

# The Antiquaries Journal

Being the Journal of the Society of Antiquaries of London

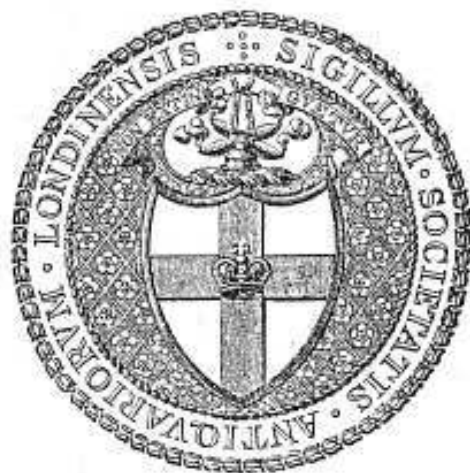
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All communications on Editorial matters and books for review should be addressed to the Assistant Secretary, Society of Antiquaries, Burlington House, London, W. 1

*An Adulterine Castle on Faringdon Clump,  
Berkshire*

BY E. T. LEEDS, M.A., F.S.A.

[Read 5th December 1935]

FROM the market-place at Faringdon the Oxford road mounts steadily, passing under the north slope of the hill known variously as Faringdon Clump or Faringdon Folly. The hill is a rounded knoll, the summit of which stands 505 ft. O.D. and, besides being a well-known landmark in the Vale of White Horse, commands an extensive prospect in every direction. Like Cumnor Hurst, Shotover, Brill and others, it is one of a series of undenuded caps of Cretaceous sands overlying Berkshire oolites that crop out at intervals between Faringdon and Aylesbury. The sands are ferruginous, dark yellow with lighter sands below, divided by a layer of sandstone rock. On the summit of the hill is a clump of beeches and Scotch firs, probably planted here, as on so many similar eminences, in the late eighteenth or early nineteenth century.

Early in the summer a trench, 22 ft. square, 7 ft. wide and 7 ft. deep, was excavated in their midst for the foundations of a tower that Lord Berners had decided to erect, and it was while this initial work was in progress that my attention was called by Mr. D. L. Stevenson of Faringdon to the discovery of skeletons in the trench. All that need be said here about them is that they lay at a depth of some  $3\frac{1}{2}$  ft., without any traces of regular burial, in great disorder, in one case the body lying immediately on top of another. For the results that have subsequently emerged and which form the subject of this report entire credit must be given to Mr. Stevenson, since within a few days the other details of the site, which impelled me to realize the desirability of further investigation, would have disappeared without record.

These details consisted of signs of disturbance appearing in the walls of the trench, briefly the insertion of large masses of clay in two trenches cut in the sand, one wider and deeper than the other, the upper part of the wider mass being covered with what may be described as a platform of clay 9 in. thick. All this began at a depth of  $2\frac{1}{2}$  to 3 ft. below a thick layer of mixed earth and sand, with some 9 in. of humus above. The course of the subsequent work will perhaps be better understood if the sections and other observations revealed at this stage are explained

