

A Romano-British Site at Bloxham, Oxon.

by W. F. J. KNIGHT

FOR some years past discoveries of Romano-British remains have been frequent in a field at Bloxham now being worked for ironstone by the Clay Cross Ironstone Company.¹ The site (FIG. 10), which must represent that of a native British settlement or village, lies half a mile west of Bloxham village, south of the road to Tadmarton.

On May 23, 1929, I learnt that the ironstone workers had found a burial, and the discovery was followed by others. As a master at All Saints' School, Bloxham, it was possible for me to record and recover the archaeological material found between then and my departure in July, 1935. Captain E. B. Johnson, the manager of the workings, the foreman, and the men themselves were always most helpful, and took a keen interest. Of the men I am especially grateful to Mr. Percy Heath, sen., Mr. Percy Heath, jun., Mr. James Coe, and Mr. Len Gregory. Boys of All Saints' School cooperated, especially N. E. Wallbank (now Dr.) and H. Hyslop. The Headmaster, Mr. V. L. Armitage, readily helped by affording various facilities. The site is one of several which have recently been investigated by archaeological societies at various schools.²

Lack of time and money, and the ordinary work of farming and extracting ironstone, prevented a thoroughly-planned archaeological excavation. Such excavation was tried but not found to be justified. The best that could be done was to enlist the interest of the ironstone workers in preserving and recording the finds, and to this end frequent visits were paid by myself and by boys of the school. But our observations could not be continuous, especially during the school holidays. We were able, however, to see several skeletons undamaged in their original position, and to recover them entire. Pottery was carefully

¹ Notes on the site have been published as follows: *Journ. Rom. Studies*, XIX (1929), 195; XXIV (1934), 206-7; XXV (1935), 43; *Oxfordshire Arch. Soc. Rept.*, 1929, 229-32; *Antiquity*, VI (1932), 359; VIII (1934), 229; *The Bloxhamist*, July 1929; July 1933; July 1935.

I am indebted to Mr. W. P. Burden for the drawings from which FIGS. 10 and 11 are taken; to Mr. D. B. Harden for the catalogue of small finds, and for help in cataloguing and drawing the pottery; to Mr. C. H. V. Sutherland for the catalogue of the coins; to Dr. L. H. Dudley Buxton for notes on the human remains and on the animal bones; and to Miss M. V. Taylor and Professor R. G. Collingwood for assistance and advice during the progress of the work.

² P. Corder, *Greece and Rome*, II (1933), 80-89.

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noted and collected. Above all coins and other metal objects were very observantly detected and loyally and generously handed in by the workmen, often with precise accounts of where they had been found.

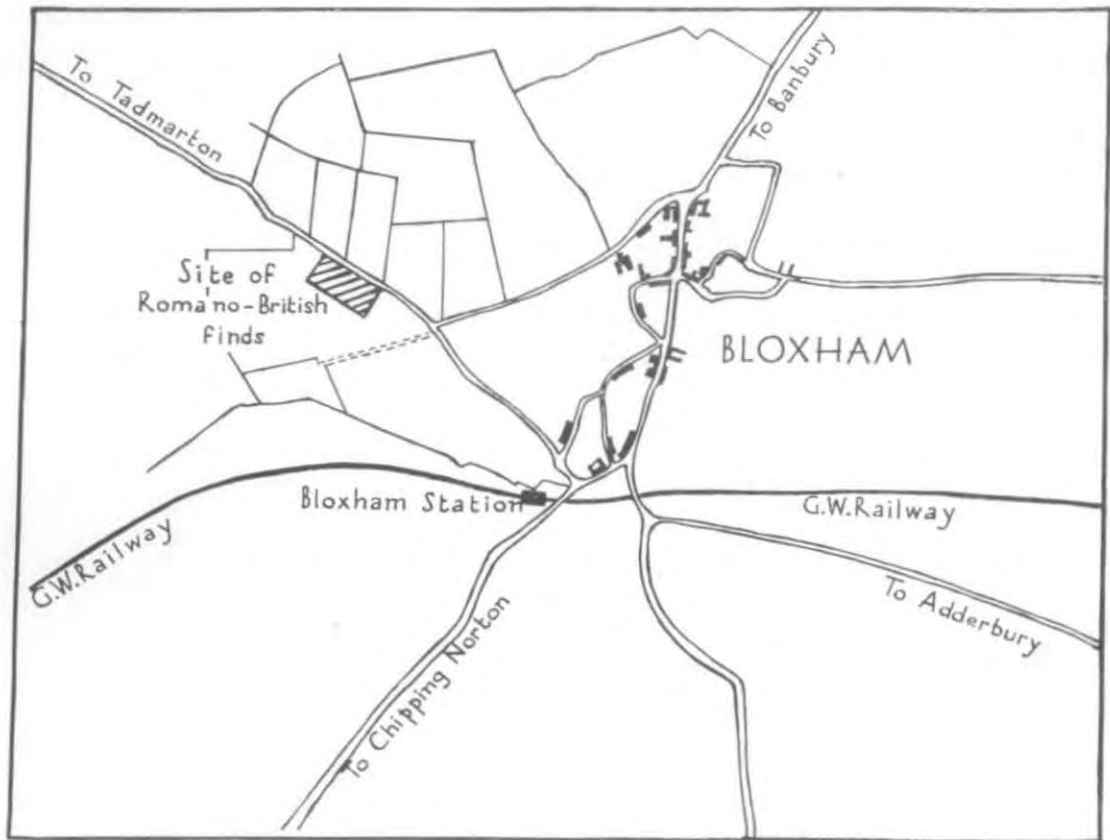


FIG. 10

SKETCH-MAP SHOWING POSITION OF ROMANO-BRITISH SITE AT
BLOXHAM, OXON.

Scale : 3 inches = 1 mile.

*Based on the 6 in. Ordnance Survey Map with the
sanction of the Controller of H.M. Stationery Office.*

Most of the human remains, and some animal bones and antlers of red deer are now in the University Museum, Oxford. The small objects, including the coins, and a large selection of significant pottery, including nearly all the

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ornamented pieces and fragments of rims and bases, are deposited in the Ashmolean Museum.

