron Age ones. The relative abundance of pottery in F206 and the thoroughness of excavation made it feasible to examine how this varied along its length, and it was noticeable that one section which had an unusually large amount of pottery also had the largest number of distinctively early forms and fabric proportions significantly biased towards typically earlier types – in effect the greater abundance of pottery in that particular section of ditch could be accounted for simply on the basis of its having a higher level of redeposited material.

The relationship between sherd size and redeposition is not clear-cut or simple since discarded pottery may be derived from different sources and redeposited material may have been reworked many or very few times resulting in very different levels of attrition through breakage or wear (Lambrick 1984). Some of the parameters for this are shown in Figure 54 in the main report, but few clear patterns can be discerned. Instead, it is better to consider the relative integrity of assemblages on a case-by-case basis to establish how processes of deposition and redeposition may have affected their interpretation. This is considered below in relation to the dating of individual groups where chronological indicators of fabric and form do not agree well.

Overall, the condition of the later prehistoric pottery assemblages was variable, and some of the smaller ones are especially problematical. Redeposition was an issue for many.

In other respects much of the pottery was in good condition; burnished surfaces, red slip coatings and white inlay decoration and all survived to a greater or lesser extent, and there were many cases of cooking residues adhering to sherds making the analysis of their use a worthwhile exercise. Enough complete or substantial profiles could be reconstructed to get at least a reasonable idea of the broad range of vessel sizes.

Fabrics

Three figure fabric codes were assigned on the basis of principal inclusion(s), secondary inclusion(s), and fineness or variants. The principal inclusion categories were as follows

- 0-- = miscellaneous
- 1-- = sand
- 2-- = ochreous inclusions
- 3-- = flint
- 4-- = shelly calcareous
- 5-- = shell
- 6-- = calcareous (including probable chalk)
- 7-- = mixed inclusions
- 8-- = organic

The first five of these categories were also used to denote standard secondary inclusions, (10-, 11-, 12-, 13-, 14-, 15-; 20-, 21-, 22-, 23-, etc., but above 5 the second numeral was used to cover other specific combinations

The texture classes were:

- 1 = fine (sand grains not readily visible without magnification; shell less than c. 1mm)
- 2 = medium (sand grains visible, generally less than 1mm; shell c1mm-3mm)
- 3 = coarse (sand grains visible, generally more than 1mm; shell over c.3mm)
- 4 = abundant

Thus fabric 111 was fine sand, 112 was medium sand etc. Again figures above 4 were used to distinguish particular variants. In retrospect the classification was less satisfactory than the rather simpler alpha numeric classifications adopted in more recent years following PCRG guidance. The following brief interpretive descriptions indicate the principal Fabric groups that were found.

Sandy Fabrics - general categories

Sandy fabrics with few other inclusions were very common, especially medium sand (112) and to a lesser extent coarse sand (113). These were generally characterised by a mixture of milky, glassy and occasionally coloured grains of quartz that may be derived from the Thames gravels. Some of the coarser sand could derive from Lower Greensand beds to the west of Mount Farm, but this was not tested by detailed analysis.

Sandy Fabrics - probable Upper Greensand group

Fine sandy wares (111) were often dominated by abundant small glassy grains of quartz

which was similar to other fine sandy fabrics with abundant glassy quartz together with black shiny grains of glauconite and some other inclusions (174 fine, 175 medium, 176 with sparse flint, 313-314, with abundant flint, 178 with organic matter, 179 with calcareous/shell inclusions). The source of these fabrics is likely to be the Upper Greensand or fluvial stream sediments derived from it which occur at the foot of the chalk, including the vicinity of the Sinodun Hills just south of the Thames at Little Wittenham. It is quite possible (on the basis of a sample of alluvial clay from near Benson shown to me by Maureen Mellor) that these fabrics were made from as-found sandy alluvial outwash, which would account for some of the variations present.

Sandy Fabrics - probable Malmstone group

Another group of fine medium and coarse sandy wares (170, 171, 172, 173) contained rounded pieces of pale coloured non-calcareous sandstone, which can probably be equated with Malmstone also from the base of the chalk around the Sinodun Hills where it was a dominant feature in late Bronze Age and early Iron Age pottery reported by Hingley (1980). It also figures amongst the Saxon pottery from Mount Farm (see Appendix 7)

Sandy Fabrics – other combinations

Sand and ochreous inclusions (12-) were fairly common, though versions with the ochreous inclusions dominant (21-) were much less so. These fabrics probably represent small lumps of iron rich clay or semi-fired earth being included with clay to which sand was added (or might possibly have occurred naturally). No particular source can be inferred, though the interface between the Kimmeridge Clay and Lower Greensand west or north west of the site might well produce clays this kind of fabric.

Sand and flint (13-) and flint and sand (31-) fabrics occurred only rarely.

Sand and shelly calcareous inclusions (14- and 41-) and (16- and 61-) were also not common. This contrasts with sites north of the Corallian Ridge where the gravels are dominated by limestone derived ultimately from the Cotswolds.

Sand and fossil shell fabrics (15-) and (51-) were somewhat commoner, in effect reflecting a mixture of the two principal inclusions represented within the fabrics at Mount Farm. As noted below, the shell could be derived from either the Kimmeridge clay or the Gault clay and might well have been brought with the clay before sand (from the gravels or other sources) was added. Again these are probably local fabrics but the inclusions were not tracked down to specific sources, and it is worth noting that rarely occurring fabrics 180 and 181 (sand with malmstone and shell) may represent a similar mixture of different source materials.

Ochreous Inclusions

As noted above, it is likely that these fabrics (22-) are based on clays that contained iron rich materials that were not fully mixed into the body of the clay before firing. In some

cases such inclusions manifested themselves as dark brown or grey lumps where firing had taken place in a reducing atmosphere. For the most part ochreous inclusions were a secondary rather than dominant feature, but the relatively small number of sherds where they were abundant suggests that particular clays with iron rich pellets in them were one of the sources being exploited, and this is more likely to have been related to the Kimmeridge rather than Gault clays.

Flint and Quartzite

Very little flint-tempered pottery (3--) was encountered compared with earlier (especially middle Bronze Age) wares. Chronologically this is of some significance, suggesting only a low level of potential late Bronze Age pottery given that calcined flint tends to be the dominant inclusion in most late Bronze Age pottery south of the Corallian Ridge.

It is also worth noting in this context that angular quartzite, which is also characteristic of some late Bronze Age fabrics (eg around Cassington and Castle Hill Little Wittenham) was not noted at all at Mount Farm, although quartzite is a significant component of superficial deposits overlying the chalk on the Sinodun Hills and is a common mineral in the gravel on the site.

Calcareous Gravel

This material is usually a mixture of fragments of fossil shell rounded limestone and sand derived from the products of Pleistocene periglacial erosion of the surrounding limestones which tend to break down and become mixed with quartz sand resulting in a calcareous shelly sands and gravels deposited along the floor of the Thames valley. Such fabrics were a major component (along with shell and sand) on Iron Age sites north of the Corallian Ridge, where the gravels are derived mainly from Cotswold limestone, but is less common south of it where other geologies have made a greater contribution to the composition of the gravels.

