Wallington Roman Villa
A Field Survey,
near Baldock, Hertfordshire
cover illustration
Reconstruction of Latimer villa, Buckinghamshire.

after Johnson 1979

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Wallington Roman Villa: 
* A Field Survey,
 near Baldock,
 Hertfordshire

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Dan Pinnock and Guy Seddon

Report  32

North Hertfordshire District Council
Community Leisure Services
Museums Field Archaeology Section
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Acknowledgements

Firstly, it is with grateful thanks that the North Hertfordshire District Council Museums Field Archaeology Section is able to publicly acknowledge the willing permission and support of the landowners, Mr. J Wallace and Miss. D Wallace, which enabled this survey to occur.

It is true to say that the survey, and this report, would not have been possible without the interest, enthusiasm and dedicated hard work of Mr. Dan Pinnock, a resident of Wallington village. He discovered the site in 1958 and reported its existence to Letchworth Museum. As will be seen, Dan's continued interest in the site down the years led him to systematically collect and record a mass of artifacts after deep ploughing in 1993. He then reported the situation to the Museums Field Archaeology Section which led to our survey and this report.

Thanks must be extended also to Penny Fenton and David Hilleston, who were employed by North Hertfordshire District Council to conduct the second field survey of the site in December 1993 during the depths of a wet and muddy winter.

David Hilleston went on to establish The Heritage Network Ltd, a local archaeological unit based in Baldock, which took on the initial processing of the finds from the site. Thanks are expressed in addition to Helen Ashworth of The Heritage Network Ltd., for supervising the washing and marking of the finds and their initial analysis, undertaken by students Keeley Hale and Guy Seddon of Bournemouth University, who also deserve our gratitude. Further thanks are due to Helen Ashworth for her pottery report. Thanks also to Mark Curteis for his report on the Roman coins.

Finally, I wish to very sincerely thank Mark Stevenson and Jane Read, who have done the bulk of the work on this report and have persevered in bringing it to fruition.

Gil Burleigh
Keeper of Field Archaeology
1st December 1999
Roman building material was first identified from the site in 1958. Deep ploughing following set-aside in 1993 disturbed significant quantities of building materials and other debris triggering fieldwalking and test pit recording. Adjacent earthworks in pasture were also investigated. The information recovered indicates that the site is potentially in the ‘first division’ of Roman villas for this country.

Introduction

Wallington village is three miles east of Balcock and on the south side of the Icknield Way.

Situated west of the village at the juncture of two quite distinct landscapes is a field, within the southwestern corner of which is a cross marked on the Ordnance Survey 1:1250 scale map, as a ‘Roman Building - site of’.

The site (Figure 1), is to the immediate northeast of Spital Wood and northwest of Bury Wood with further woodland ranging from southeast to southwest being interrupted by pasture fields. The area between the woodland and the site is dominated by a series of ponds interconnected by a network of channels and banks. Some of the smaller ponds are seasonal with the more substantial possibly being fed by springs from a perched water table. The spring line defines the northern limit of the catchment for the river Ouse to the south. The northern half of the area about the site falls away from the 140 metre level to present an extensive view across to Aishwell and southwest Cambridgeshire, being part of the region known as the Cambridgeshire Plain, over fields of cereal that once would have been rolling downland.

In addition to the earthworks and ponds in the adjacent pasture field to the south of the site, there are extensive earthworks to the east, of a medieval rabbit warren and associated house platforms and enclosures before the western limit of the village of Wallington is reached.

Today, the Roman site and some of the adjacent earthworks as well as part of Spital Wood are encapsulated within Archaeological Area number 105 on the North Hertfordshire District Plan Number 2 (with Alterations), and more specifically as number 1771 on the county Sites and Monuments database, with the medieval site close to the village being an area of Archaeological Significance number 104 within the general Archaeological Area number 104 of the village. The two types of areas denote a degree of relative importance in terms of the sites’ state of preservation and significance within the local and regional setting as previously understood.

Historical Background

General

Figure 2 incorporates earthworks surveyed on the ground, or plotted from aerial photographs in respect of Middle Warren Mead, in conjunction with former field boundaries and woodland from the 1839 tithe map for the parish of Wallington. The tithe map also provides names for a number of the fields but none reflect the presence of a Roman site within the area.

