

Excavations at Vicarage Field, Stanton Harcourt, 1951

WITH AN APPENDIX ON SECONDARY NEOLITHIC WARES IN THE OXFORD REGION

By NICHOLAS THOMAS

THE SITE

VICARAGE Field (FIG. 1) lies less than half a mile from the centre of Stanton Harcourt village, on the road westward to Beard Mill. It is situated on one of the gravel terraces of the upper Thames. A little to the west the river Windrush flows gently southwards to meet the Thames below Standlake. About four miles north-east another tributary, the Evenlode, runs into the Thames which itself curves north, about Northmoor, past Stanton Harcourt and Eynsham to meet it. The land between this loop of the Thames and the smaller channels of the Windrush and Evenlode is flat and low-lying; but the gravel subsoil allows excellent drainage so that in early times, whatever their culture or occupation, people were encouraged to settle there.¹

Vicarage Field and the triangular field south of the road from Stanton Harcourt to Beard Mill enclose a large group of sites of different periods. The latter field was destroyed in 1944-45, after Mr. D. N. Riley had examined the larger ring-ditch in it and Mr. R. J. C. Atkinson the smaller.² Gravel-working also began in Vicarage Field in 1944, at which time Mrs. A. Williams was able to examine part of the area that was threatened.

During September, 1951,³ it became necessary to restart excavations in Vicarage Field when the gravel-pit of Messrs. Ivor Partridge & Sons (Begg-broke) Ltd. was suddenly extended westward, involving a further two acres of ground. The land to be cleared (FIGS. 1 and 2) contained a ring-ditch and

¹ For plans of sites in the area, see *Oxoniensia*, VIII and IX, 1943-4, p. 84 (no. 29); *ibid.*, X, 1945, p. 18.

² *Oxoniensia*, VIII and IX, 1943-4, pp. 200-201; X, 1945, pp. 94-5.

³ The discovery that the pit was being extended was made by Mrs. B. de Seyssel who reported the matter to the Ashmolean Museum and undertook the major part of the rescue work, being present on the site for over a month. I attended at week-ends and was responsible for the survey, the section-drawing and the photography. For permission to excavate thanks are due to Mr. I. Partridge. I am grateful also to Mr. and Mrs. R. A. Castell and family, of the Old Vicarage, Stanton Harcourt, who gave much help on the site, to the Ashmolean Museum for financial assistance, to Mr. V. R. Rickard, restorer at the Ashmolean, for his reconstruction of the Neolithic storage vessel, and to Miss Grace Simpson for her report on the Samian ware.

The finds are now deposited in the Ashmolean Museum, except for the Neolithic pig teeth which are in the Institute of Archaeology, University of London.

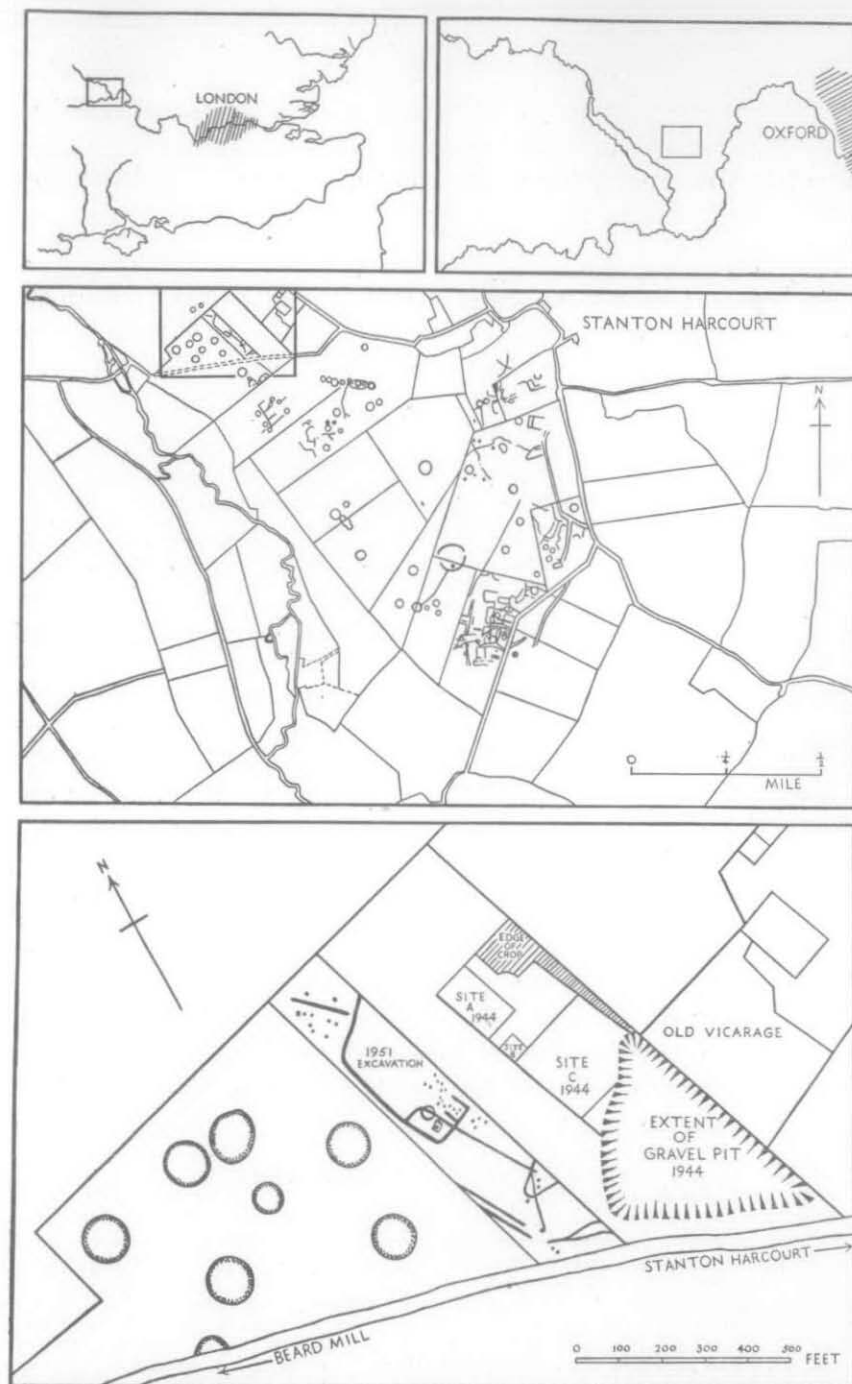


FIG. I

Maps showing the position of Vicarage Field, Stanton Harcourt, Oxon., of the excavations therein in 1944 and 1951, and of eight ring-ditches since destroyed by gravel-digging

Based on 6 in. O.S. map by sanction of the Controller of H.M. Stationery Office

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VICARAGE FIELD 1951

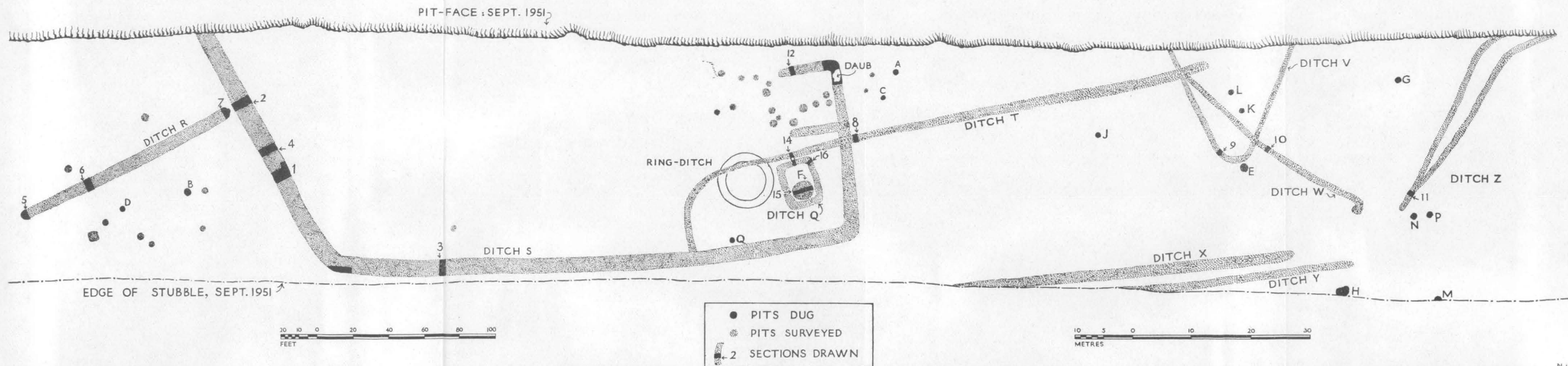


FIG. 2
STANTON HARCOURT, OXON.
Plan of the area in Vicarage Field examined in 1951 (pp. 4-10)

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a system of pits and ditches, apparently part of the Iron Age farmstead examined by Mrs. A. Williams when the gravel pit was first begun.⁴ The remains described in this report are visible in the air-photograph published by her.⁵ They lie between the concentration of pits and ditches constituting Mrs. Williams's sites A-C⁶ and the group of eleven ring-ditches at the west end of the field. Their map reference is 42/402057.

SUMMARY AND METHOD OF WORKING

Structures and objects of at least two different periods, Neolithic and early Roman, were discovered. Three small Neolithic pits contained pieces of antler and a bucket-like vessel of Rinyo-Clacton ware characteristic of some Secondary Neolithic cultures in Britain. An exceptionally small example of a ring-ditch of a type peculiar to the upper Thames valley was also examined. It contained no burial nor evidence of date save that it was pre-Roman. The Roman site comprised a characteristic group of pits and ditches; one ditch formed an enclosure with an inturned entrance, which was probably the main part of this complex. Two of the pits were perhaps post-holes; the rest were for rubbish. No traces were found in this area of the Iron Age occupation which was so strong only a few yards to the east, but there was a good associated series of early Romano-British coarse pottery.

