

Romano-British and Saxon Sites near Dorchester-on-Thames, Oxfordshire

By JEFFREY MAY

SUMMARY

A rectangular ditched enclosure with internal ditched 'partitions', known as the Bishop's Court Rectangle, was partly excavated in 1957-8 during its destruction by gravel quarrying. The regular lay-out, seen on an aerial photograph to measure about 820 ft. long and 220 ft. wide, suggested Roman military or official work, although the unusual shape made interpretation difficult. Excavation showed the ditches to have been dug in the fourth century A.D., or possibly later. No satisfactory evidence of function was obtained, although several possibilities are discussed at the end of the report. Other late Romano-British structures within or near the enclosure included post-holes, pits or possibly corn-drying ovens. A terminus ante quem was provided by Saxon domestic occupation dating probably to the sixth century A.D., and a small inhumation cemetery probably of the seventh century.

To the south of the Rectangle lay a pair of nearly parallel ditches, about 800 ft. in length, and seen on aerial photographs to terminate in a loop at their eastern end. A date in the Roman period is likely, although datable finds were few.

Farther to the south-west lay the remains of a probably rectangular timber building. Two periods of construction were distinguished. No good evidence of date was obtained, although two small sherds of possibly Iron Age pottery came from the sleeper-beam trench of the first period.

LOCATION AND TOPOGRAPHY

The sites lay $8\frac{1}{4}$ miles S.S.E. of Oxford and $\frac{1}{2}$ mile N.W. of Dorchester-on-Thames, between Bishop's Court Farm and the river Thames (PL. IV, A). The National Grid Reference for the centre of the area is SU 573954. In this region, a terrace of Pleistocene Thames Valley Gravel slopes eight feet from north to south over a distance of just under two miles, from 166 ft. O.D. at Deacon's Garage, to about 158 ft. O.D. at the Iron Age promontory fortress of Dyke Hills. The gravel terrace overlies Gault Clay, and in the vicinity of the sites is characterized by quantities of little-worn flints, occasional pieces of limestone, and, in its upper layers, deposits of finer material, grit and sand. The gravel is overlain by about 2 ft. 6 in. of rich brown soil (levels 1 and 2), from which it is separated locally by a thin layer of fine reddish soil (level 3). The sites are on the outer bank of a shallow meander of the river Thames. The present surface of the gravel terrace is about 10 ft. above the level of the river, and during the excavations, the water table did not reach a depth of less than 3 ft. from the surface. The present water table, however, may have been artificially lowered by the recent creation of huge lakes in the gravel workings, and in earlier times, it could have been higher. The sites, however, were probably not subjected to flooding in late Romano-British and Saxon times, for there was no evidence of alluvial deposition in the archaeological features examined. There is

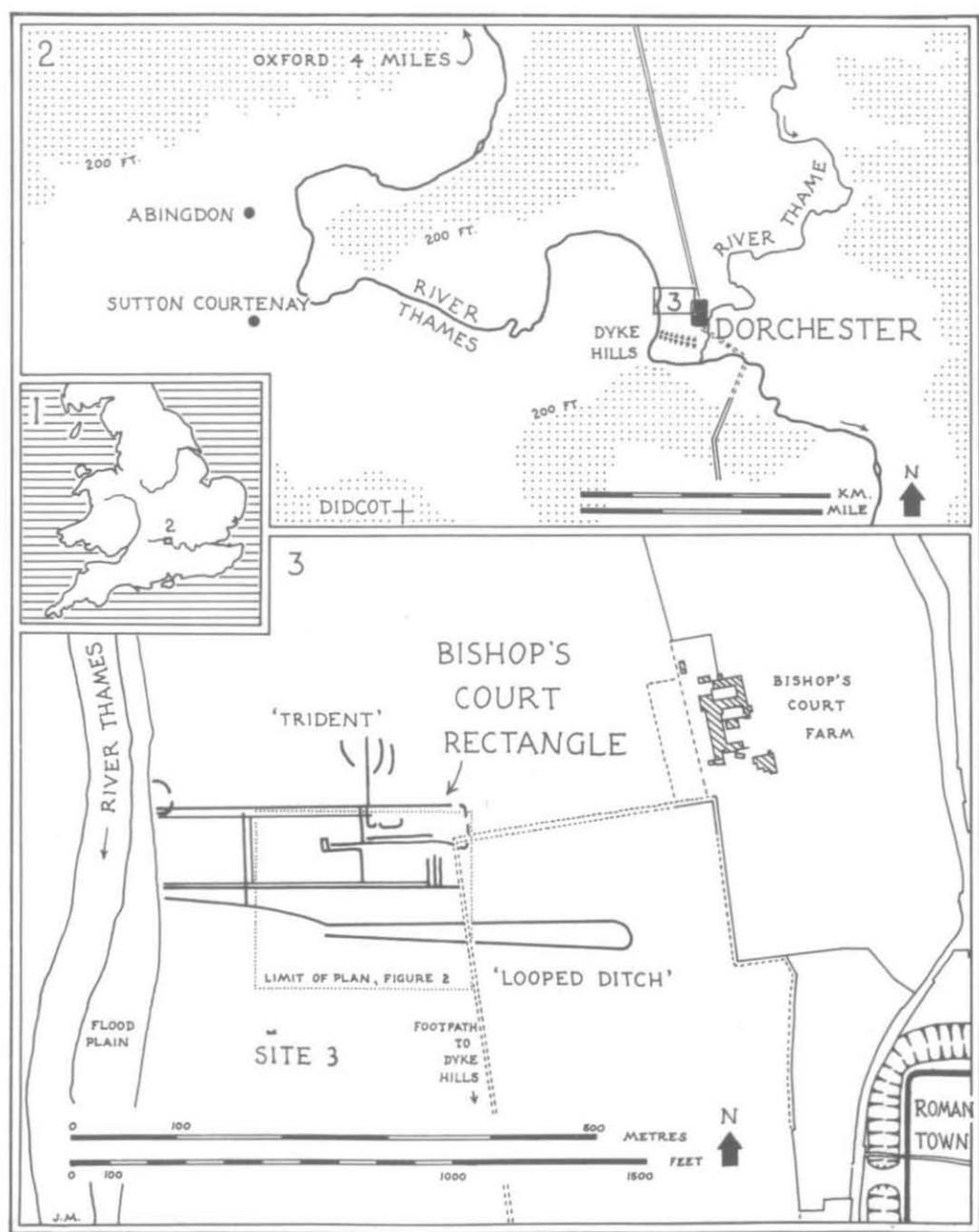


FIG. I
Dorchester: Bishop's Court Rectangle: location maps and plan of cropmarks.

a narrow strip of alluvium at a lower level between the edge of the gravel terrace and the river itself, but it was impossible to discover whether or not the archaeological features extended onto the present river bank.

DISCOVERY AND GENERAL DESCRIPTION OF THE SITES

The Bishop's Court Rectangle was discovered as a crop-mark, and photographed from the air, by the late Dr. O. G. S. Crawford, and it was first made known in *Antiquity*.¹ In 1933, a series of aerial photographs of the same area was taken by the late Major G. W. G. Allen (PL. IV, B). These showed a loop-shaped ditch to the south of the Rectangle, and although the photographs themselves were not published, the new crop-marks were combined with those from Crawford's photograph, and plotted on a general map of crop-marks in the Dorchester area.² As it appears on the present plan (FIG. 1), the Rectangle has merely been re-drawn from the photograph in *Antiquity*—the original print and negative of which were destroyed during the 1939-45 war—and nothing new can be added to what has already been published, except some minor details.

The crop-marks showed the Rectangle to be divided into three approximately equal sectors, defined by internal ditches running north and south. The western sector appears devoid of crop-marks, except for narrow gullies lying just inside and parallel to the principal ditches. Underlying or overlying the enclosure ditch at the north-west corner is a segment of an irregular circle, with a possible entrance gap on the east side. The western half of this feature, if indeed it was a complete circle, together with, no doubt, the western end of the Rectangle itself, was probably truncated by erosion of the gravel terrace by the river. West of the crop-marks, the ground descends abruptly to the river bank, now covered with bushes and thick vegetation.

The ditch and gully systems apparent in the western sector continue eastwards to define the northern and southern sides of the central sector. The division between the sector is marked by another double ditch, the westernmost of which seems to run out of the enclosure for a short distance to link with the 'looped ditch' to the south. Slightly east of the centre in this sector lay a small rectangular crop-mark forming a tiny ditched enclosure or the robbed-out footings of a building. Approaching this from the east was, possibly, a double-ditched track or driveway.

The eastern sector presents the most complex pattern of crop-marks of the whole site. The north-east corner of the Rectangle is poorly defined, but could have been rounded; there is no evidence for a south-east corner. If the crop-marks continue into this area of paddock lying to the east of the footpath to Dyke Hills, they will be the only part of the entire Rectangle to have escaped destruction by gravel quarrying. The line of the 'track' from the central sector seems to have continued, but not clearly, towards the eastern end of the enclosure. North of it, several crop-marks may have defined smaller internal compounds. From here, also, another ditch with disjointed subsidiary ditches ran northwards from the Rectangle for a distance of about 170 ft. This crop-mark was called the 'Trident' by Allen, but it is not certainly part of the same complex as the Rectangle. South of the 'track' in the eastern

¹ *Antiquity*, I (1927), opp. 472.

² *Oxoniensia*, III (1938), Fig. 20.

sector, lay three parallel ditches; these ran from the north to join the main south ditch of the Rectangle. It is noteworthy that the small inner gully on the south side of the Rectangle runs to, but not eastwards from, these north-south ditches.

To sum up, the impression gained from the aerial photograph is of a carefully laid-out rectangular ditch system, about 820 ft. from east to west, and 220 ft. from north to south, with the long axis at right angles to the river Thames. There are internal partitions and other features, and possibly a track from the eastern end approaching perhaps a small building at the centre. In some respects, the features could be interpreted as an establishment related to the Romano-British ditched villas. The elongated shape, however, is unusual. The only ditched enclosure comparable in plan known to the writer is the crop-mark site at Duncot, near Wroxeter (see below, p. 60-1).

GRAVEL QUARRYING PRIOR TO THE 1957-8 EXCAVATIONS

(Based on mss. account compiled by Professor C. F. C. Hawkes in 1957.)

In 1951, the large gravel pit then worked by Messrs. Allen, which had first been opened farther north between the Dorchester-Abingdon road and a point near the Thames at about SU 970950, was being extended southwards towards the Bishop's Court Rectangle. Pottery, identified as 'Belgic', was found on the spoil heaps and in the filling of pits destroyed by gravel quarrying, and was given to the Ashmolean Museum, Oxford (Accession No. 1951.418).³

At about the same place in 1952, continued working of the pit disclosed more such pottery (Ashmolean Museum, 1952.109), and rubbish pits and part of a ring-ditch. The record of this located the spot as SU 570947,⁴ correcting the reference given in the 1951 record cited above, which was SU 570949. In fact, this second location is also wrong, as SU 570947 is a point in the middle of the river Thames. The true location of these finds must have been farther east, from about SU 57259470 to SU 57259465, although the 'ring-ditch' could have been the irregular circle mentioned above, which lay on the edge of the gravel terrace overlooking the river at the western end of the north side of the Rectangle at SU 571946.

The working of the pit in 1953 reached Allen's 'Trident' crop-marks, about SU 57259460, and showed its three prongs to be three ditches. They proved to contain much pottery (Ashmolean Museum, 1953.59), described as 'Early Romano-British black wares', a lower quernstone (which the Museum did not obtain), and a fragment of samian form 37, dated to the late first or early second centuries A.D.⁵

In about 1954, the continued working of the gravel pit to the south reached the Bishop's Court Rectangle itself, and during the next three years, the whole of the western and much of the central and eastern sectors, were destroyed without record. By 1957, the gravel pit had been taken over by Messrs. Amey's Aggregates Ltd., of Wootton, Berkshire. In November that year, the stripping of topsoil prior to quarrying disclosed human inhumation burials, and the Ashmolean Museum was informed. With the co-operation of Mr. Humphrey Case of the Museum, and under

³ *Oxoniensia*, XVI (1951), 80.

⁴ *Ibid.*, XVII/XVIII (1952-3), 216.

⁵ *Ibid.*, XVII/XVIII (1952-3), 223.

the guidance of Professor C. F. C. Hawkes, emergency excavations were undertaken by Miss M. A. Smith (then Research Assistant to Professor Hawkes), from 6th–15th December. Miss Smith was assisted by undergraduate members of the Oxford University Archaeological Society. In 1958, during the Oxford Trinity Term between 5th May and 20th June, excavations were continued by the Society under the direction of Miss Joanna Close-Brooks. In the following Michaelmas Term, between 6th October and 8th December, work was resumed by the Society under my own direction. During both terms, work was limited to two afternoons each week.

The original draft of this report was prepared in 1966. Measurements in the original site records have not been converted to metric.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Thanks are due to Messrs. Amey's Aggregates Ltd. for permission to excavate, and for their co-operation during the excavation; to Mr. H. J. Case and the Ashmolean Museum for the loan of a vehicle and excavation equipment; to the Oxford University Air Squadron, which arranged for aerial photographs, including Plate IV, A to be taken; to the former Ministry of Public Building and Works for financial assistance; to Mr. D. Britton, Mr. H. J. Case, Professor S. S. Frere, Mr. R. W. Hamilton, Professor C. F. C. Hawkes, the late Sir Ian Richmond and the late Miss M. V. Taylor, all of whom visited the site at various stages during the excavation and gave much welcomed advice; and above all to Professor Hawkes, whose timely initiative saved at least something from the wreckage of what may once have been one of Oxfordshire's more important sites.

EXCAVATION TECHNIQUES AND PROBLEMS

The whole of Miss Smith's work was undertaken in conditions of extreme emergency. It was not possible to halt the quarrying process when the first burials came to light, and the excavation of these, together with adjacent features, was hurriedly done in the short intervals available in the circuits of the two continuously-moving mechanical scrapers. Cuttings 1 and 2 (Sections A–B and I–J) were excavated by Miss Smith during the following week, when the soil overlying the gravel had been completely stripped. In the meantime, the whole of the cemetery area, including the original base-line, had been wrecked by the movement of the machines, and for this reason, the relationship of the burials to the ditches cannot now be determined with precision.

During the excavations of 1958, cuttings were made where possible upon undisturbed ground according to estimates taken from the aerial photographs, or from a survey made by Dr M. J. Aitken with a proton magnetometer. The Bishop's Court Rectangle was one of the first sites to be surveyed with this device, and the first upon gravel. The results of the survey were a useful starting point for the excavations, but were not sufficiently accurate or detailed to enable the remaining part of the site to be planned satisfactorily by this means, or to obtain accuracy in laying out the outtings. In the summer of 1958, Miss Close-Brooks' excavations included Cuttings 3 and 6 (Sections E–F and M–N), Cutting 8 (Section G–H), and, in the eastward-advancing quarry-edge and on the nearby gravel surface

DORCHESTER ON THAMES

BISHOP'S COURT RECTANGLE

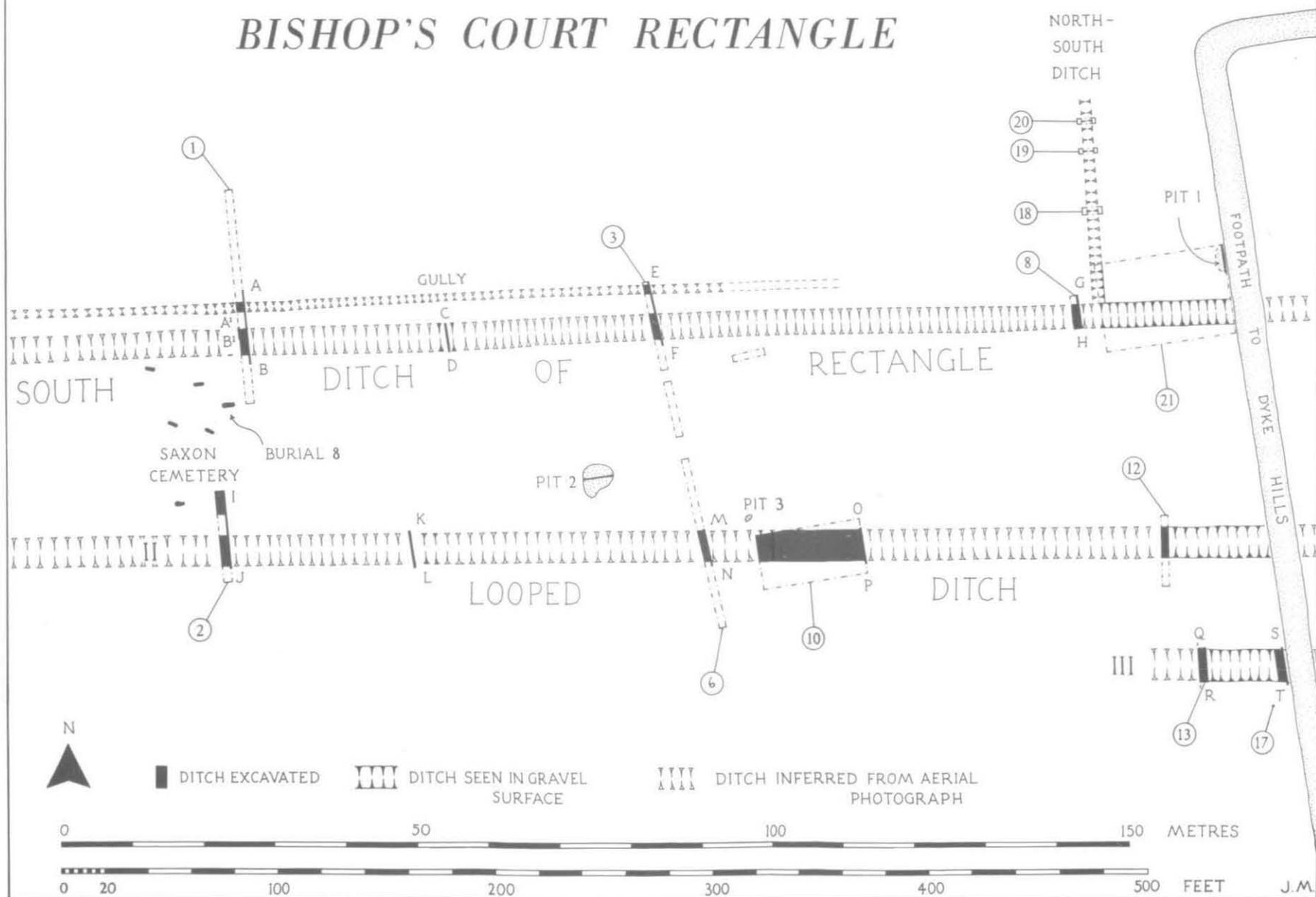


FIG. 2
Dorchester: Bishop's Court Rectangle: general site plan.

stripped of over-burden, Sections C-D and K-L, and Pit 2. In the autumn, an area of land 40-60 ft. wide had been stripped alongside the footpath to Dyke Hills (the spoil being temporarily dumped over and to the west of Cuttings 8 and 12), and the final phase of the excavations concerned features here (Cuttings 11-21) together with Cutting 10, then near the quarry face. The Cutting numbers absent from the plan in FIG. 2 are mainly extended parts of cuttings already shown.