THE SITE

The site (PLATE VIII, A; FIGS. 10 and 11) covers an area about 200 yds. from east to west and about 150 yds. from north to south, on the south side of the road from Bloxham to Tadmarton. The nearest finds to the road lay about 15 yds. south of it. The surface-soil here averages 3-4 ft. in depth above the ironstone stratum. Most of the discoveries were made where ironstone was actually being worked, but some occurred on the surface south and west of the workings. Three small excavations were carried out in places later reached in the normal course of working the stone.

The chief discovery was a cemetery of inhumation-burials. No huts or habitation-pits were identified, but a well occurred near the middle of the site. Air-photographs which were taken revealed nothing not visible on the ground. Certain formations of rough stones in the soil may or may not be due to human agency. There were, however, a few pieces of ironstone that had been burnt red by the action of fire.

THE WELL

The well was circular, about 3 ft. 6 ins. in diameter and nearly 30 ft. deep, and held about 4 ft. of spring water. The sides were carefully faced with dry masonry of dressed stones varying in size, but all of partly rounded shape. The stonework suggests that the well was mediaeval, and the finds did not prove it earlier. Apparently at some unknown time the well had been filled in intentionally, first with large stones and then with small stones and soil. In the upper part coarse Romano-British pottery occurred, including some first and second century fragments (*e.g.* nos. 13, 25, 41) at a depth of about 6 ft. and also grey soil, the product of decayed organic matter. Presumably the pottery was thrown in accidentally with the soil when the well was filled up. In the well at different levels were antlers of at least five red deer. At about 17 ft. along with a considerable amount of Roman pottery (*e.g.* nos. 1, 36, 38, 40, 44) a very fine pair was encountered, of sixteen or perhaps seventeen points. Professor Henry Balfour, who has very kindly examined and commented on some of the antlers, states that they were shed naturally in the autumn, and that the finest of the antlers could scarcely be paralleled by any deer living now, except in New Zealand. He thinks that the antlers are likely to be of some antiquity. The well also yielded frontals and parts of the skulls of red deer. Mr. Thomas Falconer suggested to me that the antlers may have belonged to deer poached in a royal forest and hidden in the well to avoid risk of discovery.

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FORMATIONS OF STONES

Near the extreme southern end of the site intrusive stones can be seen in the bank of the drift. They may represent a path, or a device for draining the field.

On the west side of the site, also in the bank of the drift, a collection of stones heaped together in a very rough arch-like formation may possibly be of Romano-British date. A few yards east of this was a larger mass of stones, at a depth of about 4 ft., and not apparently due to human agency. At this point there may have been a rubbish-pit, about 12 ft. in diameter, for animal bones, some burnt ironstone, part of a mill-stone (?), and four of the coins (nos. 3, 5, 6, 7) were found close together along with a quantity of Roman pottery (e.g. nos. 6, 10, 16, 17, 30, 33). To the west or south-west, a few feet away, was grey soil likely to result from decayed organic matter, yet in this direction the soil appeared completely undisturbed in the bank of the drift, except for a distance of about 30 yds. opposite the 'rubbish-pit,' where fragments of pottery, stones (possibly intrusive), and other débris occurred.

THE CEMETERY

The cemetery (FIG. 11), up to July 1935,¹ contained at least 21 and perhaps 24 graves. Some were recovered complete, many partially; others are only recorded on the evidence of the workmen. The bodies, which were of the usual Romano-British type,² were buried in flat graves without cists or coffins, though large stones, found above a few, may have been placed there intentionally at the time of burial. The head lay normally to NNE.³ but no. 17 had its head to the E., nos. 6 and 15 had heads to the SW., and nos. 4, 12 and 14 had heads to the W. It is doubtful whether there is any significance in these variations from the normal direction. Most lay supine; but nos. 3, 4, 11, and 18 are attested to have lain prone, a posture which is rare, but not unknown, in Roman burials, and occurs also at other periods.⁴

All the skeletons up to no. 4 (including the putative nos. 22-24, see p. 47) are said to have had funerary pots with them. None of these pots was seen in position; some are said to have 'turned to dust' when moved, of some a sherd

¹ Six further graves were found in 1938, but details are lacking, except for a fragmentary adult male skeleton recovered by Capt. C. Musgrave in July 1938, now deposited in the University Museum, Oxford. The skull of this skeleton lay between the knees, a practice also noted in numerous instances in the Romano-British cemetery at Cassington, Oxon.

² L. H. Dudley Buxton, *Journal of Roman Studies*, xxv (1935), 43.

³ For similar regularity, but in a true northerly direction, see a report of some Romano-British interments from near Ipswich (*The Times*, April 7, 1931, p. 12).

⁴ E.g. in Saxon times, E. T. Leeds and D. B. Harden, *Anglo-Saxon cemetery at Abingdon, Berks.*, p. 30, burials 1, 29, 51.

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or sherds are said to have been preserved. The complete pot found near no. 7 is not certainly to be connected with the burial, and the same is true of the objects found near nos. 15, 20, 21.

