

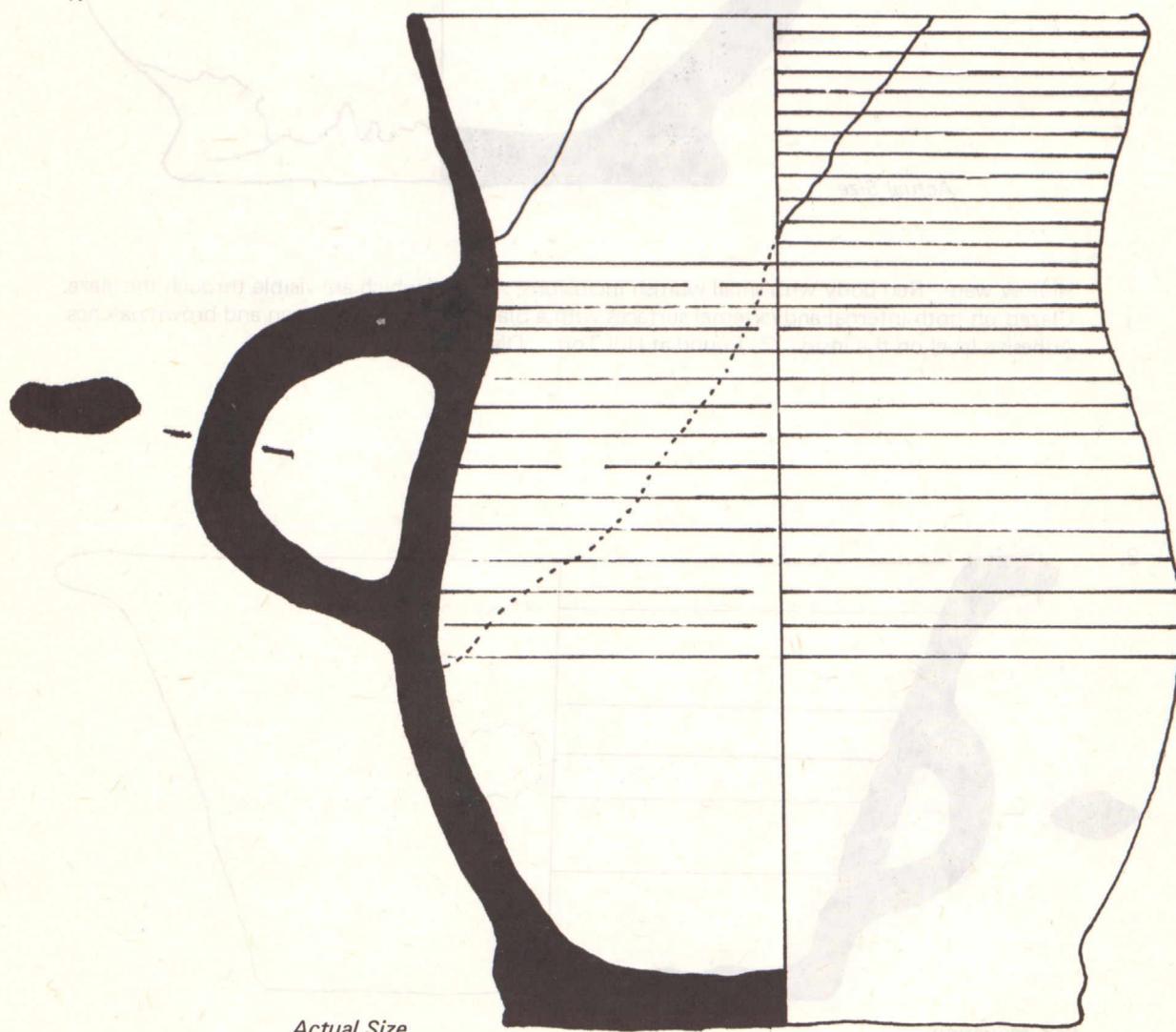
Some Examples of Coarse Earthenware from Rainford

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The writers examined a group of six complete, or almost complete, pots in St Helens Museum in the autumn of 1977. At the time all but one (No **3** below) seemed to be unprovenanced. Earlier this year, however, Miss E Lloyd, Curator of the Museum, discovered a note in the files marked '1922' which allowed her to identify five of the pots as having been found in Rainford before that date. A further complete example was recovered c 1975, on Red House Farm, Rainford, and remains in private possession. The following note is intended to record these finds and discuss their implications.