The earthworks within Middle Warren Mead indicate the village had originally extended further west to include the features now long abandoned. The ditch on the southern and eastern sides of Bury Wood (former spelling being Berry), with the eastern length extending northwards, suggested that from an earlier period, Berry Wood Close and Far Warren had possibly been part of Bury Wood, thereby defining the western limit of the medieval settlement. The present boundary of Bury Wood is defined by a number of apple trees placed at regular intervals, and one at each corner on the western side suggesting the edge of the wood had been extended slightly westwards and straightened with traces of the former ditch boundary now surviving within the wood especially within the northwestern area. The size and age of the trees suggest they may have been planted shortly before the date of the tithe map.

West of Bury Wood is Great Balance Mead with a ditch within the field parallel to the western edge of the wood to suggest Spital Wood had extended further east. In addition to changes that may have occurred before 1839, a number of field boundaries and woodlands have since disappeared, most notably Great Balance Wood east of New Balance Close and Rough, that arced northwards around the heart of the Roman site. The southern edge of the lost wood was irregular to suggest an earlier boundary may have been followed. Beyond the boundary was a small field north of the major pond that must have been part of Great Balance Mead.

A series of ponds extend in a line northwest-southeast through New Balance Close and Rough to Great Balance Mead which is connected by a network of
Figure 1: Site location plans
banks and ditches. The two northwestern ponds are only seasonal and it may be this fact reflected in the name of the field if they were not created in the post-medieval period. The associated earthworks do not appear to be related to field or woodland boundaries past or present.

The arc presented in Figure 2, from the village through the earthworks of part of the old village, on to Berry Wood Close and the ponds and earthworks, defines a route that would have run to Sandon in the east and Baldock to the west being one of many routes that together represented the Icknield Way.

When the record of taxable property and possessions was made in 1086 called the Domesday survey, the village was represented by two manors, Wallington and Monstitches (twelfth century name), plus three smaller holdings. The Wallington Manor is now Wallingtonbury farmhouse and Monstitches Manor was probably north of the church where Mutcheaps field is today if not part of the earthworks at Middle Warren Mead (Jane Read - is it possible the name suggests earthworks, 'much heaps'?). Both manors were owned by Normans but the three small holdings mentioned were owned by Saxons, Sward and Wimund. It is possible that the rabbit warrens were started during the declining years of the Monstitch Manor.

Site Specific

The Great Balance Wood was grubbed out late last century and the area may have been subject to steam ploughing before being incorporated in the adjacent pasture fields, with Great Balance and Warren Shot becoming a single field, comparable in size to Warren Shot to the immediate east. (D Pinnock pers com) The field was ploughed a couple of times during the 1980s before being ploughed again in 1990 for cereal production.

In 1958 a village resident, Mr Pinnock collected Roman tile and pottery fragments on the edge of the field near the junction of Great Balance Mead and New Balance Close and Rough and also from the edge of the Great Balance pond. The finds were reported to Letchworth Museum the following year, from whose records the Ordnance Survey subsequently plotted the site on their map of the area. It was Mr Pinnock who in 1993 contacted the author to inform that after a period of set-aside, the field had been deep ploughed, producing a large quantity of pottery and building material, some of which he had collected.

The author made a visit to the site with Mr Pinnock on 4th November 1993 to witness at first hand the evidence for a Roman building. In addition to the notes made at the time (see Appendix 1), a sketch map was made of the distribution of material observed (Figure 3).

The area of debris situated closest to the 1958 finds was represented by a concentration of pink floor concrete (opus signinum) and floor tesserae, indicating the fabric of the surviving building was being destroyed by deep ploughing and not just the accumulation of collapsed building material. The area concerned was the highest point of the field, so there may have been only a slight increase of depth during ploughing to produce a distorted distribution of disturbed material. Away from the concentration, towards the northwest and east was a scatter of flint nodules and other wall rubble to hint at the scale of the former building and enclosure.

The whole of the debris area was represented by a generally darker soil to that of the rest of the field and may represent the old pasture area that had extended northwards to the now lost Great Balance Wood.

It was clear from the new evidence and the finds made in 1958, that the building straddled both sides of the modern field boundary, with part therefore in an area of pasture that has not been ploughed.

It transpired during the site visit, that Mr Pinnock had excavated three exploratory Test Pits centred upon particular concentrations of building debris.