Mechanical excavators were at work from the start, so that archaeological digging had to be hurried and could not hope to be thorough. A number of sections were cut across all the ditches (see plan, FIG. 2). Several representative pits were cleared out and associated groups of pottery obtained. Time prevented us from working out the relative chronology of the network of Romano-British ditches by excavating their intersections; but the uniformity of the pottery suggested, from the start, that they were all broadly contemporary.

A survey was also made of the group of ring-ditches in the western half of the field, which were visible as crop-marks in the stubble (FIG. 1), and of the pits and ditches exposed by the clearance of the topsoil for gravel-working (PL. I, A, FIG. 2). These ring-ditches varied in diameter from 64 feet to 97 feet; the width of their ditches ranged from 6 feet to 11 feet. No traces could be seen of banks, mounds or central pits.

Not all the pits could be plotted in the time at our disposal, but in the area of cuttings 1-7, and at the entrance to the main enclosure, the exact location of all visible pits was planned as an indication of their density elsewhere on the site.

⁴ *Oxoniensia*, xvi, 1951, p. 5 ff.

⁵ *Oxoniensia*, *ibid.*, pl. iv.

⁶ *Oxoniensia*, *ibid.*, fig. 3.

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THE NEOLITHIC PITS

(FIG. 2, A-C)

Pit A, which lay 30 ft. south of the entrance to the main enclosure, had been partly excavated before I saw it. It was roughly square in plan, with sides 4 ft. long, and had been dug into the gravel to a depth of $1\frac{1}{2}$ feet.⁷ Its filling was black and loamy, though it contained a little gravel. This pit yielded six flint flakes and the upper part of a bucket-shaped pot of Secondary Neolithic type (PL. I, B, FIG. 5, no. 1). It seems likely that this vessel had been placed inverted or on its side and a mechanical scraper had removed its lower half, for none of its base survived.

Pit B, 45 ft. north of Cutting 1, was small. I was not present when it was excavated and no exact details of its filling were recorded, but it yielded two rim-fragments of Secondary Neolithic pottery (FIG. 5, nos. 2 and 3), together with a plain flint flake, a piece of quartzite and some incisor teeth of pig (*Sus palustris*, comparing well with those from Neolithic sites on the Swiss lakes, reported by Rüttimeyer).⁸

Pit C lay 20 ft. N.W. of Pit A. It was rectangular, about 3 ft. by 1 ft., and like Pit A, was filled with black loamy earth, to a similar depth. It contained a large fragment of red-deer antler and several unworked flint flakes.

Rubbish pits and fire-holes are frequently found on the upper Thames gravels.⁹ They represent the activities of a not inconsiderable native Neolithic population hunting and fishing beside the river. It is not yet possible to discern any significant theme in such slight traces of life. All Secondary Neolithic people seem to have made these simple excavations, some as temporary shelters, some for rubbish and others for fires. It is less usual, perhaps, to find pits which are square rather than circular. Their distribution in the upper Thames area coincides with henge monuments and with burials.

THE RING-DITCH

(FIG. 3)

This site lay in the S.W. corner of the main Romano-British enclosure, immediately north of Ditch Q (see below, p. 9). Its ditch, which had a maximum diameter of about 30 ft., was very large in proportion to the area enclosed, having a surface width of 5 feet. Its contour varied slightly in the

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⁹ See, for example, Leeds, *Antiq. J.*, xiv, 1934, pp. 264 ff., for pits at Cassington; Atkinson, *Oxoniensia*, xiii, 1948, p. 67, for Site X, Dorchester.

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THE RING-DITCH

(FIG. 3)

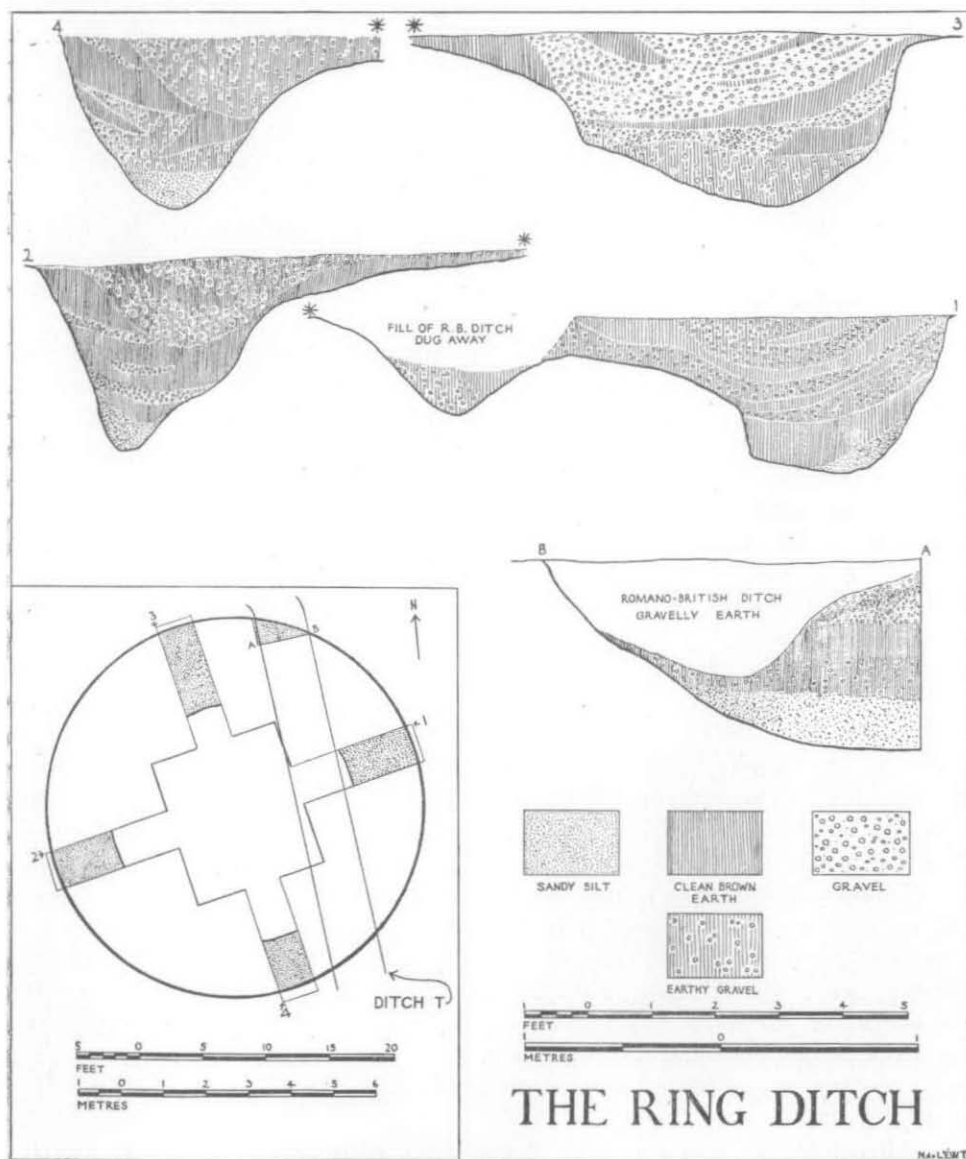
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four sections dug, though all of them showed a very steep outer side and a more gently inclined inner face. The outer edge of the ditch was quite circular.

The bottom silt consisted of about 6 in. of clean sandy gravel, produced by the immediate weathering of the sides of the newly-cut ditch. Sections 1, 2 and 4 (FIG. 3) show how this material tended to spill in from the outer side, probably because it was steeper. Subsequent filling consisted of alternate layers of clean loamy red earth, loam mixed with sandy gravel, and pure gravel streaks. In the four cuttings there was no uniformity about the order in which these layers occurred.

Ditch T had been dug through the upper filling of the ditch of this site (FIG. 4, section 8).

The interior of the ring-ditch was almost entirely covered by a pocket of natural clay. An area 10 ft. square in the centre of the circle was stripped down to the clay and gravel. No traces of any man-made features were found here or in the four cuttings across the ditch. On the surface of the gravel hereabouts a large concentration of Romano-British sherds occurred, but these were probably connected with Ditch T and the small rectangular enclosure (FIG. 3).

The sections indicate that the spoil from the ditch of this circle had been heaped on its outer side. The subsequent return of the bank seems to have been due to the action of wind and rain over many centuries, with the exception of the uppermost layer of gravelly earth, which was probably put back by Romano-British cultivation-levelling.

In prehistoric times the upper Thames area, though linked by the river and the Icknield Way with other parts of the Lowland Zone, nevertheless evolved very much its own forms of ceremonial monuments and barrow architecture. The extreme regularity with which its cursuses were laid out and the number and variety of its henge monuments bear witness to this. None, however, is more specialized than the type of site called a ring-ditch.

Ring-ditches fall into two groups, those which have a circular space not covered by a mound but defined by a ditch with outer bank, and others which have two ditches but are otherwise similar. Burials are rarely found in either. Neither is common outside Oxfordshire but some of those with one ditch may be the more familiar disc-barrows of the Wessex Bronze Age with central mounds removed by ploughing. The diameters of both groups vary from 70-100 feet, so that the example studied in this report is exceptionally small.

The fact that the outer edge of this ditch was absolutely regular, but its inner edge was less so, gives it some resemblance to Site XIV at Dorchester-on-Thames, the ditch of which showed clear evidence of construction by digging a series of contiguous pits arranged in a circle. Site XIV was a circular

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enclosure with an internal bank. Within the latter had stood a hut or platform apparently intended as a temporary resting-place for the dead, for no burial was found there. Atkinson has suggested that some ring-ditches may have been temporary mortuary enclosures, in discussing the proximity of two such sites to round barrows on Port Meadow, Oxford.¹⁰ It is possible, therefore, that our ring-ditch may be linked with those irregular little enclosures and cremation cemeteries that are so peculiarly characteristic of Secondary Neolithic culture in the upper Thames area.

THE ROMANO-BRITISH SETTLEMENT

This comprised a series of enclosures and other ditches, and numerous pits.

Ditch S (FIG. 4, sections 2-4, 12)

This was part of a large enclosure with an in-turned entrance near the centre of its southern side. It was more substantial than any other ditch examined and appears to have been the chief feature of the site. A short length of ditch branched in from the southern side about 30 ft. west of the entrance.

