

palisade (Wheeler and Wheeler 1936, 41). A series of cuttings traced these ditches and the palisade trench.

The only published pottery is Wheeler's fig.9 no.1 (C7-1), 'from the packing inserted to support the original intermediate palisade A in Pond Field'.

Also from 'the palisade ditch' is, fig.119:

1 E3-1 [858]. Hard pale grey-brown grog, patchy darker outside. Regular and wheel-made. This was from 'Cut D' with a scrap of samian and a Cam.113 butt-beaker rim.

The notebooks provide some circumstantial detail. The two main 'sites' are V and VII: these apparently represent a series of cuts along the palisade ditch A, and the continuation of the inner ditch of the main earthwork, 'palisade C' on Wheeler's pl.CXVIII. Neither of these is more substantial than the sort of field boundary ditches common on sites of the period: both contained scraps of grog-tempered native ware, samian sherds, Roman sherds and tile fragments, and a few medieval sherds, all apparently mixed together. The only vessels of any substance from this area are a small Roman grey ware jar with white paint, from 'Prae Farm I', and a 2nd century amphora rim from V.

Note that Pond Field VII is not to be confused with 'VII' on Wheeler's pl.XI, at the W end of the 'prehistoric defences'.

5 Additional and unknown sites

Transverse A ditch: a boxful of sherds from a ditch whose location is unknown includes, fig.119:

2 G6 [867], grey grog, worn pale orange surfaces.

3 Cam.113 [1270], soft, very white, worn and finely sandy.

The remaining sherds comprise the mixture of native and Roman that fills the ditches of the main earthworks: Roman ring-necked jug sherds, tile, storage jar and butt-beaker sherds, Roman coarse ware sherds, a very hard orange B1-6 rim, and a cream amphora handle and neck.

K: these vessels may belong to the South Ditch/Black Ditch area. Fig.119:

4 G1-2 [1277], K.A. Sandy pale grey grog, orange below worn dark grey-brown surfaces.

5 G1-1 [1309], K.3. Worn sandy grey-orange grog.

6 G3-1 [1339]; K.G. ?fabric: pale buff, dark grey badly flaking surfaces.

Ford A: the ford is on the other side of Verulamium where the river Ver crossed St Michael's Street (Wheeler's pl.1); fig.119:

7 D1-2 [1240], hard rather sandy grey grog, red below buff inside, dark grey coarse outside.

All the other pieces with this mark are worn and mostly Roman scraps.

Cross Country Dyke should be the main 'Belgic' ditch extension of Region II, since a note describes it as having one end in Watford Road Field; sherds from the 'entrance' are unstratified Roman.

