Notes

AN AXE-HEAD FROM CHARNEY BASSETT

A polished flint axe-head was dredged from the River Ock at Charney Bassett, SU 37829437, in the summer of 1978. It was recovered from the Thames Water Authority
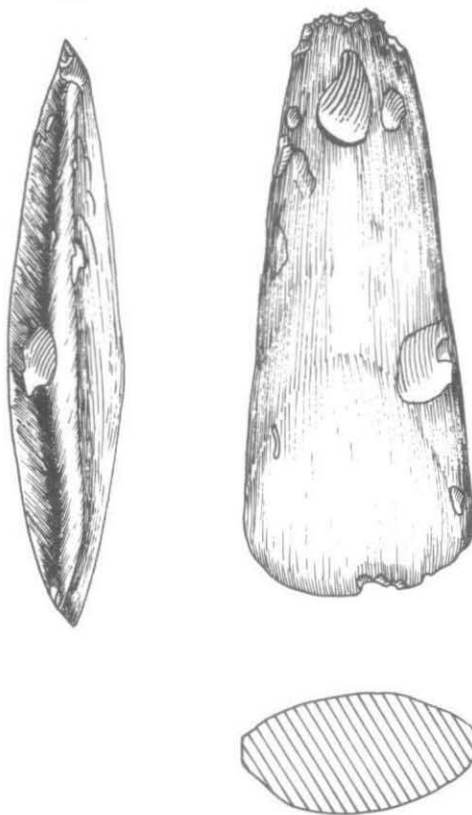

Fig. 1

spoil by Mr. Basil Sharpus. The axe is of mottled grey flint, faceted at the cutting edge and with narrow facets along each long edge. PRN 11557; Acc. No. 78.179.1. (Loan to Wantage Museum from Mr. B. Sharpus).

FIG. 1 was drawn by Mr. S. McDonald. NANCY STEBBING

A MIDDLE BRONZE AGE SPEARHEAD FROM MERTON

The object of this note is a bronze side-looped spearhead found on West End Farm, north-west of the village of Merton (NGR approx. SP 572178), and now in the Ashmolean

Museum (1978.333).   I am grateful to Dr. Andrew Sherratt for permission to publish this find.

The spearhead has a round mouth but the socket is ridged along most of its length. The loops are slender, so-called " string loops ", and one is blocked with concretion.   The blade is very short in relation to the socket and it has obviously been broken and reworked by hammering.   This is shown by the abruptly tapering profile in side view, by the divergent marks which represent the flattened socket, and by the broken tip, which reveals that the two faces of the socket have been hammered together.   The spearhead is now 9·2 cm.
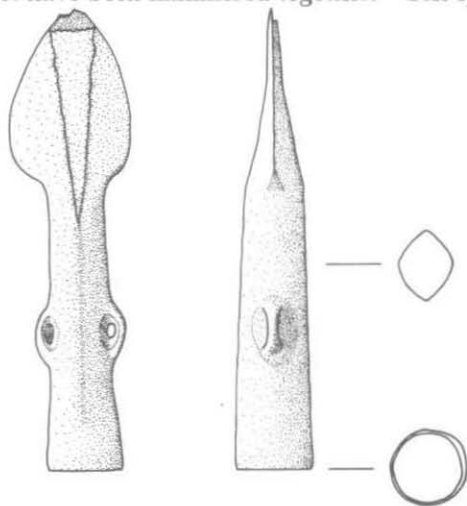

FIG. 2
Bronze spearhead from Merton.   Scale 2/3.

long but the profile of the socket indicates that it was originally about twice as long.   There are slight remains of gravel concretion.

The ridged socket and string loops of the Merton spearhead indicate that it belongs to Rowlands' group 2 of side-looped spearheads, of Middle Bronze Age date.[1]   Local finds of side-looped spearheads have been listed by Ehrenberg;[2] many come from the immediate vicinity of the Thames but the Merton spearhead can be added to the group found away from this river,[3] although its find-spot is only about 1 km. north of the River Ray.   The hoard from Burgess Meadow, Oxford, contains two side-looped spearheads;[4] one, complete, shows the probable original form of the Merton example and the other, with part of the blade broken off, shows its probable condition before it was reworked.