THE BISHOP'S COURT RECTANGLE

Little more than 450 feet of the length of the South Ditch in the central and eastern sectors remained by November 1957. Sections were dug in turn by Miss Smith (Cutting 1, Section A-B), Miss Close-Brooks (Section C-D; Cutting 3, Section E-F; Cutting 8, Section G-H) and myself (Cutting 21). In all cases, the South Ditch appeared to be 10-12 ft. wide and 3-5 ft. deep. These measurements are only approximately those which may have been visible in early times, since it was not possible to determine the level of the ancient ground surface, and also the present width may have resulted in part from re-cutting. In all sections, the ditch appeared roughly U-shaped in profile. Irregularities in outline suggested re-cutting, but this failed to show in section by different soil fillings. Throughout, the fillings consisted of fine, light brown soil, which was homogeneous except for the contrast in refuse content noted by Miss Smith in Section A-B (see below, p. 48). Here pottery and bone was found frequently to a depth of 33 in., but below that level only rarely. There was no trace in either ditch of primary silting, which is surprising in view of the crumbling nature of the gravel sides of the ditches. Only in one of the two sections dug from the modern ground surface (FIG. 3, Section G-H) was there to be seen any trace of a bank inside the ditch, but it must be noted that this section is not a typical one, and the evidence for a bank accompanying the ditch of the Rectangle remains inconclusive. Both Sections A-B and E-F located the small gully running parallel at a distance of 8-12 ft. to the north of the main ditch, seen clearly on Crawford's photograph. This appeared a shallow V-shape in profile, 4 ft. wide and little more than 1 ft. deep, and was filled with uniform brown soil. The gully does not follow the line of the main ditch along its entire length to the east; on the air photograph, it is seen to stop at the first of three short north-south ditches lying inside the Rectangle. Cutting 21 was an area cleared between the easternmost of these and the Dyke Hills footpath, and no continuation of the gully was found here. The final point of general interest is the presence of post-holes along the northern lip of the gully west of Cutting 1 and correspondingly in Section A-B. Four of these were recorded; if they formed part of a fence, the feature must have been local to the area around Cutting 1, since similar post-holes were not observed elsewhere in association with the gully.

The pottery and small finds from the South Ditch are illustrated in FIG. 8 (Roman or British and Saxon), PL. V (Saxon decorated pottery sherds) and FIG. 11 and PL. VI (bronze ornament). Most of these finds came from the upper levels of the ditch filling. Of the few small sherds from the bottom of the ditch in Sections A-B and E-F, very few are datable, and the material is too limited in quantity to give a satisfactory *terminus post quem* for the filling of the ditch. The problem of dating must be approached in a more general way, using pottery from the upper levels of the ditch. Most of this material belongs to the fourth century A.D. The topmost levels of the ditch in Section A-B, and again in Section G-H, which were deposited when the ditches were no more than shallow depressions in the ground, yielded Saxon pottery comparable with that excavated by Professor S. S. Frere in 1962 inside the Romano-British town defences of Dorchester. The Saxon pottery, for reasons similar to those given by Professor Frere, should date to about the sixth century A.D. No pottery was found in the ditches to suggest Saxon occupation during the fifth century. Two coins from the upper levels of the ditch are of Constantine I (after A.D. 330) and Valens (A.D. 364-367). The bronze ornament also came from the upper filling of the ditch, and on grounds of association, should date within the period c.A.D. 350-700.

Although it is apparently unique, a fifth/eighth-century date has been suggested for it on general stylistic grounds, by several specialists to whom it has been shown.

OTHER FEATURES WITHIN THE RECTANGLE

North-South Ditch. The easternmost of the north-south ditches was sectioned at its point of intersection with the South Ditch (Cutting 15), and traced northwards along the side of Cutting 21 (Cutting 14) and beyond for a distance of 80 ft. (Cuttings 18-20). At the intersection, the North-South Ditch was seen to have been cut through by the South Ditch. Pottery from the ditch, however, included fourth-century wares, and the North-South Ditch is likely to belong to the same general period as the Rectangle.

Pit 1. Part of a large pit lay in the north-east corner of Cutting 21. There was evidence for a rough stone lining; there was no clear evidence for a stone-built structure such as a corn-drying oven, but there was burnt clay and earth at the bottom and occasionally higher in the filling. Pottery from the pit belonged to the fourth century A.D.

DETAILS OF THE SECTIONS

CUTTING 1, SECTION A-B (FIG. 3) AND ADJACENT AREA

The topsoil had been previously stripped by machine and the archaeological work was limited to digging out, in arbitrary horizontal layers, the filling of the main South Ditch, the gully parallel to it on the north side, and investigating other near-by features such as post-holes dug into the gravel.

i. *South Ditch.* The ditch here measured 11 ft. 9 in. in width, and 4 ft. 5 in. in depth from the gravel surface. The profile was a wide and slightly irregular U-shape. The filling consisted of brown soil throughout. Above the depth of 33 in., much occupation debris was found; below 33 in. there was very little. The section drawing shows a break in the profile on both sides of the ditch at this depth, and it is possible that re-cutting accounts for the difference in the character of the finds, despite the apparent absence of different soil colour and texture in the two parts of the filling. From the lower level came one tile fragment, animal bones, and from near the bottom at a depth of 52 in. a sherd of colour-coated mortarium. From the top 33 in. came 102 sherds of pottery (FIG. 8, nos. 1-12), the bronze ornament (FIG. 11), a coin of Constantine I dated to after 330 A.D., tile fragments, oyster shells and animal remains. Of the potsherds, 15 were of handmade Saxon wares representing from three to five pots. 14 of these sherds came from level 0-9 in. including the heavily finger-printed ware and the combed ware (PL. V, 1-3). Only one Saxon sherd came from level 9-18 in.; this was the rim, FIG. 8, no. 8. The bronze ornament also came from this level. The remaining 77 sherds were Romano-British, mainly products of local kilns of the fourth century A.D. Although there was no difference in the character of the filling between level 0-9 in., containing the high proportion of Saxon wares, and 9-18 in., containing mainly Romano-British wares, it is evident from the finds that a period of time elapsed during the last stages in the filling of the ditch at this point.

ii. *Pit underlying the South Ditch.* The South Ditch here cut through a small pit (Section A'-B'). The sequence of events was noted by its excavator, Mr. P. J. Fowler, as follows: A saucer-shaped depression about 2 ft. 6 in. to 3 ft. in diameter was excavated, and a small hole dug in its centre. In this hole, the lower part of a small colour-coated bowl was placed, and then covered with a thin layer of soil. A small pink-coloured pebble was found in this soil lying immediately above the bowl base. A deposit, which showed in the section as a clear-cut line of black, flecked with white burnt bone, was then spread in the depression, which was finally filled with earth. At a later date, the Rectangle ditch was dug immediately to the south of the deposit, cutting away half of the burnt material, but not disturbing the colour-coated bowl base. Mr. Fowler also noted that the bowl base showed no trace of burning, and was distinctly separated from the burnt deposit by soil; and that the burning had not taken place in the depression, since there was no sign of burnt soil around the deposit. The bowl base is of an unusual form, but its fabric is matched by that from the near-by Dorchester kiln, the pottery from which is generally dated to the fourth or early fifth centuries A.D. This pit was one of only two features on the site shown to be stratigraphically earlier than the Rectangle and the colour-coated bowl provides the only *terminus post quem* for the digging of the ditch. The burnt bone is analysed in Appendix 5B below.

iii. *Gully.* The gully was located 8 ft. north of the South Ditch, and lay parallel to it. From the gravel surface, it measured 4 ft. in width and 1 ft. 3 in. in depth; on the gravel surface a few feet to the west, however, it narrowed to 2 ft. 9 in. in width. Its profile was a shallow V-shape. The gully was filled with brown soil similar to that in the South Ditch, although a scatter of small pebbles was noted at a depth of 8 in. Finds comprised 61 sherds of Romano-British pottery. Many of these were small fragments from one grey ware jar. This and six other forms are illustrated in FIG. 9, nos. 38-44. The assemblage does not include sherds of the red colour-coated wares so frequently found in the South Ditch.

iv. *Post-Holes.* 1. Section A-B. A small hole, set at an angle in the ground, possibly for a stake. Depth 13 in. Fill: dark brown soil.

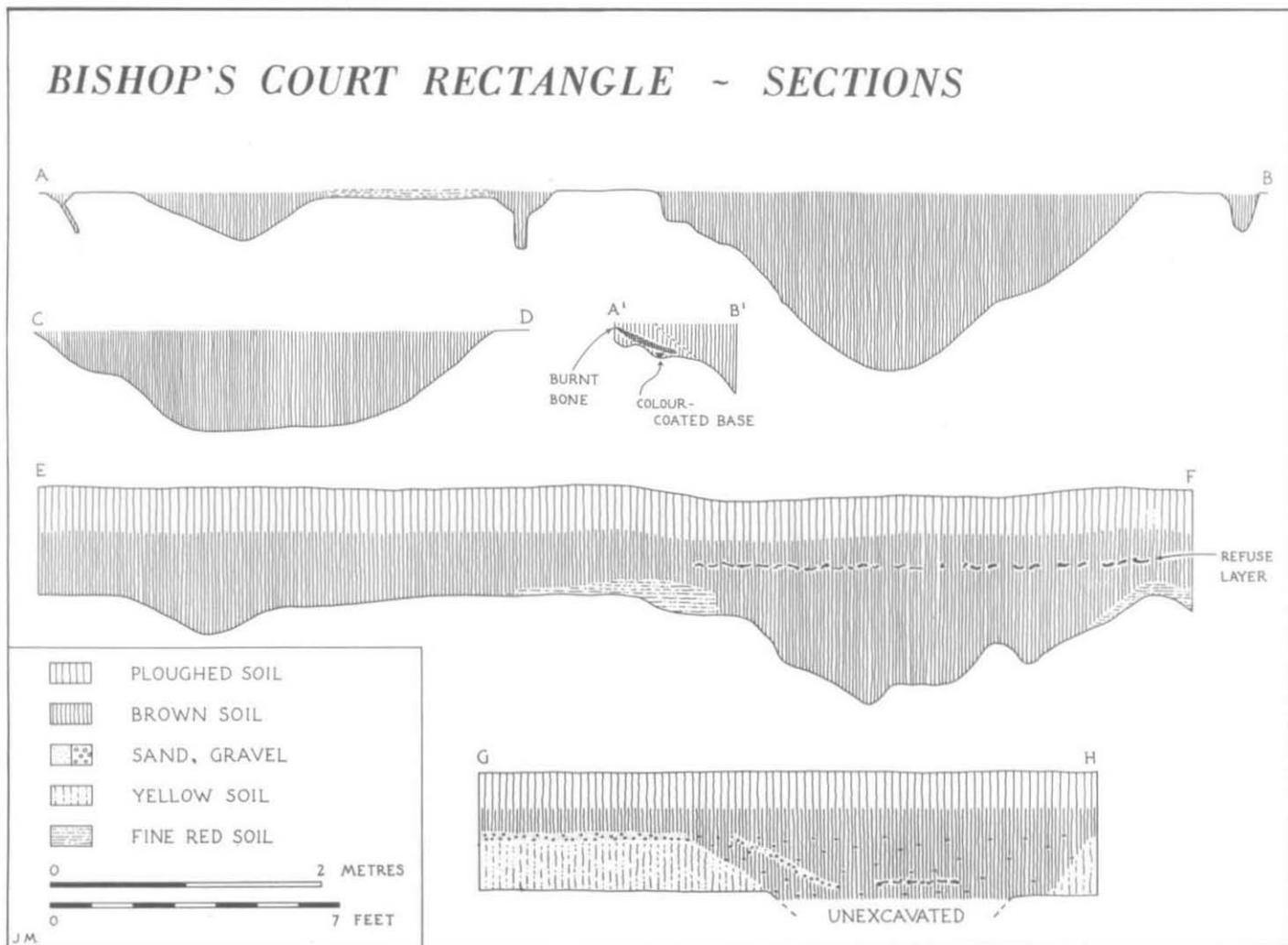


FIG. 3
 Dorchester: Bishop's Court Rectangle: ditch sections.

2. A hole 16½ in. deep from the gravel surface, with a funnel-shaped mouth 18 in. in diameter. The hole had a flat floor, and was filled with a mixture of gravel and soil. The position of this hole, just inside the lip of the South Ditch, suggests the possibility of a fence or revetment to hold back a bank. Although no similar holes were found in other cuttings, Cutting 8 nevertheless gave some indication of the existence of a bank inside the Ditch.

3. In the west side of Cutting 1, 15–28 in. north of the cremation, was another similar post-hole, 14 in. deep and 3½ in. in diameter. This was also characterized by a shallow depression 15 in. in diameter and 5 in. deep at its mouth. The gravel surface was examined to the west of the cutting at this point, but no more post-holes on the north lip of the Ditch were to be seen.

4. On the south side of the South Ditch, in the east side of Cutting 1 (see section A–B), was a hole 10 in. in diameter, 1 ft. deep, and filled with dark soil.

5–7. A further area was cleared along the northern lip of the gully to the west of Cutting 1. Three circular post-holes were located 32 in. apart from centre to centre, and approximately 7 in. in diameter.

SECTION C–D (FIG. 3)

The surface of the gravel here was badly disturbed, and the dimensions of the South Ditch could be recorded only approximately as 11 ft. 6 in. wide and 2 ft. 6 in. deep. Although it was not possible to obtain accurate relative measurements of the depths of the ditches, it was clear that C–D was substantially shallower than A–B. The profile was more regular—a wide U-shape—although an irregularity on the north side could indicate recutting. Again the filling was of homogeneous brown soil, with no indication of stratification. The only find from the ditch was a coin of Valens (364–367 A.D.) from disturbed soil from the upper levels.

CUTTING 3, SECTION E–F (FIG. 3)

Excavated in the summer of 1958 by Miss Close-Brooks, this section was the first to be dug from an undisturbed ground surface. The levels to the surface of the gravel recorded here were subsequently found to extend over most of the site.

Level 1. 0–10 in. Modern ploughed soil.

Level 2. 10–24 in. Fine brown soil with no indication of stratification, and probably disturbed by ploughing, animal activity or roots. Finds included medieval as well as Romano-British material.

Level 3. 24–28 in. Red soil lying immediately over the gravel. Romano-British finds were fairly common; medieval pottery was rare. It is likely that the soil was a natural deposit. It was found filling holes in the gravel surface in Cutting 21, which were taken to be natural solution holes, while certain Romano-British features, such as the ditches, were found to have been cut through it.

i. *South Ditch of the Rectangle.* The proportions here were similar to those in Section C–D. The ditch was 10 ft. 6 in. wide from the gravel surface, and 2 ft. 6 in. deep. The profile, however, was more irregular, and one marked irregularity in particular on the south side suggested re-cutting. The south side showed a slide of red soil into the ditch, but otherwise the filling consisted of undifferentiated brown soil, which became redder only towards the bottom. The marked step in the red soil on the north lip of the ditch is unaccounted for. There was no trace of a bank.

Overlying the ditch, at a depth of 20 in. from the ground surface, was a considerable layer of domestic refuse, which included large quantities of animal bones. Pottery from the rest of the filling of the ditch comprised the typical fourth-century wares of the Oxford region, with a few earlier survivals. No Saxon pottery was recorded.

ii. *Gully.* The gully here was approximately 4 ft. wide and 1 ft. deep; it was V-shaped in profile. It lay 10 ft. north of the South Ditch. It was filled with similar uniform brown soil, and in all respects was comparable at this point with the gully in Section A–B already described.

CUTTING 8, SECTION G–H (FIG. 3)

Excavated in the summer of 1958 by Mr. A. R. L. Selkirk under the general direction of Miss Close-Brooks. The deposits here were apparently different from those encountered elsewhere on the site. Beneath the modern plough soil, there were only 8 in. of the brown soil of Level 2 before the upper levels of the filling of the South Ditch and other features were encountered.

i. *Hearth.* In the north end of the cutting, at the bottom of level 2 at the depth of 16 in., was an irregular oval patch of burnt clay, ¼ in. in thickness. With it was a quantity of burnt bone and charcoal.

ii. *Saxon Refuse Deposit.* In the south end of the Cutting, at the depth of 32 in., was a mass of bone and coarse, hand-made Saxon pottery.

The interpretation of these features is difficult. But judging from the quantity of domestic refuse, and the possibility that the hearth was contemporary (despite the lack of Saxon pottery in any quantity associated with it), it seems possible that the area might have been the site, or close to the site, of a Saxon hut.

iii. *South Ditch of the Rectangle.* The upper levels of the ditch were detectable at a higher level (18 in.) here than elsewhere on the site, because of an admixture of gravel in the brown soil. The ditch appeared to have been cut through a local deposit of 'yellow earth', 15 in. thick, lying directly upon the gravel. This was thought at the time to have been an alluvial deposit, although it was found nowhere else on the site. Lying

upon this yellow earth, and underlying the hearth, on the north edge of the ditch, was a layer of gravel 3 in. thick. A gravel slide, not connected with it, appeared in the section from near the north edge, and descended to the level of the Saxon refuse deposit. Both these features appeared to have been truncated by modern ploughing to a depth of 18 in. The gravel layer north of the ditch might be interpreted as the floor of a Saxon structure; alternatively, it represents the lowest surviving levels of a gravel bank formed inside the enclosure from the up-cast from the South Ditch. If this is so, Section G-H provides the only evidence recovered for a bank inside the ditch of the Bishop's Court Rectangle.

In other respects, the South Ditch here is not typical. At the gravel surface, the width of the ditch was only 6 ft.—little more than half that found elsewhere. The lower levels were not excavated: the Oxford Trinity Term finished before the work was completed, and during the following vacation, the whole area was covered by a large dump of soil stripped from an area beside the footpath to Dyke Hills. The abnormality of the width of the ditch in Section G-H seems best explained by allowing the greater widths of Sections A-B, C-D and E-F, to be accounted for by inexact re-cutting, so that the width seen in Section G-H more nearly corresponds to the intended width of the Rectangle's ditch.

It may be noted that the depth of the undisturbed upper ditch filling at 18 in. from the present surface is approximately the same as that of the layer of undisturbed domestic refuse encountered in Section E-F. It is odd that other Saxon and late Romano-British features, such as a bank, were not found *below* this depth in Section E-F, on the northern edge of the South Ditch. It is just possible that this was due to ploughing on this part of the site between the abandonment of the Rectangle and the deposition of the domestic refuse, *i.e.* in late or sub-Roman or earliest Saxon times. Around Section G-H, the Roman features may have been preserved at a higher level by the presence of overlying Saxon structures.