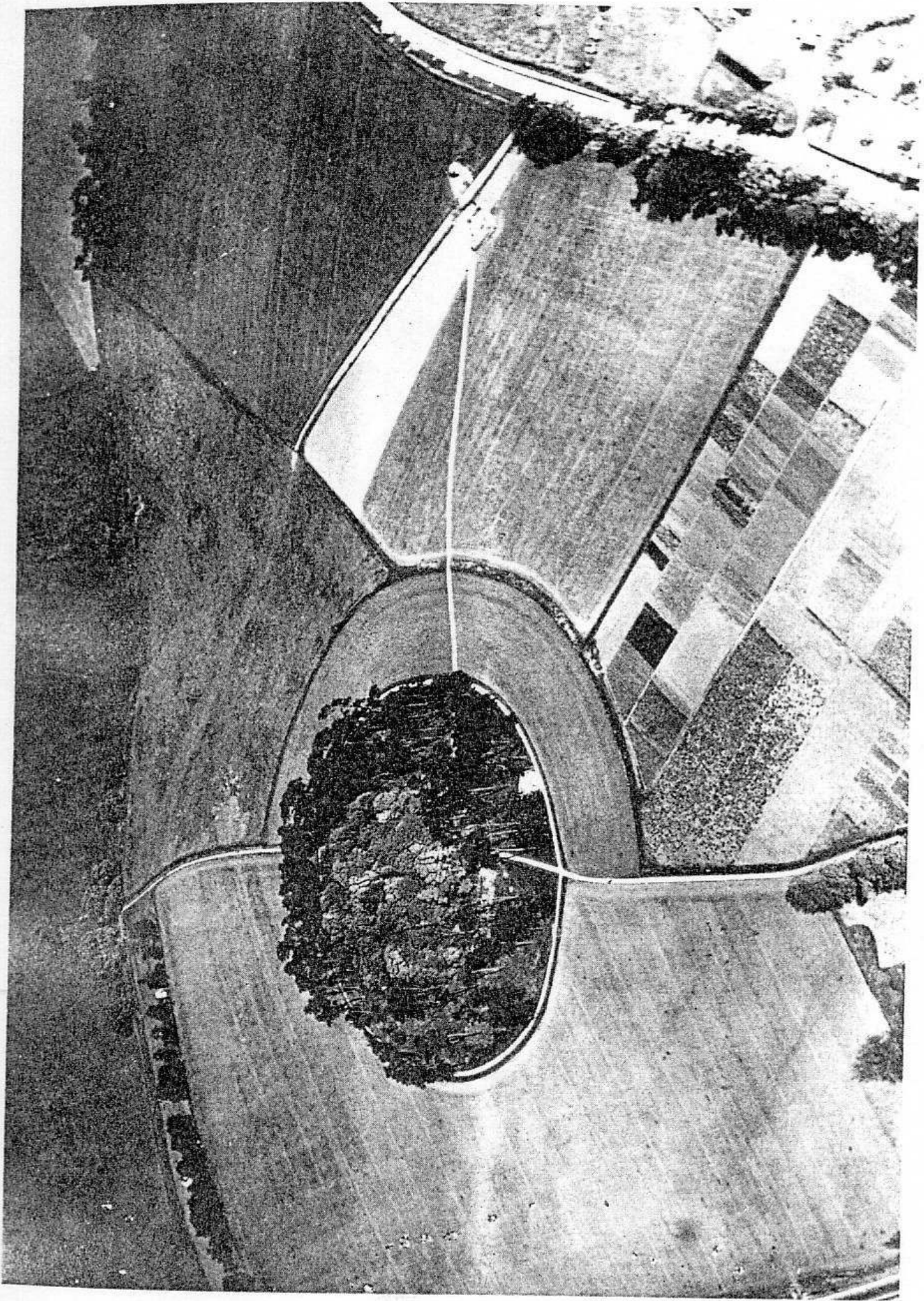
in some detail. For this purpose the sections of the west, north, and east sides of the trench are placed around the ground-plan, and below, the corresponding sections of the west, north, and east faces of the unexcavated block, 8 ft. square, in the middle of the foundations are shown in one line (pl. xxix). Starting from the west of the outer wall of the trench there appears close to its southern end a trench 3 ft. deep and 3 ft. wide, filled with blue clay. There follows a block of undisturbed sand, its northern edge sloped and revetted with a layer of clay. Beyond this point the remainder of the west and the greater part of the north wall presented a mass of jumbled clay and sand topped by an irregular layer of clay. At the eastern end of the north wall was a clay revetment in reverse direction to that on the east face. Passing to the east wall the clay platform lay evenly on the natural sand for some 5 ft. Beyond this the sand rose for a foot in height until it was again interrupted by a large clay-filled trench, some 7 ft. wide at the top, about  $4\frac{1}{2}$  ft. deep, and 4 ft. wide at the bottom. Between this and the south wall was the natural sand. The corresponding faces of the unexcavated cube showed only a short length of clay platform on the east face, but this layer extended right across the northern face and round the corner to four feet along the west face, overlying a mass of mixed clay and sand, as on the north wall of the trench, but here it had retained its level position, since for the most part the underlying material was shallower, banked up against the sides of the trench into which it had been thrown. The greater thickness towards the north wall—it was traced to  $1\frac{1}{2}$  ft. deeper below the bottom floor of the foundation-trench—underwent shrinkage and contraction from pressure, causing disruption in the even floor of the clay platform above it.

Turning back to the east wall of the trench, I was fortunate to be able to see part of the clay-filled trench extending along the floor of the foundation-trench to a distance of  $5\frac{1}{2}$  ft., at which point it terminated abruptly. Inquiries elicited the information that the clay-filled trench exposed on the west wall similarly stopped short at about a distance of some 8 ft., thus leaving a gap of some 8 ft. between their ends.

What we had arrived at was therefore part of an interrupted trench-system curving across the south side of the trench, and on the northern side a much wider clay-filled trench with a roughly corresponding curve, the northern edge of which was not known.

At first sight the south wall of the foundation-trench appeared to have been undisturbed, but later it became quite evident that





Faringdon Clump from the air; from a photograph by Major G. W. G. Allen

the skeletons had lain in a ditch some  $3\frac{1}{2}$  to 4 ft. deep outside the clay-filled trench.

Before leaving these initial observations we have to record the discovery by the tower-builders of fragments of medieval pottery, either on or in the clay, at a depth of 3 to 4 ft.

These finds suggested reference to historical sources, where at once the records of the struggles of Stephen and Robert of Gloucester opened out a line of conjecture, namely, that we were in the presence of the stronghold erected by the earl in 1144 and stormed by Stephen's army in 1145, and that the skeletons found could be accounted for by supposing them either to be combatants who had fallen in an attack on the gate, represented by the gap in the clay trenches, or who, having been killed in the course of the engagement, had subsequently been thrown into the ditch and smothered down there.

There are several accounts of the event :

Matthew Paris, *Hist. Angl.* i, 275 (Rolls Series 44) :

A.D. 1144. Rex Stephanus castellum de Farenduna cepit. Anno Domini M<sup>o</sup> C<sup>o</sup> XL<sup>o</sup> IIII<sup>o</sup> rex Anglorum Stephanus comitem Glovernie, cum multis aliis inimicorum suorum, a constructione castri Farundunensis potenter fugavit, et municipium illud in suam suscepit potestatem.

*Ann. Mon.* ii, 230-1 (Rolls Series 36) :

MCXLV. Anno decimo regis Stephani. Rex prius in agendis circa discursus Hugonis Bigot occupatus fuit ; sed in aestate Robertus consul, et omnis inimicorum regalium coetus castellum construxerant apud Ferendunam ; sed rex non segniter viribus coactis advolat, et Londoniensium terribilem et innumerosum adduxit exercitum. Assilientes igitur totis viribus castrum, dum Robertus et fautores sui copias majores non procul ab exercitu regis expectarent, gloriosissima probitate, non sine magna sanguinis effusione, ceperunt.