Fieldwalking is a simple and effective way of collecting information about a site under plough and therefore arrangements were put in hand for the area to be fieldwalked. It was not until after the fieldwalking programme in December 1993 that it transpired Mr Pinnock had also fieldwalked the area with the result that most of the available material had been collected by him already.

The 1993 fieldwalking was undertaken by Mr D Hillelsion and Ms P Fenton for North Hertfordshire District Council, with a survey of earthworks in the adjacent fields administered by Mr G Seddon and Ms K Hale, students from Bournemouth University under the supervision of Ms Helen Ashworth of The Heritage Network. For ease of reference, the material from the 1993 North Hertfordshire District Council funded fieldwalking that was subsequently processed by The Heritage Network will be referred to as the 'North Hertfordshire District Council collection'.

Following the 1993 work, Ms Fenton produced a short document outlining the background to the fieldwalking and an assessment of work required to complete the material archive.

In 1996 the two Bournemouth University students processed the finds collected by David Hillelsion and Penny Fenton from fieldwalking and began an assessment of the material from Mr Pinnock's earlier
fieldwalking, to present the beginnings of a draft report.

At the end of April 1998, the writer visited the site to study with Mr Pinnock the area of Bury Wood for any additional earthworks. Unfortunately access to Spital Wood was denied.

Following ploughing in 1998, the writer visited the site with Mr Pinnock on August 5th and collected a piece of tile tessera and whitestone from the edge of the field which were located using measuring tapes, and an assortment of pottery and bone from a series of three slots previously dug by Mr Pinnock against the edge of the field where a different coloured soil had been turned over by the plough. Mr Pinnock had also collected several items from a common point within the field, including a coin (Appendix 4, 11), and a bronze square boss/stud object plus a decorated bronze strip for which no parallel could be found to suggest it may in fact be a straightened out bracelet (Figure 18, 2 and 3 plus Appendix 10). During September 1998, Mr Pinnock extended Test Slot A and recovered additional material from Test Slot C (Appendix 10). He also cut a larger Test Slot, D, on the western edge of the field, locating a possible internal wall line in addition to recovering more material. Additional finds were also made from the plough soil across the villa site.

Off and on since 1993, Ms J Read worked on a detailed programme of quantifying material from the earlier fieldwalking and Test Pits, compiling a definitive plan showing plots for all material from the site before producing the series of plans and artifact illustrations for this report plus data for the appendices.

Methodology

Mr Pinnock’s fieldwork

Using the southern boundary to the ploughed field as the datum line, zero was set at the point where the north-south boundary between the two pasture fields to the south join with the former fence line. Distances east from the point of origin were measured out using the fence posts. By off setting from the base line into the field, it was possible to provide a plot for a particular object (see Figure 4). In addition to the plotted material, more general collections of pottery were made. The three Test Pits were hand dug and plotted by triangulation and located on plan, with plans of the individual Test Pits showing positions of finds and debris distributions (Figures 16, 17 and 19). Individual finds from elsewhere on the field were also located by triangulation (Figure 5). Additional material was recorded from adjacent sites, particularly the various ponds, which was collected when they were recently cleaned, apart from material from the largest. The four 1998 sets of Slots were hand dug to the base of the ploughing and located using hand tapes as were isolated finds from within the field, triangulated from known points on the field boundary.

The various sites from which material was collected, including the edges of some of the ponds were allocated codes:

- WAL A Top end of village
- WAL B General villa site
- WAL B/I Pond site - TL285333
- WAL B/II Great Balance Ditch - TL285333
- WAL B/III Next to Little Balance, NW of villa field - TL283335
- WAL D 3 Corner Piece
- WAL E Gas Pipeline cut in 1968 at N end of village - TL290343-295345

The four areas defined under area B relate to the overall site of the villa with the rest for sites elsewhere, further west, north or south of the village. Mr Pinnock’s collection of material includes a number of items from around the village that are significant and worthy of a subsequent report looking at the village, its origins and history.
Figure 4: Data distribution - Mr Pinnock's collection, scale 1:250 (see Appendices 2 and 4)
Figure 5: Site grid with location of Figure 4 area and finds from beyond former plan boundary, scale 1:2000
The Heritage Network’s earthwork survey and NHDC 1993 fieldwalking

Due to limited time available and lack of material over the eastern half, only the western half of the greater area of the ploughed field was fieldwalked. Orientated to the northern boundary of the field, a 30 metre grid was established with the portion over the greatest concentration of debris being subdivided into 15 metre divisions (Figure 5).