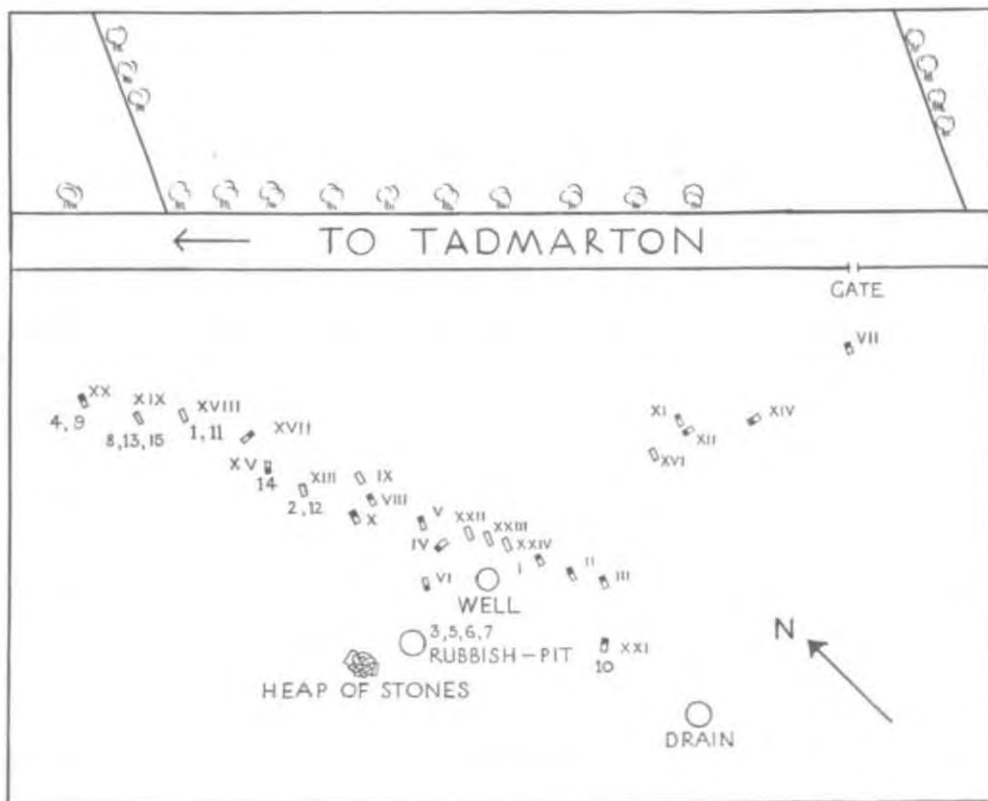


FIG. II

PLAN OF ROMANO-BRITISH SITE AT BLOXHAM, OXON.

The graves are numbered in Roman numerals; the orientation, where known, is indicated in solid black. The find-spots of the coins are indicated by Arabic numerals.

Scale: 1 inch = 110 feet.

The cemetery consisted of two groups, an eastern and smaller group near the gate in the hedge, and a larger western group. The eastern graves were not disposed in any very clear formation. The soil is very irregular and has been frequently disturbed, and the relative position of the graves is unfortunately not quite certain. The western group is clear. In it perhaps twelve of the

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graves might be described as lying side by side, but in échelon, in a nearly straight line running roughly from SE. to NW. Between the SE. end of the western group and the eastern group the ground was dug for ironstone some years ago, and it is probable that there were graves in this area. The ground between the NW. end of the western group and the eastern group has not to my knowledge been worked yet. Graves may be found in it.

1. February, 1929. Supine, head to NNE. (?); depth *c.* 3 ft. Some fragmentary bones recovered. Pot, dark bluish grey ware, *c.* 5 ins. high, said to have been found with the skeleton, but 'turned to dust' when moved.
2. May, 1929. Supine, head to NNE.; depth *c.* 3 ft. Some fragmentary bones recovered, including lower jaw and hip-bone. Young (?) man of medium height. Pot, coarse grey ware, only one sherd preserved, said to have been found with the skeleton.
3. About June 1, 1929. Prone (?), head to NNE.; depth 2 ft. 10 ins. A few stones above the body, perhaps intentional. Bones recovered. Male about 6 ft. tall. Pot said to have been found at left shoulder but 'turned to dust' when moved. Two straight-sided sherds, coarse dark grey ware, from this pot (?), are preserved.
4. June 22, 1929. Prone, head to W.; depth 2 ft. 2 ins. Bones recovered. Female, 18-25 years, about 5 ft. tall. Base-fragment, coarse dark grey ware, with central perforation $1\frac{1}{2}$ diameter, said to come from a pot found near the feet, but broken by workmen.
5. About November 20, 1929. Much disturbed and fragmentary, head to NNE. (?); parts of skeleton recovered. Male. Interesting Pott's fracture of right tibia.
6. January 18, 1930. Fragmentary (?), head to SW. by S. (?).
7. March 21, 1930. Very fragmentary, head to NNE.; depth 1 ft. 6 ins. Near skeleton was found a complete pot of coarse red ware (p. 51, no. 23).
8. October 5, 1930. Supine, head to NNE., arms folded across chest; depth 3 ft. Intact, and carefully excavated. Length of skeleton 5 ft. $9\frac{1}{2}$ ins. Male.
9. October 6, 1930. 6 ft. NNE. of no. 8, perhaps buried in same trench.¹ Supine, head to NNE.; depth 2 ft. 6 ins. Intact and carefully excavated. Length of skeleton 5 ft. 6 ins. Female.
10. About July 29, 1931. Disturbed (?). Supine, head to N. or NNE. (?); depth 1 ft. 6 ins. Carefully excavated. Length of skeleton 5 ft. 9 ins. Female; badly broken, restoration uncertain.
11. April or May, 1933. Disturbed (?); an intrusive bone, *c.* 8 ins. long, and part of a human jaw, found with spinal vertebrae. Prone, head to NNE.; depth *c.* 2 ft. Partially recovered. Length of skeleton 4 ft. 8 ins.
12. April or May, 1933. Disturbed (?). Head to W.; depth *c.* 3 ft. Fragments of skull recovered.
13. July, 1933. 'Fragments of a few bones lying more or less in a straight line.' A human interment (?).

¹ For this custom at Hook Norton, cp. Margaret Dickins, *A History of Hook Norton*, p. 1.

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14. End of December, 1933. Head to W.; lower jaw missing. Fragments of skull recovered.
15. January, 1934. Head to SW. Two fragments of skull preserved; almost certainly male. Near this skeleton, at 7-8 ft. occurred within about 6 ft.: (a) coin of Valens (p. 53, no. 14); (b) a ring (p. 55, no. 7); (c) a bracelet (p. 54, no. 6); (d) a penannular brooch (p. 54, no. 5).
16. May or early June 1934. Skull fragments preserved. Sex uncertain.
17. Early July, 1934. Supine, head to E. Parts of skull recovered. Adult male; heavily built, close to average Romano-British type (G.O.L. 189: G.B. 144: Cephalic Index 76.2). It is interesting to note that the calvarium has a very marked external inion and that the internal inion lies below the external. This has been considered by some to be a primitive feature, especially in the discussions about the Swanscombe skull. The condition is, however, not uncommon in many Oxfordshire bones which present no other special feature, except a large external inion, and does not therefore seem to be important. It is only mentioned here because of the discussions which have taken place.
18. Late October or early November 1934. Prone (?)
19. December, 1934. Supine.
20. May, 1935. Head to NNE. Near the skeleton occurred: (a) coin of Trajan (p. 53, no. 4); (b) coin of Licinius I (p. 53, no. 9); (c) a jetton (?)
21. May, 1935. Supine, head to NE. by E., face to left; depth c. 3 ft. Intact. Skull recovered. Near the skeleton was a coin of Constantine I (p. 53, no. 10).
- 22-24. Three further skeletons are said to have been found early in 1929, but their position and exact number are uncertain. Fragments of human bones, perhaps from these skeletons, were to be seen on a spoil-heap.