At Mount Farm 'calcareous shell' was seldom the dominant inclusion in fabrics (44-) and they did not bear much similarity to such fabrics in the Lower Windrush valley at sites like Mingies Ditch and Gravelly Guy (Wilson 1993; Duncan et al 2004), and are more likely to be a local equivalent (erosion products of the Corallian limestones would tend to produce similar material).

Fossil Shell

Fabrics in which fossil shell was predominant with few other inclusions (55-) were fairly common especially in the earlier Iron Age groups and were noted in a range of fine, medium and coarse versions, and in some cases the shell was noticeably abundant.

Another important group of shelly wares were those mixed with ochreous inclusions (52- and less commonly, 25-). These also varied in the size and abundance of inclusions, and in whether the ochreous inclusions had fired reddish brown or grey, depending on

firing conditions. The distinction between shelly fabrics with or without ochreous inclusions may reflect different clay sources. Both Gault and Kimmeridge clays have beds that can include abundant fossil shells (as can the Oxford clay further north) but the Gault tends not to have much iron in it whereas it can be abundant in the Kimmeridge Clay where it underlies the very Iron Rich Lower Greensand.

It is interesting to note that shelly fabrics with abundant ochreous inclusions have been a feature of a number of other early Iron Age sites, notably at Farmoor (Lambrick and Robinson 1979) and Wytham (Mytum 1986) which like Mount Farm are situated within 4km of locations where the Lower Greensand overlies the Kimmeridge Clay.

Limestone

A small number of sherds were recorded as 'calcite' fabrics but this was a misnomer as they did not specifically include calcite minerals. Mostly these were calcareous fabrics with no obvious shell, nor with distinctively angular inclusions. Some relatively soft irregular calcareous inclusions are probably chalk, but these fabrics (67-, 68-) were again rare.

Mixed wares and Alluvium

A wide range of fabrics with various mixtures of three or more of the kinds of inclusions noted above were recorded, mostly in very small numbers. As a group many of these were fabrics with ochreous inclusions and two or more other materials, and they may only be variants of other fabrics made using clays with iron rich lumps in them, of the kind already discussed. In other cases these variable fabrics may represent a rather random mixture of materials from different sources (which might best be explained as reflecting the use of raw materials that reflect the effects of Pleistocene erosion and reworking of the underlying geological strata of a wide surrounding area resulting in mixing and redeposition along the valley floor.

A very specific example of this is a subgroup of fabrics (especially examples recorded as 722 or 723) which appear to have been derived from freshwater fluvial or alluvial deposits. These contain a mixture of fine sand, plant material (or voids), very thin small shell fragments and small ochreous inclusions. In a few cases it was possible to see that voids had been left where a snail shell had decayed, leaving an impression of its form. By examining a plasticine cast of these voids it was possible for Mark Robinson to identify the snail species. His results were as follows.

Fabric 442	<i>Bithynia tentaculata</i> impression; <i>Bithynia</i> sp. shell; fossil shell fragments
Fabric 722	<i>Cepea</i> or <i>Araianta</i> sp shell apex
Fabric 722	indeterminate gastropod shell fragment
Fabric 722	<i>Vallonia</i> sp. impression

Fabric 722 cf *Bythinia* sp shell

Fabric 723 *Bithynia tentaculata* impression

The shells from these pottery sherds fall into three categories. Firstly, there are recent terrestrial individuals, *Vallonia* sp and *Cepea/ Araiant* sp. which are characteristic of general dry ground habitats and may have been incorporated accidentally at the place of manufacture into the vessels. Secondly, there are fossil shell fragments probably from marine bivalve molluscs or brachiopods, which may have been derived from the Gault or Kimmeridge clays or, reworked, from the Pleistocene gravels. Lastly, there are shells of the freshwater species *Bithynia tentaculata*. It lives in clean flowing water and lakes. The most likely sources of these shells would be either recent alluvial or streambed deposits, or layers and relict channels of finer sediment which occur in the Pleistocene gravels.

The alluvial group of fabrics was commonly used for fineware bowls and in some cases made up a significant (though never dominant) proportion of context assemblages.

Organic Fabrics

Fabrics containing significant amounts of plant material as tempering were very rare, and in some instances could indicate that intrusive Saxon material was present, or, in the case of small assemblages, the Iron Age material comprising most of the assemblage was redeposited in a Saxon context (cf Appendix 7). However, these fabrics were so rare that it is unlikely that such problems are significant.

Other Fabrics

Technical attributes of manufacture

Pot construction methods

Sherds were examined for evidence of the method of forming vessels, but in most cases this was not clear. Some small plain pots may have been 'pinchpots' but this would not be suitable for larger vessels or with complex profiles. Slab construction was suspected for some larger vessels but no tell-tale forms of cracking or breakage or joins between slabs were noted (cf Lambrick 2008). The only construction methods that was moderately commonly evident was coil building, which was most noticeable on some fine burnished globular bowls where slight unevenness in thickness left by the coils could be detected.

Surface treatments

A variety of different surface treatments were noted, including haematite coated, burnished, smoothed, wiped and tool trimmed. These occurred on a variety of fabrics,

with haematite coating not being common and reserved for bowls in fine fabrics. Burnishing was very much commoner, occurring on 18% of the pottery sherds in contexts with over 20 sherds, and it was applied to a wide range of fabrics, but this was very variable. As illustrated in Figure 54 of the main report, proportions of burnished pottery by context varied from 0% to 40% or 47% (by number or weight respectively). Evidence of burnishing was used as the principal way of distinguishing 'finewares' from 'coarsewares', which was relevant to the analysis of cooking residues and to a lesser extent, rubbish characterisation (see main text and below).

Form

The classification of whole vessel forms distinguished at the most basic level between 'bowls' (2--) 'pots' (5--) and 'jars' (7--) while also allowing for cases where sherds were clearly not from one type of vessel but might be either of the others (3--, 4--, 6--). These were variously subdivided into angular, shouldered, round bellied, straight sided, curved sided, globular and necked subcategories. Forms were also (often rather more usefully) classified according to the shape of different parts of the vessel profile (bases, bodies, necks, rims, handles), the main categories being as follows:

- Bases: omphalos, right-angled, oblique, very oblique, rounded
- Body: angular, shouldered, straight-sided, curved-sided (with variants)
- Neck: flaring, upright, concave, everted (and variants)
- Rim: plain, thickened, expanded, bead (and numerous detailed variants)
- Handle: lug, strap, vertical (with variants)

This relatively elaborate classification was intended to overcome a perceived problem with the approach adopted at Ashville (De Roche 1978) where the whole vessel form had to be inferred from often small fragments; this is often very difficult, although details of the shape of particular parts of the vessel can still be diagnostic of date. For example the different forms of everted, upright or concave neck were relevant to considering the presence of a late Bronze Age component in the assemblage, while a variety of plain and bead rim forms were relevant to identifying middle Iron Age material without knowing the overall form of the vessels.