The profile of this ditch was V-shaped, and fairly uniform, the base of the V sometimes showing a distinct slot (section 3). Its width at gravel-surface was from 7-8 ft. ; its depth varied from 2-4 feet.

The silting was not very uniform. Where it had been dug with a sharp V-section the bottom filling consisted of pure sandy gravel, spilling in equally from either side. Where the profile was shallower the lowest filling was a pure red loam. Secondary silting everywhere comprised a thick layer of gravelly earth derived from both sides of the ditch.

The material in the upper part of the ditch must represent the return, by natural causes, of the original upcast from it ; there was no evidence, however, that it had come in more from one side than the other and it appears that this enclosure ditch had no recognizable bank.

At the entrance the profile across the western in-turned arm was deeper and narrower (section 12). No trace of any wooden posts were found here but the vertical walls of the deeper part of the ditch suggest that uprights had been erected to define the entrance and perhaps to form gate-posts, for otherwise the sides of the ditch, being dug vertically into loose gravel, would have collapsed at once, to form a filling of pure gravel and sand. Section 12 shows that this did not happen. Instead, the lower silt, gravelly earth, represents a slow accumulation hastened at intervals by spreads of gravel. The upper half of the ditch contained clean red loam.

¹⁰ *Oxoniensia*, VII, 1942, p. 35.

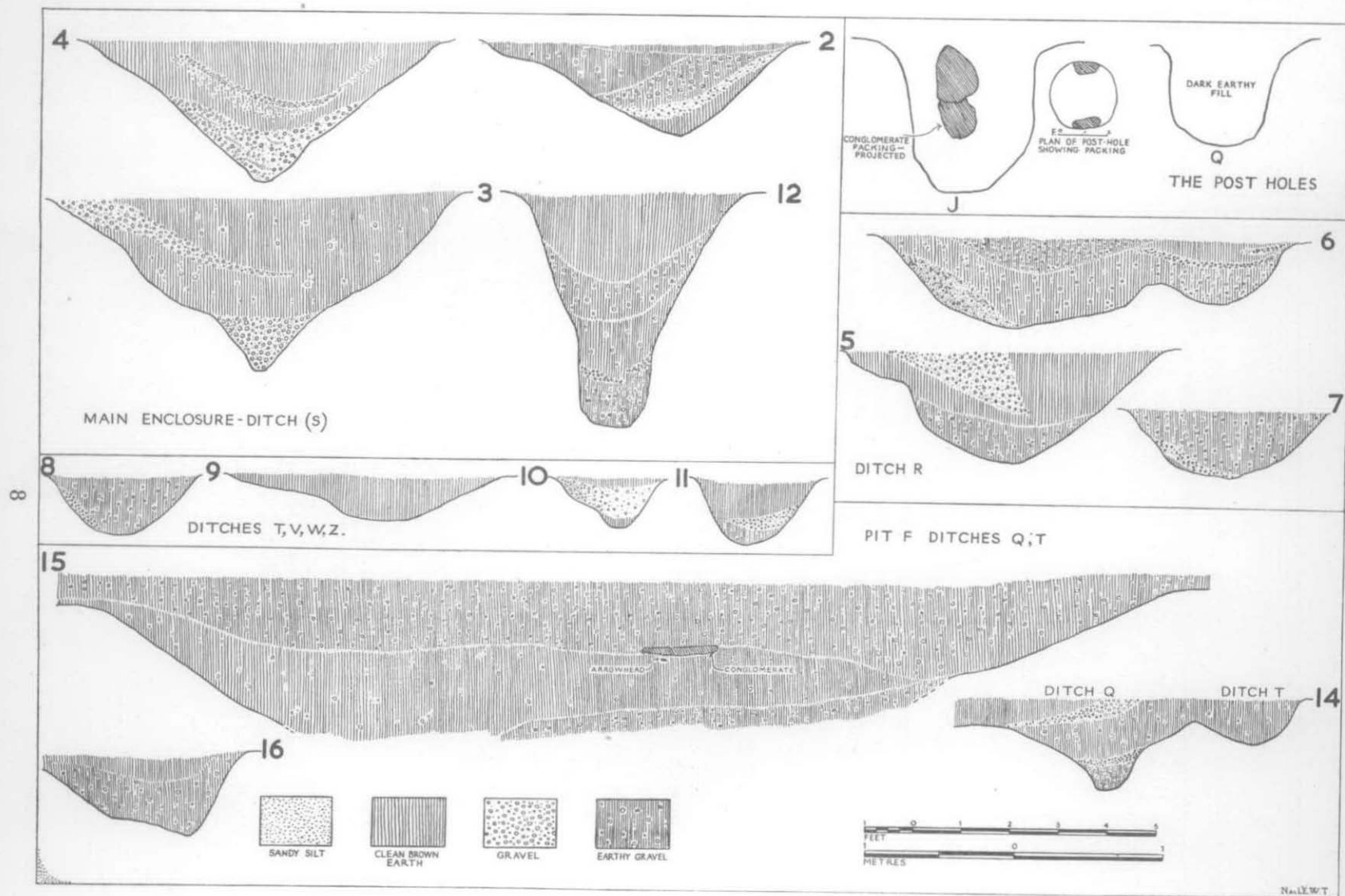


FIG. 4
STANTON HARCOURT, OXON.
Sections of ditches and post-holes in Vicarage Field (pp. 7-12)

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Very little pottery was found in the primary silt of Ditch S, but what there was conformed to the large assemblage of sherds from higher up, all of which are early Roman forms (pp. 15-7, below). On top of the lower silt in the western arm of the entrance a quantity of daub lay scattered, some of it with the impress of wattle. This provided the only clue to the character of the farm buildings which must originally have clustered within Ditch S.

Ditch Q (FIG. 4, sections 14, 16)

Ditch Q defined a small rectangular enclosure, about 20 ft. by 30 ft., which had no entrance. The ditch was extremely slight, being 5 ft. wide and 2 ft. deep.

In section 14 the primary silting consisted of very sandy reddish loam spreading from the outer edge of the ditch, over which was a pure gravel layer. Above this the filling was more earthy, though mixed with some gravel. Finally an upper layer of clean gravel had entered from the outside. In section 16 the ditch was uniformly filled with red loam containing some gravel; at the top the gravel disappeared, leaving a pure loam.

Section 14 strongly suggests that there was an outer bank, but section 16, dug only a few feet south of it, does not confirm this. The relationship of Ditch Q to Ditch T was not demonstrated by either of the sections dug.

This enclosure contained the enormous rubbish-pit F, described below (p. 10).

Ditches R, T and V-Z (FIG. 4, sections 5-11)

Ditch R was a fairly large straight ditch, running for a distance of 110 ft. N.W. from the northern side of the main enclosure. Its southern end, which finished about 2 ft. short of the main enclosure ditch, was trefoil-shaped in plan. In places, as section 6 shows, this ditch consisted of two channels touching each other. There was no evidence that one was earlier than the other.

In sections 6 and 7 the bottom silt consisted of pure sandy gravel; in section 5 this layer contained much more loam. Everywhere the upper ditch-filling was composed of clean red loam which, in section 5, included a tip of gravel. Sections 6 and 7 show the upcast on the west side but section 5 shows it on the east.

Ditch T, like Ditches W and Z, was narrow and shallow. As section 8 shows, it was about 3 ft. wide and 1 ft. deep (see also ring-ditch, section 1). Its bottom silting was pure sandy gravel running in from the east side in section 8 and from the west in the area of the ring-ditch. Its secondary filling consisted of gravelly loam.

Ditches W and Z resembled each other closely. They were 3 ft. wide

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and 1 ft. deep, with V-shaped profiles. In both, the lowest filling was loam, freer of gravel in W than in Z. Above this, in each, occurred a layer of pure sandy gravel which had entered from the east side in the first and from the west in the second. A clean reddish loam completed the filling of each ditch.

Ditch W must originally have been a straight, isolated stretch like Ditch R. At its southern end it turned slightly west and ended in a circular swelling—probably a pit—which we had not time to examine.

Ditch Z forked near its western end and curved gently southwards towards the modern road. It was not possible to tell if both branches were contemporary.

Ditches X and Y, which ran parallel, 5 ft. apart, perhaps formed a drove-way. Time did not allow them to be investigated.

Ditch V, over 4 ft. wide, was broad and shallow. It was filled with clean red loam. From the plan it seems unlikely that it was contemporary either with T or W.

Pit F

Pit F, a circle, 23 ft. in diameter (FIG. 4, section 15) was the largest pit to be seen in the area. It may be compared in size with the crop-marks by ring-ditches II, III and VI (PL. 1, A). Time did not allow the section across it to be dug deeper than 3 ft. ; its floor must have been at least twice as deep. The sides of the pit sloped gently. Its upper filling consisted of red loam with sparse gravel, overlying and also sealed by more gravelly layers. One large block of conglomerate was encountered ; in the layer beneath this occurred a flint hollow-based arrowhead, a scraper (FIG. 9, nos. 1, 2 and 6) and several sherds of Romano-British coarse pottery. Finds were fewer in this pit than in any of the other rubbish pits examined.

Pits D, E, G, H, K, L, M, N, P

I was not present when these pits were dug. It appears that their filling was red loam mixed with a little gravel. They were bowl-shaped, 2-4 ft. in diameter and 1-2 ft. deep : pits E and H were the largest. With the exception of D, which yielded no finds, and of J and Q (see below), all the pits contained varying quantities of potsherds and animal bones. The filling of H contained a large amount of wood-ash and a fragment of daub with wattle impression.

Pits J and Q (FIG. 4)

These pits were probably post-holes, although neither showed any trace of timbers. Both had much deeper and more vertical sides than any of the other pits. At the upper edge of J two large lumps of conglomerate were found in such a position as to suggest that they had been used as packing round a post.

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These structures and rubbish pits were used by a community which lived here during the first hundred years of the Roman occupation. Probably this group was a poor one : bronze, iron and Samian ware were extremely scarce. Likewise living quarters and outhouses were very flimsy, only a few scraps of daub and a rectangular drainage ditch attesting their presence at all.