CUTTING 21

i. *Possible post-holes.* During the summer vacation of 1958, the topsoil was stripped over a wide area beside the footpath to Dyke Hills. Upon the resumption of excavation in the autumn, much time was spent cleaning the surface of the newly-exposed gravel, since this was the first opportunity for area excavation within the Rectangle. A trial cutting here in the summer (Cutting 5) had located what had seemed to be post-holes. The most striking feature in the area was 154 holes in the surface of the gravel, ranging from 3-10 in. in diameter and up to 1 ft. in depth. These were found north of the South Ditch, within the Rectangle; none was found to the south, outside it. There was no clear evidence, from the plan of the holes, for any structures. The holes themselves were filled with the clean red soil of Level 3, and none contained any trace of post or stake, charcoal, pottery, or other small finds, although one small sherd, BC 165, came from the top of one hole. It became clear that, despite their selective distribution, they were of natural origin.

ii. *The South Ditch.* The filling, although not completely removed, was again seen to consist of the brown soil already noted in the sections to the west. The finds were mainly fourth century A.D. in date.

iii. *The North-South Ditch.* Along the western edge of the cutting, it was possible to examine parts of the most easterly of the three short north-south ditches seen inside the Rectangle on Crawford's photograph, and, by cutting into the side of the new soil dump, the relationship of this ditch to the main South Ditch. The section clearly showed that the South Ditch cut through, and was therefore later in date than, the North-South Ditch. The width of the latter was 4 ft. 7 in. at the surface of the gravel; its filling was dark grey soil, which contrasted with the brown soil of the South Ditch. At the intersection, the North-South Ditch became shallower, as if the South Ditch had cut across its termination.

iv. *Pit 1 (FIG. 6).* In the north-east corner of the cutting, a pit was to be seen in the side of the stripped area, lying mainly beneath the footpath to Dyke Hills. It was not possible to excavate this feature properly, nor to learn the extent to which the pit projected westwards into the cutting. It could be seen, however, that the pit had been at least 12 ft. wide from north to south, and had been dug through the topsoil to the surface of the gravel. Along the line of the section, it did not appear to have been dug into the gravel to any appreciable depth. The sides, which were lined roughly with stones and a lump of clay, sloped steeply to the floor of the pit, which was about 7 ft. across in the section. On the bottom lay deposits of red burnt earth, dark soil, and clay, with, at a higher level in the filling, more stones. The section shows two concentrations of burnt material corresponding to hollows in the bottom of the pit. The southern one had a deliberately-laid floor of fired clay, which projected a few inches from the section. This projection had a clearly-defined raised rim or edge, running fairly straight from north to south. This feature seems to have been part of a square or rectangular hearth. Pottery from the pit is illustrated in FIG. 9, nos. 47-53, and is mainly fourth century in date. A minim (No. 7 in the coin list, below), also came from this pit.

CUTTINGS 18, 19, 20

The North-South Ditch Three cuttings were dug through the topsoil to locate the edges of the ditch, but it was not possible to obtain a complete section. The mortarium rim (FIG. 9, no. 46), with the stamp of the second-century A.D. local potter VOSSVLLVS, came from the upper filling of the ditch in Cutting 20. Insufficient material was obtained to provide reliable dating evidence for the North-South Ditch, but one sherd (No. 45) from the filling of the Ditch is of fourth-century date, and the remainder of the pottery need not be inconsistent with this. Approximate contemporaneity with the layout of the Rectangle is likely, despite the suggestion of stratigraphical priority over the South Ditch at the intersection in Cutting 21, and the second-century mortarium rim.

THE SAXON CEMETERY (FIGS. 2 and 4)

Burials 1-5 were excavated by Miss M. A. Smith on Dec. 3 and 6, 1957. None of these was complete, since the inclinations of the skeletons, with skulls somewhat higher than the bones of the feet, resulted in damage to the skulls by the mechanical excavators. The skeletons lay in shallow pits in the surface of the gravel, *i.e.* at depths of approximately

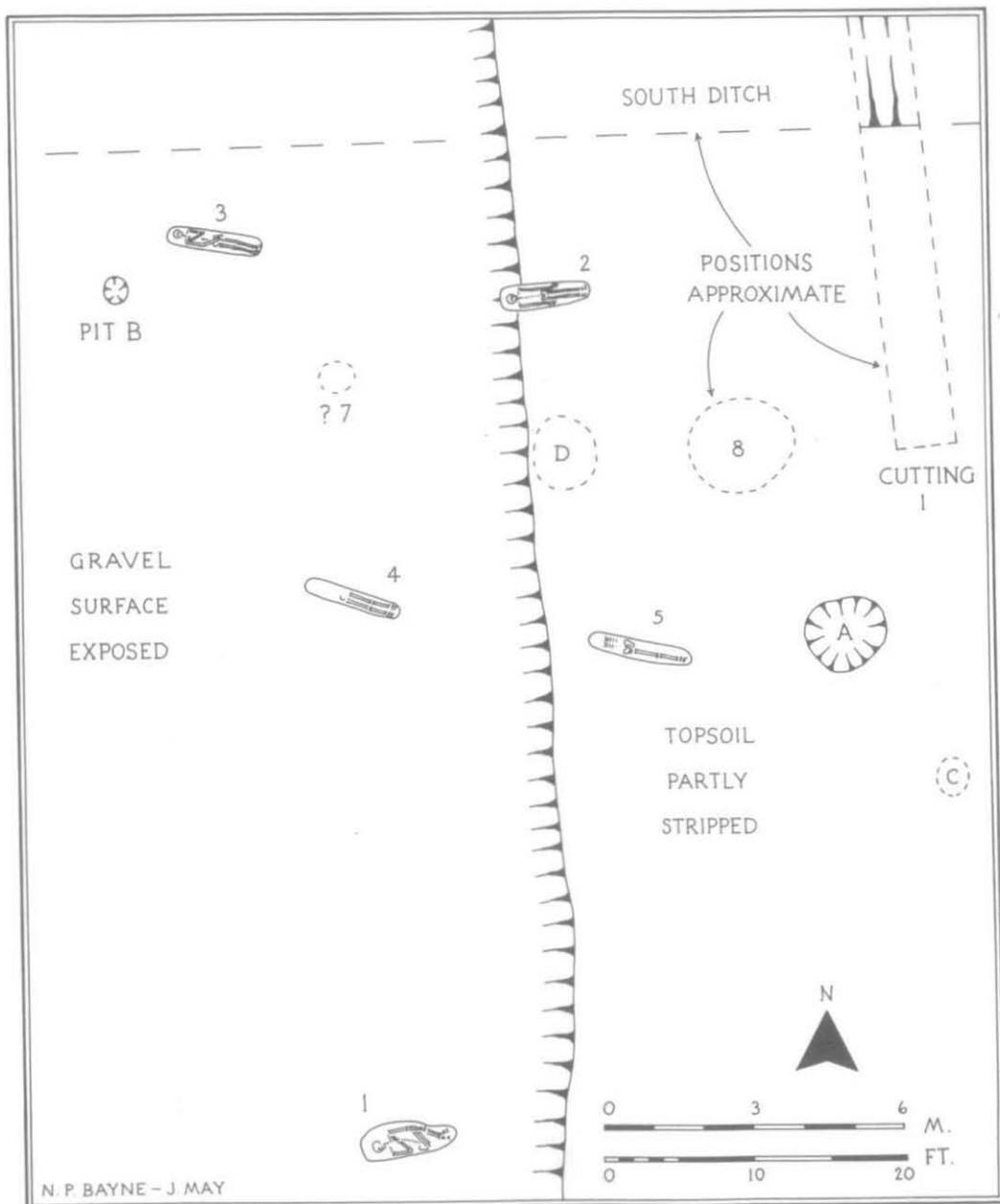


FIG. 4

Dorchester: Bishop's Court Rectangle: plan of Saxon cemetery.

2 ft. 6 in. from the former modern ground surface. All were orientated with their skulls approximately to the west. Extended burial upon the back was the normal practice, but No. 1 was crouched. Beneath No. 1 was a layer of turf forming a cushion beneath the head; this was probably of the only female present. Burial 6 is inferred from stray bones. Burial 7 was observed as a scatter of bones in the track of the mechanical excavator. Burial 8 was excavated independently by Mr. M. H. Wilmott of Culham College; this, the only furnished grave, contained two iron seaxes. The position of Burial 8 was recorded by Miss Smith as being 9 ft. 6 in. west of the south-east corner of Cutting 1; its approximate position was also indicated on a plan of the burials drawn by Mr. N. P. Bayne. Burials 9 and 10 are inferred only from stray bones deposited in the Ashmolean Museum together with the bones from Burial 8 by Mr. Wilmott. Of the more complete skeletons, five are either certainly or probably male, one is probably female, and two are of children, aged 12-15 and 6 years.

The inhumation burials apparently extended to the south of the South Ditch of the Rectangle, and therefore lay outside the enclosure. Although only one burial, No. 8, had grave goods, it is reasonable to assume, on the grounds of proximity and similarity of burial characteristics, that the unfurnished graves were contemporary. The grave goods suggest a date in the Saxon period.

DETAILS OF THE BURIALS

(Compiled from notes by Miss M. A. Smith and Mr. N. P. Bayne)

Burial 1. Adult (?) female. The skeleton was crouched on its left side, with the legs bent at the hips at rather more than 90°. The right forearm lay on the chest, the left forearm by the side; the head was to the west. The body had been laid in a grave dug into the gravel surface. Under the skull was a layer of turf, forming a cushion for the head. There were no grave goods or associated objects.

Burial 2. Child, 12-15 years. The skeleton lay extended, with its arms by its sides and with the skull to the west, in a narrow grave dug into the surface of the gravel. By the right side of the skull was a small pit, 9 in. in diameter and 6 in. deep; it was not clear if this was part of the grave. Two sherds of colour-coated ware were found by the skull, a fragment of brick was found by the right clavicle, and a sherd of black Saxon pottery was found on top of the ribs.

Burial 3. Adult male. The skeleton lay extended, with its left forearm bent across the chest and the right forearm across the abdomen. The skull was to the west. The grave had been dug into the surface of the gravel. There were no grave goods or associated objects.

Burial 4. Adult male. The skeleton lay extended with the head to the west. Only the leg bones were well-preserved.

Burial 5. Adult (?) male. The skeleton lay extended with the skull to the west. The legs were at a slight angle to the thorax.

Burial 6. Inferred from 'extra' bones boxed with those of Burial 2. No record of location.

Burial 7. Mr. Bayne noted and planned a 'scatter of unidentified bone fragments S.E. of feet' of Burial 3, and that these 'could be fragments of a skeleton dispersed by the bull-dozer'. A few bones from another skeleton were boxed with those from Burial 3, and it is very likely that they came from this area.

Burial 8. Adult (?) male. This burial was excavated by Mr. M. H. Wilmott of Culham College. The skeleton apparently lay extended. The only grave goods from the entire group were found with this skeleton, and comprised a long iron seax, which lay on the right thigh with its handle towards the feet, and a smaller seax which lay under the body.

(?) *Burial 9.* See Appendix 4.

(?) *Burial 10.* See Appendix 4.

OTHER FEATURES NEAR THE BURIALS (FIG. 4)

Pit A. A roughly circular pit about 5 ft. in diameter at the gravel surface. Six inches of the top filling were removed, and these contained much animal bone, charcoal and Romano-British pottery.

Pit B. A shallow pit lying to the south west of Burial 3. It measured 2 ft. in diameter and 1 ft. in depth, and was filled with brown soil. No finds were recorded.

Pit C. A small area of charcoal and crushed brick.

Pit D. A scatter of broken animal bones.

THE LOOPED DITCH

About 80 ft. south of the Bishop's Court Rectangle lay a double ditch system some 800 ft. in length. This was first observed by the late Major G. W. G. Allen from the air in 1933 as a cropmark. His photograph (PL. IV, B) shows clearly a pair of ditches diverging to the east of the footpath to Dyke Hills, and terminating in an asymmetrical loop. The western end, which lay within the area of the present excavations, shows very faintly on the original photograph, as does the South Ditch of the Rectangle to the north of it. On the plan (FIG. 2), the northern arm of the Looped Ditch has been numbered Ditch II, and the southern arm Ditch III. During the 1957-8 excavations six sections were obtained across Ditch II (Cuttings 2, 6, 12 and 11, and Section K-L in the side of the advancing gravel pit), and a length of its lowest filling was cleared where it was exposed in the surface of the gravel (Cutting 10). Three sections were dug across Ditch III (Cuttings 13, 16 and 17). The most informative of these sections are illustrated in FIG. 5.

Ditch II. The four sections of Ditch II (I-J, K-L, M-N, O-P) show that the northern arm of the Looped Ditch was 11-14 ft. wide, and filled with a uniform brown soil. The width, however, was determined by the recutting of the ditch in two or more places. Only Section O-P showed evidence of the differentiation of filling in two separate phases. Elsewhere, the presence of recutting may be inferred from the irregularities in the profiles. The recutting was not done systematically, and the strikingly different profiles of the same ditch suggest haphazard or piecemeal work. The irregularities in the profiles contrast with the alignment of the ditch over its whole length, which gives the impression of a careful and precisely straight lay-out. In Cutting 10, the bottom of the ditch in the surface of the gravel appeared as two parallel gullies, with marked irregularities in depth along each length. Although small quantities of gravel appear in Section I-J and O-P, there was no evidence of the use to which the gravel upcast from the ditch had been put, nor was there any clear trace of a bank. On the north side of Section M-N, the ditch had been cut through a local deposit of fine soil overlying the gravel. Finds were sparse in all sections, but several sherds of Romano-British pottery and tile came from the lower filling; Saxon pottery was found in the uppermost filling in one cutting.

Ditch III. The two sections of Ditch III (Q-R and S-T) show that the original digging of the southern arm of the Looped Ditch was in the form of a shallow U-shape, penetrating the gravel by about 24-30 inches. Both sections differed from those of Ditch II in having considerable quantities of gravel in the lowest filling. Recutting had taken place along the length of this ditch, but again a difference from Ditch II was to be seen in the relatively shallow depth of the recut, and by its clear differentiation in soil filling. Finds were very sparse but a sherd of Romano-British tile came from the lower filling in one section, and Saxon pottery from the uppermost filling.

Ditch I. The northern end of Miss Smith's Cutting 2 located another ditch, Ditch I (Section I-J and plan, FIG. 2). A few sherds of pottery suggested a Romano-British date.

Pit 2. A roughly triangular pit 14 ft. long lay about 20 ft. north of the Ditch II west of Cutting 6. Its filling contained much stone, but as with Pit 1 in the Rectangle, there was no clear evidence for a structure. The filling also contained much burnt material and charcoal, and fourth-century A.D. pottery. The pit may have been a corn-drying oven.

Pit 3. A small oval pit 3 ft. 6 in. long, lay about 2 ft. north of Ditch II near Cutting 10. Soil burnt *in situ* lay in the bottom, and the upper filling contained charcoal and burnt bone. A small sherd of red colour-coated pottery also came from the filling.

DETAILS OF THE SECTIONS (FIG. 5)

LOOPED DITCH, NORTH ARM (Ditch II) AND ADJACENT FEATURES

CUTTING 2, SECTION I-J

Excavated in December 1957 by Miss Smith. The topsoil had been previously removed by machine, and the archaeological work was limited to digging out, in arbitrary horizontal layers, the filling of Ditch II, and the other ditch, Ditch I, which lay to the north.

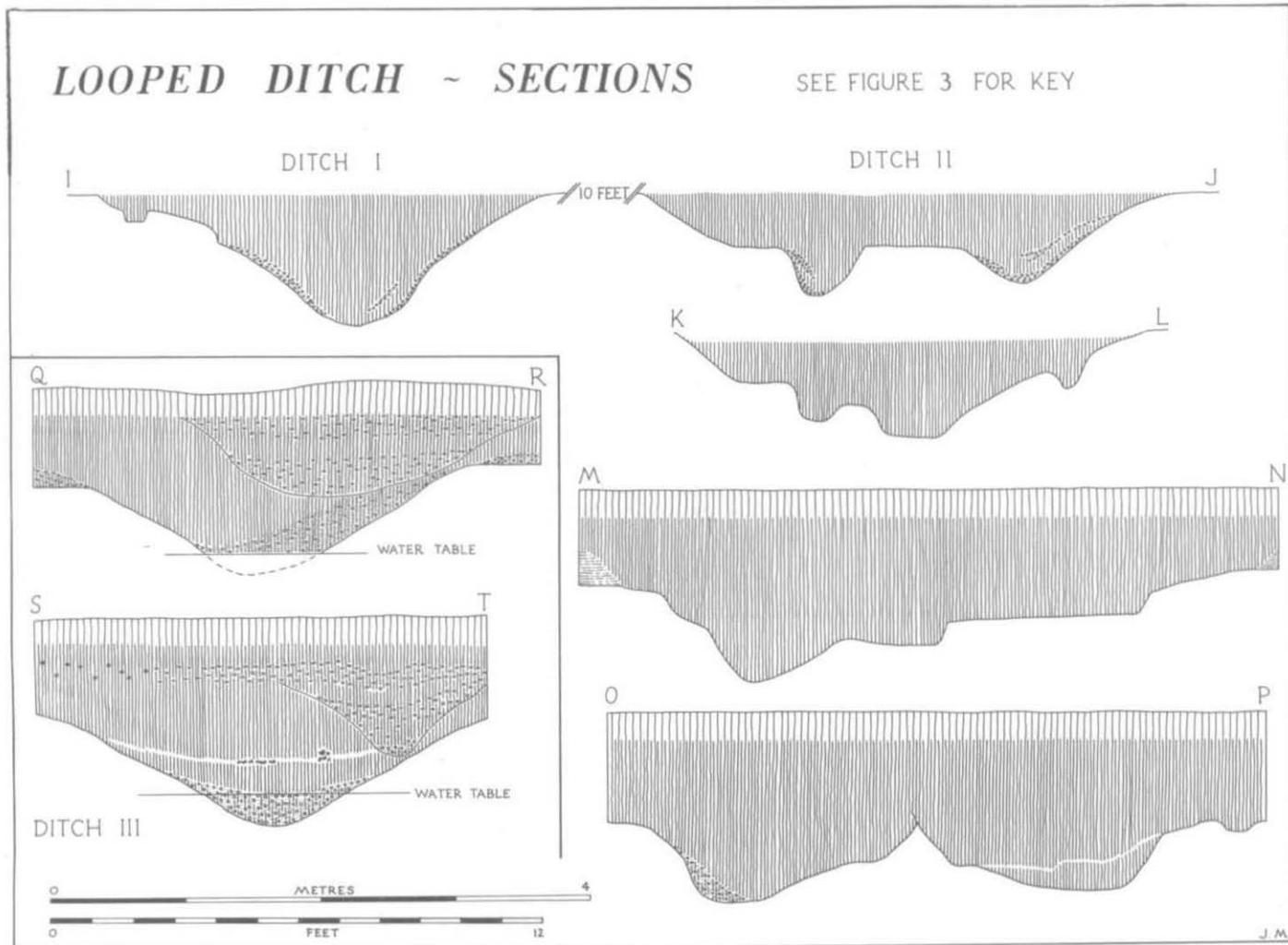


FIG. 5
Dorchester: Looped Ditch: sections.

i. *Ditch I*. Eleven feet wide, with a longer, gentler slope on the north side. Depth 3 ft. 3 in. from the gravel surface. The profile was U-shaped, and the filling was of brown soil with thin lenses of gravel at the sides. Ditch I was not located in any of the cuttings further to the east. As the gravel quarrying proceeded eastwards from Cutting 2, the ditch was reported by a machine operator to have 'gone round in a circle'. It seems unlikely that Ditch I formed a ring-ditch, however, since such a distinctive feature would certainly have been noticed by Miss Smith in the surface of the gravel during the excavation of Cutting 2. The machine operator's remark suggests that the ditch may have curved round, presumably to the north. The small, flat-bottomed hole in the section on the north lip of the ditch was thought to be modern.