*Chronicles, Stephen, Henry II, Richard I*, iii, 115-16 (Rolls Series 82) = *Gesta Stephani*.

On the advice of Philip his son to provide strong points nearer Oxford to check depredations in Robert of Gloucester's territory and for eventual attack on Oxford :

(1145) Ille [= Robert of Gloucester] profecto ad obtemperandum, accepto consilio, facilis, omnem virtutis suae convocavit militiam, veniensque ad viculum, qui lingua Anglorum dicitur Ferenduna, locum delectabilem omnique copia refertissimum, castellum in eo vallo et propugnaculis munitissimum erexit, militibusque, totius videlicet virtutis suae flore, impositis, solitos regalis militiae impetus, qui ex Oxenefordia aliisque circumquaque castellis ad suos inquietandos prodierant, virtuose coercuit.

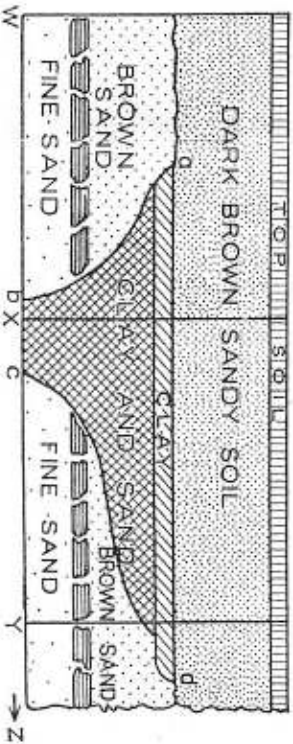
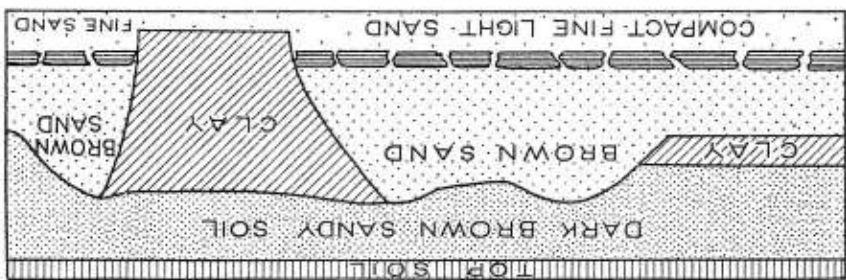
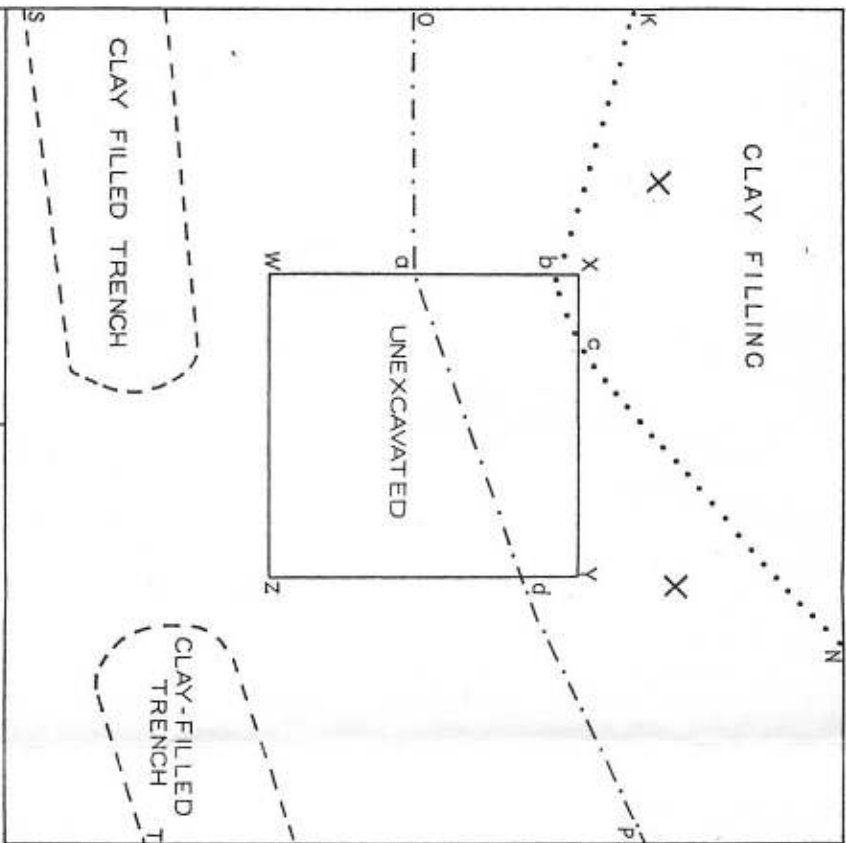
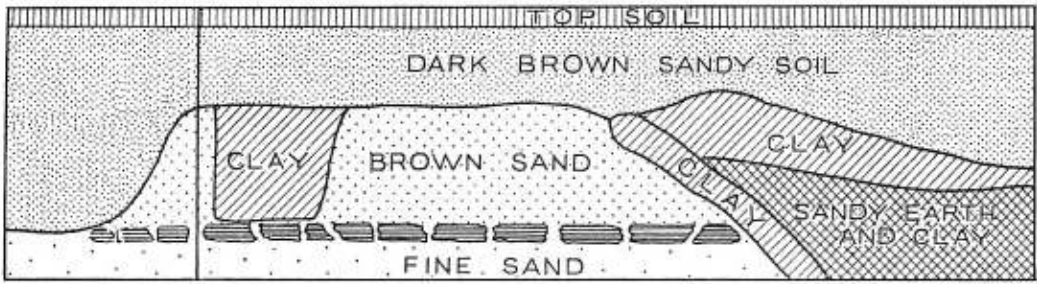
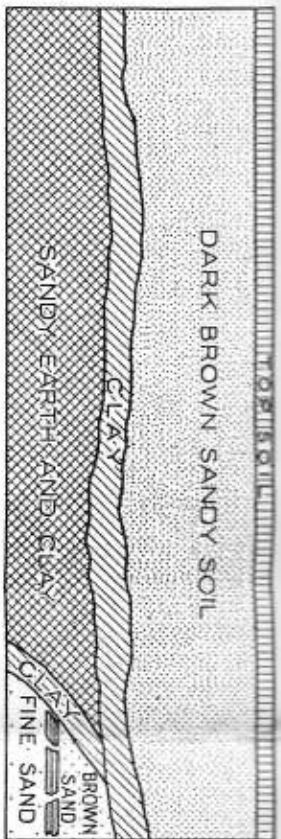