The range of forms present at Mount Farm is very typical of the upper Thames valley, though a few particular pieces are somewhat unusual, or seem to be particularly characteristic of this locality. A shouldered vessel from F526 (Fig 62 no. 104) is an unusually large probable storage jar, while the cabled rim with large dimples beneath in F661/C/2 (Fig 63 no. 114) is an unusual form, not readily paralleled in the region. Taken as a whole, the common occurrence of thickened and expanded rims with piecrust finger tip decoration reinforces the recognition (eg Harding 1972) that these forms are particularly prevalent in this part of the Thames valley.

The old arguments about whether expanded and thickened rims are from cauldrons has largely passed with the discovery at Appleford of one of these vessels with a flat base (Hinchliffe and Thomas 1980), but there remains an issue of whether any of these rim forms are particularly early. At Mount Farm the 'thickened' as opposed to 'expanded' forms occur in early Iron Age assemblages but may have remained a feature of some middle Iron Age groups (eg F506, Fig 66 nos. 150, 152), though it is very difficult to be sure they are not redeposited). Expanded rims are less common, and for example in F118 occur alongside angular forms but also more rounded vessels that might fit with the radiocarbon determination of 410–40 cal BC. A number of other contexts that include both flaring and upright or concave neck/rim forms (F655, F137, F138 F671 - Figs 55, 58) lack the thickened and expanded rims and might be earlier. This also applies to some of the assemblages published by Myres (1937).

The middle Iron Age forms represent a very typical range of plain curved sided occasionally barrel-like jars and pots and globular bowls, often with simple turned up or bead rims. The globular bowls are part of a broader tradition of globular bowl forms that are characteristic of the Upper Thames valley and beyond, while 'saucepan' type pots are largely absent.

Decoration

Decoration was recorded in terms of technique, design and position on the vessel. As with other sites in the Thames valley, early forms of linear decoration are often incised, stabbed and very occasionally inlaid, and individual motifs are sometimes stamped (eg with the ends of small bones). Finger tipping and occasionally finger nail ornament are prevalent especially on thickened and expanded rims and shoulder angles (less commonly on bases). Some characteristics of late Bronze Age decorative forms, such as slashed or finger tipped cordons and slashing of rims are largely absent. There are a few bosses (eg F137, Fig 55 no. 10) but these may well be redeposited from early to middle Bronze Age activity in the same area of the site (see Appendix 4).

Amongst the earlier Iron Age pottery designs include mainly straight linear geometrical motifs, including zig-zags, chevrons, vertical and horizontal lines and triangles (see Figs 57, 61). Some of the multiple linear geometrical decoration is reminiscent of All Cannings Cross material and is paralleled at Little Wittenham (Hingley 1980, figs 8, 12, 15) for the transition between the late Bronze Age and early Iron Age. Other motifs (eg zig-zag lines, cross-hatched triangles and a round bodied necked bowls with vertical lines and impressed crosses from F652 and F656) reflect style characteristic of early Iron Age material at Chinnor, as do a few cases of white inlay (Harding 1972). The late radiocarbon determination for F652 of 200 cal BC–cal AD 240 is surprising in this context, and may indicate that this pit containing a deposit of articulated animal bones may have been backfilled with soil containing much earlier pottery.

Middle Iron Age decorative techniques involved less use of finger tipping and slashing

though both survive in often rather indistinct forms. Linear decoration is mostly tooled or impressed rather than incised, and in most instances designs were still fairly geometrical (Figs 65, 66, 67). One tooled band inverted swag on a globular bowl is characteristic of the Frilford style of ornament (Fig 67 no. 177), but it is not clear that Mount Farm falls within the main distributions of either Frilford or Cassington style swagged decoration, or how far the original distinction suggested by Lambrick (1984) still holds up in the light of more recent work (T G Allen pers comm).

Firing characteristics

The ways in which pots had been fired were recorded in terms of a wide range of varied combinations of colour reflecting reducing or oxidising conditions, including some instances where conditions had changed during firing. In a few instances (mainly of burnished vessels) it seemed apparent that after firing in oxidizing conditions pots had sometimes been finished in a reducing atmosphere suggesting a deliberate control of firing conditions to achieve a shiny black vessel. But in most cases firing conditions were not particularly well controlled, and as with most later prehistoric pottery, vessels were variable in colour, and some were quite mottled from uneven firing.

No particular instances of spalling, cracking, over firing or severe distortion were noted, but that does not mean that vessels were all uniformly well-made, nor does it rule out some having been made on site, but this cannot be demonstrated either way.

Comments and Analysis of Use Residues

The comments field was used principally to highlight particular features of sherds, and in particular aspects such as the occurrence of food residues. The results of this aspect of the analysis were summarized in a paper some years ago (Lambrick 1984) and because they remain unusually clear the detail is also presented in the main report.

The main information recorded was the presence of carbonised food residues, sooting and limescaling on the surface of the pottery (and very occasionally the presence of holes and differences between internal and external leaching), which can be related to vessel form, finish and size. Since the Mount Farm analysis was done some molecular analysis of lipids has been carried out at Yarnton (Copley et al forthcoming), and macroscopic observations have been recorded there and at Gravelly Guy, Claydon Pike and Castle Hill. But in many other cases in the Upper Thames valley, including several with large assemblages, usewear evidence has been noted but with no quantification or detailed analysis. The results of the Mount Farm analysis given below are thus still very relevant.

Chronological analysis

Issues of Approach

At Farmoor it was found that the proportions of fabric types were correlated with diagnostic form types within each assemblage (Lambrick and Robinson 1979). The value of fabric proportion as a chronological indicator was most apparent at Farmoor, but by rearranging the Ashville data (De Roche 1978, Table II) in diagrammatic form Lambrick (1984, Fig 11.6) showed there was a more striking correlation of form, fabric and stratigraphy than was immediately apparent from the published account. Publishing R A Rutland's excavations at Castle Hill Little Wittenham, Hingley (1980) showed a very clear stratigraphic sequence in a change for predominantly flint tempered to malmstone tempered pottery in material spanning the late Bronze Age to early Iron Age. Changes in fabric proportions were also demonstrated for stratigraphic sequences at Gravelly Guy (Duncan et al 2004).

The benefits of this type of approach are not only to reinforce the evidence provided by traditional dating on the basis of form, but also to test the robustness of that evidence where there is the possibility of redeposition or intrusive material resulting from animal disturbance. The problem of redeposition is self-evident on intensively occupied sites such as Ashville, Gravelly Guy or Mount Farm, and far from invalidating a quantitative approach to the material it makes it all the more desirable in trying to unravel the real picture. The dangers of relying on form alone with no attempt to quantify fabrics are considerable: in practice this approach relies on the dating of latest types present, but this is only valid if the *absence* of yet later types is reliable (Lambrick 1984). Thus the relative frequency of occurrence for chronologically different types is an important consideration, and for any particular assemblage its size, its proportion of fineware and proportion of redeposited pottery are all relevant in assessing the significance of particular vessels present.