BRENDAN O'CONNOR

A POSSIBLE LA TÈNE III INHUMATION FROM SUTTON COURTENAY, OXFORDSHIRE

An important group of later Iron Age brooches apparently associated with an inhumation from Sutton Courtenay, Oxon., is described and illustrated in two 19th-century

[1] M. J. Rowlands, *The production and distribution of metalwork in the Middle Bronze Age in southern Britain*, B.A.R., 31 (1976), 51–55.
[2] M. R. Ehrenberg, *Bronze Age spearheads from Berkshire, Buckinghamshire and Oxfordshire*, B.A.R., 34 (1977), 7–9, fig. 27.
[3] Ibid. 17.
[4] Inv. Arch. GB 6, 1–2.

manuscript collections, but has otherwise remained virtually unrecognised since its discovery during gravel-digging in February 1826.[1] The first and only published account of the burial appeared in the *Gentleman's Magazine* later that year and referred simply to a pair of small pottery vessels, iron fragments, a bronze ring and five bronze brooches found with a skeleton at a depth of 3 ft. (0·9 m.).[2] The majority of these items, with the possible exception of the ironwork, were subsequently acquired by Jesse King, the Berkshire antiquary, who at that time lived in the neighbouring village of Appleford. Drawings of the pots, brooches and bronze ring were exhibited by Roach Smith as Romano-British pieces at a meeting of the British Archaeological Association in 1846, before apparently being sold with the rest of the King collection in 1869.[3] Although the present whereabouts of the material is unknown, two watercolour sketches of the bronzework happily survive, one in the Ashmolean Museum and another in the library of the Society of Antiquaries in London, and together form the basis for this present tentative reassessment of the site.

The first of these illustrations, contained in one of King's personal notebooks but probably the work of Roach Smith, depicts five La Tène III brooches and the bronze ring, accompanied by the brief caption ' Roman fibulae and a large brass ring found by the two urns interred with the body. Sutton belonging to the scull (*sic*) and pots '. A second and rather more informative note is appended, however, to an exact copy of the King watercolour bound into one of the several volumes of manuscript material left to the Society of Antiquaries on the death of its former Director, Albert Way, in 1874.[4] The text beneath the latter drawing is divided into two parts, the first in an unknown hand being a virtual copy of the King manuscript inscription.

' Roman fibulae and a large brass ring found by the two urns interred with the body— Sutton Courtney (*sic*)—which was ' gathered up '. Many fragments of urns etc. found near the place at various times '. The second and more important part would appear to have been written by Way himself and provides the most detailed surviving description of the grave and its contents.

' In 1826 some labourers digging gravel in the par(ish) of Sutton Courtney, a short distance from the river (Thames), adjoining to a public road leading to the Old Ford (? *c.* SU 5094), found a human skeleton a few feet below the surface. The knees and chin were brought close together and the body placed in a cist or small cavity. Near the remains was a large dark coloured urn, inverted and placed on a piece of tile. It contained fine dark mould. The urn was quite broken to pieces. Upon the corpse was placed a shield, quite decayed, an iron umbo remained. Five fibulae and a large ring of bronze were found with portions of iron, much corroded, probably a weapon. These with the skull of the warrior are in Mr. King's Museum '.

Although two alternative explanations may subsequently have to be considered, the above passage, which may have been based on further recollected information provided by King, at first sight seems to be an unambiguous description of a solitary burial belonging to the widely scattered series of later Iron Age warrior inhumations first identified by I. M. Stead and later discussed by J. R. Collis.[5] These burials, which together represent an insular funerary rite with strong continental La Tène connections, are characterised by their possession of weapons that seem to denote warrior status. The full repertoire of accompanying objects may vary, but the most distinctive graves include Middle or Late La Tène swords, bronze or iron scabbard suspension rings, belthooks, spearheads, and wooden or leather shields with bosses of bronze or iron. Although at least four of the British

[1] My attention was first drawn to the burial by Dr. I. M. Stead, who has subsequently been kind enough to encourage and advise on the preparation of this note. I am also indebted to Professor C. F. C. Hawkes for his detailed and very valuable comments on a draft version of the text.

[2] *Gentleman's Mag.* ii (1826), 259.

[3] *Jnl. Brit. Archaeol. Assoc.* i (1846), 309–10; xvi (1860), 33; H. J. Peake, *Archaeology of Berks.* (1931), 109, 232–3.

[4] Society of Antiquaries Library, London, MS. vol. *Fibulae*.

[5] I. M. Stead, *The La Tène Cultures of Eastern Yorks.* (1965); idem, ' An Early Iron Age Warrior found at St. Lawrence, Isle of Wight ', *Proc. Prehist. Soc.* xxxv (1969), 351–4; J. R. Collis, ' Burials with Weapons in Iron Age Britain ', *Germania*, li (1972), 121–33.

warriors are known to have been buried in an extended position reminiscent of their European counterparts, the remaining recorded examples all adopt the crouched or contracted body posture preferred by insular Iron Age communities in southern Britain.[6]

Returning to Sutton Courtenay we can therefore isolate three significant elements that would point to association with this warrior burial tradition. Firstly the body was crouched; secondly it was covered by a shield, as at Grimthorpe (Humberside), Owslebury (Hampshire) and St. Lawrence (Isle of Wight); and thirdly it was associated with a bronze ring and a fragmentary iron object that together hint at a sword and the fittings required to attach its scabbard to a shoulder strap or belt. The additional supposed association of the five La Tène III brooches illustrated in PLATE II is in certain respects more surprising, but at this stage seems to confirm the pre-Roman origin of the burial.