Few finds were made. One Romano-British sherd and two tile fragments came from the top 9 in. of the ditch filling, and another sherd came from about 21 in. depth, *i.e.* about 18 in. from the bottom. A very small quantity of animal bone was found scattered from 9-24 in. in depth. A Romano-British date seems probable on this evidence.

ii. *Ditch II* (North arm of the Looped Ditch). Separated from Ditch I by an interval of 10 ft. Overall width 13 ft. After a shallow decline from the lips, the ditch subdivided into a northern and southern channel, 2 ft. 7 in. and 2 ft. 3 in. in depth respectively, with a platform 2 ft. wide between them at a depth of 1 ft. 4 in. from the gravel surface. Apart from thin lenses of gravel at each side, the filling of the entire ditch section was a uniform brown soil. The channels, however, clearly suggest two phases of digging, and the intervening platform, and the break in the slope on the north side, may represent others. No pottery was found in the filling, and only a small amount of bone was found over the southern channel, at a depth of about 21 in.

SECTION K-L

During the summer of 1958, the quarrying moved eastwards along the line of the Looped Ditch, and the section was exposed in successive faces of the pit (It may be noted, however, that the south arm of the Looped Ditch, Ditch III, was not likewise observed). Section K-L was damaged by the weight of machinery passing over it, but enough survived to show that the ditch filling here was of uniform brown soil, and that the profile was very irregular, suggesting several phases of recutting. No finds were made.

CUTTING 6, SECTION M-N

Excavated in the early summer of 1958 by Miss Close-Brooks. The ditch was here about 16 ft. wide, and had been cut to a maximum depth of 3 ft. through a local patch of red soil overlying the gravel. The filling was of uniform brown soil. The profile was irregular, but differed markedly from sections I-J and K-L. While the northern channel was of the more usual U-shape, the southern side of the profile showed two broad, flat steps, 2 ft. 6 in. and 4 ft. 6 in. wide respectively. Each of these, presumably, marked a stage of recutting. No finds were made in the lower filling of the ditch.

CUTTING 10, SECTION O-P

Excavated in the autumn of 1958. The ditch was observed in the surface of the gravel in the form of two parallel channels, each one clearly representing one stage of digging. A gap 10 ft. wide on the south side resulted from relatively shallow digging along this part of the length. The section itself, which formed the edge of the machine stripped area at the time of excavation, showed two main phases of digging, and it was just possible to see that the southern channel intersected the northern channel, and was therefore later in date. At the surface of the gravel, the northern channel was 7 ft. wide and 2 ft. deep, and had a layer of gravel against the north side. The southern channel was also 7 ft. wide, and was 1 ft. 9 in. deep. The filling of the southern, and most of the northern, channel, consisted of brown soil. A small piece of burnt wood lay horizontally upon the gravel at the bottom of the south channel. Finds from both channels consisted of Romano-British pottery.

CUTTINGS 11 AND 12 (Not illustrated)

Excavated in the autumn of 1958, but the high water-table at the time prevented excavation to the bottom of the ditches. In Cutting 12, which was cut at the side of an area stripped by machine, the ditch was 17 ft. wide overall, but the section showed two channels. The northern channel intersected with the southern channel, and was therefore later in date. It may be noted that this is the reverse of the position of the channels in Section O-P, and suggests that the channels crossed in the area between Cuttings 10 and 12. Romano-British and Saxon pottery, and animal bones, were recovered from the uppermost filling of the northern channel; a large sherd from the rim of a Romano-British tile came from a position low in the filling of the earlier southern channel.

The course of the ditch was seen as one wide channel in the surface of the gravel between Cutting 12 and the footpath to Dyke Hills, and Cutting 11 removed part of its upper filling in this area.

LOOPED DITCH, SOUTH ARM (Ditch III) AND ADJACENT FEATURES

CUTTING 13, SECTION Q-R

The south arm of the Looped Ditch was seen for the first time in the autumn of 1958 in the area stripped of topsoil alongside the footpath to Dyke Hills. Cutting 13 was dug along the western edge of the stripped area, and the section drawing here has been reversed so that it may be more easily compared with Section S-T. Two phases of ditch digging were apparent. The primary ditch was about 10 ft. wide and 2 ft. 6 in.

in depth below the gravel surface. In profile, it was U-shaped. The bottom was unexcavated, as it penetrated the water table. Thin layers of dirty gravel lay on each lip, but the thickness of these layers (3-6 in.) did not suggest the presence of a bank in either case. There was, however, a very considerable layer of earth mixed with gravel against the south side of the ditch, and this could possibly have come from a bank to the south of, *i.e.* outside, the Looped Ditch. The evidence is inconclusive, however, as the position of this layer was not repeated in Cuttings 16 and 17 to the east. A sherd of brick and a quantity of animal bones came from the ditch filling.

Dug into the upper filling of the ditch on the south side was a secondary ditch whose sides could be detected as high as the bottom of the ploughed soil. The ditch was nearly 9 ft. wide, 2 ft. deep, and in profile was U-shaped. Its filling consisted of nearly horizontal layers of brown soil, and brown soil with gravel admixture. No finds were made.

CUTTING 16 (Not illustrated)

A second cutting was made across the south arm of the Looped Ditch some 16 ft. east of Cutting 13. The section was not completed, however, because of the high water-table.

CUTTING 17, SECTION S-T

Excavated against the east side of the stripped area, where Ditch III ran beneath the footpath to Dyke Hills. As in Section Q-R, the ditch exhibited two phases. The primary ditch was about 10 ft. wide, and 2 ft. 6 in. in depth below the gravel surface. In profile it was U-shaped. The filling at the bottom, which was below the water-table, consisted of dirty gravel, but it lay symmetrically, and there was no suggestion of an origin from one side or other of the ditch. The upper part of the filling consisted of brown soil, and, at a depth of 1 ft. from the gravel surface, a group of animal bones. These were the only finds from Section S-T. Dug into the upper filling of the ditch on the south side, as in Section Q-R, was the secondary ditch. At this point, it was little more than 5 ft. wide and 2 ft. deep, and its profile was narrower and more V-shaped than in Section Q-R. The filling consisted of alternating layers of brown soil, and brown soil with gravel admixture. No finds were made.

PIT 2 (FIG. 6)

A large roughly triangular pit was exposed in the gravel surface during the quarrying. In the short time available for its investigation, it was possibly only to excavate a section along the long axis. The pit was roughly lined with pieces of limestone, and the filling consisted of soil with much charcoal, limestone and other stone. A secondary depression to the east of the centre had a layer of charcoal 4 in. thick in its bottom part. Above this, the section showed pieces of coursed stone, possibly part of a collapsed structure. The filling also contained a considerable quantity of fourth-century pottery and tile fragments. In size and in section, the pit bore some resemblance to Pit 1 in the Rectangle. Its function was not determined. If it had not been for drying corn, either its structure had been severely damaged or dismantled, or it was of unusual type.

PIT 3 (FIG. 6)

A small oval pit measuring 3 ft. 6 in. by 2 ft. was noted during the gravel quarrying east of Cutting 6. It lay about 2 ft. from the north edge of Ditch II. In section, it appeared to have two phases. A shallow depression about 18 in. across, and containing brown soil with unburnt bone, overlay the south-western end of a larger oval pit about 2 ft. 9 in. long and 6 in. deep. The bottom filling of the latter consisted of 2 in. of soil burnt red; overlying this, and filling the remainder of the pit, was a layer of brown soil containing much charcoal and burnt bone. There were no datable finds.

THE TIMBER BUILDING

(Based on a report by R. E. Lington, who supervised the excavation.)

The site was noticed in the gravel surface on the edge of the gravel pit some 350 ft. south of the Bishop's Court Rectangle. It consisted of an end or side of a timber structure of two constructional periods. In both periods, the structure probably had a central entrance. Unfortunately, the gravel digging had destroyed the greater part of the structure before the site was discovered; the mechanical removal of overburden had destroyed any floor levels which might have existed.

Period I. The remains consisted of the south-west corner and parts of the western and southern sides of a wooden building constructed by the sleeper beam technique. The south side was interrupted, and a patch of undisturbed gravel had been left; this possibly represents the position of the entrance. Irregular gravel digging had removed the second, south-eastern corner, but assuming a symmetrical lay-out, its position can be presumed fairly accurately. There was a possible extension at the south-west corner, but the area here had been badly disturbed by animal burrows.

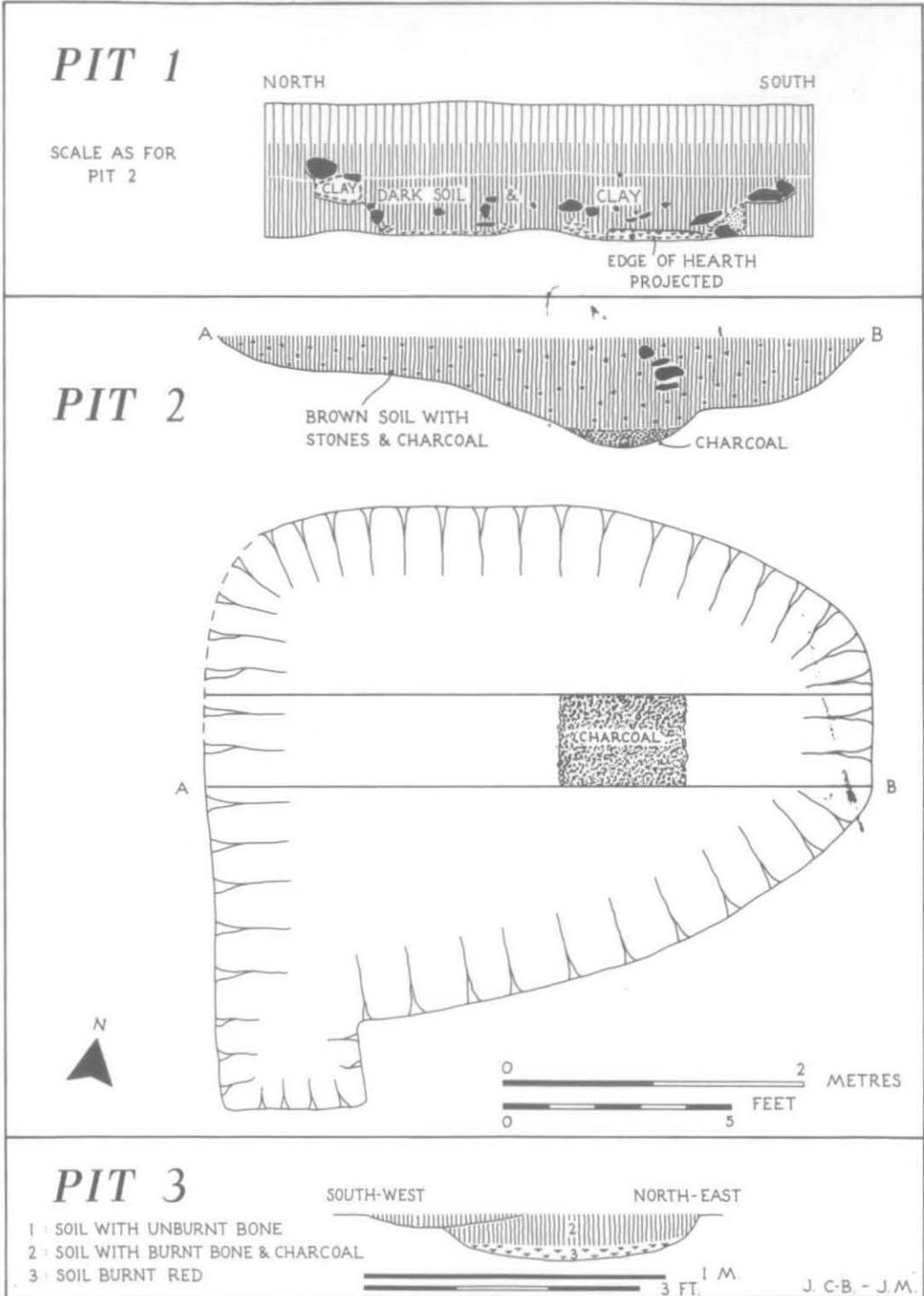


FIG. 6

Dorchester: Bishop's Court Rectangle: plan and sections.

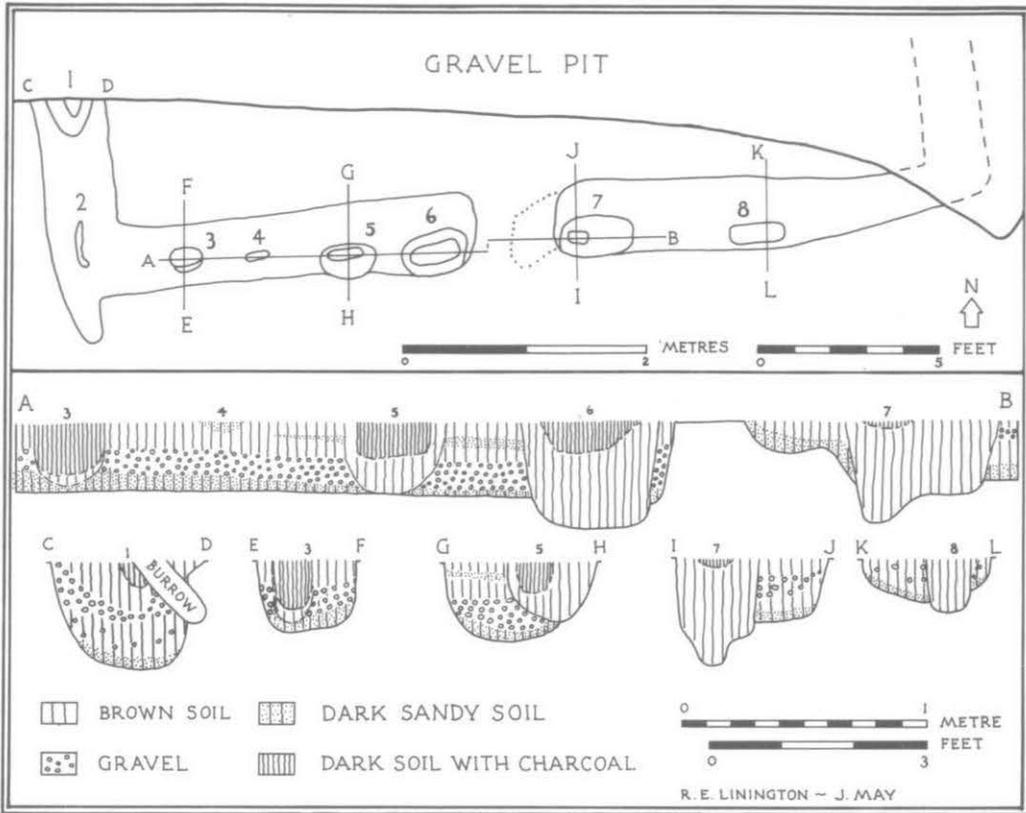


FIG. 7
Dorchester: Timber Building: plan and sections.

The structure remained in use for an unknown period until it was demolished. The timbers were then removed, and the trenches were partly filled. The site remained derelict long enough to allow the trenches to become completely filled with silted soil and collapsed gravel.

Period II. A new timber building of a very similar plan replaced the first building. The construction consisted of a series of rectangular posts about 12 in. by 5 in. in cross section, with presumably wattle and daub in between. Impressions of slots caused by thinner timbers and wattles were found between some of the post-holes. The arrangement at the corner, as stated above, had been confused by animal burrows, but it is possible that a corner post existed. The two post-holes in the centre of the south side, Nos. 6 and 7, were larger than the others, and the spacing was different. This arrangement, corresponding as it does to the patch of undisturbed gravel of the first period building, again is probably one of the entrances to the building.

The Period II building was also demolished, and the timbers were removed, in some cases destroying the outline of their sockets. At least part of the building material was burnt. The empty post sockets filled fairly rapidly with soil and debris from the demolition.

Date. Two small sherds of hand-made ware were found in the silting of the Period I sleeper beam trench. No finds were associated with the Period II building. The sherds are very probably Iron Age, but could well be rubbish survivals in a Romano-British structure.

THE PURPOSE OF THE BISHOP'S COURT RECTANGLE

No clear evidence of the purpose of the site was recovered from the excavations, yet new facts emerged, which, considered together with the evidence from the aerial photograph, allow several possibilities to be discussed. Certainty can now only come with fresh evidence from the last few square yards of the south-eastern corner of the Rectangle which still survive to the east of the footpath to Dyke Hills, or from the excavation of a comparable site elsewhere.

1. *Romano-British farmstead.* Ditched enclosures, with recutting of the ditches, and sometimes internal divisions, buildings, pits and ovens, are all features consistent with the site's interpretation as a Romano-British agricultural establishment. The most regular lay-outs known, however, such as the elaborate villa at Ditchley⁶ or the simpler establishment at Cromwell (Notts.)⁷ are broader in relationship to length. The humbler farm enclosures, such as are commonly found on the gravel terraces of the Thames⁸ and elsewhere⁹ are less regular in layout, and similarly broader in relationship to length. The 4:1 length-breadth ratio of the Bishop's Court Rectangle makes this interpretation less likely although not impossible. Other evidence in favour of such an explanation, however, is the probability that the Rectangle dates to within the Roman period, and that Pits 1 and 2 were corn-drying ovens.

2. *A Roman river port.* The position of the Rectangle suggests a purpose in which the river Thames played a part. It may be recalled that an early third-century altar was discovered at Dorchester, set up by M. Varius Severus, a *beneficarius consularis*.¹⁰ An official concerned with supplies, some of which could have been water-borne, might be expected to have had charge of an establishment convenient for storing and shipping commodities such as grain, in the vicinity of the town. The clearly later date of the Rectangle makes this interpretation difficult to sustain, and so does the position of the site relative to the river bank. One might suppose that an enclosed port would lie along the river rather than at right angles to it, in order to allow for maximum river frontage for wharves or landing stages, and minimum haulage of goods stacked or housed nearby.

3. *Roman military establishment.* The regular layout of the site would support the view that the Rectangle was engineered by the Roman army. The closest parallel in plan to the Dorchester site is the long rectangular enclosure discovered from the air in 1963 at Duncot, about 1½ miles north-east of Wroxeter. The similarity of the two sites is very striking. Duncot measures about 780 ft. by 240 ft., and is very similar in size to the Bishop's Court Rectangle. Both sites are close to Roman towns, and lie roughly at right angles to rivers. The Duncot site was tentatively identified by Dudley and Webster as a fort of the mid-first century A.D.¹¹ Limited excavation in 1974 showed that the ditches at Duncot were indeed both V-shaped in profile, about one metre deep, and had slots in the bottom. The upper filling of the ditches contained pottery dated to the mid second century A.D., although

⁶ S. S. Frere, *Britannia* (1967), Pl. 23a.

⁷ *Ibid.*, Pl. 23b.

⁸ J. E. G. Sutton, 'A Late Romano-British Site at Wally Corner, Dorchester', *Oxoniensia*, xvi/xvii (1961-2), 7-18.

⁹ Royal Commission on Historical Monuments, *A Matter of Time* (1960).

¹⁰ *C.I.L.*, VIII, 83.

¹¹ D. R. Dudley and G. Webster, *The Roman Conquest of Britain A.D. 43-57* (1965), 142 and Fig. 39.

apparently not in quantity.¹² Although the character of the Duncot site is far from clear, both in ditch profiles and probable date it differs from the Rectangle. A late Roman military origin for the Dorchester site remains a remote possibility, although it may be supposed that garrisons in the later fourth century were normally quartered within existing forts or walled towns.