This problem is particularly relevant for the early and middle Iron Age: this is because the change from vessels with distinctive profiles and frequent plastic decoration to relatively formless shapes and little decoration makes it more difficult to recognise diagnostically middle Iron Age forms from small body sherds, than it is to recognise early Iron Age forms. On a continuously occupied site with rather small assemblages there may be more chance of recovering redeposited sherds of early Iron Age than contemporary sherds of distinctively middle Iron Age type. At Mount Farm, in some of the smaller assemblages in particular, the presence of 'early' sherds where middle Iron Age forms are not in evidence may thus be most misleading as a chronological indicator.

In trying to overcome these difficulties four aspects of the pottery have been considered: form, fabric, fineware proportion and fragment sizes. Form and fabric are the main consideration, the other two providing background information to the abundance of datable sherds and the likelihood of redeposited material being present. The data is

presented in Figure 54 of the main report. The proportion of shelly to sandy fabrics was chronologically significant at both Farmoor and Ashville and these two fabric groups represent the bulk of the Mount Farm pottery, though the recognition of a third major group based on alluvial clay has complicated the picture. The more important assemblages, including those for which carbon 14 dates were obtained are illustrated in Figures 55 to 68 of the main report. The radiocarbon dates are given in Appendix 2, Table A2:1.

General Observations

The chronological change associated with increasing proportions of sandy wares is again detectable here, but is less clear than at Ashville or Farmoor. A number of changes seen to occur approximately where the shelly fabrics fall to about 20% of the sandy and shelly total: middle Iron Age forms are more evident among the profiles, rims and decoration, and although these do not by any means occur in all the assemblages dominated by sandy fabric, there seems to be a corresponding reduction in the recurrence of early sherds, from generally over 10% to generally under 10%. In particular the angular profiles and body sherds, the incised decoration and perhaps finger tip decoration appear to decline.

The presence of some 'early' sherds in all but two of the assemblages clearly suggests the presence of redeposited pottery in some of the later contexts. This may to some extent be indicated by other trends, including the blurring of fabric proportions and perhaps the fact that shelly sherds tend to get relatively smaller compared with sandy ones, which would be consistent with redeposited material having suffered more attrition.

There may be a genuine overlap of pottery styles during which 'early' and 'middle' Iron Age forms were produced concurrently for some time before the early forms were abandoned. If the shelly-sandy fabric ratio represented a genuine sequence rather than merely a rough guide to the chronology, there would be evidence for such an overlap, but the stratigraphy is not sufficient to demonstrate the sequence in many instances, and some individual associations of forms and fabrics and in a few instances between the form/fabric 'sequence' and stratigraphic relationships are sufficient to make any more detailed assessment unreliable, although the general trend seems clear. This is consistent with the pattern at long-lived settlements such as Ashville (De Roche 1978; Lambrick 1984, Fig 11.6) and Gravelly Guy (Duncan et al 2004), and contrasts with Farmoor where the break was so sharp that a gap in occupation was suggested (Lambrick and Robinson 1979).

Comments on Dating of Assemblages

Although the chronological associations of form and fabric seem to correspond with previous observations at Ashville, Farmoor and Gravelly Guy, neither the fabric proportions nor the presence or absence of particular form types is alone reliable in

determining the phase to which the individual assemblages belong. The general problems of redeposited and intrusive material, and of dating assemblages on the basis of certain forms when others may be absent, have already been noted (cf Lambrick 1984) and these issues have to be borne in mind in the phasing of individual contexts.

Among the contexts with more shelly ware (generally presumed early) several 'anomalies' occur.

- F303: A bead rim is out of place in an assemblage otherwise broadly similar to F326 and F328 (two larger, unequivocally early assemblages). F303 is a small group and it is possible that it was almost entirely composed of redeposited sherds, although the shelly sherds were mostly large (See F531 below). It is perhaps more likely that the later sherd was intrusive through animal burrowing.
- F531: The evidence for the context being early is principally the dominance of shelly pottery though this seems to be substantially from one vessel accounting for a high proportion of this small assemblage. The vessel concerned, a thickened rim pot, need not have been redeposited since this form seems to have had a fairly long currency, including a middle Iron Age parallel at Farmoor (Lambrick and Robinson, 1979). The middle Iron Age sherds seem much less likely to be intrusive since they represent more than one vessel. In this case the fabric proportions are thus misleading.
- F63: this feature was disturbed by a later ditch (F172) and since this was not obvious during excavation, the presence of one possibly intrusive middle Iron Age rim is not surprising
- F541: The middle Iron Age bead rim in this feature could again be intrusive, but on the whole this seems improbable: no other ditches can confidently be assigned to the Early Iron Age and this feature seems more likely to be part of the complex series of middle Iron Age ditches in the area. The fairly high proportion of shelly wares and early sherds in the assemblage could be accounted for by redeposited material, though these figures are in any case not very reliable for small assemblages such as this.
- F116 and F545: These features appear to fall into a similar category to F541. Both had small proportions of early sherds and no diagnostic middle Iron Age forms, but this might be due to the relatively low occurrence of recognisable middle Iron Age as compared with early Iron Age forms, especially where little fineware is present and significant redeposition has occurred. F545 cut F506 (which was certainly middle Iron Age) and F116 is a type of feature more characteristic of the middle Iron Age than the early Iron Age (see below). F545 appeared to have been deliberately backfilled, and the soil used may well have contained earlier pottery.
- F115: The fabric proportions suggest that it may be early and again the low

proportion of burnished pieces may explain why there are rather few diagnostically early sherds. However the upright rim (probably of a globular jar) is likely to be middle rather than early Iron Age, and the generally small size of the sherds suggests that a proportion may be redeposited.

- F172: The pottery fabric proportions and some forms at first sight suggests an early date, but again a proportion may well be redeposited (eg from F63) because the northern end of the feature produced definite middle Iron Age pottery in 1933 (Myres 1937).
- F257 and F656: the presence of globular bowls and jars strongly suggest a middle Iron Age date for these features, and the fairly high occurrence of early sherds and shelly ware can reasonably be attributed to redeposited material (especially for F656 which cut an early pit, F655, and produced a cross-join with a sherd from it). There may also have been early features close to F257 in the unexcavated area to its south.
- Layer 145 and F62: Both these deposits were earlier than probable middle Iron Age contexts (L106 and F59 respectively), but the fabrics and forms do not conclusively indicate to which period they belong.
- F657 The date of this context is also rather uncertain, though as a ditch it again could plausibly be regarded as part of the middle Iron Age phase, and one sherd may be the bead rim of a middle Iron Age bowl. The absence of diagnostically middle Iron Age sherds, however, would in any case not be surprising in such a small assemblage.
- F169 Despite a relatively high proportion of sandy ware, this seems likely to be one of the earlier contexts because of the high proportion of early sherds. The fabric proportions may be accounted for by the number of sherds from fineware angular bowls in this rather small group.