Perhaps the most unexpected discovery was that there was a complete break in culture between this site and the Early Iron Age farm a few yards to the east. This is all the more surprising in view of the continuity of occupation, over a similar period, at Mount Farm, Dorchester¹¹ and elsewhere.

Time did not allow the relationship between the various ditches to be established. It would seem that the main feature of this farmstead was a medium-sized rectangular enclosure with its entrance on the south side. The earliest pottery from the area occurred in this ditch, just above the primary silt. Like so many Iron Age and Roman ditches cut in gravel and chalk, the profile of the enclosure ditch was V-shaped and sufficiently steep to have silted up quickly. As a defensive work it can have been of little value. There was no consistent evidence for an inner bank nor were there any traces of a palisade which, to judge from the shape of the ditch, might have been set up in it. It may therefore be concluded that there was no need for defences against human attack but that a ditch was dug to ward off marauding animals and to retain cattle and sheep.

The plan of Ditch Q suggests that it was a drainage ditch dug round a small building so slight that nothing of it has survived. Any camper will appreciate the value of a small channel round his tent as a protection against the rain. It is possible that Pit F was contemporary with this building and ditch and may therefore have been under cover.

Little can be deduced from the other ditches belonging to the site ; it may be presumed that they were designed to mark out cattle pounds, sheep pens and perhaps fields. They were all too insubstantial to have held palisades but some may have been dug to contain thorn hedges.

Over the whole area thus marked out by these simple farmers, rubbish-pits were used in large numbers. The plan and the air-photographs indicate that the main concentration of small pits lay just to the west of the main enclosure. West of the area described in this report Vicarage Field contains at least seven more large pits similar to Pit F.

Despite the large number of open Romano-British sites in the upper Thames region, none has been fully excavated. The Vicarage Field settlement should stand between the stoutly defended Belgic farmsteads like Bos-

¹¹ *Oxoniensia*, II, 1937, p. 40.

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combe Down West, Wilts.¹² Cassington¹³ and even the early site at Callow Hill,¹⁴ and the less defended, more systematic and Romanized habitations like Woodcuts and Rotherley, in Dorset.¹⁵ Nevertheless it is difficult to assign a precise date to the main enclosure. The presence among the coarse pottery in the main enclosure ditch of a fragment of Samian ware of form 18 or 18/31 argues for a date subsequent to the Roman conquest. There is a smaller proportion of bowls made in the soapy 'native' fabric than at Callow Hill, for example. We would therefore tentatively assign the first Romano-British occupation at Vicarage Field to a date within the second half, and perhaps the last quarter, of the first century A.D.

THE FINDS

NEOLITHIC POTTERY

(1) Upper part of a large pot, d. (mouth) $8\frac{1}{2}$ in., ht. over 9 in. (PL. I, B). Thin, fairly well-fired ware with some shell-grit, unevenly coloured light buff to black. Surfaces smoothed; corky texture.

Top of vessel slopes inwards a little towards the mouth and is decorated with eight roughly parallel horizontal grooves incorporating three strips of ladder pattern. The lower part, which narrows towards the base, is separated from the top by a horizontal applied strip of clay. From this, seven vertical strips descend to the base, decorated at intervals with finger-nail impressions. Where these strips join the horizontal cordon, the end of a finger has been jabbed.

The panels formed by the vertical strips have been decorated with a highly irregular series of grooves and ladder patterns. The potter seems to have intended to produce a continuous chevron motif running from panel to panel; but only three of these have any continuity.

The rim has an internal bevel, decorated with short, closely spaced vertical lines. Pit A, FIG. 5, no. 1.

Bucket-shaped storage pots decorated with a combination of grooves, ladder patterns and cordons are very common in Secondary Neolithic assemblages. Woodhenge yielded a number of close parallels to our vessel.¹⁶ In particular, it was the custom at that site to accentuate the join of horizontal and vertical cordons, though with an elaborate rosette motif instead of the end of the finger.¹⁷ Bevelled rims are quite common on similar vessels found at Lion Point, on the Essex coast,¹⁸ and rims with bevels and ladder pattern occur on pots of our type 3 from the upper Thames area (see below).

(2) Fragment of rim of vessel similar to last, diameter about 9 in. On the outside there are six horizontal grooves which tend to run into each other. Inside, the rim

¹² *Wilts. Arch. Mag.*, LIV, 1951, pp. 123 ff.

¹³ *Oxoniensia*, VII, 1942, pp. 106-7; *id.*, XVI, 1951, p. 79.

¹⁴ *Oxoniensia*, forthcoming.

¹⁵ Pitt-Rivers, *Excavations in Cranborne Chase* (1887), vols. I-II.

¹⁶ Cunnington, M. E., *Woodhenge* (Devizes, 1929), pl. xxviii, 12; pl. xxx, 36; pl. xxxiv, 55; pl. xxxvii.

¹⁷ *Ibid.* pl. xxvi, 1, 2, 4; pl. xlvii, 10.

¹⁸ *Proc. Preh. Soc.*, 11, 1936, p. 190, fig. 4, 1-3.

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is bevelled but plain. The lower part of this bevel is accentuated by a cordon which appears to have been decorated with slashes or jabs. Soft orange ware, black core, with some shell-grit. Pit B. FIG. 5, no. 2.

(3) Upper part of similar vessel, diameter rather less. Soapy dark brown ware,

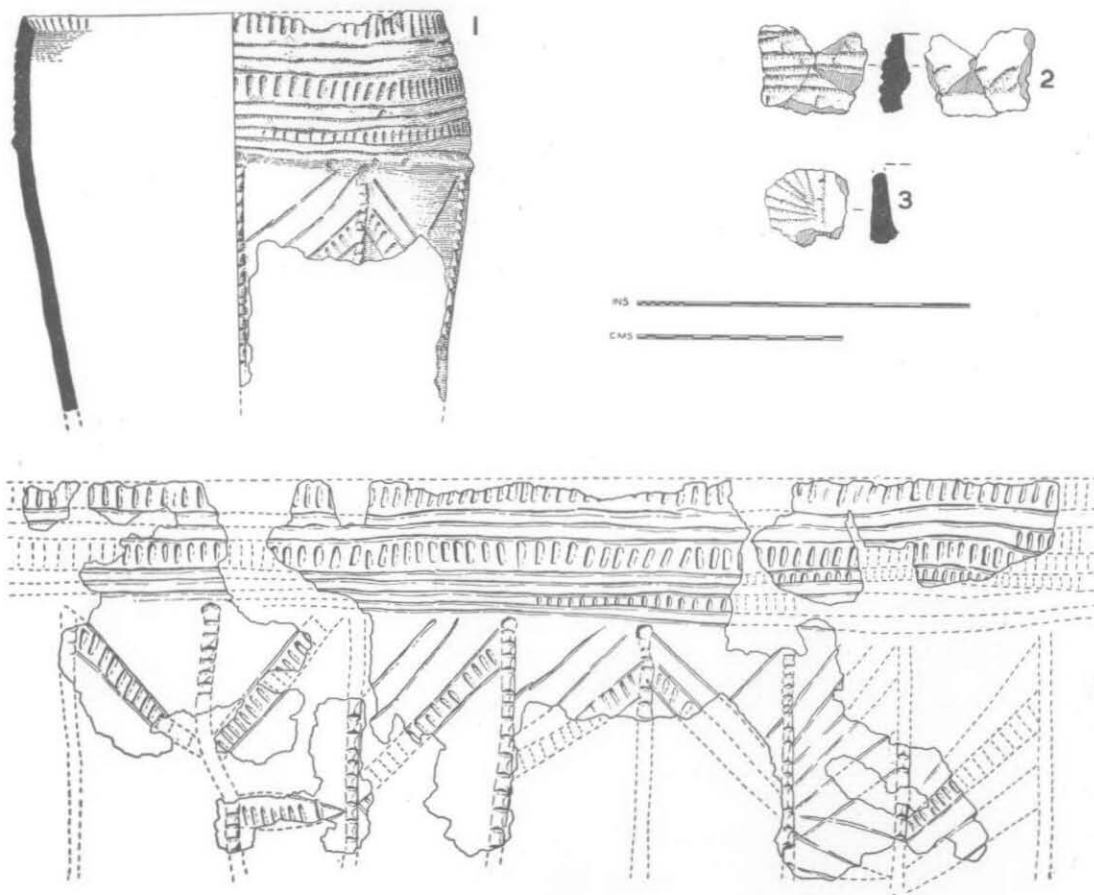


FIG. 5

STANTON HARCOURT, OXON.

Secondary Neolithic Rinyo-Clacton ware from Pits A (No. 1) and B, Vicarage Field.

Scale : $\frac{1}{4}$

core darker ; no shell grit. On the exterior a vertical cordon, decorated with fingertip ornament, joins a horizontal one ; in the panel so formed a series of grooves spread out fan-wise from one corner. Inside, there seems to be the start of a plain bevelled rim. Pit B, FIG. 5, no. 3.

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THE SAMIAN WARE

By GRACE SIMPSON

All the finds came from Pit E (FIG. 7).

1. Dr. 31 (?). Rim fragment. Probably Lezoux ware. Second century.
2. Dr. 27. The internal groove below the rim is an early feature on South Gaulish vessels. The flattened profile, beaded rim and rather dull orange glaze suggest Central Gaulish ware, possibly early Lezoux ware. The fragment is too small for a more definite comment.
3. Dr. 18/31 with a broken stamp PATE . . . in Lezoux ware. There are four possible restorations: PATERATVS, PATERCLINVS, PATERCLVS and PATERNVS, all Central Gaulish potters who made this form and worked during the Hadrianic and Antonine periods (F. Oswald, *Index of Potters' Stamps on Terra Sigillata*). The thickness of the vessel suggests that it was not by PATERCLVS, whose working life was during the Hadrianic period, but by a later potter, possibly PATERNVS who worked c. A.D. 150-190. Compare a similar stamp on Dr. 33 from Asthall, below, P. 34.
4. Dr. 29. Fragment showing part of a straight gadroon flanked by fine wavy lines probably from the lower frieze, cf. F. Hermet, *La Graufesenque* (1934, p. 160, 9) c. A.D. 50-65.
5. Dr. 29. Fragment showing the central moulding and large bead rows on either side. The profile appears to be rounded rather than sharply carinated and may have been made before A.D. 60 rather than after.