Walkers followed the grid lines, collecting all material and placing within pre-labelled bags for each predetermined 30 or 15 metre length. The field had no visible crop but the soil was heavy with moisture with water-logging common. The majority of the area was therefore walked at a 3.3% sample rate with the southwestern portion at 6.6%, based upon a projection that a 1m grid would equate to 100%. The method of fieldwalking was designed to enable an analysis of the finds based on a method developed by archaeologists in Essex where significant material that would only occur in small numbers can be better represented in overall distribution analyses. Since 1985, the Essex survey method has become the standard system from which data can be compared between sites.

The earthworks in the adjacent field to the south were planned by means of hand tapes and pacing.

Fieldwork

Flint
Prehistoric - Neolithic
3,500 - 1,700 bc

The occasional flake of flint was collected, representing waste material from the creation of a blade or other tool, but the most spectacular find was a fragment of polished stone axe, alas not from the villa site but the northern end of the village, close to the line of a gas pipe-line cut in 1968 (Figure 6). The axe has been included in this report to represent the long-standing use man has made of the local environment.

Pottery

Statistical comparison of the two pottery fieldwalking collections

By comparing the total weights of pottery collected from the same site, it can be seen from Graph 1 that the overwhelming majority was from the first fieldwalking undertaken by Mr Pinnock, with the North Hertfordshire District Council collection representing only 4% (Tables 5, 6 and 7 in the Appendix section).

Graph 1: Pottery by weight for both collections

The frequency of pottery by fabric from the meagre the North Hertfordshire District Council collection (Graph 3), shows a dramatic under representation of the ‘fine’ wares, including the Colour Coated fabrics, with only a single sherd of Samian as mentioned above (Table 1 and Table 7 in the Appendix). The question this poses is whether the fabric type distribution is real or a product of other phenomena. Comparing key fabrics represented by the two assemblages, i.e. Fabric 4, Colour Coated fabrics and Samian, it can be seen from Graphs 5 and 6 that 35% of the Mr Pinnock collection sample was of
Figure 7: Pottery examples, Mr Pinnock’s collection, scale 1:4 (see Appendix 5)
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<th>Mr Pinnock pottery collection</th>
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<th>The North Hertfordshire District Council pottery collection</th>
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| av. 79% | 20659 | 880 | av. 21% | 21539 |

Table 1: Pottery fabrics by weight for both fieldwalking collections
Graph 2: Pottery fabric by weight - Mr Pinoock's collection

Graph 3: Pottery fabric by weight - the North Hertfordshire District Council collection
The highly distinctive coloured fabrics, compared to only 6% for the later North Hertfordshire District Council material. The conclusion from such a comparison is that the earlier collection was biased towards either brightly coloured or distinctive fabrics. However, combining the two data sets (Table 2), for the three selected fabrics, produces a result within a single percentage point of being the same ratio as that arising from the Mr Pinnock collection, i.e. 5% Samian, 29% Colour Coat and 66% fabric 4. The results of which suggests that the bias was against the North Hertfordshire District Council fieldwalking, arising from the fact that all but a few of the available sherd of Samian and Colour Coat fabrics had already been collected by Mr Pinnock. The conclusion
being that Mr Pinnock had been highly efficient in the collection of those distinctive fabrics.

Of the 44 Roman period pottery fabrics identified for the site (Table 1), 23 were solely represented by Mr Pinnock’s collection, i.e. 52% of fabrics, while the formal fieldwalking only recorded seven new fabrics, i.e. 16% of the possible total. All but one of the seven fabrics were represented by single sherds with two of the six being non-definite.

If fabric is set aside and a comparison made of the shape and frequency of the sherds collected in terms of being either rim, base, body - decorated or not, and other, i.e. handle and lid sherds, then the picture obtained is not so clear cut. Table 3 and Graph 7 show the resulting data shows that Mr Pinnock was consistently collecting the majority of form types, reflecting the overwhelming volume of pottery represented by his efforts. However, there was a slight variation in the ratios of plain and decorated sherds, from levels ranging from 2.5% to 7.5% to 10% and 13% respectively in favour of the North Hertfordshire District Council data of the sherd counts represented within the form totals. The lowest form represented by the formal fieldwalking was as perhaps expected, rim sherds at only 2.5%.