The remaining contexts might be assumed on the basis of the general trend for groups with mainly sandy fabrics to be middle Iron Age, and to some extent this is borne out by the occurrence of appropriate forms. But again there are cases that do not fit the trend:

- F141: This group may well be early though again the absence of middle Iron Age forms is not reliable.
- F119: Despite the relatively high proportion of sandy ware the high proportion of early sherds and absence of middle Iron Age ones suggests that this pit may belong to the earlier Iron Age. As with F141 dating is very uncertain.
- F672: The apparent absence of middle Iron Age forms (except for one everted rim) is more surprising given the size of the assemblage, but may well be accounted for by the small proportion of fineware; in fact a middle Iron Age date for this context is strongly suggested by the globular jar with everted rim and the

inturned concave rim from the 1933 excavations (Myres 1937, 36 and Fig 9, AIB and AI14).

Eight other small assemblages towards the sandy end of the fabric spectrum produced no diagnostically middle Iron Age sherds (F126, F503, F140, F661 / 1, F4, F125 and F625). Except for F140, F4 and F126 they produced under 10% early sherds, and the absence of middle Iron Age sherds in these small assemblages is probably not very significant. F140 is comparable with F119 and its dating remains very uncertain. The same might apply to F4 and F125 except that as ditches or gullies they fit better into the middle Iron Age layout of the site. This is particularly true of F4, whose recut (F5 and 57) was clearly respected by the late Iron Age and early Roman layout (F3). The high proportion of early sherds in these features may be the result of redeposition, even though rather little shelly ware was recovered. F4 was notable for producing no burnished pottery.

Among the smaller assemblages (under 20 sherds) the semi-quantitative approach is even less reliable, making dating even more difficult. The presence of diagnostically middle Iron Age sherds is useful for some features, but in others, where they do not occur, the presence only of early sherds can seldom be considered a reliable indicator of period. However, F585 is closely comparable to F326 and F328 and is likely to be genuinely early, as are F454 and F808 which contained large fragments of perhaps three angular jars and sherds from sandy angular bowls with incised decoration. F806 may contain part of the bowl from F808 and one other small feature (12) contained sherds comparable to the angular jars, together with lumps of pale, poorly burnt clay of similar coarse shelly texture.

Other contexts which produced early sherds were F100, F111, F112, F132, F139, F151, F152, F181, F269, F270, F306, F325, F330, F394, F448, F502, F523, F551, F552, F553, F606, F614, F626, F627, F678, F748 and F832.

Contexts which produced probable middle Iron Age sherds were F68, F402, F529, F539, F546 and F561.

Even on extensive sites with large pottery assemblages that accumulated throughout the Iron Age, as at Ashville, Gravelly Guy and Yarnton, it has proved very difficult to develop clear refinements in the dating of particular forms and assemblages within the broad 'early' and 'middle' Iron Age divisions, or as indicating the transition between them. As outlined previously (Lambrick 1984) this problem arises from a combination of factors, including the general lack of long stratified sequences of large assemblages coupled with complications of redeposition, uncertainties as to the longevity of some key ceramic forms, and the varied rate of occurrence of diagnostic forms over the periods concerned. This certainly applies at Mount Farm, and any chronological overview of the ceramic evidence depends as much on characterising the assemblage as a whole as on detailed sequences.

Use of Pottery in Food Preparation

The evidence of cooking to be obtained from pottery varies. For the prehistoric pottery - especially the Iron Age material - the main information is the presence of carbonised food residues, sooting and limescaling on the surface of the pottery (and very occasionally the presence of holes and differences between internal and external leaching), which can be related to vessel form, finish and size. For the Late Iron Age and Roman period the functions of particular vessel types are rather better known, and no detailed study of cooking residues was made, though deposits were noted in particular instances.

Very little pre-Iron Age pottery was found, and hardly any showed signs of use in cooking. Internal residue was noted on one Neolithic rim sherd, probably from a coarse ware pot or deep bowl. No cooking residues were found on Beaker pottery. Sherds from three vessels recovered from the secondary filling of the Bronze Age ring ditch (F101) had internal carbonised residues. In one case (Figure 23, no. 6) this occurred on the side of a large middle Bronze Age bucket urn, just above the base, which seems most likely to have resulted from the application of direct heat to the pot indicating its use for cooking over an open fire. The vessel was also covered by lime deposits, but these were almost certainly post-depositional.

From the Iron Age much more evidence is available. 328 sherds were noted as having probable cooking residues on them, about 6% of the total from Iron Age deposits. Figure 78 in the main report gives examples of where and on which types of vessel the main forms of residue occur. On many of the larger sherds the residues are fairly limited in extent, and a high proportion of sherds from a vessel with cooking residues would therefore exhibit no trace of them. The occurrence of residue on only 6% of the sherds should thus not be taken as reflecting the true level of use of pottery in cooking.

Thick carbonised residue ('burnt stew') occurred internally on 2% of all the pottery from the Iron Age features, and accounted for 38% of the sherds with cooking residues. Only 6% of sherds with this type of residue were fineware (defined here as vessels with burnished surfaces, not 'fineware' fabrics). Taking thinner carbonised residue ('sooting') into account as well, it accounted for 4% of all pottery and 64% of the residues. Only 7.5% of the examples occurred on sherds from fineware vessels.

Internal limescale made up 2.5% of the total, 46% of the residues, and in contrast with the carbonised residues, 49% of examples occurred on fineware sherds.

An interesting feature of some large pots showing signs of leaching is that the calcareous inclusions have been leached out much more internally than externally. This may partly be due to abrasion, but could also have resulted from the pot being used for relatively acid liquids (from fruit etc), which would probably not only neutralise the lime in the water but also gradually dissolve the exposed calcareous grits in the fabric of the pottery. Although this could also be an effect of post-depositional leaching rather than the use of the vessel, the differential internal and external pattern seems too

consistent on the many sherds from one vessel to be coincidental. Such differences in external and internal leaching were only noted on a few sherds, but other instances may have been missed as this was not systematically recorded.

Observations were also made of the types of vessel and whether the residues usually occurred near the top or near the bottom of vessels, and (where possible) what capacity they had. Thick carbonised 'burnt stew' residues occurred mostly on jars and pots, and only in a very few instances on fineware vessels. The capacity of the vessels ranged from c. 0.6 litres to 2.2 litres. The pattern of residue and sooting on these vessels suggests that they tended to be used like a saucepan over a direct flame, usually with the flames reaching well up the sides of the vessel: the lower halves generally have little or no residue, while the upper halves are often heavily sooted and encrusted with patches of burnt residue, particularly on shoulders and around necks, presumably from the contents splashing over the edge or over-boiling. Such effects may have resulted from pots actually standing on the hearth or on stones in the fire rather than being suspended over the flames.

One profile shows a different pattern in which the sooting and residues occur rather further down on the body of the pot while the neck has no carbonised deposits. In this case the pot may have been used rather higher in the flame so that the contents did not boil over and only the lower part of the pot was blackened by soot. This seems less common than where the blackening is on the upper part of the pot: of 87 sherds with external blackening, 48 are from the top part of the vessels (shoulder or above) and only five are from the bottom half (the position of the remaining body sherds is uncertain).

The fineware sherds with carbonised residue or sooting were generally undiagnostic: none was certainly a bowl rather than a fine jar or pot, but some were definitely from small jars.