THE ROMANO-BRITISH COARSE WARES

The large amount of associated pottery made it worthwhile to publish it in some detail. As already explained, it forms a fairly characteristic assemblage of the later first to late second century A.D.

No attempt has been made to seek comparative material outside the immediate region, as the study of Romano-British pottery is essentially one of area-groups. The pottery from the Jewry Wall site, Leicester has been used extensively because it is the nearest site which has yielded a complete range of Romano-British wares, properly dated.

The following abbreviations are used in this section:

- Alchester*: J. H. Iliffe, *Antiq. J.*, XII, 1932.
Bloxham: W. F. J. Knight, *Oxoniensia*, III, 1938.
Camulodunum: C. F. C. Hawkes and M. R. Hull, *Res. Rep. Soc. Ant.*, XIV, 1947.
Collingwood: R. G. Collingwood, *The Archaeology of Roman Britain*, 1930.
Ditchley: C. A. R. Radford, *Oxoniensia*, I, 1936.
Dorchester: A. H. A. Hogg and C. E. Stevens, *Oxoniensia*, II, 1937.
Eynsham: J. S. P. Bradford, *Oxoniensia*, VII, 1942.
Frilford: J. S. P. Bradford and R. G. Goodchild, *Oxoniensia*, IV, 1939.
Grim's Dyke: D. B. Harden, *Oxoniensia*, II, 1937.
Leicester: K. M. Kenyon, *Res. Rep. Soc. Ant.*, XV, 1948.
Langford Down: Mrs. A. Williams, *Oxoniensia*, XI-XII, 1946-7.

EXCAVATIONS AT VICARAGE FIELD, STANTON HARCOURT

Rose Hill, Cowley : D. B. Harden, *Oxoniensia*, I, 1936.

Silchester : Mrs. M. A. Cotton, *Arch.*, 92, 1947.

Stanton Harcourt : W. F. Grimes, *Oxoniensia*, VIII-IX, 1943-4.

Verulamium : R. E. M. and T. V. Wheeler, *Res. Rep. Soc. Ant.*, XI, 1936.

Wittenham Clumps : P. P. Rhodes, *Oxoniensia*, XIII, 1948.

Westbury (Wilts.) : *Devizes Museum Catalogue*, II, 1934.

MAIN ENCLOSURE DITCH (ROMANO-BELGIC)

Cutting I (FIG. 6)

All the sherds from the main enclosure ditch occurred within 2 ft. of the bottom, but only a few were found in the bottom silt. Much pottery also lay level with the surface of the gravel. It was all of the same period, and is therefore a sufficient guide to the date of the enclosure.

1. Almost complete jar. Base perforated after firing with 6 holes. Dark grey sandy ware, red core. D. $6\frac{1}{2}$ in. ; H. 7 in. Early first century. See pit H, 1. For perforated bases, see *Oxoniensia*, I, 1936, fig. 15, no. 30 ; *Dorchester*, fig. 15, no. 11.

2. Small jar, grey ware. D. $4\frac{3}{4}$ in.

3. Jar, grey gritty ware, darker on outside. D. $6\frac{1}{2}$ in.

4. *Samian ware*. Fragment of dish, Drag. 18/31, or 18. (Not described by Miss Simpson or illustrated.)

5. Jar resembling 2, grey ware, darker on exterior. D. 5 in.

1-3 and 5 are characteristic jars of Belgic origin, which are commonly found in early Roman assemblages. 1 compares with sherds from pits H and K, but only that from H is made of the native soapy fabric (see below p. 19). Apart from the ware, these bowls closely resemble those from Area Y at Callow Hill.

6. Jar, black ware, burnished on exterior and on inside of rim. D. $5\frac{1}{4}$ in.

7. Large jar, grey ware with black core, corky texture. D. $7\frac{1}{2}$ in.

8. Large jar, dark gritty ware. D. $7\frac{3}{4}$ in.

9. Jar, black ware with grey core, heavily gritted. D. $8\frac{1}{4}$ in. Compare Pit K2 and 4, and Ring-Ditch 1 and 2. A Belgic type, but in a Roman ware.

10. Jar, dark grey ware. D. $6\frac{1}{2}$ in.

11. Jar, dark brown ware, buff on interior. D. $7\frac{1}{4}$ in.

12. Storage jar, dark ware, gritty, typical of storage-jar ware on the site. D. $11\frac{1}{4}$ in.

13. Large jar, grey ware. D. $9\frac{1}{4}$ in.

14. Storage jar, grey gritty ware, unlike the ware of the other storage jars from the site. D. $11\frac{1}{4}$ in.

15. Jar, black ware. D. $7\frac{1}{2}$ in.

16. Jar, whitish gritty ware. D. 7 in.

17. Jar, grey sandy ware. D. $6\frac{3}{4}$ in. *Verulamium*, fig. 9, 1. First century, B.C. to first century A.D.

18. Jar, black ware. D. $6\frac{3}{4}$ in.

19. Jar, pale buff sandy ware. D. $6\frac{1}{4}$ in.

20. Jar, light grey gritty ware. D. 7 in.

21. Large jar, grey sandy ware. D. $8\frac{1}{4}$ in. *Leicester*, fig. 37, 13. Late first century A.D.

22. Base, perforated after firing with 6 holes. Black ware, exterior slightly polished ; grey core.

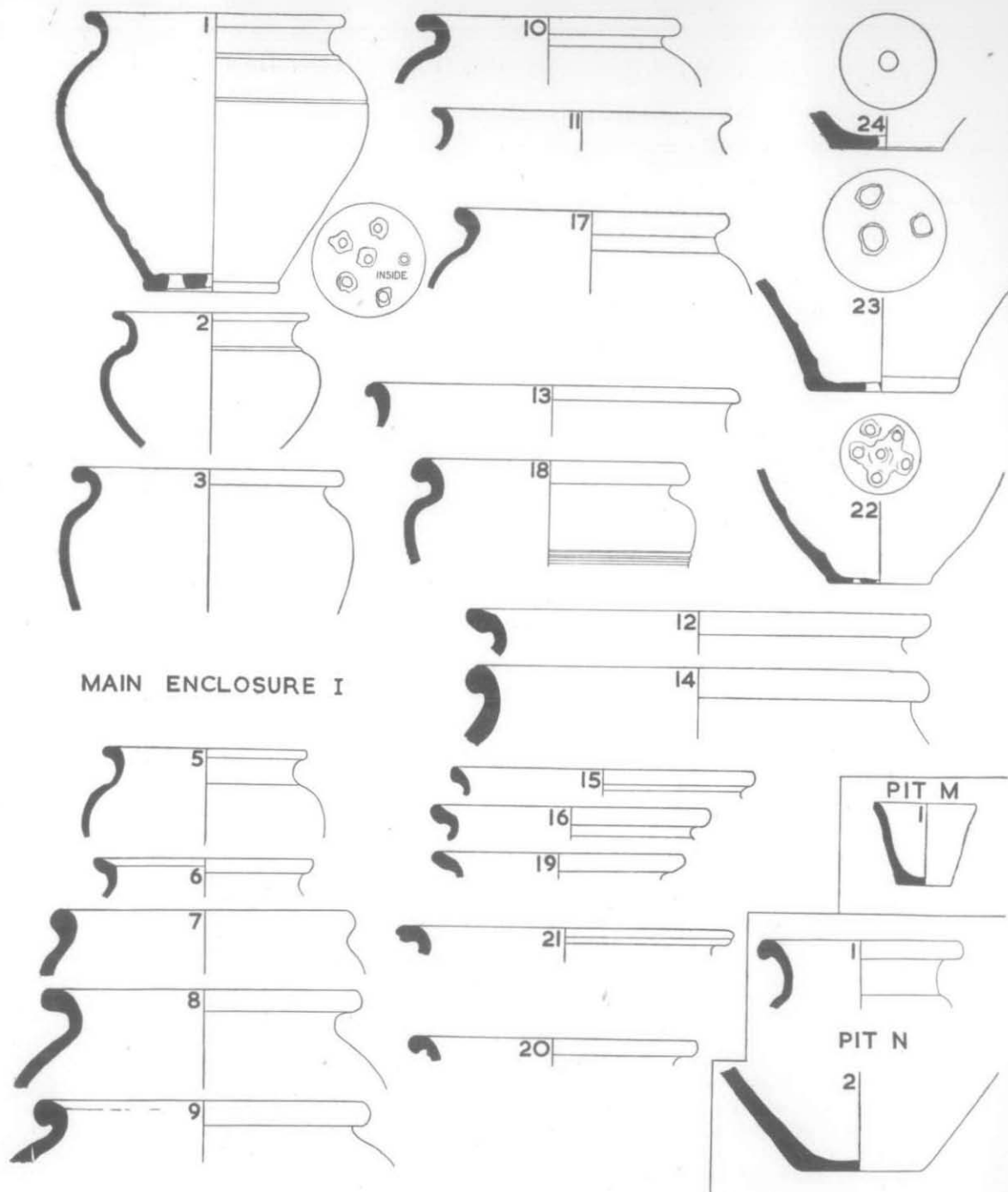


FIG. 6
 STANTON HARCOURT, OXON.
 Pottery from Pits M, N, and the Main Enclosure, cutting I, in Vicarage Field (pp. 15, 17, 21)
 Scale : $\frac{1}{4}$

EXCAVATIONS AT VICARAGE FIELD, STANTON HARCOURT

23. Base of large jar, perforated with three holes after firing. Polished exterior. Black ware, grey interior and core.

24. Base, perforated with one hole before firing. Grey ware.

Cutting III (FIG. 8)

1. Storage jar, grey-black ware, smooth, with corky appearance typical of storage jars. D. 17 in.

2. Bowl, exterior burnished black; core and interior pinky brown. D. 5½ in. This is a common Belgic type, characteristic of the Aylesford-Swarling group rather than of tribes further west. *Stanton Harcourt*, p. 54, 2, early first century A.D. *Bloxham*, p. 48, 1-3. *Alchester*, pl. xiv, 21, 23. *Grim's Dyke*, p. 86, 24-6, pre-Roman.