THE POTTERY

Fragments of pottery are found on the surface and at various depths all over the site. Two whole pots (pp. 50 f., nos. 14, 23) and 60 lbs. weight of fragments were recovered, including only about eight pieces of Samian ware. None of this pottery is earlier than the Roman occupation, but some of it can be dated to the first century A.D. (e.g. nos. 1-3, 25, 26, 32) and the series extends to the end of the Roman occupation (e.g. nos. 7-8, 17-21).

The coarse ware is principally of grey clay, fired grey or red. The clay is apparently local, for it occurs in the ironstone, and also in a small stream near Bloxham Station about half a mile from the site. No evidence, however, of pottery-making on the site itself was found. Some wasters occurred (e.g. no. 35), but these could well be introduced by trade, as they were at Beckley and Cuddesdon villas and other occupied sites in Oxfordshire where no definite evidence for pottery-making exists.

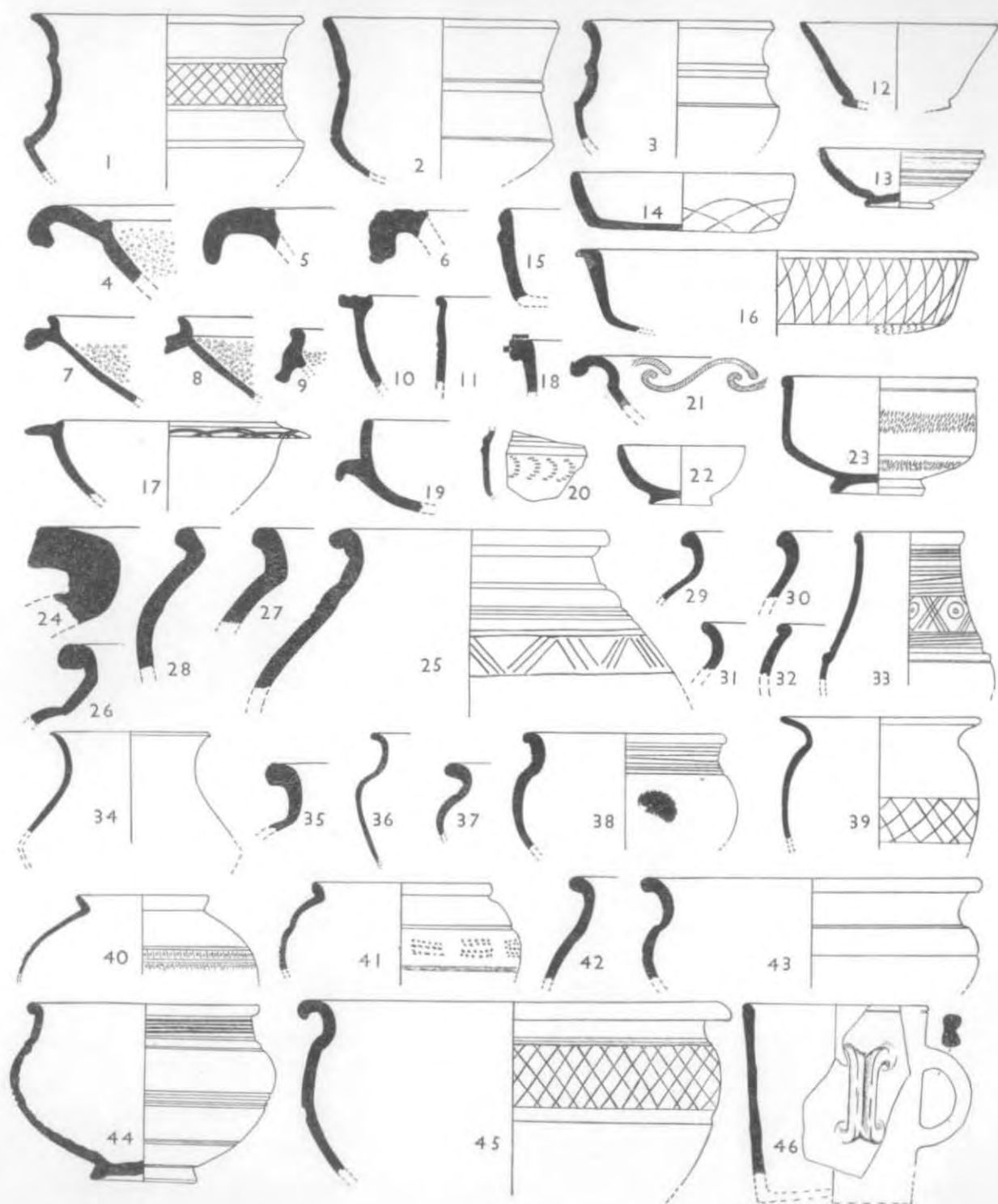


FIG. 12
ROMANO-BRITISH POTTERY FROM BLOXHAM, OXON. (4).

PLATE VIII



A



B



C



D

- A. Air-view of the site looking SE.; in top left-hand corner, Bloxham village. *Ph. Aerofilms Ltd.*
 B. Iron plough-share, knife and hammer (p. 54, nos. 1-3) ($\frac{1}{2}$).
 C. Bone knife-handle and horn peg (p. 54, nos. 3-4) ($\frac{1}{2}$). *Ph. Ashmolean Museum,*
 D. Bronze bracelet (p. 54, no. 6) ($\frac{1}{4}$). *Ph. Blinkhorns, Banbury.*

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Samian.