4. *Saxon bishop's cathedral.* An unusual structure of apparently late or post Roman date at Dorchester inevitably raises the question of the location of the cathedral of Birinus, the first bishop of the West Saxons, 635–650 A.D. Modern tradition relates the site to this part of Dorchester: Bishop's Court Farm lies little more than 200 yards north-east of the Rectangle, and the name can be traced back to the mid-sixteenth century, when 'le Byshoppes Courte' was recorded in a survey of 1551–2.¹³ Several considerations make this explanation unlikely. The Romano-British pottery from the South Ditch belongs mainly to the later fourth-early fifth centuries. Saxon pottery of presumably sixth-century date was found in Section A–B to a depth of 24 in. although in small quantities, at about the same level as the bulk of the Romano-British pottery. No Saxon pottery was found below this level. Romano-British pottery, however, was likewise absent from the depth of 33 in., apart from two small sherds from the very bottom of the ditch at 52 in. Section A–B could be used to support a seventh-century date for the Rectangle. However, the situation is different in the two sections in the eastern sector of the Rectangle. Romano-British pottery was found in Section E–F at all levels, but no Saxon was recorded at all. In Section G–H, Saxon pottery was found in the upper levels only, and although the ditch was not excavated fully in this section, there appeared a lower level in which Romano-British pottery alone was found. Again, if the Rectangle belonged to the seventh century A.D., a more even distribution of the Saxon pottery in the filling might be expected rather than a concentration, where present at all, in the upper filling. Acceptance of a seventh-century date requires acceptance of the Saxon pottery as well as the Romano-British as rubbish survival, and the concentration of Saxon pottery in the upper fillings as fortuitous.

THE FINDS

The finds are listed in stratigraphical order, and unstratified material has been omitted unless of intrinsic interest. Additional comments on the Roman and Saxon pottery were contributed by Mr. C. J. Young and Miss F. Berisford respectively; the seax was identified by Dr. T. M. Dickinson. More detailed notes on certain categories of finds (samian pottery, coins, flints and human and animal skeletal remains) form appendices at the end of the catalogue. All finds have been deposited in the Ashmolean Museum, Oxford. Each is marked with the code BC, followed by the original bag number allocated when the material was excavated. The Site Diary, which also contains a register of finds, is also deposited in the Museum, together with a file of drawings, correspondence and other papers. Bag-numbers 1–115 were allocated by Miss Close-Brooks, and numbers 116–254 by myself. Miss Smith's material was marked later, with the numbers 257–291.

¹² A. W. J. Houghton, 'A Roman fort at Duncot, north of Wroxeter (SJ/575015)', *West Midlands Archaeological News Sheet*, 18 (1975), 43–5. D. R. Wilson *et al.*, 'Roman Britain in 1974' *Journal of Roman Studies*, 6 (1975), 247.

¹³ M. Gelling, *The Place Names of Oxfordshire*, English Place Name Society, Vol. 23, I (1953), 152.

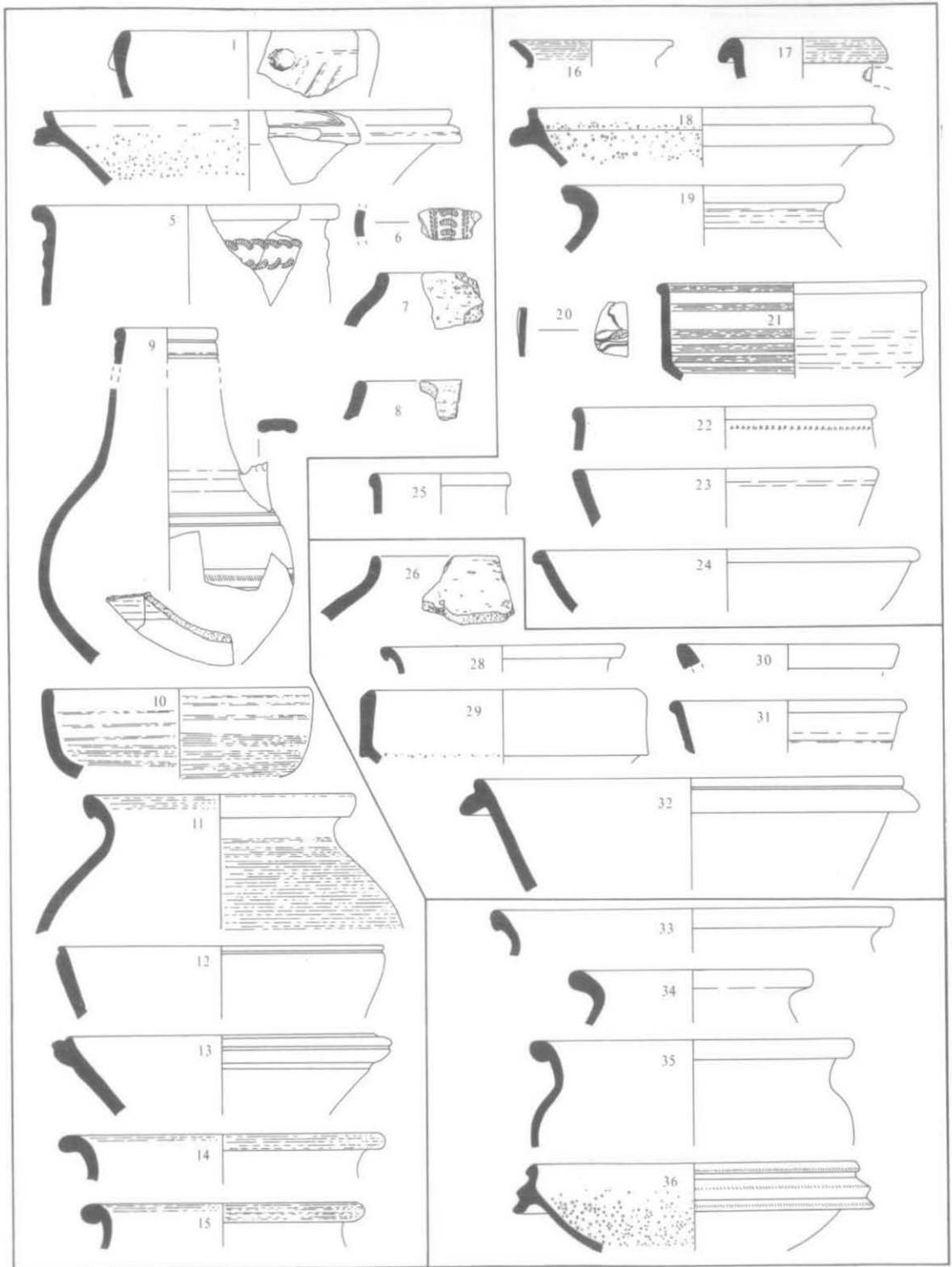


FIG. 8

Dorchester: Bishop's Court Rectangle: pottery from the South Ditch. Scale 1 : 4.

BISHOP'S COURT RECTANGLE, SOUTH DITCH (FIG. 8 and PL. V)

CUTTING I, SECTION A-B

South Ditch, depth 0-9 in.

1 Dish with slightly inturned rim, in hard pale grey ware with buff surfaces; a roughly-raised knob on the side could have been one of several. Although the form indicates Roman date, the ware is unusual (BC 260).

2 Mortarium in brick red ware with grey core and cream slip; part of the spout survives; translucent brown grits and quartz. Common 4th-century form; Oxon. product (BC 260).

Also: samian sherd, Walters form 29, late 2nd century (see Appendix 2, No. 4); 23 other sherds of Romano-British coarse ware (BC 260).

3 (See PL. V, 1) One of six or more body sherds of a vessel in coarse hand-made ware, brown outside and black and smoothed almost to a burnish inside. Six sherds show horizontal lines of rough thumb-and-finger pinching, with deep cuts into the clay caused by the fingernail. A very similar sherd came from the destruction level of the Saxon hut within the town of Dorchester,¹⁴ dated tentatively to around the middle of the 6th century A.D. Two vessels with similar decoration from the cemetery at Lackford, Suffolk¹⁵ were associated with, but perhaps later than, a number of plain pots, one of which contained a glass vessel of Harden's Type XIa (the 'York' bowl type), which Harden dates to the 5th century A.D.¹⁶ Lethbridge, however, considered the Lackford vessels to be late 6th century, but this is not necessarily inconsistent with Harden's date for the glass, which probably came from an underlying cremation.

(I am indebted to Dr. J. N. L. Myres for this comment.)

4 (See PL. V, 2 and 3) Two sherds, probably from the same vessel, in coarse, hand-made grey-brown ware filled with finely-crushed quartz grits and mica. The exterior surfaces have been combed vertically, and at first sight the sherds resemble late Iron Age wares. But these again may be paralleled in the destruction level of the Saxon hut at Dorchester¹⁷ although this vessel is apparently both horizontally and vertically combed. There are comparisons also at other local sites. The important correlation with the combed pottery from Cassington Hut E3, which produced a failed casting of a saucer brooch belonging to the second half of the 6th century A.D., is the clearest indication at present of the date both of our pottery and similar wares from inside the town (BC 260).

Also: 2 other sherds of hand-made Saxon pottery in black gritty ware with mica (BC 260).

FIG. 13. 9 iron objects (two not illustrated). Each consists of a flat strip of metal, with shallow concave sides, and convex ends each pierced by a rivet or nail. Two of these pieces fit together (No. 1), and it is possible that the other seven joined in a similar way to form four or more pairs. The workmanship of the pieces is poor. Although they are roughly similar in shape, the sizes vary, and the rivets are often irregularly placed. All show traces of wood on the inside, with the grain running across the metal strips. The wood is sometimes curved around the rivet shanks, showing that the latter were hammered through it. Two strips show traces of cloth adhering to their outer sides, but whether the cloth covered the metal strips when in use, or whether the strips came into contact with the cloth only after deposition, is not certain. Several of the strips and nails were bent, suggesting that they were deliberately wrenched from the construction for which they had been used. Conservation revealed that the surfaces had been decorated. The pattern is a double line of herring-bone, made by punching into the metal.

The joining of the two strips, and the presence of the wood on the inside, suggests that the objects were cleats perhaps for fastening together planks of wood. Single strips with rivets of similar size are sometimes found in Anglo-Saxon graves.¹⁸ The Dorchester objects are likely to have been for joining planks in some smaller woodwork such as the making of furniture or coffins. The double clamp suggests a construction to be subjected to some movement or stress, otherwise a simple staple would have sufficed to make a join.

South Ditch, depth 9-18 in.

5 Bowl in overfired brick-red ware with grey core and dark brown colour coat. Below the rim is a double band of stamps, probably one circular stamp applied lightly to two slight cordons so that the intervening groove remained unstamped. Variant of the common wall-sided bowl produced in the Oxford region, frequently with rosette stamps (BC 262).

6 One of 10 small sherds probably from a bulbous beaker, in soft brick-red fabric with mica, with deeper red colour-coating both inside and outside. The decoration is by stamping and rouletting; this sherd has a vertical arrangement of half-rosette stamps in a panel bounded by vertical double notch stamps. It is paralleled by an unpublished example from the Garsington kiln site.

¹⁴ S. S. Frere, 'Excavations at Dorchester on Thames, 1962', *Archaeol. J.*, 119 (1962), Fig. 21.9.

¹⁵ T. C. Lethbridge, 'A cemetery at Lackford, Suffolk: report of the excavation . . . in 1947', *Cambridge Antiquarian Society Quarto Publications*, n.s., 6 (1951), Fig. 23, 48, 2281 A, and 50.138 A.

¹⁶ D. B. Harden, 'Glass Vessels in Britain and Ireland, A.D. 400-1000', 132-67 in D. B. Harden (ed.), *Dark-Age Britain. Studies presented to E. T. Leeds, with a bibliography of his works* (1956), 142-3.

¹⁷ Frere, *op. cit.* note 14, Fig. 21.2.

¹⁸ J. R. Mortimer, *Forty Years' Researches in British and Saxon Burial Mounds of East Yorkshire* (1905), 254 and Pl. XC, Figs. 712-13.

7 Rim sherd of hand-made gritty ware. There are many comparable examples from Sutton Courtenay, Purwell Farm, Cassington and New Wintles Farm, Eynsham; common form in 6th and 7th centuries, although frequently with a slightly taller rim (BC 262).

8 Rim sherd of hard gritty hand-made grey-brown quartz-filled ware, with polished black micaceous outer surface and brick-red inner surface. The sherd is closely similar to the larger piece illustrated below, No. 26, and possibly belongs to the same vessel (BC 262).

9 Necked beaker, with handle, in soft orange ware with red colour-coating inside and red-brown outside. Most of the sherds were found around and immediately below the bronze ornament, FIG. 11. The handled form is unusual, although two similar examples were found within the town at Dorchester in the 1963 excavations. Oxfordshire product (BC 262, BC 265).

10 Dish in hard pale grey ware with dark grey surfaces, and with horizontal burnished lines and bands (BC 266).

11 Jar in hard pale grey ware with burnishing on the inside of the rim and in zones on the outside. Common late Roman form¹⁹ (BC 266).

12 Dish in hard dark grey gritty ware with black slightly burnished surfaces and recessed beaded rim²⁰ (BC 266).

Also: coin of Constantine I, Urbs Roma, after 330 A.D. See Appendix 1, No. 2.

FIG. 11 and PL. VI. *Bronze Ornament.* Miss Smith recorded that the object came from a depth of 18 in. in the filling of the ditch and was associated with the sherds from the beaker, No. 9 above, but that it had fallen to this level during the digging of the nine-inch layer, from the depth of about 11-12 in. See Appendix 3 for detailed report by Dr. D. M. Wilson (BC 263).

Also: 24 other coarse ware sherds, including 1 body sherd of No. 2; a rim joining with No. 11 above; a rim and 2 body sherds of the beaker, No. 9 above; 7 red colour-coated and 2 shell-filled sherds (BC 262).

Also: 16 other sherds of Romano-British and 1 sherd of Saxon pottery. These include rim and side of straight sided dish in hard pale grey ware with mica, smoothed on the inside (BC 266); small sherd of straight sided mortarium (BC 266); rim sherd of red colour-coated bowl with traces of white painted design—possibly a flange fragment from an imitation Drag. 38 (BC 266); sherd of samian, Walters form 79, late 2nd century (see Appendix 2, No. 3); rim and side of colour-coated straight-sided mortarium, in soft brick-red fabric with mica, and deeper red colour coat (BC 267); 3 sherds of colour-coated and 8 sherds of grey ware. Also 3 sherds of brick or tile.

South Ditch, depth 27-36 in.

13 Flanged dish, in hard grey ware with darker core, and dark grey surfaces (BC 268).

14 Jar in hard grey ware with burnished rim (BC 268).

15 Jar in grey ware with line-burnishing on rim (BC 268).

Also: sherd of samian, form 18/31 or 31, 2nd century (see Appendix 2, No. 7); sherd of red colour-coated ware (BC 268).

South Ditch, depth 52 in. (bottom)

Sherd of mortarium, once red colour-coated or white slipped, but now worn (BC 290); sherd or tile (BC 269).

SECTION C-D

South Ditch, upper filling

Coin of Valens, A.D. 364-7 (BC 181). See Appendix 1, No. 4.

SECTION E-F

South Ditch, depth 0-9 in.

16 Sherd of cavetto-rim jar in hard dark grey ware with burnishing on the inside of the rim (BC 39).

17 Rim from jug or flagon with trace of handle attachment, in hard light grey ware, with burnishing on the outer side of rim (BC 39).

18 Mortarium in brick-red ware with grey core and cream slip, with square flange. A common Oxfordshire form, fabric and slip. Mortaria in this form and fabric were made at a kiln site near Little Baldon Farm, Marsh Baldon, and at Garsington (both unpublished) (BC 39).

19 Jar in hard grey ware (BC 39).

Also: 46 other Romano-British coarse ware sherds, including one sherd of Nene valley colour-coated beaker; 12 sherds of Oxfordshire red colour-coated wares; one small sherd of brown-glazed post-medieval

¹⁹ A. C. C. Brodrick, A. R. Hands and D. R. Walker, *Excavations at Shakenoak*, I, No. 108, c. A.D. 350-430. Frere, *op. cit.* note 14, Fig. 18, no. 231, though of a different fabric, late fourth century. Allen's Pit, Dorchester, Potters' Dump (unpublished).

²⁰ *Ibid.*, No. 127, c. A.D. 250-430.

ware; sherd of brick; iron nail; small fragment of green glass; oyster shells; 3 flint flakes, one with secondary working; fragment of daub with chaff and wattle impressions (BC 39, 44, 46, 48, 54, 61).

South Ditch, depth 9-24 in.

20 Small sherd of colour-coated hunt cup, in soft pink-buff ware with red-brown colour coat inside and sepia outside. The smaller joining sherd is from Level 2, above the filling of the ditch. An Oxfordshire product, cf. Sandford.²¹ Hunt cups made in other areas of Roman Britain are 2nd and 3rd century in date.

21 Six sherds from a bowl in soft orange ware with grey core and red or brown colour-coating. Horizontal bands of deeper brown colour are irregularly spaced inside—an unusual feature. The fabric is that of the Oxfordshire red colour-coated wares (BC 56).

22 Bowl in soft orange-buff misfired ware, with orange colour-coat. Single rouletted line below rim. Oxfordshire product (BC 56).

23 Dish in hard grey ware with buff and grey outside, and very slight cordon below rim (BC 56).

24 Bowl in brick-red ware with darker colour-coat. Oxfordshire product, 4th century A.D.²² (BC 56).

Also: 25 sherds of Romano-British and one of probably Saxon ware; 1 sherd of brick or possibly kiln bar; 1 small sherd of brown-glazed post-medieval pottery (BC 56, 61).

South Ditch, depth 24-30 in. bottom

25 Sherd from rim and neck of beaker or jug, cf. No. 9 above, in soft orange ware with traces of colour-coating. Oxfordshire product (BC 87).

Also: 13 other Romano-British coarse ware sherds, including 5 red colour-coated, 7 grey ware, 2 shell-filled ware, 2 sherds of brick (BC 87).

CUTTING 8, SECTION G-H (FIG. 3)

Topsoil, Level 2

26 Rim sherd in hard, gritty, black, hand-made Anglo-Saxon ware, with quartz, grits and mica. Common Saxon form (BC 59).

South Ditch, above 'Saxon Refuse Deposit'

49 sherds of Romano-British and 24 sherds of Saxon pottery. The Romano-British includes 15 red colour-coated sherds of mortaria, bowls, etc., 5 shell-filled sherds, 1 sherd of brick. The Saxon pottery represents probably no more than two vessels (BC 53, 60, 78, 82). In addition, there were 17 pieces of coarse, black, daub-like material, with flat surfaces and thicknesses ranging from 7 mm. to 2.4 cm. (PL. V, 4). It has a hard, tar-like appearance, and contains much chaff. Its surfaces have sometimes flaked away, but where they survive, consist of a distinct, rough, quartz-filled layer. The material does not seem to be pottery; on heating, it does not soften like tar. Specimens were shown to Dr. N. Davey, who did not think that they were building material such as daub.

South Ditch 'Saxon Refuse Deposit'

27 (See PL. V, 5-6). Two examples from a collection of 51 sherds of coarse hand-made Saxon pottery, representing further pieces of BC 60, above. The ware is soft and brown, like dried mud. When excavated, its texture recalled that of a soggy biscuit. The inner surfaces were burnished, but have frequently flaked off, and the outer surface varies between a similar black burnish on the upper parts of the vessel, and a deliberate roughening on the lower part. The ware is filled with mica, quartz and other grit. The fabric most commonly occurs in 5th and 6th-century contexts, as does the deliberate roughening (BC 98, 101).

Also: 4 small sherds of Romano-British pottery, including sherds matching BC 82 above (BC 98, 101).