The royal forces at Oxford ask for help. Stephen then moves :

Audiens autem rex et suorum angustiam et hostium adversus se praevalentem potentiam, licet infectis necessariis negociis, cum maximo illuc militum collegio, rupta dilatione, tetendit; veniensque Oxenefordiam, usque dum copiosorem repararet exercitum, paucis diebus ibidem repausavit, collectisque tandem in immensam copiam viribus, circa castellum Ferendunae, obsidionem protelaturus, castra metatus fuit. Deinde operi miro et non infructuoso praemonuit suos insistere, ut se scilicet vallo et propugnaculis caute circumcingerent, ne repentina hostium irruptio ad se perturbandos quoquomodo irrueret, sed, quasi intra asylum suum recepti, et sibi prudentius providerent et hostibus, cum expediret, tutius audaciusque occurrerent. Nec mora, erectis circa castellum miri artificii machinis, sagittariis quoque in circuitu differtissime ordinatis, qui interius recludebantur gravissime vexabat; quia hinc eos lapides, vel si quid aliud machinae excutiebat, desuper irruentes ubique contundebant, inde horridissima sagittarum grando, in eorum circumvolans prospectu, dirissime inquietabat; aliquando tela eminus vibrata, molesve quaelibet lacertis excutientibus interius emissa eos molestabat, aliquando valida pubes, clivosi valli celsitudinem animose conscendens, pugnam cum eis, paxillis tantum utrosque dirimentibus, acerrime committebat. In hunc denique modum, quotidianis regales excursibus eos, qui inclusi erant, gravare; illique e contra viriliter et invicte sese defensare, donec, qui primi habebantur, ceteris insciis, ad regem occulte miserunt, deque reddendo castello, pactione inter se confecta, ei satisfecerunt. Hoc itaque in regis dispositionem contradito castello, plurimum gloriae, cumulum fortunae regis, Deus adspirato adjecit, . . . .

Of the existence of an adulterine castle in 1145 there is therefore ample record. The question, however, was: Could the disturbance revealed in the foundation-trench be connected with the castle of 1145? It seemed that some additional exploration could not fail to throw light on that point. The attempt to solve it is the subject of the present report.

A favourable opportunity presented itself when Mr. A. B. Emden, Principal of St. Edmund Hall, asked whether I could suggest some work that could be carried out by members of the Oxford University Camp of the Universities' Council for Unemployed Camps that was held near Eynsham in June. We eventually agreed that, if permission could be obtained, the problems of Faringdon Clump formed a possible and feasible subject. We thereupon approached Lord Berners for the necessary permission to cut several exploratory trenches, and we wish to record our deep obligation to his lordship for the readiness with which he acceded to our request. We have further to express our indebtedness to the band of men from



# FARINGDON CLUMP

14 - V - 1938

Scale of Feet  
0 5 10

Faringdon Clump: Plan and sections of foundation-trench for tower

the South Wales mining area and Oxford undergraduates who in the hottest days of July opened up the ground for our investigation. Totally unversed in archaeological operations, they showed an enthusiasm and zeal that call for high praise.

As the time at our disposal was comparatively short, we decided to dig a series of trenches in the hope of ascertaining the disposition of the clay fillings observed in the foundation-trench at other points on the hill-top. For it seemed reasonable to suppose that, if the original surmise about its purpose was correct, we should be able to trace the lay-out of the centre of Robert of Gloucester's fort.

Before describing the results of the work, it is desirable to examine the hill from another point of view, this time an aerial one, by the aid of one of Major G. W. G. Allen's excellent photographs, which with his wonted readiness he took at my request (pl. xxviii). Naturally the summit of the hill is entirely masked by the trees, but the photograph shows that it was apparently surrounded by two outworks, of which the inner coincides with the footpath that follows the outer edge of the trees. Of the outer work only half can now be traced upon the ground, bounding the upper cornfield on the south side of the hill. The other half has been levelled down on the north side, and its line now lies beneath the arable land on that side. We have had no opportunity of examining this outwork, but, if anywhere, it must be to some palisade on this and on the inner work that the expression in the *Gesta Stephani*, 'paxillis tantum utrosque dirimentibus', must apply.