3. Small cup, grey ware with brown wash or colour-coat. D. 4½ in. This may be copying a Samian cup, Form 27. For a not dissimilar copy, *Frilford*, p. 43, 7; third quarter first century A.D. For a discussion of such copies, *Dorchester*, p. 58, 38, in bank of Dorchester defences.

4. Jar, grey ware. D. 7½ in.

5. Small jar, black ware. D. 4½ in. *Grim's Dyke*, p. 86, 13, pre-Roman.

6. Base, well-smoothed. Pink ware. *Grim's Dyke*, p. 86, 29, pre-Roman.

PIT E (LATE SECOND CENTURY A.D.: FIG. 7)

(No. 1 is a leaf-shaped arrowhead (FIG. 9, no. 3); no. 2 is a bone pin (FIG. 9, no. 7); nos. 3-5 are Samian.)

6. Pie-dish of reddish black ware, polished all over. D. of rim, 7½ in.: H. 1½ in.

7. Pie-dish, reddish-black sandy ware, slightly polished all over. Resembles no. 6 in ware and colour. D. of rim 8 in.: H. 1½ in.

8. Pie-dish, grey ware. D. of rim 8 in.

The pie-dishes from the site do not correspond with dated groups from Leicester; it seems likely, therefore, that they are localized within the upper Thames region. At the Jewry Wall site the Stanton Harcourt dishes would be first-second century (*Leicester*, p. 85).

9. Jar, thin grey ware, sandy texture. *Leicester*, fig. 27, 29, before A.D. 80, fig. 38, 26, Trajanic; *Frilford*, p. 43, 21; *Silchester*, p. 153, fig. 11, 8 (but smaller), A.D. 45-65.

10. Jar, grey ware, slightly polished ext. D. 4½ in. *Ditchley*, p. 58, fig. 11, 13. *Camulodunum*, pl. lviii, 119b. Cf. Pit N, 1, below.

11. Jar, dark grey sandy ware. D. 5½ in. *Leicester*, fig. 26, 24, Antonine. *Collingwood*, type 59, late first to early second century.

12. Mug, grey ware. D. 6¾ in. *Leicester*, fig. 46, 20, second century.

13. Storage jar, grey-black, heavily-gritted ware, slightly corky appearance. D. 8½ in.

14. Storage jar, ware similar to last. D. 10½ in.

15. Small beaker. D. 3¼ in. *Dorchester*, p. 60, fig. 16, no. 50; *Wittenham Clumps*, p. 30, fig. 10, no. 3.

16. Small jar, top of rim on inside is polished; ext. of rim has a slightly roughened sandy zone, polished above and below. Black ware. D. 3½ in.

17. Jar, dark grey ware. D. 6 in.

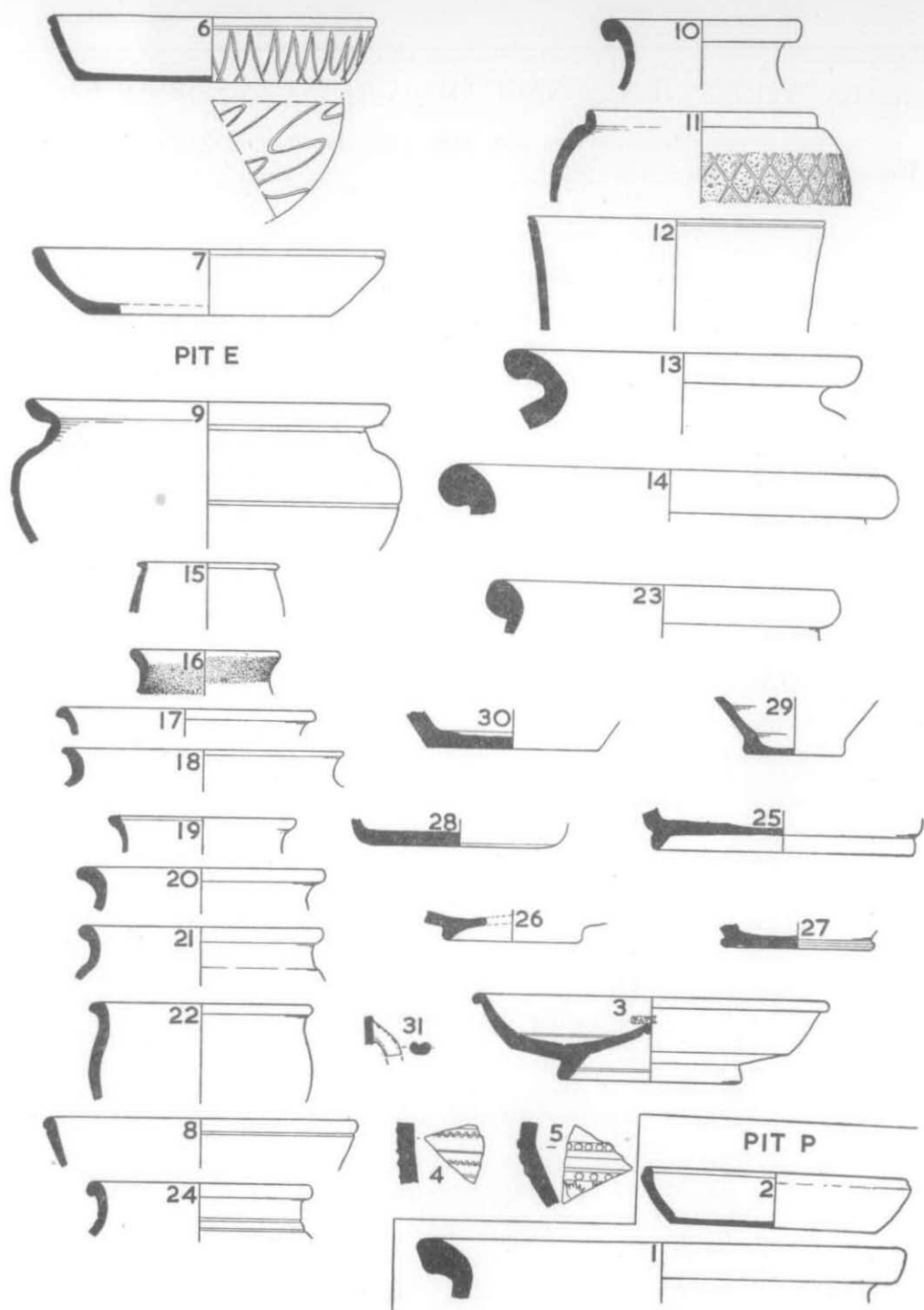


FIG. 7
 STANTON HARCOURT, OXON.
 Pottery from Pits E and P in Vicarage Field (pp. 17, 22)
 Scale : $\frac{1}{4}$

EXCAVATIONS AT VICARAGE FIELD, STANTON HARCOURT

18. Jar, dark grey ware, burnished on ext., and on upper part of rim on interior. D. $6\frac{1}{2}$ in.
19. Jar, grey ware, smoothed exterior. D. $4\frac{1}{2}$ in.
20. Jar, grey ware. D. $5\frac{3}{4}$ in.
21. Jar, buff-black ware. D. $5\frac{1}{2}$ in.
22. Jar, black outside, buff inside ; typical shelly ware. D. $5\frac{1}{4}$ in. Cf. Pit L, 7, below.
23. Jar, grey ware, well-smoothed exterior. D. 8 in.
24. Jar, grey ware. D. $5\frac{1}{4}$ in.
25. Base, pink ware.
- 25a. (Not illustrated.) Sherd of similar ware, part of neck of straight-walled vessel with even series of flat rings on exterior.
26. Base, hard creamy white ware. D. 3 in.
27. Base, polished on exterior ; hard grey-white ware. D. $3\frac{1}{2}$ in.
28. Base, grey ware, polished. D. 4 in.
29. Base, dark grey ware. D. $2\frac{1}{4}$ in.
30. Base, pink ware with grey core and small flint grits. D. 4 in.
31. Small handle, buff-grey ware.
32. (Not illustrated.) Two plain sherds of thin fine white ware, probably belonging to a small globular beaker with everted lip. They are unlikely to be later than the Flavian period and may be safely dated to the second half of the first century A.D. At this period, considerable quantities of white wares were being imported into Britain from Europe ; for a typical selection, see *Verulamium*, pl. lv a.¹⁹
33. Fragment of an unburnt human skull.

PIT G (SECOND-THIRD CENTURY A.D. : FIG. 8)

1. Small jar, rim missing ; probably the cavetto-rim type. Grey ware, black on outside. H. c. 6 in. *Leicester*, fig. 6, 6, second century. *Bloxham*, fig. 12, 39, third-fourth century.
2. Jar, shelly ware. D. 5 in.
3. Dish, orange ware with grey core. D. 6 in. *Leicester*, fig. 19, 17, not before second century. *Wittenham Clumps*, fig. 10, 4.
4. Jar, grey ware. D. $3\frac{3}{4}$ in.
5. Jar, grey ware. D. $6\frac{1}{2}$ in.
6. Fragment of handle, grey ware.

PIT H (ROMANO-BELGIC : FIG. 8)

1. Jar, exterior carefully smoothed. Smoky-brown soapy ware with dark core. D. $6\frac{1}{2}$ in.
This form of bowl is directly descended from the Belgic cordoned jar. J. P. Bush Fox, *Excav. at Swarling* (*Res. Rep. Soc. Ant.*, V), pl. 8, 12 ; *Camulodunum*, pl. lxxvi, 221a, and p. 260, no. 20 ; *Langford Down*, p. 57, 9, 11, 15, pre-Roman ; *Stanton Harcourt*, p. 54, 9, first century B.C. to first century A.D. ; *Eynsham*, p. 55, 16.
2. Storage jar, light brown gritty ware, smoothed inside and out ; grey core. D. c. 18 in.

¹⁹ I am indebted to Mr. M. R. Hull and Mr. G. Webster for help in identifying these fragments of white ware.

EXCAVATIONS AT VICARAGE FIELD, STANTON HARCOURT

3. (Not illustrated.) Fragment of daub, showing impression of a thin piece of wattle about $\frac{1}{2}$ in. in diameter.