South Ditch, below 'Saxon Refuse Deposit'

28 Jar in pale orange-brown ware, with worn surfaces (BC 85).

29 Straight-sided mortarium in soft brick-red ware with deep red colour-coat inside and red-brown coat outside, slightly over-fired. Imitation Drag. 45, Oxfordshire product (BC 85).

30 Rim of jar with deep undercut, in pale grey-buff ware with traces of white slip (BC 85).

31 Bowl in orange ware fired grey inside, with brown inside colour-coating and traces of red coating outside. Imitation Drag. 31 R (BC 85).

32 Flanged dish in hard black ware with light brown core. This is a common local 4th-century form (BC 85).

²¹ T. May, 'On the pottery from the Waste Heap of the Roman Potters' Kilns discovered at Sandford, near Littlemore, Oxon., in 1879', *Archaeologia*, 72 (1922), Fig. 3, nos. b and c.

²² D. B. Harden, 'Two Romano-British Potters'-Fields near Oxford', *Oxoniensia*, 1 (1936), Fig. 15, nos. 10-12.

Also: 32 other sherds of Romano-British coarse ware, including the rim of a colour-coated straight sided mortarium and 12 other red colour-coated sherds (BC 69, 85); sherd of tile (BC 69); piece of (?roofing) slate (BC 85).

CUTTING 21

South Ditch of Rectangle, upper filling

33 Jar in hard pale grey ware (BC 175).

34 2 rim and 29 other sherds of jar in hard, thin, pale grey gritty ware (BC 195).

35 Jar in hard grey ware (BC 247).

36 7 rim and body sherds of a mortarium in soft brick-red ware with darker red or brown colour-coating. The sherds are worn, so that much of the colour-coating, and the rouletting on the ribs of the flange, is barely discernible. This is a variant of the common flanged red-coated mortarium, in which the flange has been bent too far downwards. Cf. Wally Corner;²³ Allen's Pit, Dorchester, Potters' Dump (unpublished). Rouletting on the flange is a feature of the Dorchester kilns (BC 247).

Also: 13 other sherds of Romano-British coarse ware and 1 sherd of hand-made Saxon ware with mica and quartz filler (BC 175, 195, 202, 235-6, 239-43, 246-7, Saxon sherd, BC 238).

CUTTING 1, SECTION A1-B1 (FIG. 9)

37 The complete base of a small bowl in soft brick-red fabric with mica, with deeper red colour-coating inside and outside. On the angle above the foot is a small oval flattening bearing a row of roulette marks. This is apparently a potting error, but it suggests that the bowl bore rouletted decoration higher up the side. The ware is similar to that of several sherds from the South Ditch itself, e.g. No. 6 above, and also with sherds from the Dorchester kilns in the Ashmolean Museum,²⁴ and is 4th or early 5th century in date (I am grateful to Dr. G. Simpson for help in identifying this pottery). The position of this sherd is important, because it provides the latest *terminus post quem* for the Rectangle itself. While it may be unwise to rely completely on this one piece of evidence, the implication is that the Rectangle could belong to the 5th as well as to the 4th century A.D.

BISHOP'S COURT RECTANGLE, GULLY BESIDE SOUTH DITCH (FIG. 9)

SECTION A-B

38 14 joining sherds from the rim and neck of a beaker in soft brown-buff ware with mica, with dark grey surfaces. The surface colour may have been the result of the misfiring of a red or brown colour-coat. Oxfordshire product (BC 258).

39 Two joining sherds from a small dish in buff ware with mica, with grey core. The rim has an external bevel. 2nd-4th century (BC 258).

40 Sherd of a similar but larger dish in grey ware with mica. There is a chamfer near the base. The rim is rounded with a wide shallow groove below. 2nd-4th century (BC 258).

41 Rim sherd, and also 45 small body sherds, from a jar in hard, pale grey, gritty ware (BC 258).

42 Rim sherd and 4 other sherds from a jar in hard gritty salmon-pink ware, with white/cream slip (BC 258).

Also: 2 sherds possibly from a cheese press or similar vessel (BC 258); sherd from foot of a red colour-coated beaker (BC 258); sherd of samian base, from 18/31, 2nd century (see Appendix 2, No. 6); 7 other Romano-British coarse ware sherds (BC 258).

SECTION E-F AND DISTURBED DITCH FILLING NEAR SECTION E-F

43 Neck of jug or flagon in white ware with buff slip containing an unusual amount of mica. A less well-moulded neck from Birdoswald²⁵ is late, c. 350-400 A.D. (BC 108).

44 17 sherds from a jar in hard gritty pale grey ware with mica, and darker grey surfaces (BC 108).

Also: 3 sherds from the base of a straight-sided or flanged dish, with lattice-type decoration (BC 108); 5 other sherds of Romano-British coarse ware (BC 40, 108).

BISHOP'S COURT RECTANGLE, NORTH-SOUTH DITCH (FIG. 9)

CUTTING 21

45 Small worn sherd from mortarium, in orange ware with white slip; cf. No. 18 for variant of this type. The form compares well with the 4th-century mortaria from the Cowley Kiln²⁶ (BC 128).

Also: 4 sherds from grey ware jar (BC 128); sherd from jar in pale grey ware (BC 177); sherd from neck of flagon with part of handle, in soft chalky white ware with pink core (BC 177); sherd of *tegula* (BC 128); shank or iron nail (BC 192); flint with secondary working (BC 248).

²³ J. E. G. Sutton, *op. cit.* note 8, Fig. 3, no. 4.

²⁴ D. B. Harden, *op. cit.* note 22, Fig. 15, nos. 19-21.

²⁵ J. P. Gillam, *Types of Roman Coarse Pottery Vessels in Northern Britain* (1968), form 18.

²⁶ R. J. C. Atkinson, 'A Romano-British Potters' Field at Cowley, Oxon.' *Oxoniensia*, vi (1941), Fig. 5, e.g. no. 68.

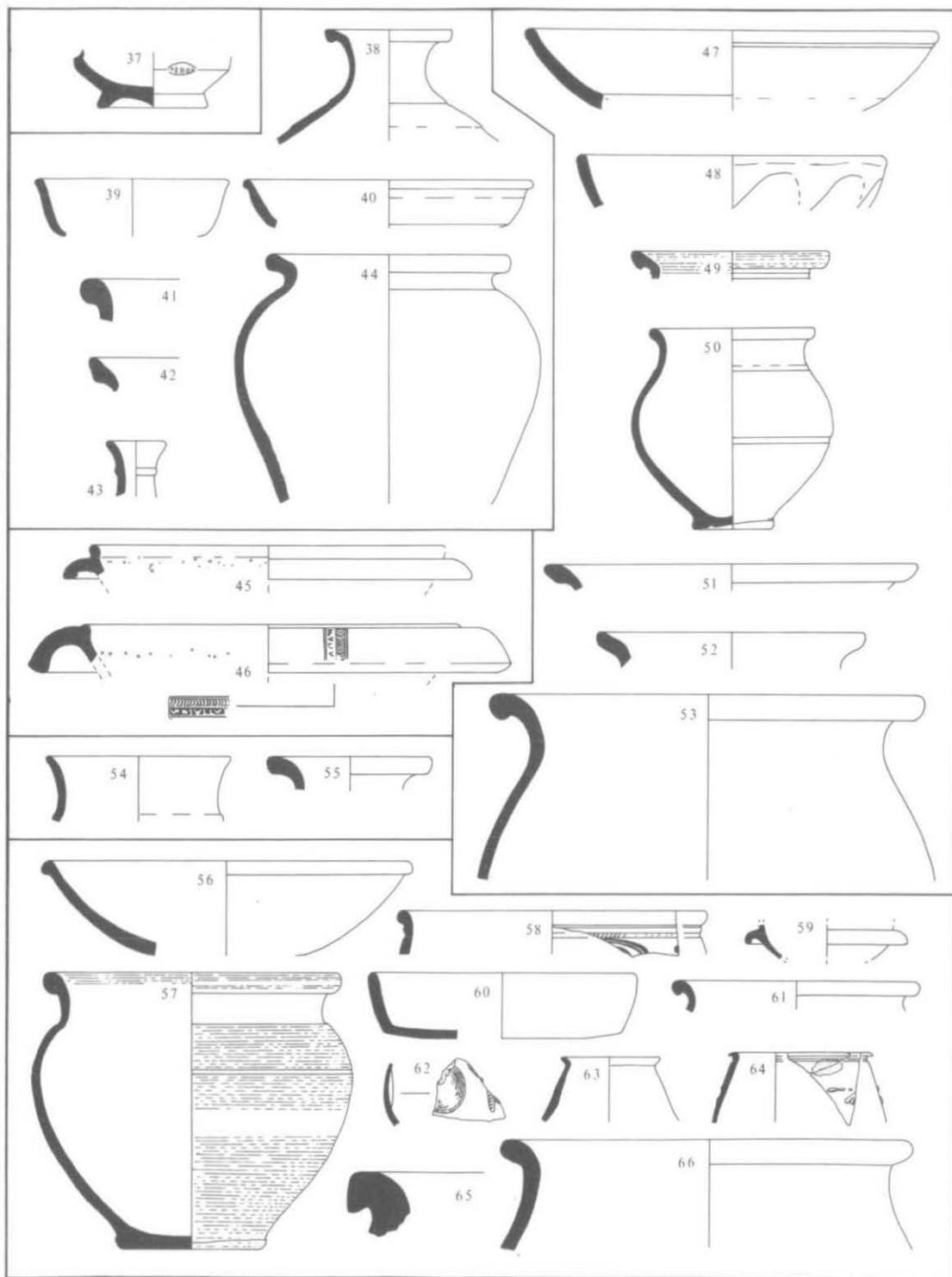


FIG. 9
 Dorchester: Bishop's Court Rectangle: pottery from Looped Ditch and other features. Scale 1 : 4.

CUTTING 19, UPPER FILLING OF DITCH

Small sherd of plain samian, small sherd of fine ware fired reddish with pale grey core and darker grey surfaces; small sherd of sandy pale grey ware (BC 205).

CUTTING 20, UPPER FILLING OF DITCH

46 Sherd from rolled-rim mortarium in white ware, with stamp VOSSVLLVS. The only name known among the mortarium potters of the upper Thames valley, Vossulus seems to have worked at Cowley, where 12 of his stamps were found, during the 2nd century A.D.²⁷ (BC 209).

Also: footring base from jar in pale grey ware with darker grey surfaces (BC 203); 13 other Romano-British sherds (BC 209).

SAXON CEMETERY

BURIAL 2

From 'over Grave 2'

Sherd of samian ware; 12 sherds of Romano-British coarse wares, including 4 red colour-coated (1 over-fired) and 1 painted white ware bowl. The latter was produced at Headington;²⁸ 2 sherds of tile; 8 sherds of hand-made Saxon soft black ware with grey inner surface and chaff filler; 1 other Saxon sherd (BC 286). 3 pieces of waste flint (BC 283).

From 'undisturbed filling of Grave 2'

2 sherds from red colour-coated beaker and necked bowl; 1 sherd of tile; 1 sherd of hand-made chaff-filled ware from same vessel as BC 286 above; 1 small sherd of modern china (BC 288).

BURIAL 8

Accompanying the burial

FIG. 12, bottom. Iron seax; both tang and point broken, but surviving length 11.2 in. (28.5 cm.); drooping tang with traces of wood adhering; blade wedge-shaped in section. Tang slightly bent out of line with blade (Ashmolean Museum, 1958.9). An example of a narrow seax, earliest of three categories of these weapons identified in the upper Thames valley by Dr. T. M. Dickinson. (I am grateful to Dr. Dickinson for making available the relevant part of her recent thesis dealing with these implements.) It belongs to group a of the type, the small narrow seax. Five others are known from the region. Local dating evidence is weak. The earliest example, from Yarnton grave 1, was associated with a spearhead which could be 6th century. At Lyncham Barrow, grave 1, a seax was associated with a spearhead probably of the 7th century, and wider comparisons suggest that the type belonged mainly to that period.

FIG. 12, top. Iron knife, length 5.3 in. (13.6 cm.), with drooping tang and wedge-shaped section (Ashmolean Museum, 1958.10). Dr. Dickinson comments that the marked downward curve of the back of the blade to the point is most usual in the 7th century.

PIT 1 (FIG. 9)

47 Bowl in cream ware with red-brown colour-coating, probably imported from the Nene valley (BC 213).

48 4 sherds from rim of straight sided dish in dark grey ware (BC 137, 215).

49 2 sherds from rim of jar in grey ware with horizontal lines of burnishing and deep undercut (BC 217, 221).

50 4 sherds joining to make complete profile of a small jar in pale grey ware with darker grey surfaces. The form looks early, and is comparable, although not identical, to pottery from the kiln site at Overdale, Boar's Hill, Oxford (BC 137).

51 Rim of jar in grey ware (BC 222).

52 Rim of jar in grey, cinder-like ware (BC 137).

53 5 joining sherds from large rolled-rim storage jar in pink and grey shell-filled ware (BC 244).

Also: 45 other Romano-British sherds, mainly grey, white and shell-filled wares (BC 133-5, 137, 147-50, 152-3, 160-2, 211, 218-9, 223-4, 226-9, 232-4, 244); Sherd of tile (BC 204); large iron nail (BC 137); iron nail (BC 220).

LOOPED DITCH AND ADJACENT FEATURES (FIG. 9)

CUTTING 2, SECTION I-J

Ditch I, depth 0-9 in.

Sherd from large Romano-British storage jar in coarse pale grey ware with stone inclusions and dark grey surfaces, cf. similar sherds from Ditch II, Cutting 10; small rectangular piece of tile, possibly a *tessera*; sherd from large Romano-British storage jar in coarse pale grey ware with dark grey surfaces and quartzite inclusions

²⁷ *Ibid.*, 18.

²⁸ H. Case and J. R. Kirk, 'Notes and News (Headington, Oxon.)', *Oxoniensia*, xvii/xviii (1952-1953), 225, Fig. 45, nos. 7-8 for form.

as in the gritting of Oxfordshire mortaria; small rectangular piece of tile, possibly a *tessera*; sherd of *imbrex* (BC 270).

Ditch I, depth 21 in.

Sherd of large storage jar in grey ware with pale brick-red surfaces; BC 271.

CUTTING 6, SECTION M-N

Ditch II, depth 0-9 in.

Broad flake of unpatinated flint (BC 41); small flake of patinated flint (BC 43).

CUTTING 10, SECTION O-P

Ditch II, Upper filling

6 sherds of Romano-British pottery, including one possible Nene valley product; iron nail; 2 flint flakes (BC 129, 130, 144).

Ditch II, Filling of North Channel

54 Rim of jar in pale grey ware (BC 142).

55 Rim of flask in pale grey ware (BC 142).

Also: 7 other grey ware sherds (BC 142, 164, 174, 182, 191); sherd of brick (BC 190); piece of flint waste (BC 167).

Ditch II, Filling of South Channel

10 sherds of Romano-British coarse ware (BC 166, 168, 172, 189); iron nail shank (BC 168).

CUTTING 11

Ditch II, Upper filling

2 sherds of Romano-British pottery (BC 131, 140).

CUTTING 12

Ditch II, Upper filling

Sherd of Romano-British grey ware (BC 282); large sherd of tile (BC 282); sherd of Saxon scored pottery (BC 180); sherds from 3 Saxon vessels (BC 180); fragment of clay oven or possibly pottery kiln dome, with three impressions of hulled barley (BC 254).

Ditch II, Upper filling of North Channel

5 joining sherds from Romano-British shell-filled vessel (BC 196-7); 2 joining sherds of Saxon ware (BC 159); coin of Constans, c. A.D. 343 (see Appendix 1, no. 3); flint flake (BC 159).

Ditch II, Lower filling of South Channel

Large sherd from rim of tile (BC 207).

CUTTING 13, SECTION S-T

Ditch III filling

Sherd of brick (BC 173).

PIT 2 (FIGS. 6 and 9)

56 3 sherds from a bowl in pale red-brown ware with grey core and deeper red colour-coated surfaces, imitation Dragendorff 31 R. Oxfordshire product, cf. Dorchester kiln²⁹ (BC 67).

57 Many sherds from jar in hard pale grey ware with bands and lines of burnishing on the body and inside the rim (BC 104).

58 Rim from necked bowl, in orange ware with red colour-coating, with rouletting below the bead and traces of white painted decoration. An Oxfordshire product, bowls of this kind were apparently made at the kiln site at Little Baldon Farm, Marsh Baldon (BC 66).

59 Sherd from small flanged bowl in orange ware with deeper orange colour-coating; imitation Dragendorff 38 (BC 67).

60 2 sherds from straight-sided dish in pale grey ware with darker grey surfaces; traces of loop-pattern on underside (BC 67).

61 Sherd from rim of grey ware jar with deep undercut (BC 67).

62 Sherd from the side of a beaker in thin orange-buff ware with pale grey core, with orange-brown colour-coating. Trace of reversed boss or thumb indentation, and part of a stamp. An exact parallel (unpublished)

²⁹ D. B. Harden, *op. cit.* note 22, 88, Fig. 15, nos. 10-12.

was found in building operations at Cowley Conservative Club, adjacent to the kiln site, in 1969. Vertical bands of rouletting, although not apparently thumb indentations, were used on beakers made at the Garsington kiln site. Oxfordshire product (BC 67). Another similar sherd from this deposit, in pale orange fabric with brown colour-coating, has a reversed boss 3 cm. in diameter (BC 66).

63 Rim of beaker in orange ware with brown colour-coating outside; the slip extends also about 1.5 cm. below the rim on the inside, where it is purple-red. A standard Oxfordshire form; on beakers, the brown colour-coat seems to have been intentional (BC 104).

64 2 joining sherds from beaker in thin white ware with black colour-coated surfaces and barbotine decoration. A Nene valley product, late 2nd-early 3rd century A.D.³⁰ (BC/F).

65 Rim of large storage jar in pale grey coarse ware with buff surfaces (BC 67).

66 Rim of large storage jar in shell-filled ware with grey core and pinkish-brown surfaces (BC 115).

Also: 55 other Romano-British sherds, including rims from 2 bowls, *cf.* no. 56; 4 sherds of rouletted red colour-coated ware; 4 other colour-coated sherds; 43 sherds of grey, buff and shell-filled wares; sherd of scale beaker in grey ware with brown surfaces; sherd of brown-glazed post-medieval pancheon (BC 65-7, 104); 12 sherds of tile (BC 66-7, 104, 115); 5 iron nails (BC 68, 103).

PIT 3

Sherd of orange ware with grey core and deep red colour-coating, probably from a local kiln (BC 106).

TIMBER BUILDING

Period I sleeper-beam trench

Small sherd of hand-made dark grey ware, 8 mm in thickness, brown outer surface, liberal finely-crushed stone filler. Possibly Iron Age (BC 116).

Small sherd of hand-made grey-brown ware, 5 mm in thickness. Possibly Iron Age.

FIG. 11, no. 2. Fragment of whetstone, 34 mm in thickness, ground smooth on both sides and on one end (BC 116c).