To return now to the central site, several trenches (pl. xxx) were excavated, (*a*), marked N 1, to a distance of 111½ ft. northwards in line with the east wall of the tower; (*b*), marked N 2, to 65 ft. parallel to the last, and in line with the west wall; (*c*), marked NW, to 75 ft. in a north-westerly direction from the north-west angle of the tower; (*d*), marked W, to 89 ft. westwards in line with the north wall; and also one eastwards in the same line. Other small cuttings were made north-eastwards and between trenches (*a*) and (*b*). The distances from the foot of the tower are given, though building operations prevented us from digging originally closer than 20 ft. from the base of the tower. More recently a trench, 48 ft. long, dug parallel with the north wall of the tower has helped to clear up points of doubt.

Reference to the plan and section will show that clay platforms similar to those seen in the foundation trench were uncovered at various points, and the relationship of one to another



we have attempted to indicate on the plan, though it must at once be said that endeavours to make all of them coincide with a regular circular system seem to fail.

In trench *n* the largest section exposed showed a well-beaten layer of clay, some 9 in. thick and 6 ft. wide, and this was traced in a curving line to the west side of trench *n* 2. Farther outwards in *n* 1 a smaller layer of clay could be detected, and beyond this the brown sand fell away to a flat-bottomed ditch some 18 ft. wide, from which a small quantity of sherds was recovered, and among animal bones the distal end of an ox tibia, perforated close to the knuckle and with a short nail inserted in the hole. Nowhere in either of these two trenches was the clay of great thickness, nor had any quantity of loose clay been buried below the platforms.

More instructive was the *nw* trench. At 19 ft. from the north-west angle of the tower a clay platform 6 ft. wide was uncovered at a depth of 2 ft., and on it was a large block of sandstone. Here a greater thickness could be seen below the upper layer. Outwards from this at 37 ft. was a second layer 5 ft. wide with some rubbly material beyond its outer edge. Yet farther out at 49 ft. was a third clay layer close to the inner edge of the ditch.

In trenches *n* 1 and *n* 2 the filling of the ditch consisted of mixed sandy earth with a certain amount of loose stone, but in the *nw* the entire ditch from a depth of 2 ft. to its base at  $3\frac{1}{2}$  to  $3\frac{3}{4}$  ft. was filled with loose pieces of sandstone such as might be used for dry walling. At the base of the ditch was a thin carbonized streak, particularly noticeable on its inner slope. From this sherds of medieval culinary ware were extracted. But throughout the filling similar sherds as well as sherds of glazed ware occurred at all depths. An iron key lay on the floor of the trench.

In the west trench only one clay layer came to light, its outer edge at  $23\frac{1}{2}$  ft. from the wall of the tower. This must have belonged to the outer ring, the same ring as that at *A*, *B*, etc., since outside it, though difficult to detect in the loose sand, we must have passed into the ditch, where at a depth of  $3\frac{1}{2}$  ft. there was found an extensive carbonized patch overlying stones, some reddened by the fire, and thinning out in all directions. Around this patch were sherds, including those of the largest piece recovered, built up from small fragments of green glazed ware.

Apart from these occurrences the edge of a clay layer was encountered at *Q*, *R*, *U*, and *V*.

The purpose of the clay insertions seems tolerably clear. The



natural sand is very loose and any attempt to erect in or upon it a palisade, a wall, or even a rampart could only have ended in failure. It will be noted in the longitudinal section of the nw trench that there is a marked rise coinciding with the second clay band. Its presence on the ground was pointed out to me by Mr. Stevenson before we began operations. This, then, must have been the basis of a rampart, possibly surmounted by a palisade; the wide inner band, however, shows no such mounding over it, and we suggest that it served as the foundation of a stone wall, the material of which, when demolished, was thrown down into the ditch.

The difficulty of co-ordinating the various sections of clay-insertion has been simplified by the excavation in December of the 48 ft. long trench parallel to the north wall of the tower. In this heavy clay could be traced throughout the greater portion of its length, stopping abruptly at *u* and *v*; and a right-angled trench dug south of the point at which trench *N 2* was begun in July revealed an edge of the clay 9 ft. south of *D* at *D 2* and solid clay at all points nearer the tower.

There can be no doubt, therefore, that the points *D 2*, *v*, *o*, *N*, and *u* all mark the edge of a clay-filled pit (pl. xxx), some 35 ft. in width and *c.* 8½ ft. deep, on which the central buildings were erected.

Traces of these were suggested by conditions also observed in the *E-W* trench north of the tower. The presence of what appeared to be laid stones is shown on the plan in black. Here the level of the clay was 2 ft. lower than at the western end of the trench; above the stones was black, disturbed earth with no trace of clay. It is possible that we have here the footings of a structure set towards the east side of the central platform.

The keep was presumably built largely of wood, but, if so, its material was demolished and used for other purposes, since there were no signs of destruction by fire. It remains a moot point whether the stone found in the ditch was solely used in the rampart or also came in part from the central building.

#### *Date*

The authors of the *Victoria County History*<sup>1</sup> conclude that the castle was destroyed shortly after its capture by Stephen, though they infer from a mention of one William the Porter in charge at Faringdon in 1179 that possibly part of the castle still survived. There is no actual historical record of its being razed,

<sup>1</sup> *V.C.H. Berks.* iv, 489.



though such treatment would certainly have been in consonance with Stephen's action elsewhere. This and other mentions of Faringdon are possibly germane to any attempt to solve the problems of the castle and may be quoted in full:

Pipe Roll, 26 Henry II, p. 47: 'Willelmus janitor redd. comp. de exitu de Ferend' ut custos. In thesauro lxiiij *l.* de veteri moneta et xlv *l.* de nova.'

Pipe Roll, 29 Henry II, p. 134: 'Et in operatione gaiole' de Ferendon' xxx *l.* et ix *s.* et iiiij *d.* per breve regis et per visum Willelmi Portarii et Roberti Bonvaslet.'