In a few cases a thin layer of limescale covered carbonised residues internally, while in others limescaling occurred in pots with 'burnt stew' residues externally as well as sooting. This indication of some variation in the use of vessels is not surprising.

Deposits interpreted as limescale occurred on a wider range of pottery than the carbonised deposits, most notably in many fineware bowls as well as other cooking jars/pots. Limescaling occurs in hard water areas when calcium carbonate is precipitated from the water by its evaporation, especially when heated. It was noticeable (as might be expected) that limescaling occurred mostly in the bottom of vessels (22 sherds as against 14 in upper parts out of 70 examples). In a few cases the limescale was thinner towards the bottom.

Some interesting exceptions to this general pattern include two small jars on which limescaling spread near the top of the rims and three curious bases probably from early Iron Age angular bowls, with holes in the bottom, where limescale appears to have been deposited through the holes and over the outside (Fig 78 nos. 16, 98, 204). The thickness and extent of the scale suggests that it could not have resulted merely from splashing,

and its absence on the broken edges of the pots indicate that it was not a post-depositional lime deposit. Although these three examples are from bowls, a couple of coarseware base sherds that are more likely to be from jars or pots had both internal and external limescale though no visible holes, and this may reflect similar use. The occurrence of limescale on pots with holes in them was also noted at All Cannings Cross though no interpretation was offered (Cunnington 1923).

Possible explanations of these bowls is that they were used for draining curds, which over time might produce calcareous residue, or that the small pots were used in the top of larger pots of hot or boiling water as a double cooker. Two jars with limescaling up to the top of the rim could represent the lower half of the suggested double cooker arrangement, though they happen to be later in date. However, this need not be the only explanation of limescaling on the rim of pots: it could also arise simply from regularly filling the jar almost to the top to heat the water.

Two fineware sherds with linear decoration had limescaling on them, and it also occurred on one (and less certainly two others) with haematite coating. Although the number is small, the occurrence of cooking residues on these decorated pieces is similar to the general pattern of residues on fineware pottery noted above. Although this might suggest that decorated or haematite coated wares had no special status as tableware seldom used for cooking, it is also possible that they were only used for cooking when they were already worn and had lost some of their fine finish (as perhaps indicated by the poor state of the haematite coating compared to some other sherds with this finish).

The capacities of vessels with limescaling range from quite small bowls (perhaps c 0.6 litres) to medium sized jars (c. 2.2 litres). Some larger vessels such as the very large cooking pots may also have been used for heating water, but no limescale survived.

The main points emerging from this analysis may thus be summarised as follows:

- A wide range of vessel sizes was used in cooking, including some small ones with capacities of 0.6 litres or less, but there is no positive evidence from limescaling or thick carbonised residues for the exact use of large pots over c.2 litres. This suggests most cooking was for small family sized groups.
- Pots for cooking relatively solid food (?thick soups and stews) tended to be used low on an open fire, and were almost exclusively unburnished coarseware jars and pots.
- The coarseware used for cooking had both limescale and carbonised residues, sometimes both occurring on an individual vessel, showing to a limited extent some diversity in the function of pots
- A significant proportion of vessels associated with heating water were burnished fineware bowls, which occasionally were decorated. While there is thus not a simple distinction between fine tableware and coarse kitchen ware, the use of

fineware in cooking was significantly restricted.

- Small bowls with limescaling extending through holes in the bottom could either reflect a double cooker arrangement or straining curds in cheese making.
- Occasional differential leaching of the inside of pots with calcareous temper may indicate boiling of relatively acidic fruit or vegetables, but could result from physical wear and tear from cycles of soaking in hot liquid and drying and mechanical abrasion from stirring contents during cooking or from serving.

At Claydon Pike (Jones 2007, 48-9) between a third and half of middle Iron Age pots and jars had external sooting and / or internal burnt residues, indicating consistent use in cooking or heating but only 10-20% of bowls had cooking residues. Some types of vessel were seldom used for cooking. Of the 38 vessel bases recovered, there were no deposits of external soot, which is consistent with the Mount Farm evidence that vessels were usually placed low in the fire or on the hearth during the cooking process. As at Mount Farm, internal abrasion and leaching was noted on some vessels. A wide range of vessel sizes were used for cooking at Claydon Pike, mostly small to medium pots and jars (100-200 mm diameter, perhaps 0.5 to 6 litres), but seldom larger vessels, though sooting was noted on two very large vessels of 360 mm and 380mm diameter (up to 30 litres). This may indicate preparation and consumption of food on a more communal scale, but like Mount Farm this was very rare and the general conclusion was that people prepared and consumed food in small family groups.

At Gravelly Guy and Yarnton (Duncan et al 2004, 278; Hey et al forthcoming a) less correlation was found between fine- or coarse-wares and types of cooking residue, but unlike Mount Farm, the distinction of 'wares' was based more on fabrics, not finish. This may in fact indicate that if a distinction is to be drawn between 'fineware' and 'coarseware' vessels, it should be on the basis of finish (and perhaps form), not fabric. At Yarnton rather similar observations about forms were noted, with carbonized residues commonest on simple barrel-shaped jars (less commonly shouldered, angular or globular forms), but this was not related to vessel size or finish.

Conclusions: chronology, sources and regional affinities

Late Bronze Age

In an important paper defining the character of late Bronze Age pottery, John Barrett (1980) cited the assemblages from Long Wittenham, Allen's Pit and the 1933 material from Mount Farm as including examples of pottery formerly considered to be early Iron Age that could better be regarded as falling into the late Bronze Age. Since then the character of late Bronze Age assemblages in the area has become much clearer from a number of other sites, including Appleford, Radley, Castle Hill Little Wittenham and Whitecross Farm.

Some years ago it was noted that flint tempering is often dominant or common among the fabrics of later Bronze Age pottery (De Roche and Lambrick 1980; Lambrick 1984), and further work has suggested that this is a surprisingly uniform characteristic of groups of this period in the Thames Valley, at least south of the Corallian Ridge. The almost complete lack of flint tempered wares among the classic early Iron Age sites of the Upper Thames is a reason to support their traditional dating in the absence of any convincing evidence to overthrow the accepted chronology.

At Mount Farm the Deverel Rimbury assemblages in the upper fill of Ring Ditch 101 and the charcoal-filled hollow F164 were dominated by flint, shell and/or quartzite tempered fabrics. The middle to late Bronze Age activity represented by Waterhole 162 and its long sequence of infilling was not associated with any definite pottery assemblages and as the ring ditch came under the plough there may have been a hiatus in activities that generated pottery debris. Slightly further afield, notably at Appleford, Castle Hill Little Wittenham, St Helens Avenue Benson and Whitecross Farm Wallingford, late Bronze Age fabrics have been dominated by calcined flint and/or quartzite (De Roche and Lambrick 1980; Hingley 1980; Timby 2003; Cromarty et al 2006). Hingley's analysis of the late Bronze Age to early Iron Age sequence outside Castle Hill is particularly useful as it links the decline in flint tempered pottery to a stratigraphic sequence representing the transition from late Bronze Age to early Iron Age traditions (the new dominant fabric being local Malmstone conglomerate). At Mount Farm no such assemblages of late Bronze Age forms were found in predominantly flint tempered fabrics, and most forms can be paralleled in Hingley's later groups considered to be early Iron Age.