Three of these pieces (Nos. 1, 2 and 4) are all unambiguous examples of ' Colchester ' brooches with characteristic fretted catchplates, while a fourth (No. 3) is almost certainly a similar piece whose foot has merely become masked through prolonged contact with a corroding iron object. The remaining specimen (No. 5), with its ribbed bow and cylindrical spring cover belongs to the equally distinctive ' Langton Down ' class, and like its Colchester counterparts represents a form that became current in central and eastern parts of southern Britain during the pre-Conquest decades of the first century A.D.[7]

While representing an entirely respectable and chronologically coherent assemblage, both in their own right and as potential accompaniments for a sword burial, these five brooches nevertheless present a serious obstacle at this point if their association with the Sutton Courtenay warrior is to be accepted. Elsewhere in southern England the practice of providing inhumations with objects of this kind is altogether rare, and in no case has any single individual been found with more than the one, or at very most two, specimens required to fasten conventional dress at the shoulder or hip. Among the entire series of warrior burials, moreover, there is but a single recorded example of a brooch, a La Tène II piece from the shoulder of a crouched skeleton at Whitcombe.[8] The association of no fewer than five brooches at Sutton Courtenay would therefore be entirely unprecedented amongst British inhumations, suggesting as it does their deliberate deposition as formal grave-goods, rather than as incidental items of dress.

Whilst it remains possible that the Sutton Courtenay warrior is in this respect no more than an exception to the local rule, it also deserves to be recalled that larger collections of brooches are very occasionally found in the context of La Tène III cremation burials in south-eastern England.[9] Bearing this point in mind, the original descriptions of the burial deposit may assume a new significance, for these not only refer to ' many fragments of urns found *near* the place at various times ', one of which may have been the ' large dark coloured urn inverted and placed on a piece of tile ', but more specifically mention that two small pottery vessels filled with an ashy ' dark mould ' were found *close* to the skeleton. The drawing of these ' two urns of pale red and dark brown pottery ' exhibited to the British Archaeological Association in 1846 is now lost, but the earlier account in the *Gentleman's Magazine* specifically states that ' one of them appears to have been a drinking cup, it is marked with indented strokes, and nearly seven inches in height, but unfortunately the top was broken off by the spade . . . . . . the other was of a different make and only four inches in height '. Regarded as La Tène III cinerary vessels these urns would not only provide an alternative and more acceptable source for the pre-Conquest brooches, but would at the same time yield an important counterpart to Owslebury, where a comparable inhumed

[6] Collis, op. cit. Table 1; R. P. Whimster, ' Iron Age Burial in Southern Britain ', *Proc. Prehist. Soc.* xliii (1977), 317–27.
[7] C. F. C. Hawkes and M. R. Hull, *Camulodunum*, (Rep. Research Cttee. Soc. Antiq. No. 14, 1947), 308–9, 317.
[8] G. M. Aitken, ' Third Interim Report of Excavations at Whitcombe ', *Proc. Dorset Natural Hist. and Archaeol. Soc.* lxxxix (1967), 126–7.
[9] As many as five specimens have been recorded with individual cremations at King Harry Lane, St. Albans (I. M. Stead, personal communication), although Aylesford Culture burials from elsewhere rarely have more than one or two brooches. See I. M. Stead, ' The earliest burials of the Aylesford Culture ', *Problems in Economic and Social Archaeology*, ed. G. de G. Sieveking *et al.* (1976), 401–16.

warrior lay in a rural burial-ground otherwise devoted to Late La Tène and early Roman cremations.[10] Although Sutton Courtenay lies to the west of the main Aylesford Culture cremation zone, isolated burials from sites such as Pyrton, Kingston Blount, Abingdon, Burghfield and Beenham do confirm the occasional penetration of the rite into the middle and upper reaches of the Thames Valley.[11]

While this second hypothesis remains potentially attractive, its acceptance would inevitably deprive the inhumation of its only closely dateable grave-goods, thereby introducing a third more difficult element into the argument. Left with no more than a shield and an iron weapon the warrior would no longer be demonstrably pre-Roman, and might instead be regarded as a secondary post-Roman burial whose association with the La Tène III cremation or cremations was merely coincidental. While deserving serious consideration, this third alternative nevertheless seems improbable, for although numerous pagan Saxon inhumations have indeed been found in the Sutton Courtenay area, few if any of these deviate from a standard extended body position.[12]

In conclusion we can therefore define in order of decreasing probability three alternative interpretations of the Sutton Courtenay deposit.