Only one fragment of decorated Samian was found, a side-fragment, form 37, bearing a large rosette (NW. of graves 1-3, surface). Of undecorated Samian the following small fragments occurred:

- Form 18/31: rim-fragment, blackened by burning; NW. of graves 1-3, surface.
- Form 18 or 18/31: three base-fragments; NW. of graves 1-3, surface.
- Form 35: rim-fragment; in well at 3½ ft.
- Form 38: side-fragment; find-spot unrecorded.
- Form 79: rim-fragment; near grave 7 at 2 ft.

Coarse pottery (FIG. 12)¹

1. Deep bowl. Soft gritty grey ware, calcite-coated and burnished on exterior. Criss-cross-burnished band between cordons. Well at 17 ft. with antlers.
2. Deep bowl. Soft reddish ware with grey core, red-washed and burnished on exterior. Near grave 13.
3. Deep bowl. Hard red ware with grey core, blackened by fire on exterior. Near grave 18.

Bowls of types 1-3 are derived from an Iron Age C (Belgic) prototype and are not uncommon on mid-first century Roman sites. Cp. Verulamium, p. 161, fig. 15, 35 a-d (Belgic prototypes): Swarling, pls. III, 2 and XI, 3 and 9: Richborough I, p. 92, pl. xx, 3: Alchester III, pp. 55, 57, pls. XIV-XV, 21, 23, 54: Grim's Dyke (*Oxoniensia* II), p. 87, fig. 21, 24-26.

4. Mortarium. Hard white ware, colour-washed. Find-spot unrecorded. Early second century. Cp. Wroxeter I, p. 78, fig. 19, 46: Alchester I, p. 173, fig. 6, 3.
5. Mortarium. Ware as no. 4. SW. of well at 1 ft. Late first to early second century. Cp. Wroxeter I, p. 77, fig. 19, 34: Alchester I, p. 173, fig. 6, 1.
6. Mortarium. Hard buff ware, colour-washed. Rubbish-pit at 2 ft. Second century (?). The type is akin to Wroxeter I, p. 77, fig. 19, 38. For the ribbing on the rim cp. Verulamium, fig. 31, 38: Ditchley (*Oxoniensia* I), p. 59, fig. 11, 2.
7. Mortarium. Hard buff ware (reddish core), colour-washed. Near grave 7 at 1½ ft. Third to early fifth century. Cp. Wroxeter I, p. 79, fig. 20, 158: Alchester II, p. 131, fig. 9, 3-5.
8. Mortarium. Soft reddish ware with red colour-coat. Find-spot as no. 7. Third to early fifth century. Cp. Wroxeter I, p. 79, fig. 20, 162: Lydney, p. 97, fig. 26, 12-14: Dorchester Kiln (*Oxoniensia* I), fig. 15, 5-6.

¹ References are abbreviated as follows:—

Wroxeter I, II; Hengistbury; Swarling; Richborough I, II, III; Ospringle; Lydney; Verulamium = *Reports of Research Committee of Soc. Antiquaries* I, II, III, V, VI, VII, X, VIII, IX, XI respectively.

Alchester I, II, III = *Antiq. Journ.*, VII, 147 ff.; IX, 105 ff.; XII, 35 ff. respectively.

Sandford = *Archaeologia*, LXXII, 225 ff.

Silchester = T. May, *The pottery found at Silchester* (1916).

Newstead = J. Curle, *A Roman frontier-post; the fort of Newstead* (1911).

Collingwood = R. G. Collingwood, *Archaeology of Roman Britain* (1930).

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9. Mortarium. Hard white ware (reddish core), colour-washed. NW. of graves 1-3, surface. Third to fourth century. Cp. Wroxeter I, p. 79, fig. 20, 178 ff.
10. Bowl. Soft reddish ware with grey core. Rubbish-pit at 2½ ft. Late first to second century. Cp. Collingwood, type 19: Richborough I, p. 100, pl. xxvii, 79: Verulamium, pp. 184, 196, figs. 28, 20 and 35, 69-70.
11. Bowl. Imitation of Drag. 29 or 30. Hard grey ware, colour-washed and burnished on exterior. Perhaps associated with grave 4 at 2 ft. Second century. Cp. Alchester I, p. 174 f., fig. 7, 1 ff.: Verulamium, pp. 182 ff., fig. 27, 7. Local imitations of the Samian forms 29 and 30 are frequent on British sites, and are difficult to differentiate, especially when fragmentary.
12. Bowl. Imitation of Drag. 33. Hard red ware, wet-smoothed. Near grave 18. Second to third century (?). Cp. Sandford, p. 228, fig. 1, 2: Richborough I, p. 105, pl. xxix, 124.
13. Bowl. Hard grey ware, grey-washed and burnished. Well at 6 ft. The type is not easy to parallel or date.
14. Pie-dish. Complete. Soft grey ware, calcite-coated and burnished. Curved burnished lines on exterior. Find-spot unrecorded. Second to third century. Cp. Collingwood, type 36: Richborough II, p. 101, pl. xxxi, 154.
15. Pie-dish. Hard grey ware, colour-washed. Near grave 11 at 1 ft. Fourth century. Cp. P. Corder, *Roman Pottery at Crambeck*, p. 30, pl. III, 52-3: T. May, *Colchester Cat.*, pl. LVIII, 280.
16. Pie-dish. Soft black ware, calcite-coated and burnished. Above carination criss-cross burnished lines, below carination, pot-hooks. Rubbish-pit at 2½ ft. First-second century. Cp. Collingwood, type 45: Silchester, pl. LXVI, 199: Richborough I, p. 97, pl. xxiv, 46.
17. Bowl. Hard white ware (reddish core), colour-washed. Curved lines of dark brown paint on flange. Find-spot unrecorded. Late third to early fifth century. Cp. Corder, *Crambeck*, p. 31, pl. III, 75-6.
18. Bowl. Ware as no. 17. Bands of reddish-brown paint on rim. Rubbish-pit at 2½ ft. Late third to early fifth century. Cp. Rose Hill Kiln (*Oxoniensia* 1), fig. 19, 15: Richborough II, p. 102, pl. xxxi, 162 and reff. *ad loc.*
19. Bowl. Imitation of Drag. 38. Hard red ware with glossy red slip. Find-spot unrecorded. Third to early fifth century. Cp. Alchester I, p. 176, fig. 7, 9: Hengistbury, p. 49, pl. xxv, 12: Dorchester Kiln (*Oxoniensia* 1), fig. 15, 14-15.
20. Bowl. Soft reddish ware with red colour-coat. Stamped frieze of half-roses on body. Near grave 7 at 1½ ft. Fourth to early fifth century. Cp. H. Sumner, *New Forest Roman pottery sites*, p. 28, pls. v-vi: Hengistbury, p. 50, pl. xxv, 23: Silchester, pl. LVII.
21. Bowl. Ware as no. 20. S-curves in white barbotine on rim. Find-spot unrecorded. Late third to early fifth century. Cp. Lydney, p. 98, fig. 26, 27: Richborough II, p. 103 f., pl. xxxii, 175-6 and reff. *ad loc.*: Dorchester Kiln (*Oxoniensia* 1), fig. 15, 9 and 13.
22. Bowl. Imitation of Drag. 40. Ware as no. 20. Near grave 11 at 4 ft. Third to fourth century. Cp. Sandford, fig. 1, 13: Silchester, pl. LIV, 97.