*Ibid.* p. 137: 'Idem redd. comp. de eodem debito. In operatione gaiole de Ferendon' iiiij *l.* per breve regis et per visum Willelmi Portarii et Roberti Bonvallet.'

One may ask whether the gaol had anything to do with the castle.

No other mention of a *gaiola* occurs in the published Pipe Rolls. William the janitor continues at least down to 1191, when an entry under 2 Richard I, p. 34, reads 'Homines de Ferendon' debent xx m. pro habenda villa sua ad firmam ad quam solebat esse. et pro remouendo Willelmo portario a custodia predictae uille', an entry repeated under 3 Rich. I, p. 163. In that year (*ibid.* p. 99) there is an entry 'et pro conducendis viij prisonibus a Ferendon' usque Oxin' xxiiij *d.*' After that all entries about Faringdon have to do with rents, the *vetus firma* and the *nova firma* as mentioned already in 1130 (31 Hen. I, p. 127), before the castle was erected.

Even the entries about the gaol and William the janitor cannot be brought with any degree of certainty into connexion with the castle on Faringdon Hill, and in any case some more unequivocal reference to it is needed before it can be assumed that, in all the destruction of adulterine castles that was part of Henry II's policy, that at Faringdon was long left intact after its surrender to Stephen. As already remarked, the results of our exploration go to show that the ditch must have been filled up very soon after it was made.

It is further stated that in 1202 King John granted the site of the castle to St. Mary of Citeaux, and that in the following year

<sup>1</sup> The quotation in du Cange under *Gaiola* is apposite to the present inquiry, indicating that castle and *gaiola* go together. *Charta Henrici Regis Anglorum*, Tom. 3, Hist. Harcur, p. 151: 'Sciunt me reddidisse et praesenti carta confirmasse Balduco . . . seruianti meo . . . custodiam Gaiolae meae Rothomagensis et portae castelli mei; et pro ista custodia habet unoquoque die duorum solidorum usualis monetae in meo redditu vicecomitatus mei Rothomagensis, pro custodia Gaiolae meae decem et octo denarios, et pro custodia portae sex denarios.'

he provided timber for building.<sup>1</sup> In 1203, however, the Cistercians, if ever they occupied the summit of the hill at all, moved to Beaulieu, so that their occupation can have been but of the shortest duration. In point of fact there is not a particle of evidence to show that the site was ever inhabited by them, for what King John granted them was the *manerium*, a much more extensive and richer endowment than a mere sandy hill-top. That endowment was adequately valued by the monks after their establishment at Beaulieu, since it provided a substantial part of their revenues.

It may be that a second castle, more permanent in character, was built no great while after 1145 and that it stood lower down the slope of the hill commanding the centre of the town, on the site of the modern workhouse. In the sixteenth century some eight acres of land lying next to Parsonage Close are named as the Bailey, and this is taken by the writer of the account of Faringdon in the *Victoria County History of Berkshire*<sup>2</sup> to indicate a position on or adjoining Faringdon Clump, and by inference connected with the adulterine castle. The tradition of a Bailey that had belonged to a castle that shows such manifest proofs of rapid destruction is hardly conceivable, and a place of the importance of Faringdon may well have had some sort of castle later, if only modest in size, capable of being called merely a *gaiola*.

But what of the evidence afforded by the pottery? The dating of medieval pottery is notoriously obscure. In important excavations in the past that might have supplied invaluable information on this point the opportunities were sadly missed. More recently attempts have been made to remedy this defect, and observations at Castle Neroche, Somerset; at Lydney, Gloucestershire; and at Kidwelly, Monmouthshire, have been interpreted to establish that, even as late as the middle of the thirteenth century, glazed wares are not to be expected as a general constituent of the pottery from a medieval site.

### Pottery

The pottery, as is normal at most medieval sites, can be divided into unglazed, of varying degrees of coarseness, and

<sup>1</sup> This statement is misleading. The word 'castellum' does not occur. The passage in *Ann. Mon.* i, 26 speaks of 'saisinam de Ferendune', and that in ii, 254 of 'regium castrum'. 'Castrum' is defined by du Cange as *villa* or *une terre*, and is evidently synonymous with the *manerium* cited below. King John's gift has, therefore, no connexion with the castle.

<sup>2</sup> iv, 489.

finer glazed wares. At Faringdon there are also specimens that hardly merit the title of glazed ware, since they have no more than a hardly perceptible wash of glaze.

(1) COARSE. (i) Grey, rough, close-grained, sometimes speckled with grit, or with a porous texture; (ii) similar fabrics, but fired red on the outside, and generally speaking better potted.

*Rims.* Only a few rims were obtained. They belong to:

(a) Vessels with inturned rim, but with an exterior overhang, probably from large bowls or pancheons.

(b) Large pots, of medieval cooking-pot type; one of the largest pieces of finer red ware than most was found at 36 in. in the nw ditch. It has a deep, hollow neck and a well-moulded overhang on its widely flared rim. In others the rim is thicker and more solid, tapering to edge; no. 7 found at 36 in. in the nw ditch.

(c) A large vessel with rim, square in section.

(d) Portion of a pancheon with flattened rim, rolled over towards the interior of the vessel.

This last and two of the thicker rims mentioned under (b) have a thin wash of yellowish-green glaze.

One sherd of a neck has an impressed ornament, part of a handle deep vertically slashed incisions, and another a thumb-press at its root (as *Antiq. Journ.* xv, 327, fig. 3. 14).

*Base-sherds* are few and small, but seem to indicate a slightly sagging base.