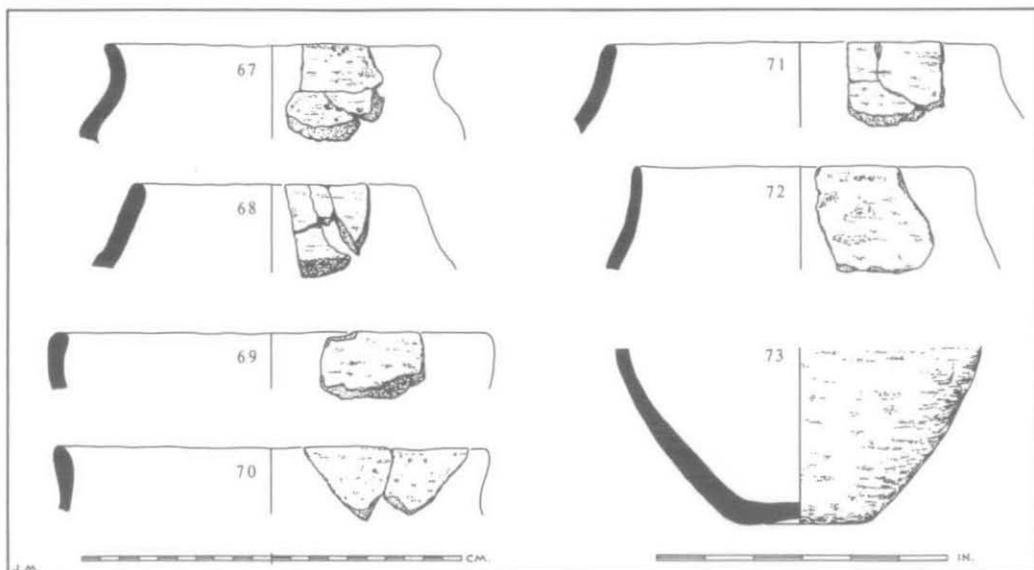


FIG. 10

Dorchester: Bishop's Court Rectangle: unstratified Anglo-Saxon pottery. Scale 1 : 4.

MISCELLANEOUS UNSTRATIFIED FINDS

Anglo-Saxon pottery (FIG. 10)

67 Grey ware with quartz filler, outside burnished. Form common on all pagan settlement sites in the Oxford area (BC 121).

³⁰B. R. Hartley, *Notes on the Roman Pottery Industry in the Nene Valley*, Peterborough Museum Society, Occasional Papers 2, Peterborough Museum (1960), Fig. 4.1.

68 Grey ware with stone and (?)crushed brick or pottery filler. Upper part of rim burnished; deliberate roughening on shoulder. Slightly unusual rim form; the shoulder is usually more pronounced with this type of rim (BC 121).

69 Rim in hand-made grey ware with buff surfaces, with shell, mica and other inclusions. Said to have come from a pit near the Saxon cemetery (BC 285).

70 2 joining sherds from a rim in hand-made pale grey ware with mica and other inclusions. The thickened flat-topped rim is a typical pagan Saxon form, but the fabric is unusual (BC 53, 121).

71 3 joining sherds of hard gritty hand-made grey-brown quartz-filled ware, with polished black micaceous outer surface and brick-red and brown inner surface, probably from the same vessel as no. 8. Said to have come from a pit near the cemetery (BC 285).

72 Rim in hard dark grey-brown gritty ware, with mica and other inclusions, and with black burnished outer surface. A common Saxon form, with a good parallel at House 4, Sutton Courtenay³¹ (BC 125).

73 Many sherds from the lower part of a vessel in hard black gritty ware.

Also: 8 sherds from a vessel in red-brown hand-made ware with chaff and quartz filler, and with darker brown surfaces. The outsides bear apparently haphazard but delicate finger tip impressions forming dimples roughly 8 mm in diameter (BC 121).

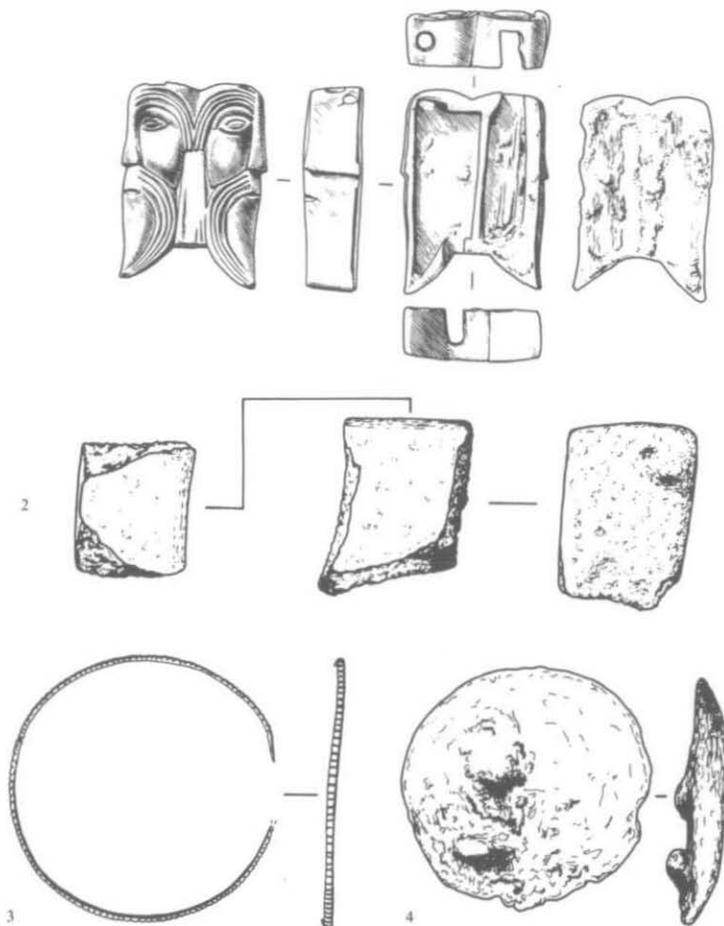


FIG. 11

Dorchester: Bishop's Court Rectangle: objects of bronze, lead and stone. Scale 1 : 2. For the bronze head, see above p. 64, and below, Appendix 3.

³¹ E. T. Leeds, 'A Saxon Village near Sutton Courtenay, Berkshire', *Archaeologia*, 73 (1923), 147-92.

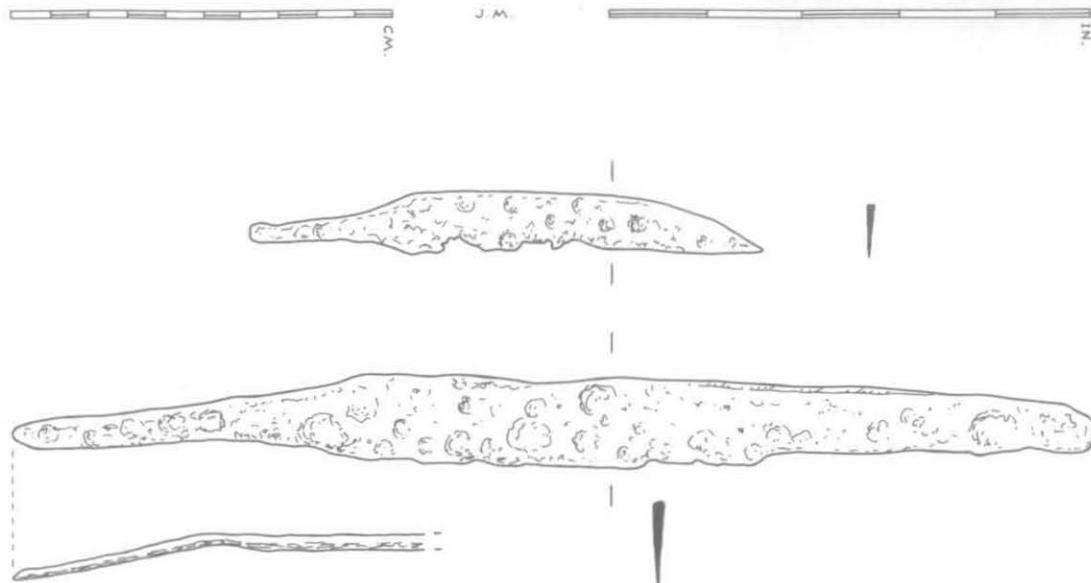


FIG. 12

Dorchester: Bishop's Court Rectangle: iron seax and knife accompanying Burial 8. Scale 1 : 2.

Romano-British small finds (FIG. 11)

3 Bronze bracelet. Thin, elliptical-sectioned bronze, 2.7 in. in diameter. Decoration by simple cuts. One terminal survives, of plain, flattened form.

4 Lead disc. Approx. 2.5 in. in diameter; weight 182.45 gr. One side is of flattened convex shape, and has several specks of charcoal incorporated into its surface; the other side is flat in part, but has several rough knobs of metal projecting.

Quern. Miss Smith noted that a 'quern stone came from the gravel top some 30 yards south of ditch seen in ground. Top stone apparently in position over the bottom although both must have been incomplete'. Six fragments survive from a rotary quern, 1.75 in. in thickness and approx. 2 feet in diameter.

APPENDIX I

THE COINS. By C. H. V. SUTHERLAND

1 Carausius (A.D. 286-93), worn.

Obv. [. . .] CARAVSIVS P AVG Rad., dr., Bust r.

Rev. Type uncertain, m.m. illegible.

(BC 33, Cutting 3, layer 3).

2 Constantine I (A.D. 306-336), after A.D. 330. Unworn.

Obv. [VRBS] ROMA Helmeted head l.

Rev. Wolf and Twins, two stars above, m.m. obscure, but traces of T (? , RP etc.)—Treveri.

(BC 289, Cutting 1, Section A-B, South Ditch of Rectangle, upper filling).

3 Constans (A.D. 337-50), c. A.D. 345, worn.

Obv. [D N] CONSTAN [SPFA] VG Diad., dr., bust r.

Rev. VICTORIAE D D AVGG R NN Two Victories, m.m. TRP—Treveri.

(Cutting 12, Looped Ditch II, upper filling).

4 Valens (A.D. 364-78) A.D. 364-7, unworn.

Obv. D N VALEN S PF AVG Diad., dr., bust r.

Rev. SECVRITAS REIPVBLICAE Victory l.

OF II

CONS—Arelate. R.I.C. gb.

(BC 181, Section C-D, South Ditch of Rectangle, upper filling).

5 Valens (A.D. 364-78), unworn.

Obv. D N VALENS PP AVG Diad., dr., bust r.

Rev. SECVRITAS REIPVBLICAE Victory l.

OF I

LVGD—Lugdunum.

(Unstratified)

6 Gratian (A.D. 375-83), *c.* A.D. 375, slightly worn.

Obv. D N G [RA] TIAN [VS AVGG AVG] Diad., dr., bust r.

Rev. GLO[RIA NOVI SAECVLI] Emp. holding labarum

OF [. .]

CON[. .]—Arelate.

(Unstratified)

7 Minim, details obscure.

(Cutting 21, filling of Pit 1).

APPENDIX 2

THE SAMIAN POTTERY. By GRACE SIMPSON

Five of the vessels are typical Antonine forms made in central Gaul, Dr. 33 (two), Walters 79 (two) and Dr. 45. The others are probably Antonine, but are too fragmentary for certain identification. The period of their manufacture indicates that there was occupation in the locality during the second half of the second century A.D., but all were found as rubbish survivals in later contexts.

1 and 2 Parts of two cups with concave walls, Dr. 33.³² Central Gaulish, *c.* 140-190 A.D. (BC 83, BC 120, surface finds).

3 A platter with external groove, Walters 79.³³ Central Gaulish (BC 125, surface find).

4 3 sherds from similar vessel (BC 260, 267, Cutting 1, South Ditch of Rectangle).

5 Rim, straight-sided, Dr. 45.³⁴ Central Gaulish, late second century (BC 67, Pit 2).

6 Fragment of base of Dr. 18/31. Central Gaulish, second century (BC 258, Cutting 1, Gully).

7 Rim fragment of Dr. 18/31 or Dr. 31. Second century. (BC 268, Cutting 1, South Ditch of Rectangle).

APPENDIX 3

THE BRONZE ORNAMENT (FIG. 11 and PL. VI). By D. M. WILSON

From the upper filling of the South Ditch of the Bishop's Court Rectangle came a small bronze casting of two moustachioed heads in profile. The shape of the piece is roughly that of a fish-tail, the two pointed elements of which are formed by the moustaches of the men (PL. VI). A thin bronze back-plate, once attached by soft solder, covered the hollow-cast internal structure, which is divided into two cells of unequal size by a vertical strip. Inside the narrower of these two cells, that to the right, are the remains of an iron bar or clip, and traces of iron also appear in the right-hand cell. At the top of the right-hand cell is a rectangular slot, and another similar slot appears at the bottom of the other cell. At the top of the left-hand cell is a circular hole and a similar hole, perhaps produced by faulty casting, on the top of the left-hand side is plugged with a piece of bronze. In the strip separating the two cells are three holes, two at the top and one at the bottom. The faces on the front of the object are moulded; the central features, nose and mouth, appear on the corner of the longest sides and are carried round the edge, the hair and moustaches being cut in linear technique after casting. The eye is of lentoid shape with a central pupil of the same shape and a heavy curved eyebrow. The cheeks are moulded naturalistically, and there is a plain strip between the moustaches and cheeks of the two men. The object measures 1.5 by 2.2 cm., and is 4 mm. thick; the back plate is 0.25 mm. thick.

³² F. Oswald and T. D. Price, *Introduction to the Study of Terra Sigillata treated from a chronological standpoint* (1920), Pl. li, 11-13.

³³ *Ibid.*, Pl. lviii, 7, and p. 199, where it is stated that the form ' belongs typically to the second half of the second century '.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, Pl. lxxiv. I.



FIG. 13

Dorchester: Bishop's Court Rectangle: selection of iron cleats. Scale 1 : 2. See above, p. 63.

Dr. H. J. Plenderleith of the British Museum's Research Laboratory has examined the object in detail and has reported on it as follows: 'A careful chemical investigation has revealed the presence of much phosphate from within the box indicating possibly among other things the one-time presence of leather, bone or ivory'.

The function of the object is obscure. Dr. Plenderleith has suggested to me that the residue of iron rust which appears inside each cell, together with the terminal slot in each cell, suggests the presence of two spring clips. This is a reasonable suggestion but no parallels for this method of attachment are known from the pre-Norman Conquest period, to which this object undoubtedly belongs. The object could belong to one of a number of groups: the mount of a shrine or of a belt, a padlock, perhaps the fastening clasp of a book or box; this latter interpretation would certainly seem to be the most reasonable of many which could be made, but speculation along these lines is unprofitable.

At first sight the object would suggest parallels with the western areas of Britain, with for instance the head on the Killua Castle bell shrine,³⁵ where the moulded cheeks and billet-like nose are not unlike the features on the Dorchester bronze. Similarly certain human heads seen in profile in St. Gallen MS 1395³⁶ are not altogether dissimilar. Such parallels, however, are not convincing. Further, the degree of naturalism in the design of this object makes it difficult to fit it into any early Germanic contexts, although such features as the flowing curves of the hair are paralleled in the figural scenes of the Sutton Hoo helmet,³⁷ where we have one of the rare Germanic occurrences of a semi-naturalistic face in profile. These again are parallels which are not really close enough to allow accurate comparison. One can only say in the circumstances that the object is unparalleled in style and form and although it obviously has Germanic-Celtic affinities its precise place in archaeology cannot be defined.

APPENDIX 4

HUMAN SKELETAL REMAINS. By LUCILLE E. ST. HOYME

The human remains described in this report consisted of six individual burials, and bones from other burials scattered or disturbed by the bulldozers. Another group of bones consisted mostly of animal remains; the only recognizable human bones in this group were a few metacarpals, metatarsals and phalanges, which could not be associated with any of the other burials.

Many of the bones were badly damaged, and many parts were lost. Thus restoration was usually neither practical nor profitable. For this reason, repair of bones was restricted to the minimum necessary for examination of areas crucial to the identification of age or sex, the recognition of duplicated parts, or the measurement of long bone lengths for stature estimation. The crania were so badly damaged, with so many parts missing, that even a visual estimate of head form was impossible.

Estimates of age, for the adults, must be in the broadest possible terms; reliable age indicators from postcranial parts of the skeleton were usually either missing or inconclusive. Such evidence as is present is described. As to sex, pelvic morphology was considered the most reliable type of evidence. Interpretations of the evidence were based on the author's theory of sexual differentiation, outlined elsewhere.³⁸ The morphology of crucial parts has been described, so that the reader can make his own comparisons with standards provided in the literature³⁹ and draw his own conclusions. Where evidence from pelvic morphology is lacking, craniofacial form, and, last, long bone size are considered, bearing in mind their limitations for this purpose.

³⁵ M. and L. de Paor, *Early Christian Ireland* (1958), Pl. 31.

³⁶ B. Salin, *Die altgermanische Tierornamentik . . .*, Stockholm, 1904, Fig. 738.

³⁷ R. L. S. Bruce-Mitford, 'The Sutton Hoo Ship Burial. Recent theories and some comments on general interpretation', *Proc. Suffolk Inst. Archaeol. and Nat. Hist.*, 25 (1949), Pl. vii a.

³⁸ L. E. St. Hoyme, 'Sex differentiation in the human pelvis in early adult life', *Homo*, v. 10 (suppl.), Bericht 6. Tag. Deutsch. Ges. f. Anthrop., Kiel, 66-7.

³⁹ L. E. St. Hoyme, 'Sex differentiation in the human pelvis: Its bearing on problems of identification', 336-499 in *Variation in human skeletal characteristics*, D. Phil., Oxford, 1963.

Head form and height are the physical features of former populations which most interest their descendants. The evidence on head form is too unreliable to present; and the evidence on stature is not much more satisfactory. Fortunately most of the long bones were in measurable condition, so that lengths could be obtained for use in stature reconstruction formulae. Selecting appropriate formulae, however, is difficult. Of the adult skeletons, two are certainly male, two are probably male, and one probably female. Since the sex difference in stature estimated from the same bone may be from 2-4 cm., allowance should be made for errors from this source. Also, race is a problem: one may object to any of the available formulae—Pearson's because they were based on 19th-century French of the lower classes;⁴⁰ or Trotter & Gleser's formulae for American Whites.⁴¹ In general, the estimates derived from the Pearson formulae are about 5 cm. less than those obtained by the Trotter and Gleser formulae. It is, of course, impossible to know whether the Dorchester Anglo-Saxons were nearer in body build to the 19th-century French or the 20th-century Americans. The latter seems the more likely, for the bones suggest healthy, well-nourished, rather young individuals, corresponding more closely to healthy young soldiers killed in action than to elderly residents of the poorer parts of Paris. Accordingly, the estimates given are the maximum and minimum for each skeleton, taken from the tables given by Trotter and Gleser.

Description of the skeletons

BURIAL 1. Adult, sex? Skull fragments (mainly from around bregma), parts of the lower jaw, and the following skeletal parts:

Key to symbols used: v—bone complete or nearly complete; x—parts; d—distal end only; p—proximal end only; s—shaft; ?—identification probable but not certain.

	Rt.	Lt.		Rt.	Lt.	
Hum.	v	x	Fem.	x	x	Sternum .
Rad.	v	.	Tibia	v	v	Ribs 3x
Ulna	v	.	Fib.	.	.	Sacrum .
Scap.	?	.	Innom.	.	.	Vert. 9x
Clav.	.	.	Foot	x	x	C .
Hand	.	.	Patella	.	.	T .
						L .

The skeleton seems to be that of an adult. The bones are so badly eroded that any further statements are risky. Of the bones present, only the tibia and those of the right arm are measurable. No sex indicators are present, but the small size of the long bones and the rather pointed chin are suggestive of the female sex. The erosion of the bone surfaces has removed any traces of pathology or arthritis, if such were ever present. Stature estimates range from 165 cm. (tibia) to 173 cm. (humerus), or about 67 in.