Graphs 8 and 9 represent the above data in pie chart format in order to underline the disparity between the two collections. However, if the two sets of information are combined, then the resulting pie chart, Graph 10, shows that there are two major aspects that demonstrate the collection is atypical. Firstly, the majority of sherds were equally divided between rim and body sherds, but with base elements only representing a quarter of either of the other two categories. Perhaps the relative under representation of base sherds when compared to the Mr Pinnock and the North Hertfordshire District Council collections, i.e. 25% and 33% respectively, suggest that both represented a bias. Secondly, it is ‘normal’ for body sherds to represent the majority and not 45% as in this case (see next section by Helen Ashworth). It would be appropriate for a comparison to be made with a fieldwalking collection of pottery from another ploughed villa site from the archaeological literature, but unfortunately such an example could not be found. This highlights the fact that little has been published of this type of archaeological fieldwork. A systematic approach to fieldwalking was proposed by Woodward in 1978 by reference to a study of prehistoric sites, built upon in 1985 with two publications from Sheenan and the Archaeology Section of Essex County Council, both explored the handling of quantitative data as opposed to primary spatial concerns dealt with previously by Hodder and Orton (1976).

A field survey of the extra-mural area at Silchester, Berkshire (Corney 1984), provides the closest type of study. Pie-charts were produced for each field walked and for each period, showing quantity of pottery by the area of the pie and divisions for certain categories: coarse ware, fine ware, samian and mortaria. Unfortu-

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>rim</th>
<th>base</th>
<th>body (plain)</th>
<th>body (decorated)</th>
<th>other</th>
<th>TOTAL</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mr Dan Pinnock</td>
<td>461</td>
<td>109</td>
<td>410</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>1025</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NHDC collection</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>473</td>
<td>113</td>
<td>455</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>1091</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3: Pottery Form by sherd count
nately only the total pottery weights were included within the tables with no breakdown for the categories stated and certainly no sub-category divisions. The pie-charts overlaid on a series of plans showed that there was a wide variety of relative proportions to show there was no consistent profile that could be applied to such a settlement. In order to compare 'like for like' the combined pottery data for the Wallington site, it was necessary to present the data in a fashion similar to the Silchester study (Table 4, Graph 11). Half the pottery represented coarse wares with the majority of the rest being equally represented, weight for weight, between
fine wares and mortarium. Samian represented only 2% of the total.

Comparing the data with that from Silchester, shows that there is not one field from the area around the walled town that produced a pottery profile anywhere similar.

There are two possible conclusions to be drawn from the lack of comparison, either the type of sites represented being quite different will inherently produce a different pottery profile, or, the lack of distention made between different periods of the villa occupation, have masked any comparison there may be with the phased pie-charts from Silchester. The results may still show no comparison between any part of the extra-mural settlement around Silchester and Wallington, but an attempt to roughly divide the pottery into period groups is clearly a necessary next step. Even without any further refinement, hopefully the results presented here will provide a useful comparison for a future fieldworker elsewhere, whether around Baldock or further afield when extrapolating building size, position and function from surface pottery distributions.

Graph 10: Pottery Forms - combined collections

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Silchester</th>
<th>Wallington</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Samian</td>
<td>1563</td>
<td>416</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mortaria</td>
<td>1550</td>
<td>5602</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>remainder</td>
<td>14067</td>
<td>15521</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>17180</strong></td>
<td><strong>21539</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Graph 11: Combined Collections modelled upon Silchester

Combined Pottery Collections

Helen Ashworth

Introduction

A total of 1091 sherds, weighing 22622 grammes, has been recovered from the various phases of fieldwork undertaken on the site of Wallington villa. The majority of the assemblage was collected from the field surface after ploughing and is consequently in the form of small abraded, chiefly undiagnostic, sherds.

As most of the pottery from the present site has been collected from the field surface, and the exact locations have not been recorded, this assemblage has been treated as an unstratified collection. Therefore there has been no attempt to phase the site, other than in very general terms. Nor has it been possible to analyse the distribution of the pottery in any meaningful way.