The total number of pieces included in the above category is 43.

None of the rims agrees with anything illustrated from White Castle, Ogmore or Grosmont, or from Kidwelly<sup>1</sup> and Lydney, and a comparison of the sections illustrated from these sites goes to suggest that as a criterion of date the rims have no great value, varying locally.

(2) GLAZED. These wares are easily distinguishable, even where, as often happens, their surface is left unglazed, by their superior potting and the total absence of white specks in the paste. In colour they vary from light red to light buff, and as a rule show little variation of colour in the fracture. Occasionally the grey texture of the coarse, light red wares remains below the better fired surface.

Like the coarse wares, the glazed pottery from Faringdon is unfortunately fragmentary, but one or two larger pieces were recovered. The largest (at 42 in., in ditch, w) belongs to a jug with ovoid body decorated with horizontal grooves on the shoulder. It is of hard buff ware, with a roughish, purplish exterior surface, overlaid by a thin and patchy, mottled

<sup>1</sup> The evidence from Kidwelly does not seem very convincing. Even Mr. Radford admits that the cooking-pot layer found at the foot of the rampart opposite the wall of the inner ward could have belonged to the builders of the ward. In the section (*Archaeologia*, lxxxiii, 110, fig. 3, Section II), although covered by a layer of builders' mortar, it is on the same level as another layer of mortar lying immediately at the ground-level of the wall of the ward, and that cannot have been deposited before the building began.



brown and green glaze. Sherds of similar fabric were found at 26 in. in NW.

*Rims.* One found at 42 in., in ditch, w, and others like it, are from the necks of pitchers with flat-topped rim and slashed handle. One of them varies from the rest in its texture, being decidedly more sandy. It is unglazed outside, but has a thin wash of light orange glaze inside. It is a ware well represented in the Ashmolean Museum in large globular-bellied vessels, which have a tubular spout springing from the shoulder and secured to the neck by a strap of clay, also three stunt legs. They are decorated with wavy, applied strips and seem invariably to have had pseudo-plaited handles. I have only met with this ware in isolated sherds, e.g. at Taunton, outside the Oxford district.

*Decoration.* The glaze is mostly of varying shades of green, mottled with darker green or brown; a few pieces have a rich orange ground with green or brown flecks. Decoration is almost all of one type, namely vertical applied lines of manganese showing brown against a green background and purplish red against orange. One fragment has had broad stripes of manganese, such as occur on some baluster-jugs from Oxford sites. Two sherds show bands of square-toothed roulette decoration. Otherwise the only ornamentation is faintly impressed stars under a light mottled green glaze on a tiny sherd of a fine white ware. From NW ditch come four pieces with speckled dull green ground over which a design has been added in broad brush lines of a dull yellow.

#### *Note on Medieval Pottery*

The discovery of this fragmentary but wide range of glazed pottery at Faringdon seems to raise doubts in regard to the correctness of the generally accepted chronological arrangement of early medieval glazed wares. Normally pride of place is given to the baluster-jug, a tall pitcher whose shape derives either from a wooden prototype, as indicated by the lathe-marks round the neck, or from a tall leather vessel akin to but earlier than the usual form of black jack. Such pitchers, found at Trinity College, Oxford, in association with coins of Henry III, are placed at the end of the thirteenth century,<sup>1</sup> and others with a bag-like form, comparable with examples portrayed in the Luttrell Psalter, are assigned to the fourteenth. The baluster-pitchers may, as Mr. Rackham suggests, range back to the twelfth century, but in any case are regarded as the earliest considerable class of glazed pottery that can be dated back so far. All the others are deemed to represent a gradual development of improved form and technique.

At Faringdon there is no incontestable evidence of baluster-pitchers. One base of hard grey ware is not unlike the bases of that type, but is much smaller and is more deeply waisted than anything that belongs to

<sup>1</sup> *Arch. Journ.* iii, 62. This association is often cited, but in reality has little worth. The old wells and pits in Oxford produce a very varied assortment of material, and even the coin found inside one of the pitchers merely gives a possible, not an absolute, *terminus post quem* for the pitchers, but not therefore for all glazed wares.

those pitchers. This type of base is, however, found with pitchers shorter in height, and with a swollen, ovate body, exactly like that to which the large sherd found in w trench must have belonged. An imperfect specimen from Broad Street, Oxford (fig. 1, *b*) in the Ashmolean Museum has the same mottled green glaze, and is decorated with vertical stripes decorated with rouletting and alternately washed over with manganese. This rouletting occurs also on another Ashmolean specimen, a small bag-shaped jug with blotchy green glaze and a handle circular in section and pricked down its length with deep incisions (fig. 1, *c*). Except for one piece the Faringdon sherds show no trace of the common manganese trellis-work decoration of the Oxford baluster-jugs.

The vertical striping repeats itself in relief on certain Faringdon sherds, which, though too small to admit of certainty, may come from another class of pitcher represented in the Ashmolean collection. Here the glaze is richer, more evenly disposed, and the vessel itself is built up, as it were, in three stories; a tall, hollow neck, below which a rather flat shoulder, on which the stripes may assume a zigzag arrangement, meets a low, swollen belly at a well-marked carination (fig. 1, *a*). The base is inclined to sag.

Nearly all the glazed wares can be closely paralleled by material found in Oxford itself. This means, as might well be expected, that the pottery is for the most part local, not necessarily that it came from Oxford. This local character comes out very strongly, for example, in the baluster-jugs when compared with those discovered in London or in York, and the same holds good for the bag-shaped pitchers with carinated body decoration of vertical stripes in relief.