1. That the deposit comprises the contemporary burial of an inhumed warrior with one or more inurned La Tène III cremations, the latter of which were provided with the collection of five brooches.

2. That a single later La Tène warrior was buried with a conventional sword and shield, together with an unprecedented collection of bronze brooches and pottery vessels.

3. That a primary group of cremations, accompanied by the brooches, was subsequently disturbed or joined by an exceptional crouched pagan Saxon inhumation with a sword and shield.

ROWAN WHIMSTER

THE ROMAN SETTLEMENT AT KINGSTONHILL FARM, IN THE PARISH OF KINGSTON BAGPUIZE, OXFORDSHIRE

The parish of Kingston Bagpuize stretches about 4 miles southwards from the Thames to the River Ock, astride the Corallian ridge which runs westwards from Oxford. About a mile north of the village of Kingston Bagpuize, just below the scarp crest overlooking the Thames, lies Kingstonhill Farm. A previous excavation in the vicinity of the farm-buildings, about 250 m. south of the crest, produced stone, tesserae, and a large quantity of cattle horn-cores, indicative of a late Romano-British farmstead or villa.[1] Recent disturbance of the soil by the farmer, Mr. P. Christiansen, in the same vicinity has revealed further traces of Roman occupation.[2]

During the laying of a water pipe a short discontinuous layer of mortar in the trench section was revealed, and a few metres to the south a group of loose stones. Time did not allow a thorough investigation of these features, but near the stones a stratigraphically earlier section of ditch produced a quantity of pottery and several large fragments of bone. The pottery, largely from three bowls, was datable to about the first half of the 1st-century

[10] J. R. Collis, ' Excavations at Owslebury, Hants; an Interim Report ', *Antiq. Jnl.* xlviii (1968), 18–31.

[11] H. Case, ' A Late Belgic Burial at Watlington, Oxon '. *Oxoniensia*, xxiii (1958), 139–41; R. A. Chambers, ' Two Belgic Cremations from Kingston Blount, Oxon.', *Oxoniensia*, xli (1976), 354–5; D. Miles in *Rep. of Archaeol. Excavations 1972* (Dept. of the Environment, 1973), 25; G. C. Boon and J. Wymer, ' A Belgic Cremation Burial from Burghfield ', *Berks. Archaeol. Jnl.* lvi (1958), 46–53; note in *Berks. Archaeol. Jnl.* lxi (1964), 102–3.

[12] D. Benson and D. Miles, *The Upper Thames Valley: An Archaeological Survey of the River Gravels* (1974), 62–3.

[1] M. Parrington, ' Roman finds and animal bones from Kingstonhill Farm, Kingston Bagpuize ', *Oxoniensia*, xli (1976), 65–70.

[2] I would like to thank the farmer Mr. Paul Christiansen for all his kind help and co-operation during the work on his land.

A.D. The bowls, Forms 120B at Bagendon[3] and 221A at Camoludunum,[4] were in a fine, hard, light brown fabric with a dark grey burnish. An example from Dorchester[5] of similar form and fabric was also of this date.

To the north of this trench a lagoon for slurry, about 20 m. by 30 m., was excavated by machine. During the course of the work observation revealed a length of ditch, c. 7 m. long, which contained in its primary fill pottery of the late first to early third-centuries. This pottery consisted largely of necked jars with rolled rims in a grey sandy fabric. But the early pottery was represented by the rims of two jars in a native gritty fabric, paralleled at Dorchester,[6] and there dated c. 80–115. This lower fill was overlain by a layer of building stone from which it was impossible to rescue any stratified pottery, but pottery from the spoil originally taken from this area included forms current from the mid-third-century and into the fourth.

Over the rest of the area of the lagoon, petering out to the north-east, was a dark clayey layer, c. 50 cm. thick on average, sealed by brown sand. This occupation layer contained a thinly dispersed scatter of pottery, bone, small pieces of tile and crushed mortar and building stone, as well as two small undated pits. The majority of the pottery recovered from this area, although not from stratified contexts, covered the third- and fourth-centuries.

This new evidence of activity at Kingstonhill Farm from the mid-first-century to the fourth- or fifth-centuries strengthens the case for the existence of a settlement of some size here in the Romano-British period. A settlement here would be well placed, on a belt of light sandy soil and able to exploit a variety of different soils; the modern settlements in the north of the parish are also on small belts of sandy soil. At North Audley Farm, on the same subsoil, to the east of Kingstonhill Farm, a pottery scatter may represent another settlement of this period very close by. The present evidence seems to suggest that the site at Kingstonhill Farm might have been on a periphery of the main area of settlement. Fieldwalking may clarify both the nature and extent of this settlement.