All references to totals in the following report mean the combined weights of pottery from Mr Pinnock's work and the fieldwalking by North Hertfordshire District Council, unless otherwise stated.

Methodology

The initial recording of the pottery was on existing pro forma record sheets, which record by fabric, weight (in grammes) number and type (e.g. rim, base) of sherds and vessel form. All diagnostic forms were paralleled with published examples where possible.

Each sherd was examined through a binocular microscope at x10 magnification to determine the nature of
the inclusions, any surface treatment or decoration and any notable characteristics. These were noted on the pottery Record Form. The assemblage was then divided into fabric groups based on the North Hertfordshire fabric series (Ashworth, 1990).

The estimated date range of the pottery was also noted on the record sheet, based on the fabrics and forms present in the assemblage.

**Provenance**

The vast majority (75% of the total) of the pottery from the site is coarse ware of relatively local origin (see Graph 12) coming mostly from the kiln sites at Hadham in Hertfordshire (26% of the total) and Harrold in Bedfordshire (26% of the total). A small amount (4% of the total) came from the Verulamium region. The remainder of the coarse ware assemblage includes groups of mainly unprovenanced grey wares (5% of the total), a small amount of grog-tempered wares (3% of the total) and amphorae (3% of the total). These coarse wares appear on the site in the early 2nd century and continue throughout the ceramic sequence.

During the 2nd and 3rd centuries fine wares were apparently represented by samian (2% of the total, Graph 12). The diagnostic sherd’s indicate that the common forms (including a fragment of a Dr. 37 bowl, a Dr. 33 dish and a Dr.33 cup) were most popular. The only other continental ware so far recovered is one sherd of an Eastern Gaulish colour coat beaker. Other early fine ware from the site includes a tiny amount (0.07% of the total) of mica-dusted ware, probably from southeastern England.

Samian was clearly replaced by Nene Valley and Oxfordshire fine wares on the present site in the late Roman period. The colour coat wares from the Nene Valley were apparently slightly more popular (5% of the total) than those from Oxfordshire (4% of the total). This may be a reflection of taste or cost.

As well as supplying the finer table wares, the kiln sites at Oxford and the Nene Valley supplied the bulk of the mortaria from the site, including both prism ware and white-slipped forms from Oxford. Three sherds of Mancetter-Hartshill mortaria were also collected from the site.

**Forms**

Jars were the most common form recovered from the site. There was a marked predominance of shell-tempered jars. Those with simple outcurved rims (at least 15 examples collected, including Figure 7: 34) and drooping triangular rims (at least 10 examples collected) may have been used as cooking jars as several of the examples showed signs of sooting on the exterior. At least 12 rim sherds from shell tempered storage jars
were also collected. Greyware jar rims were present in the assemblage, but these were mostly in the form of small abraded sherds and it was impossible to identify them more closely. It is likely several may have come from the standard rilled jar produced at Hadham (the Braughing Jar, Going type G21).

Bowls and dishes were also collected from the site, including examples of grey ware flanged bowls (at least 10 examples) and dog dishes (at least 8 examples). These were apparently plain, without burnished latticing or arcading. This may be a reflection of the circumstances of their recovery or a preference of the inhabitants of the villa. At least one late red-slipped flanged bowl was collected (Figure 7: 17).

Samian forms recovered included a decorated fragment from a Dr.37 bowl (Figure 7: 32) and part of a Dr.36 dish (Figure 7: 31). Fragments of cup forms 33 and 31 were also recovered from the site (not illustrated).

Flagons were not present in large quantities in the assemblage. Only three rims were collected from the site (Figure 7: 20, 23 and 25) and one handle. This may be a reflection of the late date of the assemblage as the biggest supplier of such vessels to this part of Hertfordshire was Verulamium, and production there had virtually ceased by the early 3rd century (Tyers 1996).

The dearth of exotic forms, such as tazza, and the number of utilitarian domestic vessels, such as cooking jars and mortaria, supports the interpretation of this group as a normal domestic assemblage.

**Dating**

The earliest pottery so far recovered from the site is represented by one sherd of fabric 3, of early to mid-1st century AD date, from Wal/B II post 32. Twelve sherds of grog-tempered pottery (fabric 2 A and B) of late 1st-early 2nd century date were recovered from across the site. Occasional sherds of butt beaker ware (fabrics 5 and 6) have also been collected.