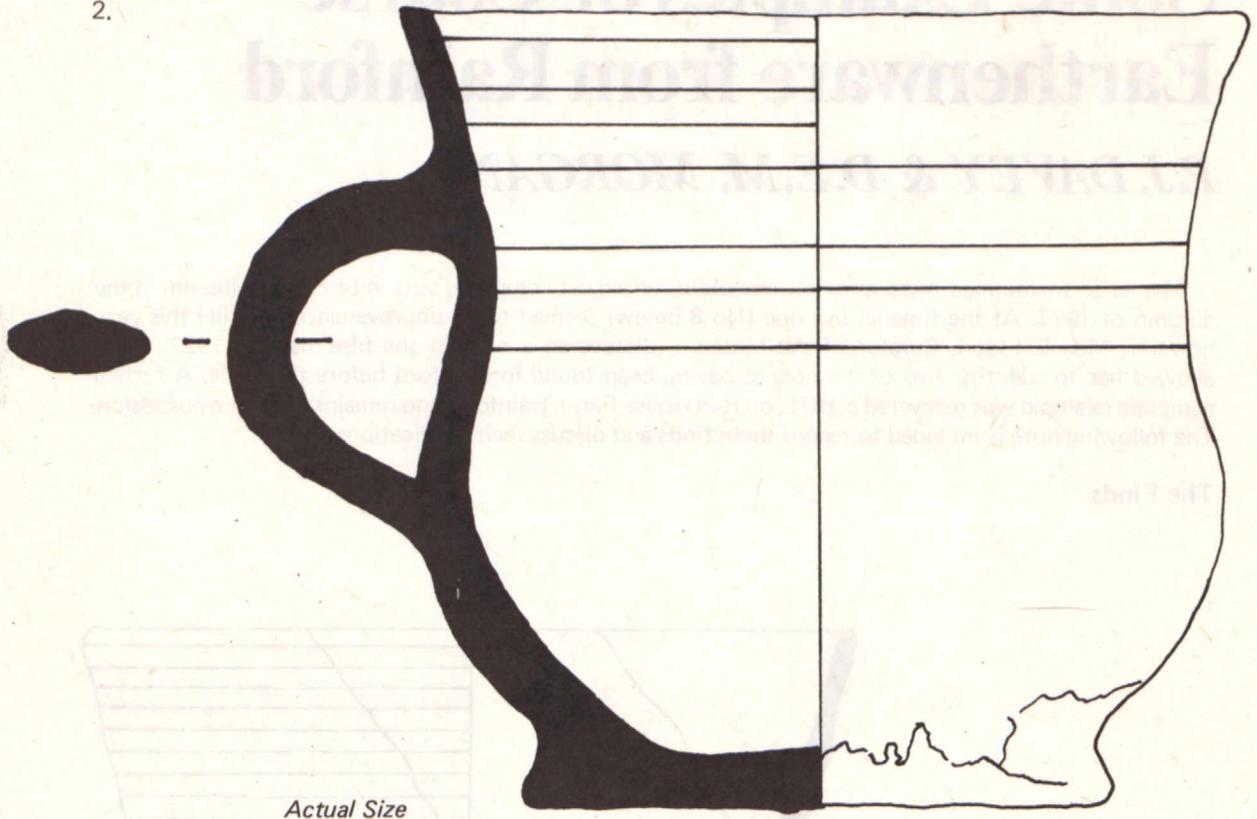
The Finds

1.



Hollow ware. Over-fired purplish orange body. Streaky yellow brown glaze around handle, and up to and over the rim. Main portion of both internal and external surfaces unglazed. Interior heavily wheel-marked. Adhesive label on inside '1'. Found at Hill Top, close to the Bottle and Glass Public House. DM/SH/1/1.