PIT K (FIRST CENTURY A.D. : FIG. 8)

1. Jar, neck pierced by one small hole after firing. Grey ware. D. $6\frac{3}{4}$ in. The form of this jar compares with Pit H, 1, but the ware is much more Roman and must be a stage later in date. *Grim's Dyke*, p. 86, 4, pre-Grim; *Langford Down*, p. 57, 15, Belgic.

2. Jar, grey ware with red core and some flint grit. D. $7\frac{1}{2}$ in. *Dorchester*, p. 55, 14, pre-wall ditch; *Grim's Dyke*, p. 86, 1, Belgic; *Stanton Harcourt*, p. 58, 19, first century A.D.

3. Jar, grey-black ware. D. $7\frac{1}{2}$ in.

4. Jar, similar to (2), grey ware with red core and some grit. D. $7\frac{1}{2}$ in.

PIT L. (SECOND CENTURY A.D. : FIG. 8)

1. Storage jar, grey-black corksie ware. D. 11 in. *Leicester*, fig. 29, 13, second-fourth century. *Verulamium*, fig. 15, 27, second century. *Camulodunum*, p. 101, 5, second century.

2. Jar, grey ware. D. $6\frac{3}{4}$ in. Cf. cutting 1, 21.

3. Jar, grey sandy ware, creamy on interior. D. $6\frac{1}{2}$ in. *Leicester*, fig. 30, 11, first century A.D.

4. Jar, grey gritty ware. D. $7\frac{3}{4}$ in.

5. Jar, smooth grey ware. D. $6\frac{1}{2}$ in. *Rose Hill, Cowley*, p. 101, 19, third-fourth century, but here colour-coated.

6. Small jar, grey ware. D. $4\frac{1}{2}$ in.

7. Jar, typical shelly ware. D. $4\frac{1}{2}$ in. Compare Pit E22.

RING-DITCH (FIRST-SECOND CENTURY A.D. : FIG. 8)

Surface, prob. associated with Ditch T.

1. Jar, black ware, grey core. D. $7\frac{1}{2}$ in.

2. Similar jar, black ware, grey core. D. $8\frac{1}{2}$ in. Compare these two with Pit K, 2 and 4. Prob. first century A.D.

3. Jar, grey ware. D. $7\frac{1}{2}$ in. *Bloxham*, p. 48, 36, first-second century A.D. *Ditchley*, p. 58, 11, Domitian-Trajan. *Langford Down*, p. 57, 2.

4. Jar, grey gritty ware. D. $8\frac{1}{4}$ in. Same general type as 1 and 2.

5. Handle, pink ware, grey core.

6. Jar, grey sandy ware. D. $5\frac{1}{2}$ in.

PIT M (FIG. 6)

1. Miniature pot, wheel-thrown; grey ware, polished exterior. D. $2\frac{1}{2}$ in., H. 2 in. Such tiny pots, made by hand or on the wheel, must have been intended chiefly for children, but also, perhaps, for ointments and the like. *Westbury (Wilts)*, pl. lx, 9, hand-made. *Ibid.*, Chalcot House, pl. lxiii a, 18, a miniature wheel-made cavetto-rim jar.

PIT N (LATE FIRST-EARLY SECOND CENTURY A.D. : FIG. 6)

1. Jar, grey ware. D. 5 in. Compare Pit E10.

2. Base of large jar, grey ware, buff core.

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PIT P (FIG. 7)

1. Storage jar, buff-black corky ware, some large grit ; normal storage jar ware. D. $11\frac{1}{4}$ in.
2. Pie-dish, reddish-black ware, polished all over. There are traces of an applied colour-coat, very similar to that on cup, Cutting III, 3. D. 6 in. *Leicester*, fig. 20, 1, Antonine, but can last much longer.

BONE

Head of a bone pin (FIG. 9, no. 7), decorated with a small knob at the top and two grooves beneath it. Pit E, 2.

This is a normal Romano-British type, associated, here, with pottery of the second century A.D.

FLINT

1. Round scraper (FIG. 9, no. 1), typical of the Neolithic/Bronze Age. Steeply flaked at the working end and along one side of the bulbar face only. Patinated grey : fresh. Cracked by burning. Pit F.
2. Arrow-head, *petit tranchet* derivative, Clark's form I (*Arch. Journ.*, XCI, 1934, p. 32 ff.). Pit F. Patinated pale grey : fresh (FIG. 9, no. 2).

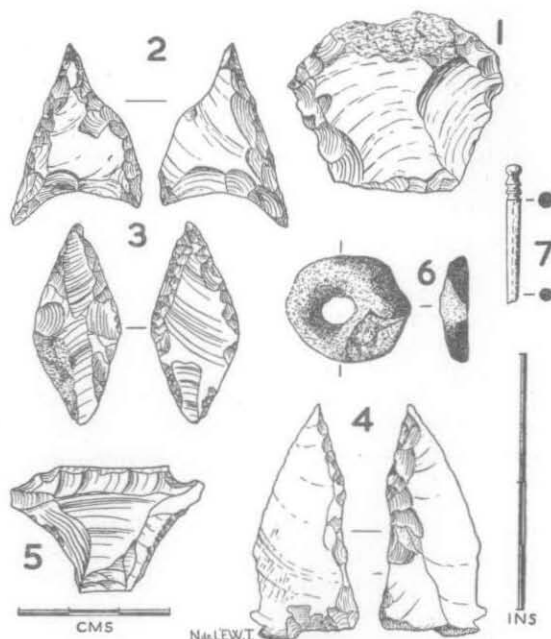


FIG. 9

STANTON HARCOURT, OXON.

Small finds of flint, stone, and bone from Vicarage Field.

Scale : $\frac{1}{2}$

EXCAVATIONS AT VICARAGE FIELD, STANTON HARCOURT

3. Arrow-head, leaf-shaped ; unpatinated and fresh. Neolithic arrow-heads can be divided into those which are well flaked on both sides, and those flaked all over on one face and retouched on the other. This specimen belongs to the second group. It closely resembles one found with a crouched inhumation in Barrow 13, Crichel Down, Dorset (*Archaeologia*, xc, 1944, p. 75, fig. 23, 3). Pit E (FIG. 9, 3).

4. Arrow-head, *petit tranche* derivative, Clark's form G. Patinated grey ; fresh. Surface (FIG. 9, no. 4).

5. Scraper with two hollow edges, flaked on non-bulbar face only. Patinated grey ; fresh. Surface (FIG. 9, no. 5).

STONE

Small sandstone ring, d. $\frac{5}{8}$ in., flat on one side, domed on the other ; perforated for suspension. Pit F (FIG. 9, no. 6).

APPENDIX

NOTES ON SECONDARY NEOLITHIC WARES IN THE OXFORD REGION

There are two distinct but roughly contemporary kinds of native Neolithic pottery in the Oxford region,²⁰ Peterborough ware and Rinyo-Clacton ware.

Peterborough ware

This has been found at Cassington, Stanton Harcourt, Dorchester and Abingdon in quite large quantity and is classified into three groups by Atkinson.²¹ The fabric is distinguished by the use of pounded flint or quartz as a backing ; shell-grit is much rarer. Colours vary from brown, through buff to a delicate pink. The surfaces of the sherds have been smoothed, as is usual on Peterborough ware. The use of cord-ornament is found in this group alone.

Rinyo-Clacton ware

Rinyo-Clacton ware,²² recently defined by Piggott, is widely distributed throughout Britain. Three types can be distinguished in this region.

Type 1. This has been found at Cassington, Dorchester and Stanton Harcourt in small quantity.

Although ware should not be given too much value as a criterion of culture or date, sherds within this group, though linked chiefly by shape and decoration, are also very similar in colour and texture. They are brown to orange ; shell-

²⁰ In this discussion I am very grateful for the help given to me by Mr. R. J. C. Atkinson and Mr. H. J. Case.

²¹ *Excavations at Dorchester, Oxon.*, I, 1951, p. 67-8.

²² Known previously as Grooved Ware, or Neolithic C.

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grit backing is present but sparse. They are much more uneven in thickness than types 2 and 3. Two sherds from Site 1, Dorchester,²³ although rather thinner than usual, fall within this group: the pot and sherds from Vicarage Field also belong here.

The shapes in this group vary slightly. The specimens from Vicarage Field are bucket-like; one of the sherds cited from Site 1, Dorchester, has an in-turned rim and a more tapering body. The chief decorative motifs are shallow grooves, but horizontal and vertical applied strips, often with fingertip impressions along them, are common. Ladder pattern is also found. The Dorchester sherds show a combination of grooves with jabs that have left hemispherical and angular pits in the clay.

Type 2. This has been found at Abingdon, Cassington and Sutton Courtenay in fair quantity.

This type is easily recognized by the use, sometimes excessive, of shell-grit as a backing, and by the decoration of bands worked up into relief by the skilled use of some kind of tool. The ware is either orange or grey and is of very even thickness. Surfaces have been carefully smoothed.²⁴ The ware is almost indistinguishable from Western Neolithic Abingdon pottery.

Decoration comprises groups of horizontal ribs tending to be wavy and often running into each other. Ladder pattern is frequently found. Rims are bevelled on the inside where ladder pattern is almost invariable. Vessels of this class seem to have been bucket-shaped. A sherd from Abingdon and another from Cassington²⁵ are decorated with designs made by jabbing with the lozenge-shaped end of some potter's tool.

Type 3. This has been found at Cassington and Sutton Courtenay in very small quantity.

The few fragments of this type from the Oxford region are well matched by groups of sherds from pits in the neighbourhood of Amesbury, Wilts.²⁶ The sherds are very thin and somewhat corky; decoration consists of sharply incised grooves, often with ladder pattern. Two examples have been found in Pit T at Sutton Courtenay,²⁷ and H. J. Case has recently found some minute fragments in a pit at Cassington. Those from Pit T show no shell-grit backing, but the pieces from Cassington are shell-gritted.

Sherds of this type are thinner and more friable than, and generally quite distinct from those of types 1 and 2.

²³ *Excavations at Dorchester, Oxon.*, 1, p. 110, 49-50.