R. COWELL

INHUMATIONS AND ROMAN SETTLEMENT FEATURES AT BOX HILL, ABINGDON, OXON

Construction of a building by a stream in the garden of no. 47 Bowyer Road, Abingdon[1] (OS SU 4990 9799) disturbed seven skeletons,[2] the graves of which cut through late Roman settlement features.[3] These features, which lay between 0·7 m. and 0·9 m. below present ground surface, consisted of a post-hole cut into natural gravel, separated from a gully to its south by a layer of orange brown loam. All contained late third- to mid-fourth-century pottery,[4] and their dating was confirmed by a third-century denarius found in the gully.

The graves were between 0·55 m. and 1·1 m. below present ground surface. Of

[3] E. Clifford, *Bagendon, a Belgic Oppidum*, Excavations 1954–56 (1961), 263.

[4] C. F. C. Hawkes and M. R. Hull, *Camoludunum* (1947), Plate lxxvi.

[5] S. S. Frere, ' Excavations at Dorchester-on-Thames, 1962 ', *Archaeological Journal*, cxix (for 1962), 132, Fig. 12, no. 6.

[6] Ibid. 136, Fig. 15, nos. 80, 85.

[1] Permission to excavate was kindly granted by the owner, Mr. Freestone.

[2] Oxon. Dept. of Museum Services, P.R.N. 12, 113. Only seven skeletons were located, although bones from 3 stratified and 6 unstratified skeletons were recovered.

[3] P.R.N. 12, 114.

[4] The size of the Roman pottery sample was insufficiently large to merit examination but as a whole. Proportions by weight were: Coarseware 180 g., Reduced ware 1100 g., Red and brown Oxford colour-coated ware 250 g., White ware mortaria 110 g. Forms noted were M23, M18, C51, C108.1, R18.1, R20.1, R24 (C. J. Young, *Oxfordshire Roman Pottery*, B.A.R., 1978); also coarse shell-gritted slack profiled jar with everted rim and necked jar of similar fabric. My thanks to Dr. Peacock of Southampton University for identifying a sherd of amphora from the sample as being early Roman (Dressel 1, or 2 to 4), and therefore probably residual. The site records, fuller report, and finds will be deposited at Oxon. Dept. of Museum Services, Fletcher's House, Woodstock, Oxon.
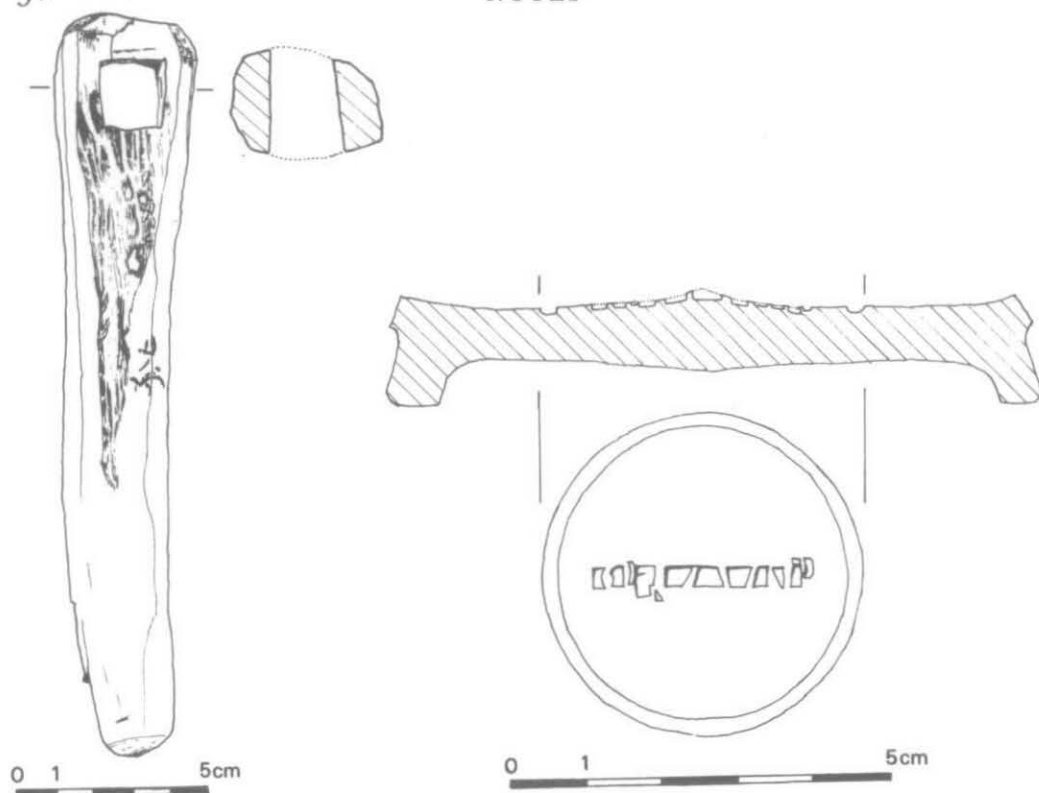
Fig. 3