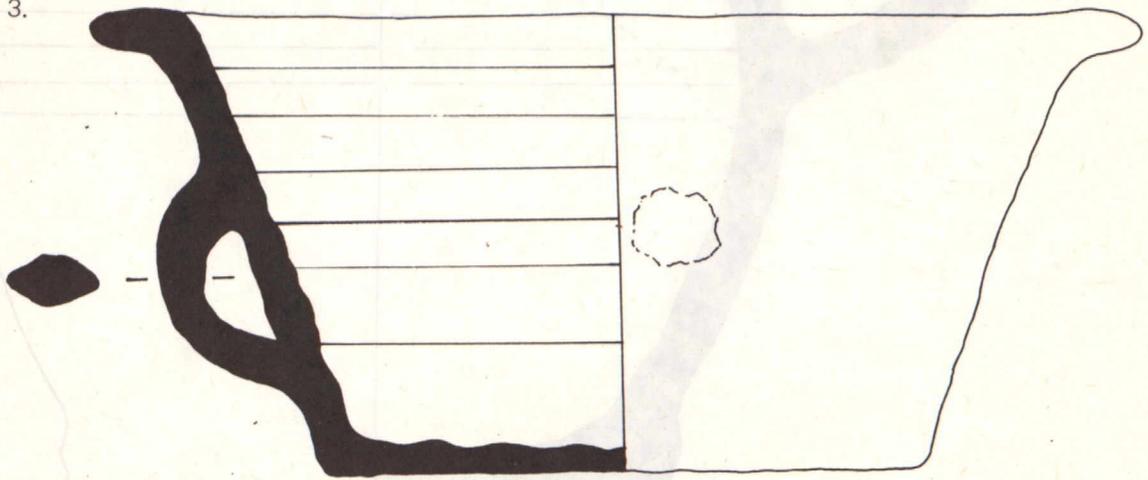
2.



Actual Size

Hollow ware. Red body with small whitish inclusions, some of which are visible through the glaze. Glazed on both internal and external surfaces with a blackish glaze, with green and brown patches. Adhesive label on the inside '2'. Found at Hill Top. DM/SH/2/2

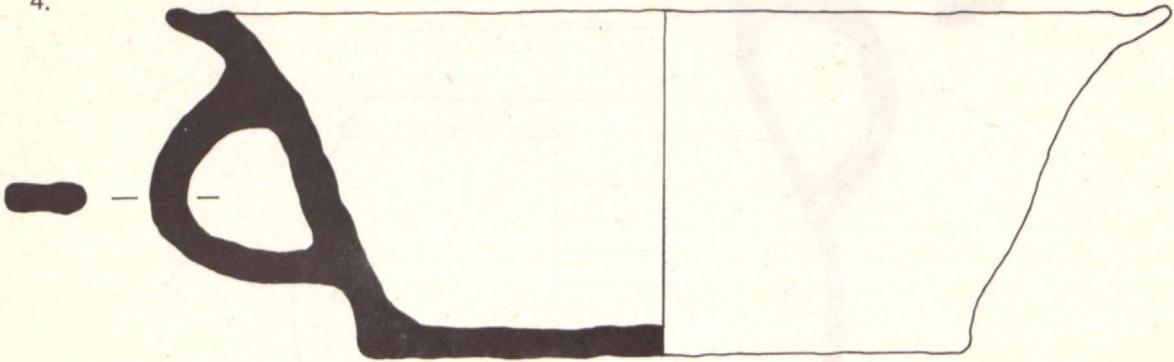
3.