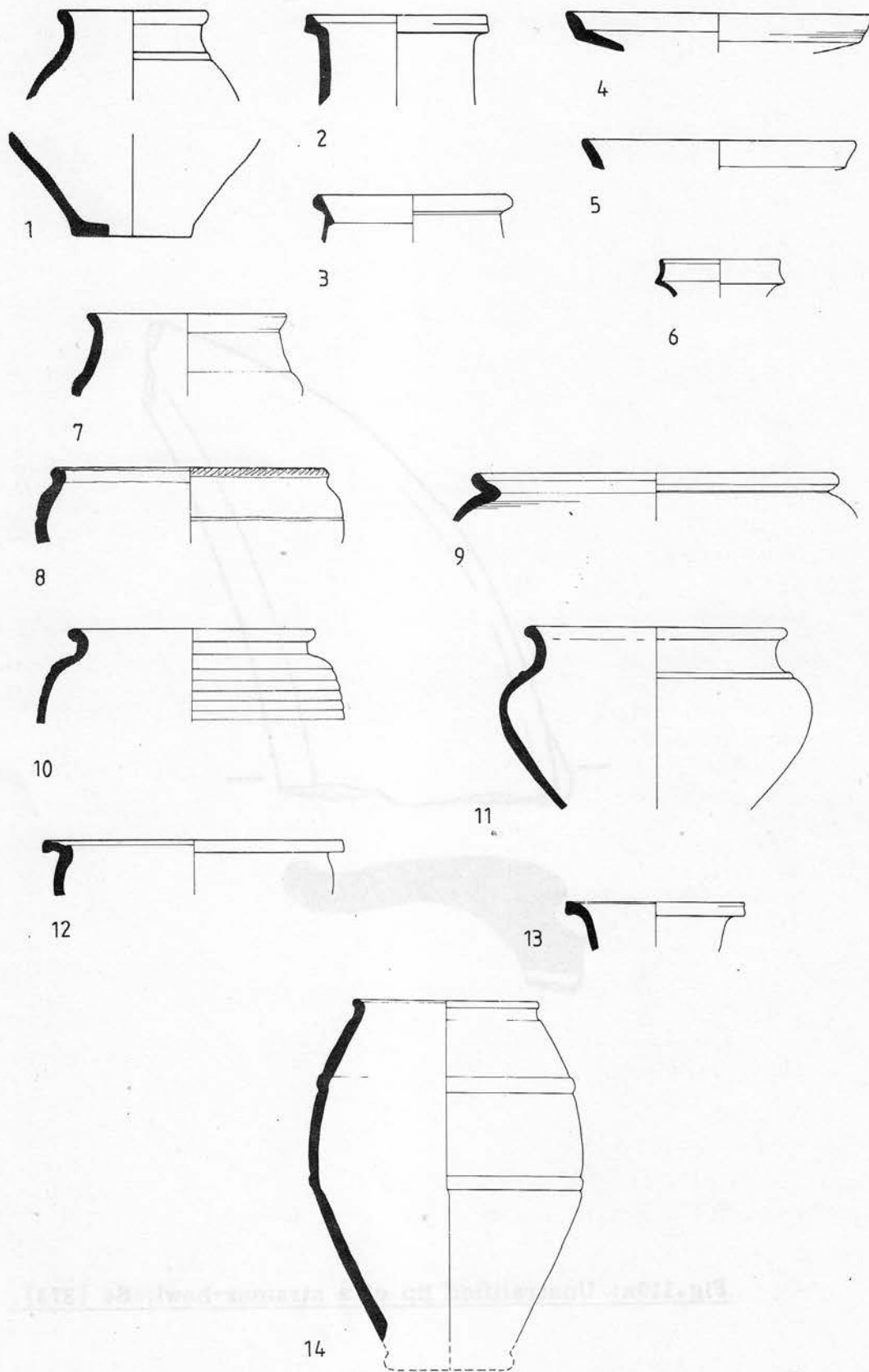


Fig.119: Pottery from additional and unknown sites. 1:4
 (No.1 is from Pond Field.)