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23. Bowl. Complete. Imitation of Drag. 37. Ware as no. 20. Rouletting on side and bottom. Near grave 7 at 1½ ft. Late third to early fifth century. Cp. Lydney, fig. 26, 25: Sandford, fig. 2, 15: Dorchester Kiln (*Oxoniensia* 1), fig. 15, 21.
 24. Storage-jar. Hard gritty brown ware with grey core, colour-washed and burnished on exterior. Find-spot unrecorded. Exact date uncertain. This type of heavy jar is common on local sites, but normally has a rolled rim more like that of no. 25.
 25. Storage-jar. Finely-levigated ware with soapy surface, orange-coloured on exterior, grey elsewhere. Zigzag burnished lines on shoulder between cordons. Well at 6 ft. Fragments of another similar jar were found near grave 3 at 2 ft. First century. Cp. Newstead, p. 244, pl. XLVII, 38 (Flavian): Silchester, pl. LXXVI, 9-10. This type is based on an Iron Age C (Belgic) prototype, cp. Verulamium, p. 163, fig. 16, 45 a-b and p. 195, fig. 34, 60 and 61.
 26. Storage-jar. Hard gritty grey ware, colour-washed and burnished. Six ft. W. of well at 1½ ft. First century. Cp. Alchester I, p. 177, fig. 8, 4: Alchester II, p. 128 f., fig. 8, 61, 65. Numerous examples of this type occurred in the earliest levels at Alchester.
 27. Storage-jar. Hard brown gritty ware, wet-smoothed on exterior. Near well at 1 ft. Exact date uncertain. The type is derived from Iron Age C prototypes such as Verulamium, p. 150, pl. LI, 25, and p. 166, fig. 20, 63.
 28. Storage-jar. Soft and friable gritty grey ware fired brown in patches. Near grave 3 at 2 ft.
 29. Olla. Soft dark grey ware full of particles of shell. Horizontal grooves on shoulder. Near grave 7 at 1½ ft.
 30. Olla. Ware as no. 29. Rubbish-pit at 2 ft.
 31. Olla. Ware as no. 29. NW. of graves 1-3, surface.
- Coarse native-made jars such as nos. 28-31 are frequent on local Roman sites. They are difficult to date within narrow limits and many of the types doubtless lasted unchanged throughout the Roman period. For a general description and discussion of these wares see May, *Silchester*, pp. 177 ff., and for some varieties of them dated to the first or second century at Chesterton Lane, Alchester, see *Oxfordshire Arch. Soc. Report*, 1937, p. 39, fig. 5 (cp. especially *ibid.* nos. 64 and 68 with no. 31 above).
32. Bowl. Soft grey ware, blackened by fire on exterior. Near grave 3 at 2 ft. First century. For the shape (which is derived from Iron Age C bead-rim bowls) cp. Richborough III, p. 172, pl. xxxv, 243 (Claudian).
 33. Beaker. Hard grey ware. Burnished horizontal lines on neck and shoulder, between which a burnished frieze of cross-hatching alternating with double concentric circles. Rubbish-pit at 2 ft. Third century (?). For the shape, which is frequent on late Roman sites, cp. Wroxeter II, p. 53, fig. 19, 69: Richborough II, p. 104, pl. xxxiv, 185: Richborough III, p. 182, pl. xl, 326. But normally these tall beakers are decorated on the belly and not on the neck, and are of colour-coated, not hard grey, ware. In its fragmentary state it is difficult to date the present example closely, but it is probably earlier than the majority of such beakers.