64% reduction

Hollow ware. Orangy body with small buff inclusions, exterior surface sooted. Three splashes of yellowy brown glaze on the exterior. Interior chestnut brown glaze, crazed. Rim only patchily glazed. The rim has also been smoothed over with either a leather or cloth. Label reads 'Found underground at Rainford c 1920. Dated 1000-1500'. Found at Hill Top. DM/SH/3

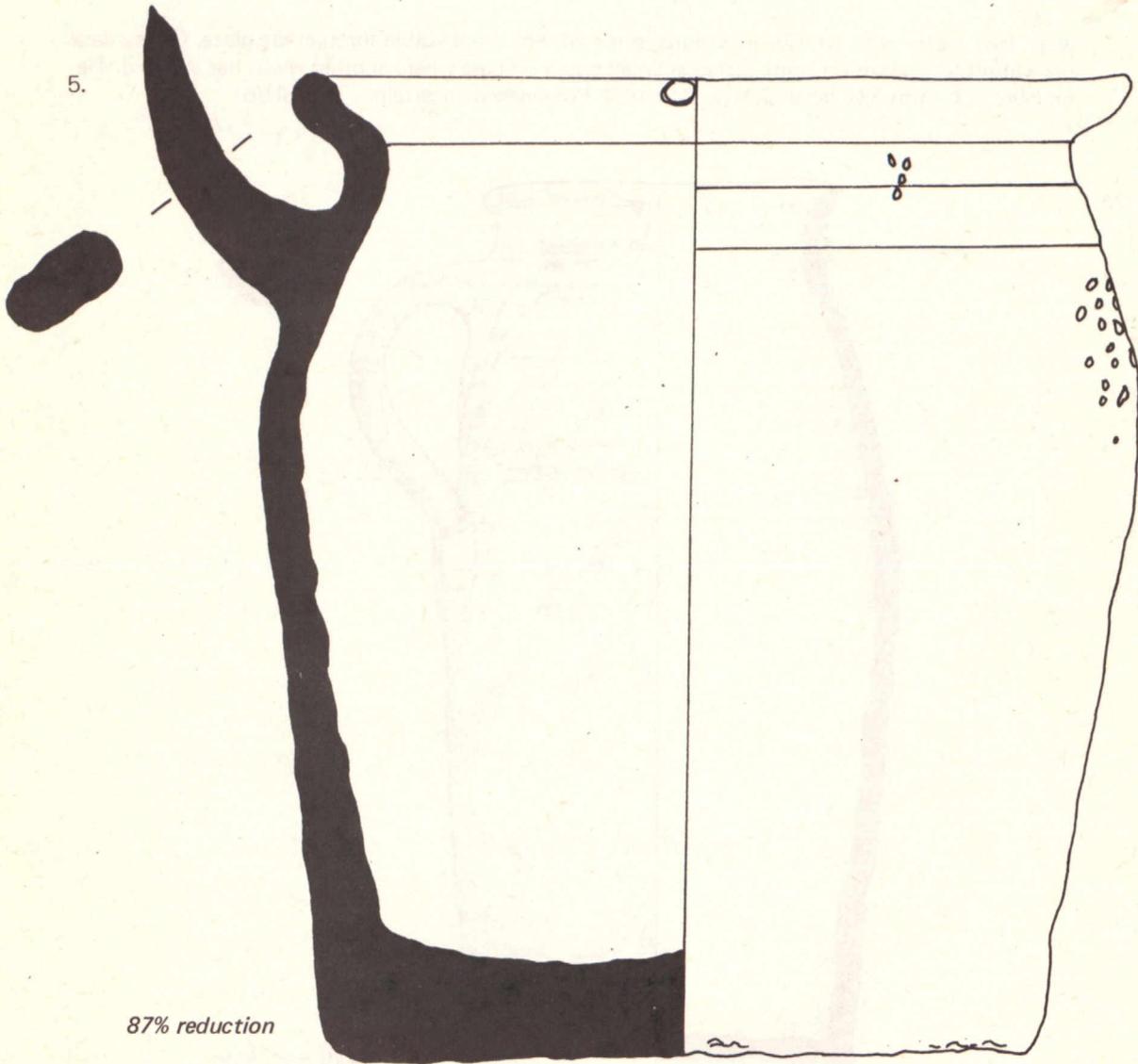
4.