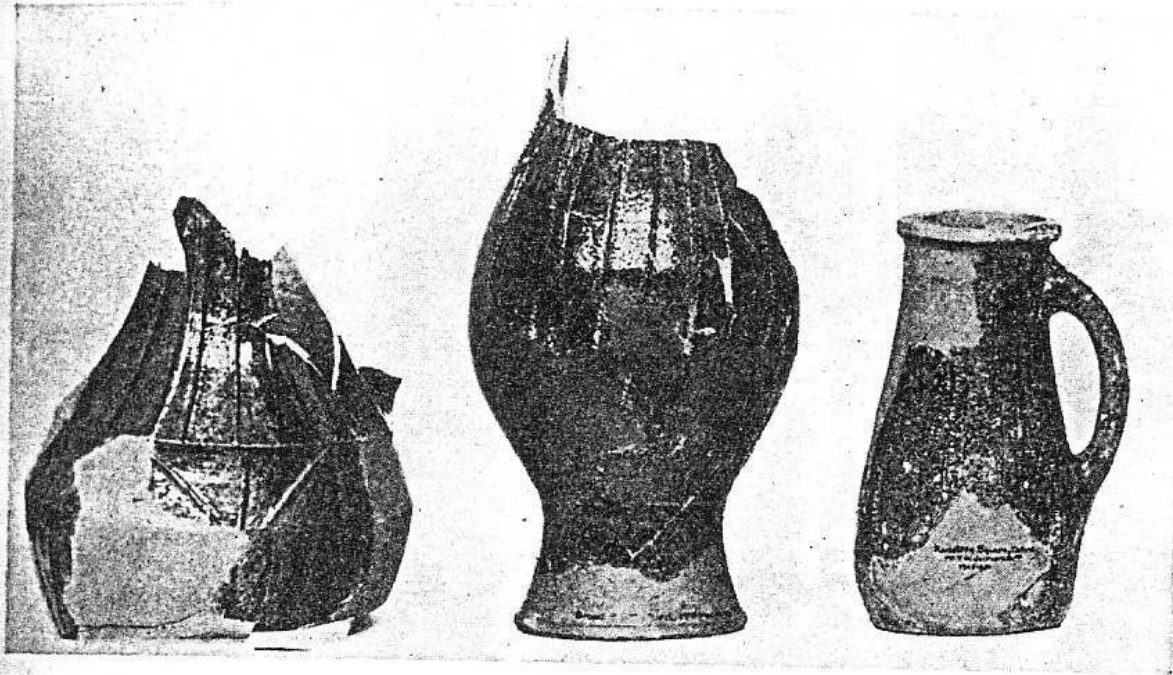
Finally it is to be noted that the deeply waisted foot occurs on vessels with scrolls in green glaze ornamented in the manner of the Salisbury knight-aquamanile and the ram in the Ashmolean. There are other pieces with the same feature, a large jug with yellow scroll-work on a rich brown ground (also from Oxford).

It can only be said that the evidence from Faringdon seems to indicate that the opinion hitherto held is profoundly mistaken, and that much of the glazed ware that is normally dated in the fourteenth century goes back to an earlier period, even to the middle of the twelfth. This may sound drastic beyond words, but, if we have rightly interpreted the trench-sections, it is inevitable.

The importance of the capture of Faringdon has been recognized by Professor Stenton in his *English Feudalism, 1066-1166*. He regards it as the turning-point in the struggle and cites the medieval authorities to prove that from it ensued a general improvement in Stephen's fortunes. That the improvement was in the main military seems obvious, but Stephen may at the same time have largely replenished his own and seriously depleted the exchequer of his opponents. For the author of the *Gesta Stephani* calls the surrender of the castle 'cumulum fortunae regis . . . , quia non solum ex militum captione, qui se illi

sub redimendi conditione commiserant, sed ex armorum et spoliolum copiis, quae intus affluentissime reppererat, suos largissime commilitones ditavit, . . .'

In spite of the rapidity with which the hill must have been fortified, it was evidently regarded as a serious menace to the king's cause. Not only the terror of the Oxford garrison, but also the huge preparations made by the king and the account



(a) (b) (c)  
FIG. 1. Medieval pottery in the Ashmolean Museum

of the attack, show that the fortifications must have been of considerable strength. Evidently, too, it held a large and well-furnished garrison, in pursuance of Robert of Gloucester's projects against Oxford, including sufficient knights for the chronicler to mention the ransom that they brought in.

With all reservations for the enthusiasm of the chronicler, the capture was evidently a very rich one, the point of concentration of an important part of Earl Robert's forces. We might quite well, therefore, expect to find here signs of medieval well-being, with the most up-to-date fashions in fine glazed crockery. Had the place been stormed and left for some period, we ought to have discovered some large pieces of broken vessels, but the very scrappy nature of the sherds in itself bears witness that any lying in the ditch were broken up by the mass of stones hurled down when the fortress was razed, either at the time of its surrender or no long time after.

One thing is certain. The pottery forms a homogeneous group, well-potted wares with blotchy glaze, side by side with the



normal cooking-pot wares. Beyond this group there is nothing but a few scraps of late seventeenth- and early eighteenth-century wares, with fragments of glass wine-bottles and clay pipes to match, all found near the surface. Except possibly one piece of a bellarmine, there is not even a scrap to support 'Cromwell's battery', a local name attached to the hill. From an archaeological standpoint Cromwell (or the representative of that seemingly ubiquitous leader) must, like the royal duke of the rhyme, have marched his battery up the hill and down again.