skeletons III, IV, V and VI only the lower legs were recovered.   No grave-cuts for these were discerned, but the skeletons were presumably supine and appeared to be aligned north–south, III over IV, and 0·8 m. further west, V over VI.   Skeletons I, II and VII were excavated more fully.   They too were aligned on a north–south axis, but were buried head to toe in the same grave—thus I and VII had their skulls to the south, and II lay in between them with its skull to the north.   Skeleton I had a limestone slab lying directly over its rib-cage, whilst another lay over the left arm of II, which rested on the lower left leg of I.   Skeletons I and VII were buried with their arms straightened along their sides, but II had its left arm crossed over its chest.   Skeleton I also apparently had its skull propped up on a sherd on a Roman grey-ware pot.   The graves must be later than the mid-fourth-century because they cut late Roman features.   Late Roman pottery in the grave fills does not necessarily indicate a late Roman date of burial, as the pottery may be residual.   If the graves were pagan Saxon, however, one might expect grave goods, although they are not always present with such inhumations, particularly later ones.

Examples of burials with stones laid apparently deliberately on the corpse are known in several cemeteries of the late Roman/early Saxon period.   The closest parallel found is a group of graves from Margidunum,[5] which were cut into a late Roman clay bank, one of which was found with a stone resting directly over its rib-cage.   These graves, too, were mainly aligned north–south.   Other examples are from further to the south in Abingdon,[6]

[5] M. Todd, ' Excavations at Margidunum ', *Trans. Thoroton Soc.* 73 (1969), 75 grave no. 5.
[6] A. L. Meaney, *Gazeteer of Early Anglo-Saxon Burial Sites*, 43.   Seven skeletons were noted with stones deposited on them *c.* 1 foot above corpse, from Abingdon I cemetery (SU 490 963).

Shipton under-Wychwood,[7] and the Winnall II cemetery near Winchester.[8] In the last case Meany suggests that the practice was designed to lay the spirit of the dead person.[9]

There is a mention of " haedenan byrgels " (heathen burials) in both the Abingdon and Wootton Charters of the tenth/eleventh-centuries[10] at a spot on the parish boundary nearby, but this is probably *c.* 1 km. further to the north-east. There are several other Saxon burial sites known in Abingdon[11] within or just outside this radius of Box Hill.

Illustrated is a base sherd of a red colour-coated bowl (probably form C.51) with ' illiterate ' stamp, from the gully;[12] also an implement of antler, probably red deer, from the posthole.[13]

THE HUMAN BONES. By MARY HARMAN

A small group of human bones was retrieved from the site, comprising one partially complete skeleton, the skull and much of the left side of another, the right torso and arm of a third, and the lower legs and feet of at least six more.

The bones were in good condition. The sex was decided where possible from the relevant features of the skull and pelvic girdle, and the size and ruggedness of the bones; the assessment of age is based on tooth wear and the state of epiphyseal fusion, using the diagrams published by Brothwell.[14] Height is calculated using the formulae of Trotter and Gleser, given in Brothwell.[15]

Skeleton I is that of a man aged 20 to 25 years with a perfect set of teeth, apart from the lower third molars which had not developed. He was about 5 ft. 6¼ ins. in height (168·5 cms.), and had a malunited fracture at the distal end of the right fibula, the end being displaced slightly anteriorly and laterally. He also had sacral spina bifida and thirteen wormian bones in the lambdoid suture, interesting, but not extraordinary, variations from the normal.

Skeleton II consists of the skull and left limb bones of an individual, possibly male, aged between 17 and 22 years, with good teeth, though none of the third molars had developed, and nine teeth have been mislaid since death. He was about 5 ft. 8½ ins. in height (173·9 cms.) and had one wormian bone in the lambdoid suture.

Skeletons III to VI, an assorted collection of lower leg and foot bones, are derived from at least six individuals, one possibly male, the others of uncertain sex, all adult apart from one of between 15 and 20 years of age.

Skeleton VII consists of the right arm and right side of the torso of an adult of unknown sex.