²⁴ *Antiq. J.*, xiv, 1934, pl. xxix. This shows clearly the shell-grit and the manner in which the decoration has been executed.

²⁵ *Antiq. J.*, viii, 1928, pl. lxxiv, fig. 2, h; *Oxoniensia*, v, 1940, pl. ii, j.

²⁶ *W.A.M.*, xlvii, 1935, p. 64, pit 5; *ibid.*, lxi, 1948, p. 287 ff.

²⁷ *Antiq. J.*, xiv, 1934, p. 265 and pl. xxxiv, d.

EXCAVATIONS AT VICARAGE FIELD, STANTON HARCOURT

THE CHRONOLOGICAL RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN ABINGDON, PETERBOROUGH AND RINYO-CLACTON WARES IN THE OXFORD REGION

An attempt must be made to assess the chronological position of these wares in the region within the Neolithic period. At Site I, Dorchester, Peterborough ware was in a secondary position to Abingdon ware which was, itself, associated with the first phase of that site. Here, too, a sherd of Rinyo-Clacton ware of Type 1 occurred with pieces of Abingdon pottery under the bank of the oval ditch, so that it must also be contemporary with the earliest period there. Ebbsfleet ware, the earliest type within the Peterborough group, was found in a secondary position in the mortuary enclosure at Dorchester (Site VIII); this site, of a type apparently peculiar to our insular version of western Neolithic culture, should be contemporary with Site I, phase I.

The evidence from Dorchester shows that Peterborough ware was later than Abingdon pottery and Rinyo-Clacton ware Type 1. So far there is nothing to show that Peterborough pottery elsewhere in the region was earlier than the latter. Indeed, in Oxfordshire it has not yet been found in association with Rinyo-Clacton ware at all. These ceramics differ from each other so completely that there can have been little contact between the two groups; though living side by side they kept apart. Judging by the quantity of sherds which survive, the makers of Peterborough pottery predominated in the Oxford region.

In ware, shape and decoration vessels like those from Vicarage Field closely resemble the grooved and rusticated pots from Woodhenge and Durrington Walls, Wiltshire. Indeed, the grooved wares of our region belong to what may be called a Woodhenge group of ceramics; for the pits excavated by Dr. J. F. S. Stone over a number of years in the neighbourhood of Amesbury, together with the sherds from the two henge monuments, supply excellent comparative material. For this reason it is necessary to describe briefly the chief types of pottery found at Woodhenge so that the small assemblage of sherds of Rinyo-Clacton ware from the Oxford region may be properly compared with the more representative material from Wiltshire.

At Woodhenge pottery of two cultures can be associated with phase 1, Western Neolithic, and Rinyo-Clacton wares, the latter predominating. Bell beakers and corded beakers were found higher in the ditch silting and are secondary; but they occurred in large quantity.

The Western Neolithic pottery comprises sherds of a few plain bowls with rolled-over rims, baked hard and containing a good deal of flint backing.²⁸

²⁸ Cunnington, M. E., *Woodhenge*, pls. xxxii, 43; xxxiv, 58; xxxviii, 93.

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The Rinyo-Clacton ware can be divided into at least seven groups distinguished by decoration :

- (1) (Cunnington, *Woodhenge*, pl. xxviii, 11-12 ; pl. xxxiv, 55.)

In this group grooves are deep and wide, reminiscent of the type-site, Rinyo, in Orkney. They can be found combined with much finer grooves.

- (2) (Cunnington, *ibid.*, pl. xxxii, 44 ; pl. xxxiii, 51.)

Some vessels were decorated solely with finer grooves. Groups 1 and 2 frequently combine grooves with rustication of the surface of the pot, in which case the upper half shows grooves and the lower part rustication. Raised cordons, vertical and horizontal, are common. Where such cordons join, the place is marked by a rosette motif, often elaborately worked up (Cunnington, *ibid.*, pl. xxvi, 1, 2 and 4).

- (3) (Cunnington, *ibid.*, pl. xxx, 31-2 ; xxxi, 37 ; pl. xxxiii, 49, 52-4 ; pl. xxxvi, 75-6.)

A large series of sherds show jabbed decoration executed in a variety of ways—by a fine pointed tool, hollow reed, a thicker pointed instrument, the tip of the finger. With this group it is common to find applied cordons on the pots as well (Cunnington, *ibid.*, pl. xxv, 1).

- (4) (Cunnington, *ibid.*, pl. xxxv, 67-8.)

Some pots seem to have been decorated entirely with the fingertips. On some sherds in this group the fingernail impressions are prominent while on others the surface has been roughened up more thoroughly.

- (5) (Cunnington, *ibid.*, pl. xlvi, 1-2.)

A little group of sherds from outside the sanctuary, in burial circle 2, shows extremely delicate incised decoration best paralleled in fineness of line and in motif in French Chassey ware. These pieces belong to a shallow bowl which was decorated on the inside.

- (6) (Cunnington, *ibid.*, pl. xlvi, 7.)

One sherd from the upper layer of the ditch-filling of burial circle 2 shows maggot decoration. It must be closely allied to Peterborough pottery. At present it is an isolated fragment.

The beaker pottery from Woodhenge was all in a secondary position but in sufficient quantity to suggest that there had been an important Beaker phase at this site. Bell-beakers predominate, some being corded. Burial circle 1 contained the only A beaker to come from the area.²⁹

The stone tools from Woodhenge include a wide range of *petit trachet* derivative arrowheads, a scraper with polished edge and an axe of Group 1, the latter two not published by Mrs. Cunnington.

Recent work at Durrington Walls, the large henge monument a few

²⁹ *Ibid.*, pl. xli.

EXCAVATIONS AT VICARAGE FIELD, STANTON HARCOURT

yards north-east of the Woodhenge complex,³⁰ has produced an assemblage of Rinyo-Clacton pottery which, while closely analogous to the material described above, contains in addition a group of sherds decorated with impressed cord and stamped patterns which must be closely allied to Peterborough ware. Beaker pottery was extremely rare at this site.

At Woodhenge plain Western Neolithic bowls seem to be associated with the construction of the monument, for they occur in some quantity under the bank and on the bottom of the main ditch in a fresh condition, together with Rinyo-Clacton ware, and they were also found in the ditches of some of the burial circles near by. These bowls are virtually identical with the earliest forms at Windmill Hill and argue for an early date within the Neolithic both for Woodhenge and for the makers of Rinyo-Clacton ware there.

The Rinyo-Clacton ware of our type 1 from the Oxford region compares closely with that from Woodhenge but rustication is much rarer. The elaborate rosettes placed at the junction of vertical and horizontal cordons on the pottery at Woodhenge are missing in Oxfordshire. Instead, on the pot from Vicarage Field the tip of the finger has been carefully placed at the junction of such cordons.

If the evidence from Sites I and VIII at Dorchester, Oxon., suggests that there is a chronological distinction between Rinyo-Clacton ware and Peterborough pottery, sites like the West Kennet long barrow, Wilts., and the pit at Orton Longueville, near Peterborough³¹ imply that we are dealing, rather, with a cultural difference. The bulk of the pottery from the long barrow chamber is Peterborough ware, including a few pieces of Ebbsfleet pottery.³² There are also two fragments of Rinyo-Clacton ware of our type 1.³³ With due regard for the unsatisfactory way in which Dr. Thurnam conducted his excavation of this barrow, it appears that although the main users of this tomb were makers of Peterborough pottery, those using grooved ware were living in the area at roughly the same time. Beaker sherds, good examples of types A and B, were also abundant in the barrow.

At Orton Longueville Peterborough pottery and Rinyo-Clacton ware were found in the same pit.

The ware of Rinyo-Clacton type 2 is identical with that of the Western Neolithic bowls from the causewayed camp at Abingdon³⁴ and may have arisen from native contact with these western farmers. We must await the publica-

³⁰ *Antiq. J.*, xxxiv, 1954, p. 169 ff.

³¹ Piggott, S., *Neolithic Cultures of the British Isles* (Cambridge, 1954), pp. 337-8.

³² Cunington, M. E., *Pottery from the long barrow at West Kennet* (Devizes, 1927), pl. ix, 81.

³³ *Op. cit.* in note 32, pl. viii, 69, and one fragment unpublished.

³⁴ *Antiq. J.*, vii, 1927, p. 437 ff.; *id.*, viii, 1928, p. 461 ff. Mr. H. J. Case's re-examination of the site has been published since this paper was written (*Antiq. J.*, xxxvi, p. 11 ff.).

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tion of H. J. Case's re-examination of this important site before we can decide at what stage this contact took place.

Type 3 ware is probably contemporary with type 2 but direct evidence of contact has yet to be found. Similar sherds from a pit at Woodlands, near Woodhenge, were found with part of a Graig Llwyd axe. No objects of this rock have so far been found with Beaker pottery,³⁵ so the makers of type 3 pottery may have refused contact with the Beaker folk though living side by side.

We are left with the impression that the makers of our Rinyo-Clacton ware type 1 learned their potting outside the region, perhaps in the area of Woodhenge. This also applied to those who produced type 3 ware. The potters of type 2, on the other hand, seem more closely associated with the western farmers at Abingdon. We have tried to suggest that the builders of Woodhenge, and consequently the makers of our type 1 Rinyo-Clacton ware, ought to be early in the British Neolithic period. No direct evidence has yet been found to establish the relationship of types 2 and 3 either to each other or to type 1. This must await a re-assessment of the chronological position of the causewayed camp at Abingdon.

The Peterborough 'people', if such they may be called, remained exclusive: evidence from sites near Avebury and Peterborough however, suggests that they may have been contemporary with those using Rinyo-Clacton wares types 2 and 3, and, at some stage, type 1.

³⁵ *Proc. Preh. Soc.*, xvii, 1951, p. 121.

PLATE I



A



B

VICARAGE FIELD, STANTON HARCOURT, OXON.

- A. View of the area of the 1951 excavations looking N., with ditches appearing after the top-soil had been stripped off (pp. 1-10).
 B. Pot of Secondary Neolithic Ware (bottom restored) from Pit A (p. 4). Scale: $\frac{1}{3}$.

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