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34. Olla. Hard grey ware, colour-washed and burnished on exterior. Find-spot unrecorded. Late first to early second century. Cp. Collingwood, type 83 : Richborough III, p. 178, pl. xxxviii, 291-2 : Silchester, pl. lxxii, 169 : *V.C.H. Hunts.* i, pl. II opp. p. 236 (examples from Dorchester, Oxon. etc.).
35. Olla. Ware as no. 34. A distorted 'waster.' Find-spot unrecorded. Second century (?). A normal, fairly early, high-shouldered type, cp. Richborough III, p. 175, pl. xxxviii, 267, 270.
36. Olla. Hard pinkish ware with colour-washed surfaces, burnished on exterior. Well at 17 ft. with antlers. Probably first to second century.
37. Olla. Hard gritty reddish ware with grey core. East of grave 3 at 4 ft. Late first century. Cp. Richborough III, p. 174, pl. xxxviii, 263.
38. Olla. Hard grey ware, colour-washed and burnished on exterior. Burnished grooves on neck. Well at 17 ft. with antlers. Second to third century (?).
39. Olla. Hard gritty grey ware, calcite-coated and burnished on rim and on exterior. On body a reserved band on which a frieze of criss-cross burnished lines. Near grave 7 at 1 $\frac{3}{4}$ ft. Third to fourth century. Cp. Wroxeter II, p. 53, fig. 19, 67 : Sandford, fig. 7, 55 : Silchester, pl. lxvi : Ospringe, p. 62, pl. xxxix, 462.
40. Olla. Hard grey ware, colour-washed, burnished on exterior. Rouletting on shoulder. Well at 17 ft. with antlers. Late first to early second century. Cp. Collingwood, type 62 : Wroxeter I, p. 73, fig. 17, 26 : Richborough III, p. 176, pl. xxxviii, 280 ff.
41. Olla. Ware as no. 40. Frieze of barbotine dots on body, in squares. Well at 6 ft. Later second century. Cp. Collingwood, types 61-3 and note on p. 230 : Silchester, pl. lxx, 159.
42. Olla. Coarse gritty ware, grey on exterior, reddish elsewhere ; roughly-finished surfaces. Near grave 7 at 1 $\frac{3}{4}$ ft. Exact date uncertain.
43. Olla. Ware as no. 40. Near grave 18. Second to third century (?) Cp. Silchester, pl. lxx, 161.
44. Olla. Hard brown ware, grey in parts, burnished on exterior. Hand-made grooves on neck, wheel-turned grooves on shoulder and body. Well at 17 ft. with antlers. Late first to second century (?)
45. Olla. Ware as no. 40. Frieze of criss-cross burnished lines on shoulder, below which a deep groove. Near grave 3 at 1 ft. Second to third century (?). Cp. Ospringe, p. 29, pl. xxxi, 311.
46. Mug. Hard reddish brown ware, burnished on exterior. Incised groove at rim. Near grave 7 at 1 $\frac{3}{4}$ ft. Another example, but in hard grey ware with criss-cross burnished frieze on body, occurred, find-spot unrecorded. Late second to third century. Cp. Collingwood, type 88.
47. Flue-tile. Fragmentary. Hard red ware with grooved pattern. W. of graves 1-3, surface.

BLOXHAM, OXON.

THE COINS¹

by C. H. V. SUTHERLAND

The digging produced 21 coins, of which 15 are Roman, 5 of the remainder being English copper, from the time of George II onwards, and one perhaps a worn jetton. All are deposited in the Ashmolean Museum. The Roman coins were all found on the west side of the site, from 1933 onwards.

1. Local copy of *as* of CALIGULA: type of M. & S. I, 117, 30. Large oblong counter-mark, incuse on reverse, illegible: coin much worn. October–November, 1934, near grave 18, at 4–5 ft.
2. TRAJAN. *Sestertius*, exact type doubtful through wear. May, 1933, near grave 13, at 2½–3 ft.
3. TRAJAN. *Dupondius*, ? M. & S. II, 275, 428. Much worn. Spring, 1933, in rubbish-pit, at about 2 ft.
4. TRAJAN. *Dupondius* or *as*, too much worn for identification. May–June, 1935, near grave 20, at about 2 ft.
5. FAUSTINA I. *Dupondius*, M. & S. III, 167, 1174. Fair condition. Find-spot as no. 3.
6. M. AURELIUS. *Sestertius*, M. & S. III, 295, 1038. Rather worn. Find-spot as no. 3.
7. POSTUMUS. *Sestertius*, small and perhaps irregular. *Victoria Aug* type: exact variety uncertain through wear. Find-spot as no. 3.
8. 'RADIATE.' Small *Æ3*, barbarous. Much worn, and rev. illegible. December, 1934, near grave 19, at about 4 ft.
9. LICINIUS I. *Æ3*, C. VII, 193, 49 (cuirassed). Fair condition. Find-spot as no. 4.
10. CONSTANTINE I. *Æ3*, C. VII, 231, 16. Rather worn. May–June, 1935, near grave 21, at about 3 ft.
11. CONSTANTINE I. *Æ3* (Constantine II as Caesar), C. VII, 367, 33. Fair condition. Find-spot as no. 1.
12. CONSTANS. *Æ3*, C. VII, 431, 179. Mint-mark invisible through wear. Spring, 1933, near grave 13, at about 2½ ft.
13. UNCERTAIN OF THE HOUSE OF CONSTANTINE I. *Æ3*. *Gloria exercitus*. Rather worn. Find-spot as no. 8.
14. VALENS. *Æ3*, C. VIII, 110, 47. Mint-mark invisible through wear. December, 1933, near grave 15, with small objects nos. 4, 5, 6, at 7–8 ft.
15. VALENTINIAN I OR VALENS. *Æ3*. ? *Restitutor Reip*. Much worn. Find-spot as no. 8.

¹ References are made to the following: Mattingly and Sydenham, *The Roman Imperial Coinage* (M. & S.); Cohen, *Description historique des monnaies frappées sous l'empire romain* (2 ed.) (C.).

W. F. J. KNIGHT

THE SMALL FINDS

by D. B. HARDEN

1. Hammer, iron (PLATE VIII, B): worn and splayed head, blunt-nosed tail set horizontally (technically: 'cross-paned'), small shaft-hole. L. $5\frac{1}{2}$ ins. D. head $1\frac{3}{8}$ ins. W. across shaft hole $1\frac{1}{4}$ ins. W. tail $\frac{5}{8}$ in. Find-spot unrecorded.

For the type, which is common on Roman sites, see Sir John Evans, 'Iron tools from Silchester,' *Archaeologia*, LIV, 145 f., figs. 8-9. Evans remarks on the smallness of the shaft-hole compared with the weight of the tool, and suggests that the shaft was not wooden, but made of stiffened hide with an iron end in the shaft-hole, for one of the Silchester examples had its hole filled with corroded metal. Cp. also Curle, *Newstead*, p. 285, pl. LXIII, 1.

2. Plough-share, iron (PLATE VIII, B): flat, pointed blade with blunted sides; three-quarter-circle socket. L. $11\frac{1}{2}$ ins. W. of blade $1\frac{1}{4}$ ins. T. of edge $\frac{1}{2}$ in. Find-spot unrecorded.

For two plough-shares of this type from Bigberry Camp near Canterbury see W. Boyd Dawkins, *Arch. Journ.*, LIX, 215, pl. ii, fig. 4b, who mentions parallels from Mount Caburn and Hunsbury. All these belong to the Early Iron Age, but the type lasted into the Roman times (E. C. Curwen, *Antiquity*, I, 268: G. W. B. Huntingford, *Antiquity*, VI, 327 ff.).