DUNCAN WILSON

EXCAVATIONS IN WESTCOTE BARTON PARISH CHURCH, OXON. 1977

At Westcote Barton the parish church stands some 400 m. above sea level on the southern edge of a small valley. The modern village begins 0·2 km. to the east, although immediately to the east, south and west of the church the valley contains earthworks from earlier village settlement.

The exterior of the church was extensively refurbished when the tower was built in the fifteenth-century. The south porch is also Perpendicular. Inside the church Norman masonry survives in the south aisle to the east of the porch. Faint traces of the sill and jambs of a lancet window survive below the present east window of the aisle, and the south

7 R. A. Chambers, ' Shipton Barrow ', CBA Group 9 Newsletter No. 7 (1977), 75. A large limestone slab noted over (?Anglo-Saxon) burials, intrusive in barrow.

8 A. L. Meany and S. C. Hawkes, *Two Anglo-Saxon Cemeteries at Winnall*, (1970), 11, grave 8, " large flint on centre of chest ", 15, grave 25, " a number of heavy flints especially over the chest ".

9 Ibid. 31.

10 M. Gelling, *Place Names of Berks.* iii (1976), 725, 727.

11 viz: R. J. C. Atkinson, ' Excavations in Barrow Hills field ', *Oxoniensia*, xvii–xviii (1952–3), 14–35; D. Miles, *Barton Court Farm*, forthcoming; M. Parrington, *Ashville Trading Estate* (CBA Research Report No. 28, 1978); Meany, op. cit. note 6, 43.

12 See note 4.

13 B. J. Philp, ' The Roman Villa at Darenth ', *Excavations in West Kent*, 1960–1970 (1973), 153–4, objects 453–455 for other antler implements of the third- to fourth-century with square sockets. These examples are suggested to be rakes and hammers.

14 D. Brothwell, *Digging up Bones*, (1965), 60, 69.

15 Ibid 102.

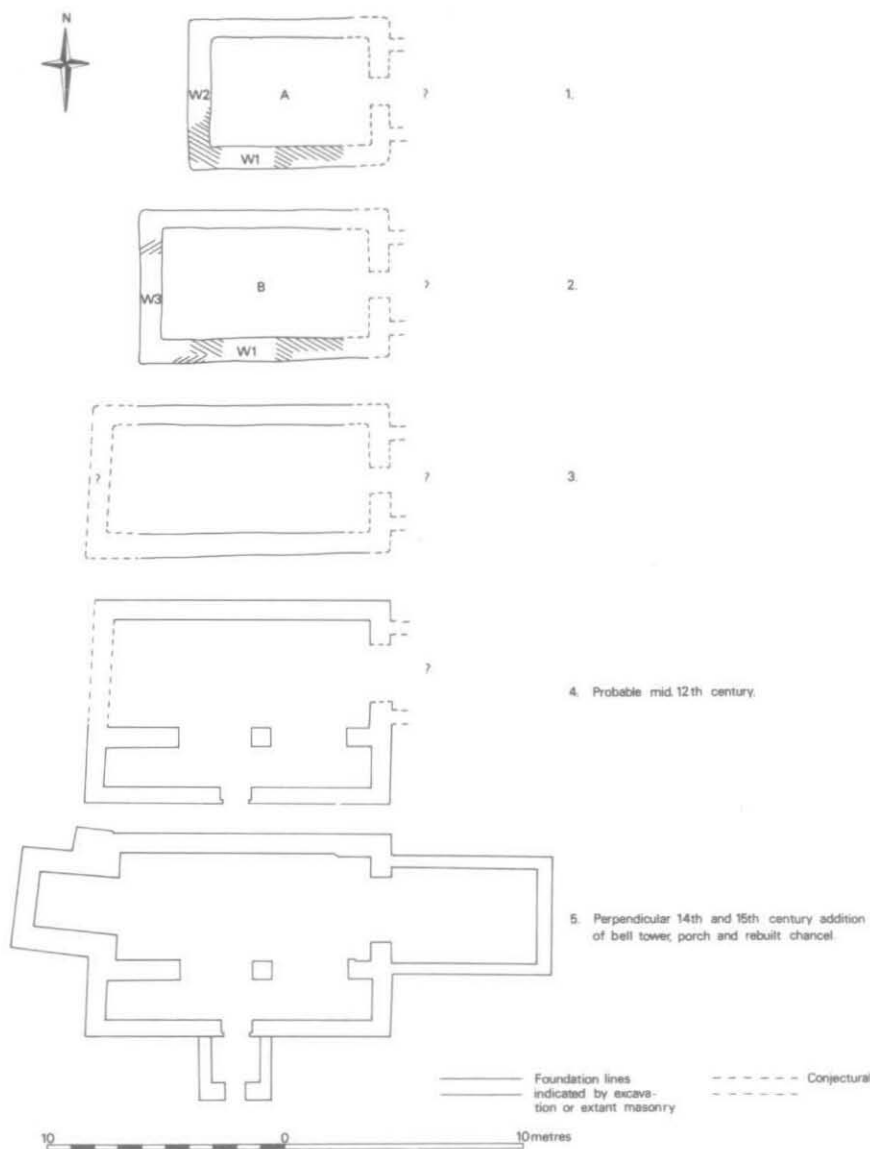Westcote Barton 1977   Evolution of the Nave