Nevertheless, a pyramidal loomweight is distinctively late Bronze Age in character and both in the 1933 and more recent excavations there are several examples of individual sherds that are more characteristic of the late Bronze Age than early Iron Age, and Myres' pits μ , θ and κ combine bipartite and tripartite angular jars and bowls, some with finger tip decoration, that can probably be regarded as belonging to the latest Bronze Age or earliest Iron Age. A similar element of latest Bronze Age forms is present among the more recent pottery but there are no assemblages that can confidently be attributed to this period.

It thus appears from the ceramic evidence that there may have been some late Bronze Age domestic occupation on or near the site at some point after the final use of the Ring Ditch and the charcoal-filled hollow in its upper fill characterised by Deverel Rimbury assemblages, but it is not manifest in definite assemblages from subsoil pits, ditches or waterholes, or as a significant number of stray late Bronze Age forms in flint tempered fabrics. The nature of any late Bronze Age occupation is thus enigmatic, and may be little more than casual temporary occupation, and possibly only scattering of manure associated with the late Bronze Age or early Iron Age cultivation episode.

Early Iron Age

From the early Iron Age onwards no particular gaps in the ceramic sequence are evident through to the Roman period. But it is still difficult to judge when occupation became more permanent, not least because there are very few assemblages that are distinctively earliest Iron Age. The radiocarbon determinations for 'early' Iron Age assemblages are surprisingly late, but not impossibly so if the groups fell within the earlier end of the 95% confidence range or were somewhat transitional with middle Iron Age forms. It is clear for example that T-shaped and thickened rim forms with finger tip decoration characteristic of the Mount Farm assemblage, and once thought distinctively early (Harding 1972, 75-6, pls 44-5), may well have remained current well into the middle Iron Age. Furthermore, they are not a noticeable feature of late Bronze Age or earliest Iron Age assemblages elsewhere.

Affinities of this material are, as might be expected both with the Chilterns and the Wessex chalk, but most obviously bear comparison with the material from nearby Allen's Pit and Castle Hill Little Wittenham.

Early to Middle Iron Age

There is no reason on ceramic grounds to suspect a break in occupation of the kind evident at Farmoor (Lambrick and Robinson 1979), and every reason on the basis of site sequence (albeit not closely stratified) that occupation gradually evolved from the early to middle Iron Age. The difficulty of recognising this ceramically is as evident here as at other sites like Ashville and Gravelly Guy.

Middle Iron Age

Some of the middle Iron Age groups are much larger (not least because several come from large (or long) ditches. Many contexts, including some of the largest containing large pieces of middle Iron Age pottery were affected by redeposition (for example numerous feature sherds of early Iron Age character have been omitted from the illustrated pottery from F206 in Fig 65).

In broad terms the middle Iron Age pottery is very typical of Upper Thames assemblages and yet not entirely linked in to local traditions such as the Frilford-Cassington styles of globular bowl. In some ways comparisons are more difficult locally because rather few large middle Iron Age assemblages have been published from the immediate surroundings.

Overall issues of status, quality and sources

The range of forms and fabrics present at Mount Farm appear to reflect a reasonably diverse range of vessels serving several purposes for storage and cooking. Throughout the sequence there are remains of attractive, well-made pots that are not just utilitarian items. But Mount Farm was not a site of special status, and virtually all the pottery can be paralleled on other local farming settlements. The diversity of fabrics appear to

reflect the natural diversity of the local geology within 5km of the site, not more distant contacts, and it is reasonable to suggest that almost all the pottery was made locally, though some pieces could come from similar geologies further afield. It is perhaps rather less likely that much pottery was made on site. However, the reasons for differences in the diversity of wares on Iron Age farming settlements in the Upper Thames valley are not well understood, as exemplified by the contrast between the diverse pottery at Watkins Farm Northmoor compared with the very restricted range of fabrics at nearby Mingies Ditch (Allen 1990; Wilson 1993).

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Illustrated pottery**Figure 55****Context 655**

1. 655/A/1 Fab 029 finger tip
2. 655/A/1 Fab 153
3. 655/A/1 Fab 021
4. 655/A/1 Fab 112 burnish

Context 137

5. 137/b/1 Fab 672 burnish
6. 137/b/1 Fab 112 burnish
7. 137/a/1s Fab xx burnish
8. 137/b/1 Fab 152 burnish
9. 137/A/1 Fab 151
10. 137/A/2s Fab 553
11. 137/b/1 Fab xx boss
12. 137/A/1 Fab xx
13. 137/A/1 Fab 523

Context 138

14. 138/A/1 Fab 553 finger tip
15. 138/A/1 Fab 111 burnish
16. 138/A/1 Fab 721 burnish hole in base
17. 138/A/1 Fab 112 burnish

Figure 56**Context 326**

18. 326/A/2 Fab xx finger tip
19. 326/A/1 Fab 523 finger tip
20. 326 Fab 112 finger tip
21. 326 Fab 122
22. 326/A/1 Fab 523 finger tip
23. 326/A/xx Fab 117
24. 326/A/1 Fab 722

25. 326 Fab 112
26. 326/A/5 Fab 721
27. 326 Fab 722
28. 326/A/4 Fab 723
29. 326/A/1 Fab 117

Context u/s

30. u/s Fab xx burnish

Context 603

31. 603/A/6 Fab 112 burnish

Figure 57**Context 608**

32. 608/A/6 Fab 026 finger tip
33. 608/A/6 Fab 152
34. 608/A/10 Fab 117 burnish
35. 608/A/9 Fab 111
36. 608/A/7 Fab 552
37. 608/A/10s Fab 722 burnish

Context 263

38. 263/A/1 Fab 112 finger tip
39. 263/A/1 Fab 173 finger tip
40. 263/A/1 Fab 112 incised lines

Context 62

41. 62/A/1 Fab 112 finger tip
42. 62 Fab 180
43. 62/1/-s Fab 118
44. 62/A/1 Fab xx

Context 507

45. 507/A/1-2 Fab xx incised lines

Context 808

46. 808/A/1 Fab xx incised lines

Context 656

47. 656/C/1 Fab xx burnish, white inlay

Context 273

48. 273/A/1 Fab xx tooled lines

Context 51

49. 51/A/1 Fab xx incised lines

Context 308

50. 308/A/1 Fab xx incised lines

Figure 58**Context 671**

51. 671/A/7 Fab 174 burnish
 52. 671/A/7 Fab 112
 53. 671/A/8 Fab 121 burnish
 54. 671/A/1 Fab 112 burnish
 55. 671/A/4 Fab 553
 56. 671/A/7 Fab 112
 57. 671/A/6 Fab 722 finger tip
 58. 671/A/6s Fab 112
 59. 671/A/1 Fab 153
 60. 671/A/7 Fab 174 burnish
 61. 671/A/7 Fab 112 burnish
 62. 671/A/2 Fab 112