Pottery of 2nd and 3rd century date is represented by imported samian, products of the Verulamium region (fabrics 16 and 20) and by an increasing amount of grey wares and shelly wares. However, the bulk of the present assemblage dates to the late Roman period and is represented by late products of the Hadham, Oxfordshire, Nene Valley and Harrold kiln sites.

**Discussion**

The pottery from the present site has been collected over a number of years. The group recovered by Mr Pinnock accounts for 96% of the total number of sherds, the remainder came from a few days fieldwalking in December 1993 by David Hilleston and Penny Fenton.

Rim sherds accounted for 37% of the total number of sherds, the vast majority being collected by Mr Pinnock, and body sherds for 45% of the total number. Given that in an archaeological excavation the number of body sherds is normally far greater than all other types of sherd it would appear that there has been a bias in collecting during fieldwalking on the present site. It may be that rim sherds are more easily recognisable under such conditions, or, being in general thicker-walled, they have survived better in the topsoil.

The vast bulk of this assemblage comprised Romano-British pottery, there was a notable lack of the medieval and, particularly, post-medieval wares (4% of the total) commonly recovered during fieldwalking. This may
reflect a lack of activity of this date across the area of
the present study or that these have been recognised and
removed prior to this study.

This group, collected from the site of Wallington villa,
represents a domestic assemblage, but not a particularly
high status one. The fabrics and forms are all found on
sites of this date in North Hertfordshire. There is a
dearth of exotic forms and wares, suggesting either that
the inhabitants of the villa were not wealthy, or that
these wares have yet to be located on the site.

The pottery is chiefly late Roman in date (late 3rd to 5th
century) but there is evidence of earlier Roman
occupation on the site. This indicates that the ploughing
has almost certainly disturbed the upper levels of
the building, but has not yet seriously intruded on the earlier
remains.

**Conclusion**

The ceramic assemblage from the present site, combined
with the analysis of the artefact types, gives a tantalising
glimpse of the archaeology of the Wallington villa.
Comparison with the Romano-British pottery from a
fieldwalking exercise on a similar site would throw
further light on the assemblage from the present site. It
could, for example, show whether the perceived bias in
types of sherd or fabric noted in the group from
Wallington villa, were repeated elsewhere.

*April 1999*

**Cloth production**

A single spindle whorl was recovered by Mr Pinnock
(Figure 9; Appendices 2 and 3), made from a trimmed
sherd of pottery, indicating a cottage industry of
producing yarn and thereby clothing. The presence of
the object also indicates a ready access to wool and
shows that sheep were part of the local economy. The
disc would have been threaded over a stick, resting
against a widened split end, either singly or as multiples
to define the tension required to tease out the yard, the
end of which would have been secured to the stick
which would then be spun. The fabric of the pottery
used to fabricate this object was identified as fabric 49,
a Much Hadham ‘Romano-Saxon’ ware and of the
fourth century AD. The spindle-whorl must post-date
the use of the pottery vessel and therefore could date to
the fifth century or the last occupation phase if the villa.

A chalk loom weight extended the evidence for the
manufacture of products from the home spun yarn.

**Mortaria and Amphorae**

As mentioned above, a total of 1550 grams of sherds
were recovered from the field as a result of both
fieldwalking exercises. A wide variety of fabrics and
forms were clearly represented, with 98% coming from
Mr Pinnock. As was the case with most of the rest of
the pottery, none of the mortaria was individually
located, the only exception was a single sherd from Test
Pit B, which unfortunately was not identified from
within the collection. Mortaria are specialised bowls,
with a lip, wide rim and the interior surface studded
with hard grit of quartz or flint, against which fibrous
material could be pounded or ground to provide a
powder or liquid. Such household items can easily be
dropped or worn through to ensure their regular
occurrence on occupation sites.

Amphora are large specialised storage and transportation
vessels, designed for their durability, for such things as
olive oil and fish oil from Italy and Gaul with vessels
being most commonly made in the area of southern
Gaul and Spain. From the site, only 15 grams were
recognised from the North Hertfordshire District
Council collection, which must be considered a gross
under representation even from a fieldwalking context
and even if there is no comparable villa fieldwalking
sample.