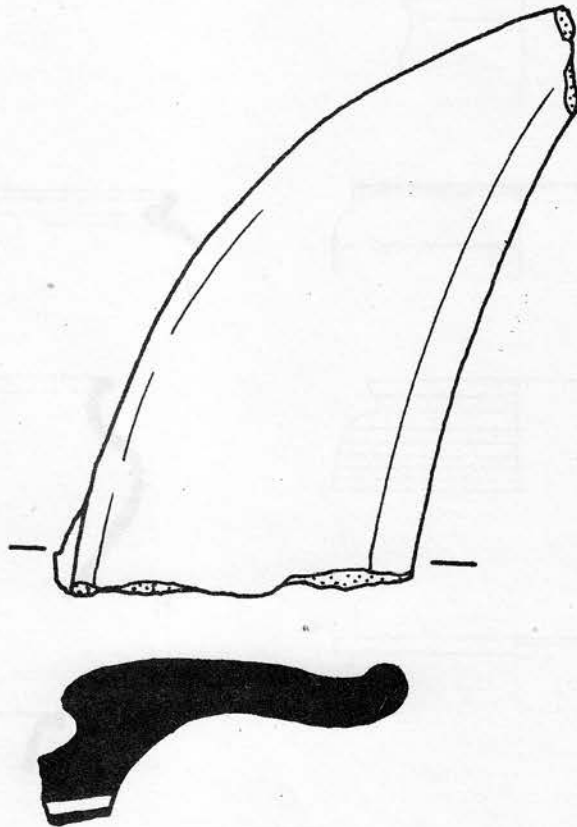


Fig.119a: Unstratified lip of a strainer-bowl, S4 [373]. 1:1

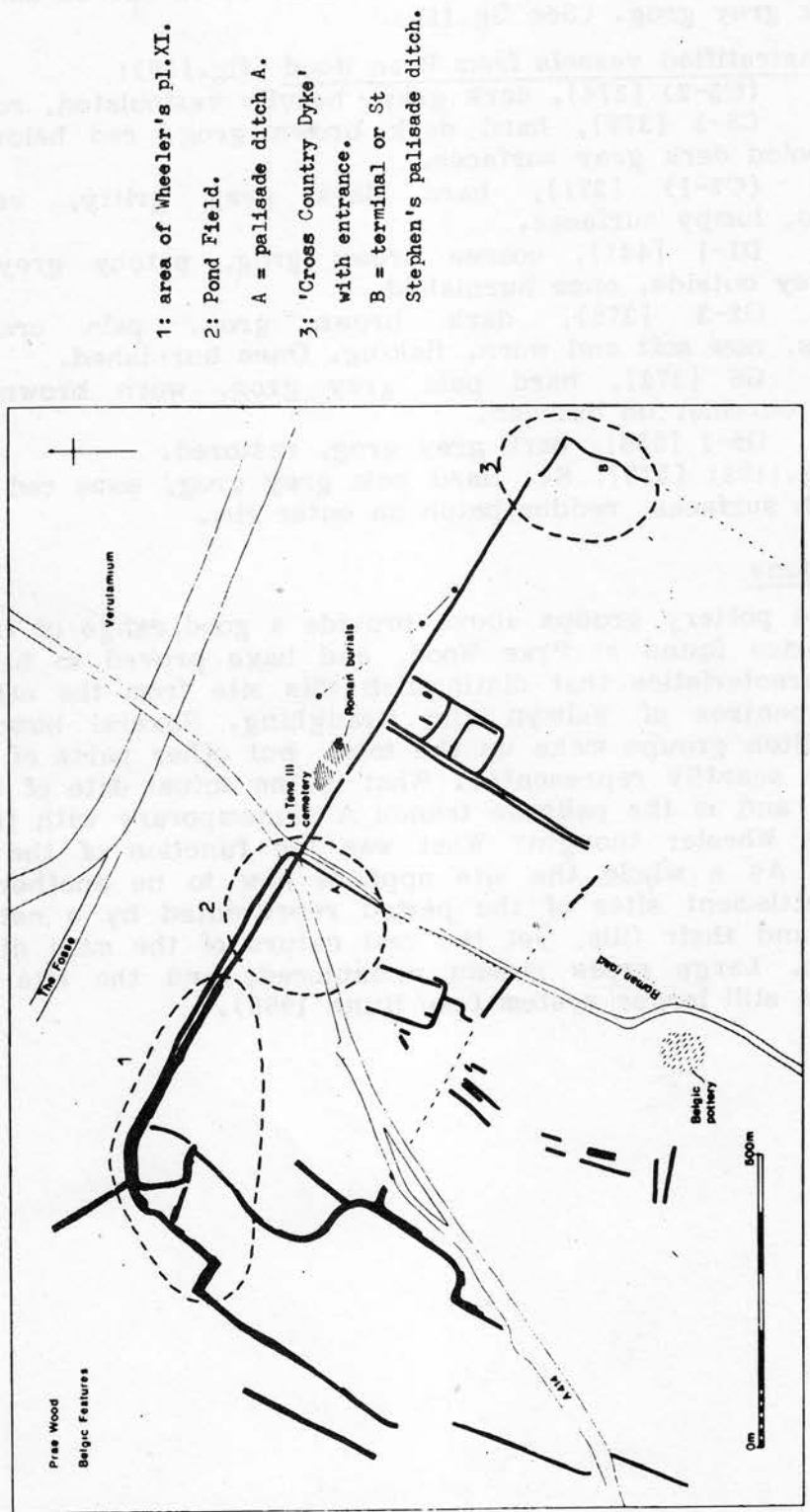


Fig.120: The three areas of Wheeler's Præ Wood explorations. (map from Hunn 1980, fig.4.)

St Stephen's Palisade Trench is apparently the 'terminal palisade B'. This produced everted rims, rilled sherds and a base, all dark grey grog. (See fig.120).

Unstratified vessels from Prae Wood (fig.119):

- 8 (C5-2) [374], dark grey, heavily vesiculated, rough.
- 9 C5-3 [370], hard dark brown grog, red below patchy hard tooled dark grey surfaces.
- 10 (C7-1) [371], hard dark grey gritty, very well modelled, lumpy surfaces.
- 11 D1-1 [441], coarse brown grog, patchy grey inside, buff-grey outside, once burnished.
- 12 G2-3 [375], dark brown grog, pale orange-buff surfaces, now soft and worn, flaking. Once burnished.
- 13 G6 [372], hard pale grey grog, worn brown inside, reddish outside; no burnish.
- 14 G5-1 [538], dark grey grog, restored.

Fig.119a: [373], S4. Hard pale grey grog, some red grog on roughish surfaces, redder patch on outer rim.

Conclusions

The pottery groups above provide a good range of the forms and fabrics found at Prae Wood, and have proved to have their own characteristics that distinguish this site from the other main Herts. centres of Welwyn and Braughing. Several homogeneous native ditch groups make up the total, but other parts of the site are only scantily represented. What is the actual date of the main ditches, and is the palisade trench A contemporary with the inner ditch as Wheeler thought? What was the function of the various ditches? As a whole the site appears now to be another of the many settlement sites of the period represented by a network of ditches and their fills, yet the real nature of the main ditches is unknown. Large areas remain unexplored; and the site may be part of a still larger system (see Hunn 1980).