55% reduction

Hollow ware. Red body. Interior purplish black glaze, pooled in base opposite the handle. A few splashes of glaze on the exterior surface. Small piece of another vessel adhered below the rim. The glaze on the underside of the base is marked with either the rim or base of another vessel. The vessel is cracked to just below the handle. Found at Hill Top. DM/SH/4

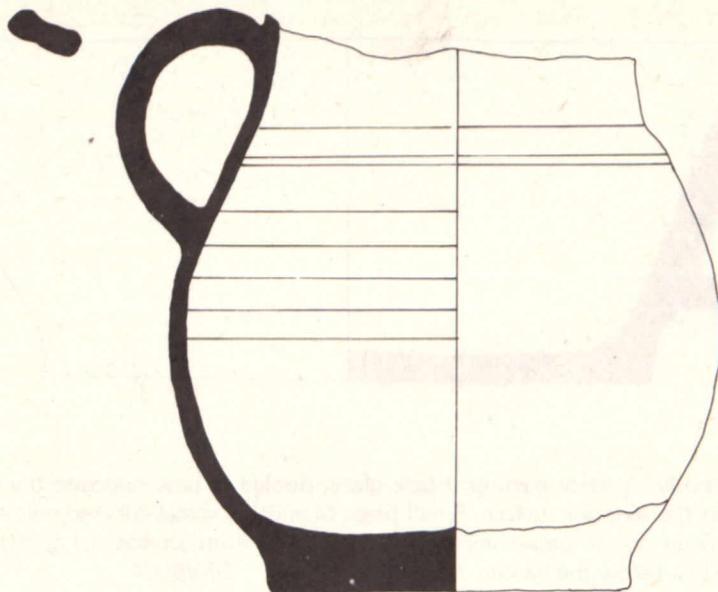
5.



87% reduction

Hollow ware. Over-fired purplish red fabric, coarse with large inclusions. The overfired glaze is both black and brown, also purple on both surfaces. Exterior and rim badly blistered in places. Internal lid-seating. Interior heavily wheel-marked. Small skillet-type handle below rim. Lump of clay attached on the outer base. Adhesive label on the rim '5'. Found when excavating the field behind the Golden Lion Inn, Rainford, about 4 feet below the surface, Friday July 29 1898. DM/SH/5/5

6.



48% reduction

Jug. Red fabric with whitish inclusions, some of which are visible through the glaze. Glossy dark brownish black glaze on both surfaces. Small patch on base where another vessel has adhered. Tie-on label '53'. Adhesive label on base 'AW 163'. Provenance uncertain. DM/SH/6

7.



44% reduction

Jug. Well fired dark red body. Patchy black/brown glaze inside and overflowing from rim on outside. Warped and fire cracked. Weight: 1.76 kg, volume: 3 litres, though will not and would not hold water. Possibly a kiln waster. Found by Mr W E Grayson on Red House Farm, Rainford c 1975 when laying a drain. He retains ownership.

Discussion

Documentary evidence indicates that pottery was an important part of the economic life of the Rainford area from at least the 17th century onwards (Davey & Morgan 1977, 126-128). A number of potters' wills and inventories survive from the period and seem to suggest a 'cottage' industry complemented by agriculture. During the middle of the century, possibly due to interruption of supplies from the south caused by the Civil War, many of the potters seem to have adapted their techniques in order to produce clay tobacco pipes as well.

Fieldwalking in 1977/78 by Liverpool University Extra-Mural students, on land west of Rainford church, recovered kiln wasters and other evidence for both a 17th century pottery and pipe shop on the same field. The pipe site was excavated early in 1979, and pottery associated with it had as 'grog', crushed, waster pipe-stems included in the bodies.

It is against this sort of background that the seven whole, or almost whole, pots should be seen. In addition the 19th century publication of three tygs found in 1877 (fragments similar to which were also found as wasters in fieldwalking), gives a broader picture of what the production range might have been like (Gibson, 1878).

At present it is impossible to give any precise chronology for either form or fabric in the Rainford potteries. A number of the pots described here should belong to the middle of the 17th century or not much later (eg **4** and **7**), while others almost certainly derive from 18th century production (eg no **6**). Their poor quality and condition, together with parallels in the fieldwalking material, suggests that they are all Rainford products.

Acknowledgements

The writers wish to thank Mr Senior and Miss Lloyd of St Helens Museum for permission to study the collection, Mr W E Grayson for his cooperation and Arthur Amery for producing the drawing of **7** at short notice.

Bibliography

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