BURIAL 2. Child, 12-15 years of age. Part of skull, a complete mandible; postcranial skeleton complete except for parts of pelvis, ribs, sternum, vertebrae and sacrum. The group of cranial fragments included the temporal bones, parts of both parietals, the occiput, and the upper dental arch, with teeth. The bones had been warped by earth pressure, which prevented any reconstruction. The cranial bones presented nothing unusual.

Age is estimated on the basis of tooth eruption and epiphyseal union. The 12th-year molars of both upper and lower jaws are but slightly worn, the roots of the second premolars are still open, and the 3rd molars (crown only formed) are still in their crypts. Epiphyseal union does not seem to have begun, although the larger epiphyses of the long bones are present. There is no indication on the acetabular margins of the ilia (the only parts of the innominate present) that fusion had begun at this point; this would suggest an age closer to 12 than to 15 years. Any sex indicators are unreliable at this age.

⁴⁰ K. Pearson, 'On the reconstruction of the stature of prehistoric races', *Philosophical Transactions of the Royal Society*, series A, v. 192 (1899), 169-244.

⁴¹ M. Trotter and G. C. Gleser, 'Estimation of stature from long bones of American Whites and Negroes', *American Journal of Physical Anthropology*, n.s.v., 10 (1952), 462-514.

BURIAL 3. Adult male? Skull fragments and the following skeletal parts:

	Rt.	Lt.		Rt.	Lt.		
Hum.	v	v	Fem.	v	v	Sternum	v
Rad.	v	v	Tib.	v	v	Ribs	x
Ulna	v	v	Fib.	v	v	Sacrum	v
Scap.	v	v	Innom.	v	v	Vert.	
Clav.	v	v	Foot		x	C	5
Hand		x	Patella	.	.	T	12
						L	4
						(plus L5 fused to sacrum)	

The postcranial skeleton, which is in good condition, is that of a male 183-187 cm. tall (78 in.). The only arthritis present in the skeleton is the slight lipping of the 9th, 10th, and 11th thoracic vertebral bodies. The only anomaly noted is the bilateral fusion of the 5th lumbar vertebra with the sacrum, a condition which is not particularly rare. All the pelvic characters point to the male sex, as does the size of the skeleton. Age is probably young to middle-aged.

BURIAL 4. Adult, male. Skull fragments (no face or lower jaw), and the following skeletal parts:

	Rt.	Lt.		Rt.	Lt.		
Hum.	sd	.	Fem.	v	v	Sternum	x
Rad.	?	?	Tib.	v	v	Ribs	x
Ulna	p	.	Fib.	v	v	Sacrum	?
Scap.	x	x	Innom.	x	x	Vert.	
Clav.	sd.	sd	Foot		x	C	1
Hand		x	Patella	v	v	T	8
						L	4
						(plus pta)	

Only the legs of this individual were well-preserved; the arms, spine, shoulder and hip girdles were badly damaged. The only areas available as sex indicators were parts of the sacroiliac surface of the ilia and one sciatic notch; these presented typically male characteristics. The stature (179-181 cm.; 70.5 in.) and general robustness of the bones is compatible with this estimate of the sex. Age indicators were either missing or inconclusive. Epiphyseal union was complete, but traces of arthritis had not appeared in the spinal or other joints; this would suggest that the skeleton was that of a young to middle-aged adult. There is no trace of pathology nor any anomaly among the bones present.

BURIAL 5. Adult, sex? The following bones were present:

	Rt.	Lt.		Rt.	Lt.		
Hum.	x	x	Fem.	v	.	Sternum	.
Rad.	.	.	Tib.	v	v	Ribs	x
Ulna	.	.	Fib.	v	v	Sacrum	x
Scap.	.	.	Innom.	.	.	Vert.	
Clav.	.	.	Foot	.	.	C	.
Hand	.	.	Patella	.	.	T	4
						L	4

The rather large size of the bones, with a resulting height estimate of 173-176 cm. (69 in.), suggests the male sex, but size alone is not a particularly reliable sex indicator. The only age indicator is a slight lipping of the lumbar vertebral centra; this would suggest early middle age.

The only point of interest is an old fracture of the lower end of the right fibula. In the course of healing, there seems to have been a suppurating lesion which did not affect the adjacent tibia. The slight shortening of the fibula does not seem to have produced any alteration in the ankle joint.

The leg bones are in good condition, whereas the humeri are badly eroded, but there is no reason to think that more than one individual is represented.

BURIAL 6. A nearly complete left parietal bone and a fragment from the proximal end of an adult tibia, were boxed with the bones of Burial 2. They may have come from another burial.

BURIAL 7. Parts of a skull, a fragment of an adult sacrum (first sacral segment only), the proximal half of a femur, and the distal end of a tibia (so badly crushed that size is doubtful), were boxed with bones of Burial 3. The skull fragments consist of a left temporal, part of the occiput, both zygomatic arches and upper and lower jaws. Judging from the texture of the bone, the left parietal listed under Burial 6 could belong to the same skull.

BURIAL 8. Adult, probably male. Skull parts, complete mandible, with parts of most of the long bones, as follows:

	Rt.	Lt.		Rt.	Lt.		
Hum.	p	v	Fem.	x	x	Sternum	x
Rad.	.	?	Tib.	v	v	Ribs	x
Ulna	s	s	Fib.	sd	sd	Sacrum	x
Scap.	x	x	Innom.	x	x	Vert.	
Clav.	v	v	Foot		x	C	3
Hand	.	.	Patella	.	.	T	8
						L	2
						plus ?	

Sex is probably male, judging from the sacroiliac area of the left innominate—the only sex indicator present. Sex indicators in the skull—chin shape, size of mastoid process—as well as body size are intermediate. Estimated height is 168–174 cm., 67 in. Age indicators are either missing or inconclusive. There are no signs of arthritis in the skeleton, and tooth wear is only moderate. Age would seem to be young to middle-aged.

The major point of interest in the skeleton is an old dislocated (?) left hip. The fragment of the acetabulum present is enlarged and flattened; and the corresponding femoral head is flattened, with the fovea capitis greatly enlarged. Neither femur nor acetabulum shows any arthritic changes associated with this deformity. The pelvis is so badly damaged that no other observations are possible.

The only other point of interest is a minor dental anomaly. In the lower jaw, the left deciduous 2nd molar has been retained and the second permanent premolar, which usually replaces it, has not erupted. The roots of the tooth are exposed, and the tooth would probably have been lost shortly. Other teeth, particularly the incisors and canines, show signs of gum-line inflammation, probably pyorrhea. The roots of the molars are partly exposed, probably as a consequence of the same condition.

?BURIAL 9. The left half of the mandible of a child aged about 6 years, was included among the bones of Burial 8 sent to the Ashmolean Museum by Mr. Wilmott.

?BURIAL 10. The distal half of an adult right femur, 3 loose teeth, and a few unidentifiable scraps of long bone, were included among the bones of Burial 8 sent to the Ashmolean Museum by Mr. Wilmott.

Of the skull, only the posterior part remains, consisting of the posterior part of the parietals, occipital and left temporal. The sutures are united; the bone is fairly thick, but not unusually so.

TABLE 1
Long bone lengths, adult

	Sex	Humerus		Radius		Ulna		Femur		Tibia		Fibula	
		r.	l.	r.	l.	r.	l.	r.	l.	r.	l.	r.	l.
Anglo-Saxons (All England) ⁴²	M	337.1	333.1	251.6	251.9	274.2	273.8	463.3	465.7	378.9	383.4	366.2	362.6
	F	312.5	309.6	251.9	227.6	247.2	248.4	426.1	430.9	350.4	351.9	332.1	337.7
Burial 1	?F	(333)+	—	241	—	260	—	—	—	(352)	(356)	—	—
Burial 3	M	379	(375)	290	283	300	303	514	518	415	414	—	—
Burial 4	M	—	—	—	—	—	—	500	(497)	398	(395)	385	394
Burial 5	?M	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	470	389	387	376	(367)
Burial 8	M	—	(327)	—	—	—	—	(473)	—	375	—	—	—

+ = estimated

TABLE 2
Long bone lengths, children*

	Anglo-Saxon Burial 2 (12–15 years)		Comparable No. 8 (14 years)		Neolithic ⁴³ No. 7 (15–16 years)		No. 12 (9–10 years)	
	r.	l.	r.	l.	r.	l.	r.	l.
Humerus	258	253	—	258	—	—	156	—
Radius	185	183	200	—	—	—	—	—
Ulna	205	201	—	—	—	184	—	115
Femur	(350)	358	—	—	—	—	204	—
Tibia	278	279	316	—	—	—	—	—
Fibula	274	—	290	—	—	—	—	—

* Anglo-Saxon bones measured without epiphyses. Collins & Waterman do not state whether or not epiphyses were included in their lengths.

⁴² A. H. Münster, 'A study of the lengths of the long bones of the arms and legs in man, with special reference to Anglo-Saxon skeletons', *Biometrika*, 5, 28 (1936), 258–94.

⁴³ A. E. P. Collins and D. M. Waterman, 'Millin Bay: A Late Neolithic cairn in Co. Down', *Archaeological Research Publications (Northern Ireland)*, 4 (1955).

APPENDIX 5

THE ANIMAL REMAINS. A. By J. M. RENFREW and R. WHITEHOUSE

In view of the difficulty in isolating closely dated groups of bone, it has been thought best to confine treatment of the material to a general survey of all the skeletal material recovered. The date-range for the bones is likely to have been *c.* A.D. 350-700, with the possibility of very small numbers of bones surviving from the earlier Romano-British period. Detailed measurements of individual bones have been deposited with the excavation records in the Ashmolean Museum.

TABLE 3

	<i>No. of Bones</i>	<i>Percentage of Total</i>
Cow	373	60.5
Sheep/goat	177/2	29.1
Horse	37	6.0
Pig	21	3.5
Dog	2	0.3
Cat	2	0.3
Deer	2	0.3
	<hr/>	<hr/>
	616	100.0
Unidenti- fiable	492	—

TABLE 4

Immature Animals (under 4 years)

	<i>No. of Bones</i>	
Cow	104	28% of all cow bones
Sheep/goat	27	15% of all sheep bones
Horse	5	13.5% of all horse bones
Pig	3	14% of all pig bones

TABLE 5

Bones yielding more specific information

	Foetal	Under 1 year	Survived 1 winter only	Survived 2 winters only	Survived 3 winters only
Cow	2	1	30	16	1
Sheep/goat	2	0	10	0	0
Pig	0	0	2	0	1

This suggests a capacity for overwintering at least at one stage, presumably the Romano-British one, in the use of the site.

13 bones showed signs of burning, and 11 bones had been cut. One point of interest from the above figures is the high proportion of cattle.

B. By B. J. MARPLES

A small collection of calcined bones from the pit underlying the south ditch of the Rectangle (see p. 48 above), and thought at the time of excavation to represent a human cremation, was submitted for examination. Most of the bones are too fragmentary for identification, but long bones, vertebrae and a jaw are present. None seems to be human. The only complete bone is a phalanx and part of the distal epiphysis of a metapodial probably from a calf. It was possible also to assemble from the fragments part of an astragalus which belonged to an Artiodactyle, perhaps a Red Deer, judging from its size, which is larger than that of a reindeer and considerably smaller than that of an Ox of the Roman period. The unidentifiable fragments are of the size suitable for either deer or calf.

The collection is unlikely to comprise a human cremation; animal remains include immature ox, and probably also Red Deer.

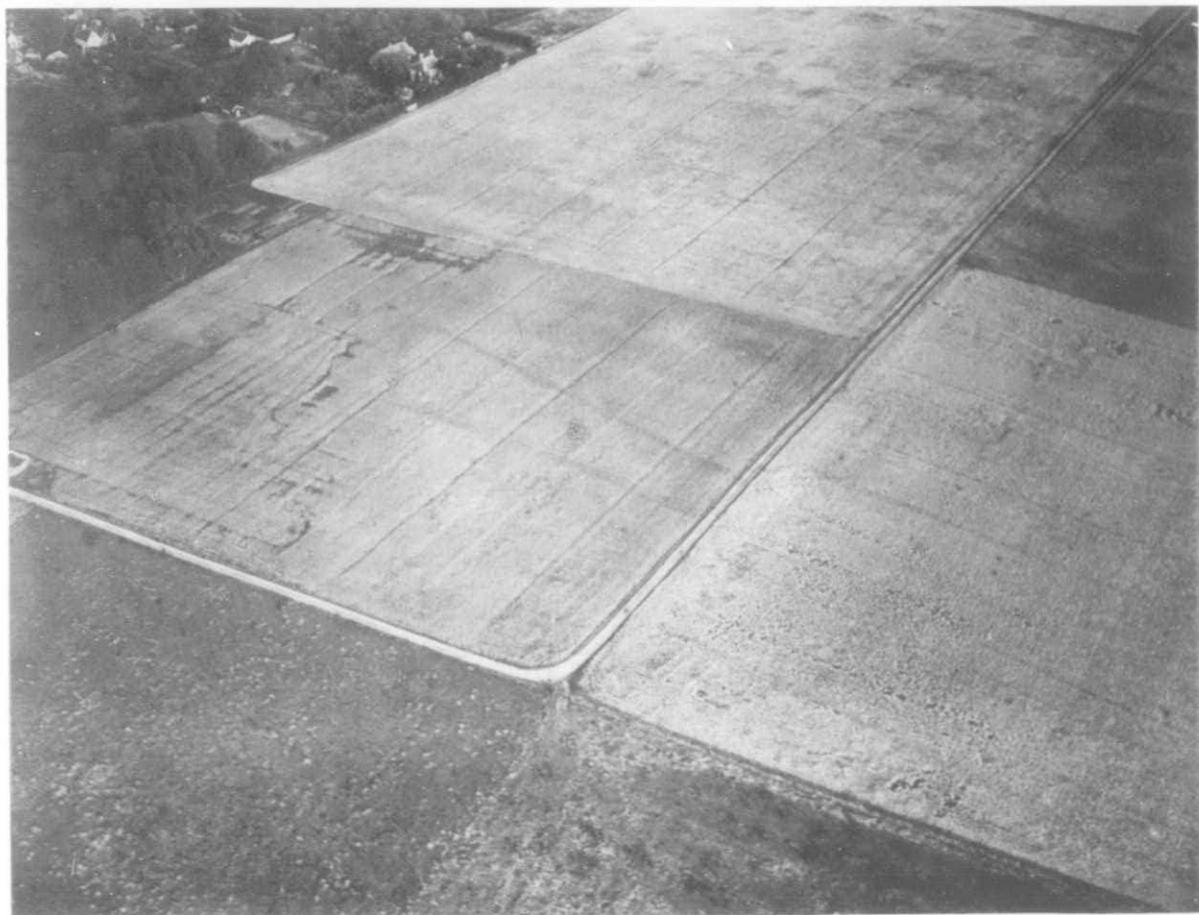
A publication grant from the Department of the Environment is gratefully acknowledged for this paper.

PLATE IV



A. Dorchester, Bishop's Court Rectangle. Air view of the site in May 1958, looking north. River Thames left, Bishop's Court Farm right.

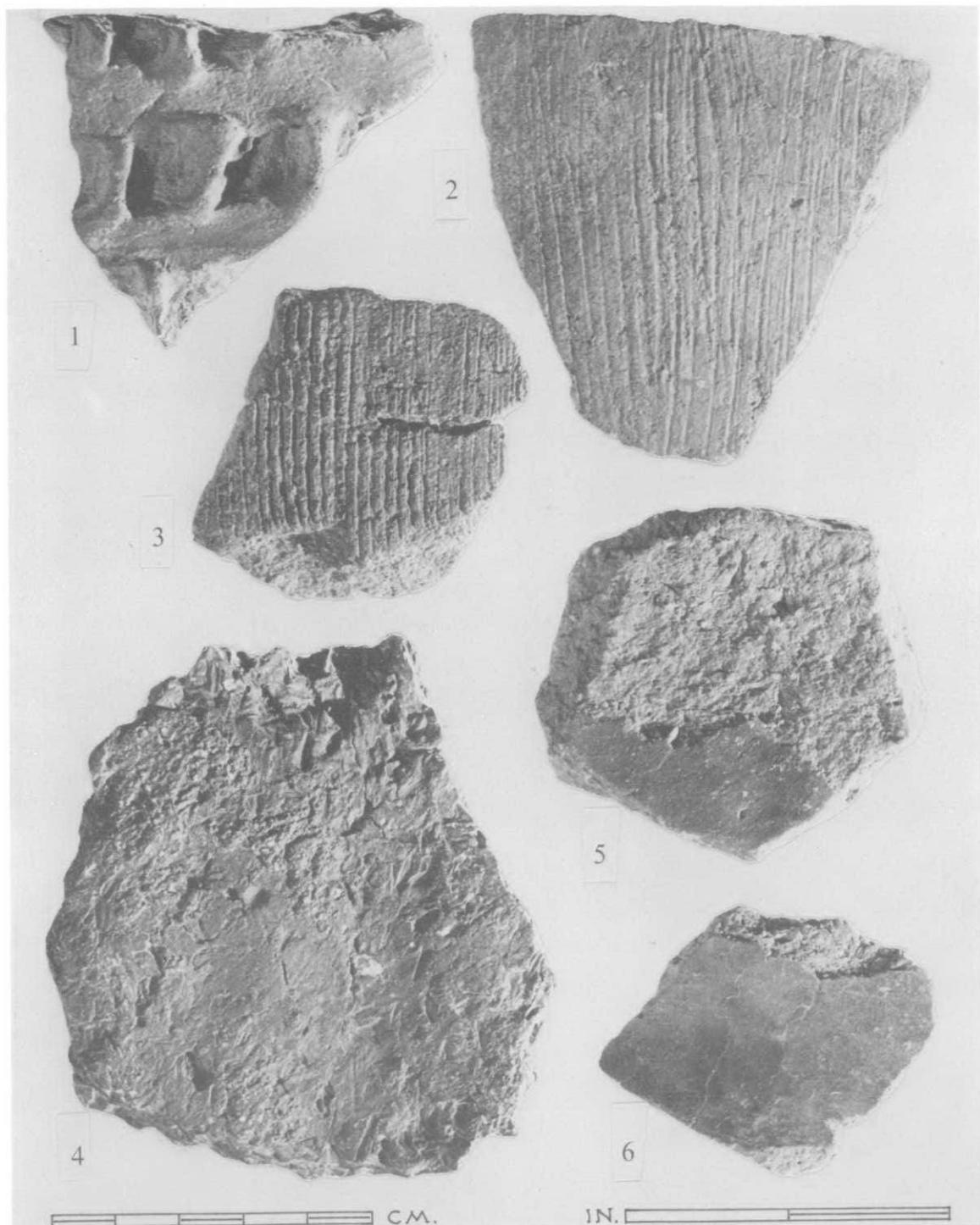
Ph.: R. B. Marson



B. Dorchester. Air view of the Looped Ditch, looking S.E. Taken by Major G. W. G. Allen in the 1930s.

Ashmolean Museum

PLATE V



Dorchester, Bishop's Court Rectangle. Saxon pottery and daub, scale 1 : 1.

PLATE VI



Dorchester, Bishop's Court Rectangle. Bronze ornament from the South Ditch, scale 6 : 1, inset 1 : 1.

Ph.: J. R. Marjoram