Context 118

63. 118 Fab 112 burnish
 64. 118/A/1s Fab 159 burnish
 65. 118 Fab 151 burnish
 66. 118 Fab 032 finger tip
 67. 118/a/1s Fab xx
 68. 118 Fab 112
 69. 118 Fab 032 finger tip
 70. 118/A/1s Fab 723

Figure 59**Context 142**

71. 142/A/1 Fab 112 burnish
 72. 142/A/1 Fab 112
 73. 142/b/1 Fab 112
 74. 142/b/1 Fab 112
 75. 142/A/1s Fab 112 finger tip
 76. 142/b/1 Fab 032

Context 328

77. 328/A/1 Fab 523 finger tip
 78. 328/A/1 Fab 122
 79. 328/A/1 Fab 312 finger tip
 80. 328/A/1 Fab 322
 81. 328/A/1 Fab 523 finger tip
 82. 328/A/1s Fab 722

Context 141

83. 141/A/1 Fab xx finger tip
 84. 141/A/1 Fab 132 burnish

Figure 60**Context 321**

85. 321 Fab 523 finger tip

Context 75

86. 75/A/1 Fab 553 finger tip
 87. 75/A/1 Fab 758
 88. 75/A/1 Fab 722 finger tip
 89. 75/A/1 Fab 751 finger tip?

Context 115

90. 115/A/1 Fab 112
 91. 115/A/1 Fab 722
 92. 115/b/1s Fab 159
 93. 115/b/1s Fab 111

Figure 61**Context 454**

- 94. 454/A/1 Fab 553 finger tip
- 95. 454/A/1 Fab 122
- 96. 454/A/1 Fab 112 burnish, incised lines

Context 652

- 97. 652/A/1 Fab 111
- 98. 652/A/1 Fab 112 hole in base, burnish
- 99. 652/A/1 Fab xx burnish, impressed
- 100. 652/A/1 Fab xx burnish, incised lines
- 101. 652/A/1 Fab xx burnish, incised lines

Figure 62**Context 534**

- 102. 534/D/1 Fab xx finger tip

Context 585

- 103. 585/A/1 Fab 723 finger tip

Context 526

- 104. 526/A/1 Fab xx finger tip?
- 105. 526/A/1 Fab xx

Figure 63**Context 661 (earlier phase)**

- 106. 661/A/12 Fab 173 finger tip
- 107. 661/A/8 Fab xx
- 108. 661/A/9 Fab 141 burnish
- 109. 661/3 Fab xx
- 110. 661/A/3 Fab 112
- 111. 661/A/8 Fab 112

- 112. 661/A/3 Fab 112
- 113. 661/A/3 Fab 037
- 114. 661/C/2 Fab xx burnish, cabling, impressed dimples

Context 545

- 115. 545/A/1 Fab xx one finger impression
- 116. 545/C/1 Fab 721

Context 508

- 117. 508/A/2 Fab 553 burnish

Context 531

- 118. 531/A/1 Fab 112 burnish

Context 63

- 119. 63/A/1 Fab 112

Figure 64**Context 677**

- 120. 677/A/3 Fab 142
- 121. 677/A/3 Fab 112
- 122. 677/A/1 Fab 122

Context 257

- 123. 257/E/1 Fab 111
- 124. 257/D/2 Fab 111 burnish
- 125. 257/E/2 Fab 717

Context 251

- 126. 251/E/2 Fab 148

Context 561

- 127. 561/A/1 Fab 122
- 128. 561/A/1 Fab xx slashing

Context 106

- 129. 106 Fab 721
- 130. 106 Fab 032 finger tip

131. 106 Fab 122
132. 106 Fab 112 finger tip

Figure 65

Context 206

133. 206/G/-s Fab xx burnish tooled lines
134. 206/C/1 Fab 112 burnish
135. 206/H/1 Fab 112 burnish tooled line
136. 206/D/x Fab 174 burnish
137. 206/b/5 Fab 112 burnish
138. 206/K/1 Fab 174 burnish
139. 206/D/5 Fab 151 burnish
140. 206/E/1 Fab 112
141. 206/I/1 Fab 112
142. 206/I/1s Fab 112 burnish
143. 206/G/-s Fab 028
144. 206/M/2 Fab 037 finger impressions?

Context 525

145. 525/C/1 Fab 721 burnish
146. 525/a/1 Fab 721 burnish
147. 525/A/1s Fab 722

Context 200/203

148. 200/203 u/s Fab 151

Context 213

149. 213/A/1 Fab 174 burnish

Figure 66

Context 506

150. 506/a/1 Fab 723 finger impressions
151. 506/A/1 Fab 513

152. 506/B/1 Fab 512 finger impressions
153. 506/A/3 Fab 717
154. 506/a/1 Fab 115
155. 506/A/1 Fab 144
156. 506/A/1 Fab 172 burnish
157. 506/A/1 Fab 142
158. 506/A/1 Fab 112
159. 506/B/1 Fab 011
160. 506/A/1 Fab 121
161. 506/A/1 Fab 172 burnish
162. 506/A/1 Fab 112 burnish
163. 506/A/1 Fab 552
164. 506/A/1 Fab xx burnish, tooled lines and stabbed dots
165. 506/A/1 Fab xx burnish, tooled lines
166. 506/A/1 Fab 141
167. 506/A/1 Fab 122

Context 605

168. 605/A/3 Fab xx burnish, tooled lines and stabbed dots
169. 605/D/2 Fab xx burnish, tooled lines and stabbed dots

Context 584

170. 584/A/1 Fab 112
171. 584/A/1 Fab 174 burnish
172. 584/A/1 Fab 722
173. 584/A/1 Fab 722

Figure 67

Context 505

174. 505/D/1 Fab xx burnish
175. 505/a/1 Fab 112
176. 505/C/1 Fab 122 burnish, tooled

- line 203. 676/A/3 Fab 142
177. 505/C/1 Fab xx burnish, tooled lines and dots
178. 505/x/1 Fab 174 burnish, tooled line
179. 505/D/1 Fab xx burnish
180. 505/C/1 Fab 174 burnish
181. 505/a/1s Fab 153
182. 505/A/1 Fab xx burnish, tooled lines
183. 505/C/1 Fab 721
184. 505/B/1 Fab xx
185. 505/C/1 Fab 112 burnish, tooled lines
186. 505/D/1 Fab 112
187. 505/a/1 Fab 111
188. 505/b/1 Fab xx
189. 505/A/1 Fab 442
190. 505/x/1 Fab 112
191. 505/B/1 Fab 174
192. 505/A/1 Fab 153 finger impressions
193. 505/a/1 Fab xxx
194. 505/a/1 Fab 112 burnish

Figure 68

Context 676

195. 676/A/2 Fab 102 vertical scoring?
196. 676/A/2 Fab 174 burnish
197. 676/B/3 Fab 112
198. 676/B/2 Fab xxx
199. 676/B/3 Fab 722
200. 676/B/3 Fab xxx
201. 676/B/2 Fab 142 burnish
202. 676/B/2 Fab 445