3. Knife, iron, with Handle, bone (PLATE VIII, B, C): simple, one-edged blade ending in a rounded point; tapering tang; the handle roughly cylindrical and carved from an ox-bone, with plain ends, cut off square; on exterior at each end is an incised criss-cross band flanked by double lines. L. of blade $4\frac{1}{2}$ ins. L. of tang $1\frac{1}{2}$ ins. L. of handle $4\frac{3}{4}$ ins. D. of handle 1 in. Find-spot unrecorded. The two pieces were found close to each other and perhaps belong together.

For the type, which is common on Roman sites, cp. *Lydney*, p. 91, no. 152, pl. XXXI A: *Richborough* II, p. 52, no. 74, pl. XXIV (handle missing): *Newstead*, pl. LX, 2-4: Eck, *Deux cimetières gallo-romains de Vermand et de S. Quentin*, pl. XII, 9: Ritterling, *Hofheim*, pl. XVIII, 34, 41, etc. (first century A.D.).

4. Peg (?), horn (PLATE VIII, C): made of a pared down core of a horn with a holed notch at the butt end for attaching a string. Perhaps a peg for locking a bolt. L. 3 ins. D. $\frac{5}{8}$ in. Near grave 13, found with pot no. 2 (p. 49).

5. Brooch, bronze: penannular, circular section, with bent-back and pinched terminals. D. $1\frac{1}{8}$ ins. Near grave 15, with nos. 6 and 7 and coin no. 14, at 7-8 ft.

For the type (probably third-fourth century A.D.) cp. *Lydney*, p. 78 f., fig. 14, and references *ad loc.*: H. E. Kilbride-Jones, 'Evolution of penannular brooches,' *Proc. Roy. Irish Acad.*, XLIII, sect. C, no. 13, pp. 379 ff., who considers this to be the initial form from which later penannular brooches with zoomorphic terminals were developed.

6. Bracelet, bronze (PLATE VIII, D): flat strip of metal with 'crenellated' edges, cut out and chased, with overlapping ends with rivet-holes. On exterior, incised wheel-turned double concentric circles joined by diagonal rows of dots. D. $2\frac{3}{4}$ ins. W. $\frac{1}{2}$ in. Find-spot as no. 5. Described and figured in *Journ. Roman Studies*, XXIV (1934), 206 f.: *The Bloxhamist*, July 1935.

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For the type (probably late Roman) cp. *Lydney*, p. 82 f., fig. 17, espec. D and F (but neither shows the 'crenellated' edge): *Richborough* II, p. 49, no. 51, pl. XXI, 2.

7. Ring, brass: circular in section and flattened in part by use. Perhaps a harness-ring, and almost certainly post-Roman. D. $\frac{7}{8}$ in. T. $\frac{1}{8}$ in. Find-spot as no. 5.
8. Whetstone. In field W. of graves 13, 15, 17 (*Oxfordshire Arch. Soc. Report*, 1929, p. 232).
9. Quern, fragmentary. In SW. corner of site, at 3 ft.
10. Mill-stone, fragmentary. In the rubbish-pit (p. 44). Perhaps post-Roman.

ANIMAL BONES

Numerous animal bones were found, including the skeleton of a dog (near the 'arch-like formation of stones,' p. 44) pig, sheep, *bos* (young animals presumably used for food), and possibly horse, though no horse bones exist among those submitted to Dr. Buxton for examination. Many of the bones were split or burnt. In one instance a complete sheep's leg appeared to have been buried in a pot of calcite ware. There were also, in the well (p. 43), antlers of red deer, perhaps post-Roman.

CONCLUSIONS

The site was one of many Romano-British occupation-sites known to have existed in the valley of the upper Cherwell, most of them beside rivers or small streams. It is shown by the pottery to have been occupied more or less continuously from the first century to the late fourth or fifth, throughout the whole of the Roman occupation. No signs of cremation-burials have been found, and since Romano-British inhumations belong in general to the late third century and afterwards, the cemetery probably belonged to the later part of the occupation of the site only. The paucity of the graves is no proof that the settlement was small or short-lived: other burials, both cremation and inhumation, doubtless remain undiscovered outside the excavated area.

Stratification was absent. The soil, of which there is usually a depth of three or four feet above the ironstone, has no doubt been shifted again and again, so that finds of any age may occur at any depth. The finding of coins and metal objects at depths of from 4-8 ft., that is, deeper than the graves, may indicate that there were huts or habitation-pits towards the NW. end of the cemetery.

Though no positive evidence for ancient huts or houses has come to light, the pottery and coins prove that Romano-Britons were settled here for a period of at least 300 years. It need not have been a large settlement since the quantity of pottery is not excessive for a community enduring so long. The people

were poor and simple. They seem not to have possessed any expensive or luxurious property; even the amount of their Samian ware appears to have been very small. As remains of considerable buildings have not occurred, and are not revealed by air-photography, it is to be supposed that the settlement consisted of huts, of which the foundations have been obliterated by centuries of ploughing. It is true that one solitary fragment of a flue-tile (p. 52, no. 47) was recorded, but this, though suggestive, is not enough by itself to prove the existence here of a bath-house. Yet the settlement had some permanence and continuity, and was in touch with the outside world. It was probably purely rural and agricultural. Though it is possible that ironstone was worked in this region in Romano-British times, no evidence exists, either here or elsewhere, to substantiate such a theory: and, equally (p. 47), there is no good evidence that pottery was made here, despite the existence of suitable clay in the neighbourhood.

The occurrence of recent objects, such as the coins of Hanoverian English kings, part of a gun or pistol, and a pair of manacles, added to the doubtful evidence from the well (p. 43), suggests that the site was also inhabited again not many generations ago. The nearest houses to the site are now several hundred yards away. Among them is a cottage partly ruined, and said to be haunted. There exists, indeed, a tradition, traced to a grandfather of a man now living, that a farmhouse used to stand where the Romano-British remains have been found, and that it was destroyed by fire. No documentary confirmation of this tradition can be found.