Fig. 4

aisle arcade is also Norman with two round arches divided by a round pier with a square scalloped capital.   The south wall of the aisle contains a Norman tomb recess bearing cable and zig-zag decoration.   The church interior was extensively altered during the restoration of 1855–6[1] and it was probably then that the present chancel arch was built onto the earlier responds which bear grooved imposts, that to the south with a band of nail-head decoration.[2]

[1] Jenner Marshall, *Memorials of Westcote Barton in the County of Oxford* (1870), 7.
[2] J. Sherwood and N. Pevsner, *Oxfordshire* (1974), 832–3.

Replacement of the Victorian floor in the nave and south aisle enabled the writer to carry out limited archaeological investigation within the church for the Oxfordshire Archaeological Unit.[3] The Unit is indebted to the Vicar, the Rev. P. Dance, for permission to carry out this work.

Excavation was limited to three areas within the nave and south aisle where the removal of the Victorian floor revealed the foundations and mortar floor, $0 \cdot 1$ m. thick, of the earliest stone-built nave (FIG. 4A), the later floor levels having been removed during the Victorian restoration. This earliest mortar floor had been laid directly onto the natural subsoil. The mortar was contemporary with the unbonded, local brown limestone-rubble foundations of which the west wall-foundation (W2) was shallow and only the bottom course partially survived.

The west end of the nave was later extended 2 m. (W3) on a foundation similar to W2; the absence of a floor surface to the extension and the partial survival of the original west-wall foundation W2 indicate that a new floor was laid in the extended nave at this time.

No dating evidence was discovered for the primary nave A nor for the western extension. The only pottery, a few late twelfth- to thirteenth-century sherds, came from a disturbed level. No floor levels were visible in section below the mortar floor of what appeared to be the earliest nave (represented by W1 and W2); to test for an earlier timber nave would have necessitated the total removal of the mortar floor. Within the permitted time-scale this was not possible.

R. A. CHAMBERS

TWO LEATHER OFFCUTS WITH QUALITY-CONTROL MARKS FROM THE MOAT OF OXFORD CASTLE[1]

The leather offcut, illustrated here as no. 1, has already been published in these volumes, where the monogram was described as " possibly a sort of branding mark ".[2] The device seems to be an ' I ' and an ornate ' W ' rather than ' AA ' or ' AA1 ', as was suggested previously. The stamp on the other piece (no. 2) can be read as two conjoined ' M 's. Metalwork of the thirteenth- to eighteenth-centuries came from the same deposits of the moat of Oxford Castle, so close dating by association is not possible. The ' IW ' device is similar in style to professional " merchants' " marks, particularly those of the sixteenth- and seventeenth-centuries.

The impressed stamps (there is no discolouration to indicate that heat was used in the marking) are probably the seals of searchers. These officials were chosen by the town authorities or craft guilds concerned with leather to examine " every tanned hide, skin or leather . . . . . whether the same be thoroughly dried or no ".[3] They would mark the skin with a stamp if they were satisfied that the processes of treatment had been carried out to the required standard. Details of the practice of sealing in this way are better documented in London than in Oxford. (Compare the hallmarking of precious metals today as a survival of this method of quality control, formerly used in several trades.) In the capital, representatives of the cordwainers, girdlers, curriers—and later the saddlers too—were responsible for carrying out these duties in the late medieval and post medieval periods.

[3] The site records and finds will be deposited with the Oxfordshire County Museum. P.R.N.'s 10,975 and 4,668.
[1] I am grateful to Mr. A. Crossley and Dr. J. Cooper of the Oxfordshire V.C.H. for allowing me access to then unpublished material, and to Mr. T. G. Hassall for permission to publish these objects from his excavation.
[2] J. Jones in T. G. Hassall, ' Excavations at Oxford Castle 1965–73 ', *Oxoniensia*, xli (1976), 284–6, fig. 21, no. 2.
[3] Act 1 Jac. I, c. 22, sect. 31, quoted in J. W. Sherwell, *A History of the Guild of Saddlers* (privately printed, 1899), 195.

1   2
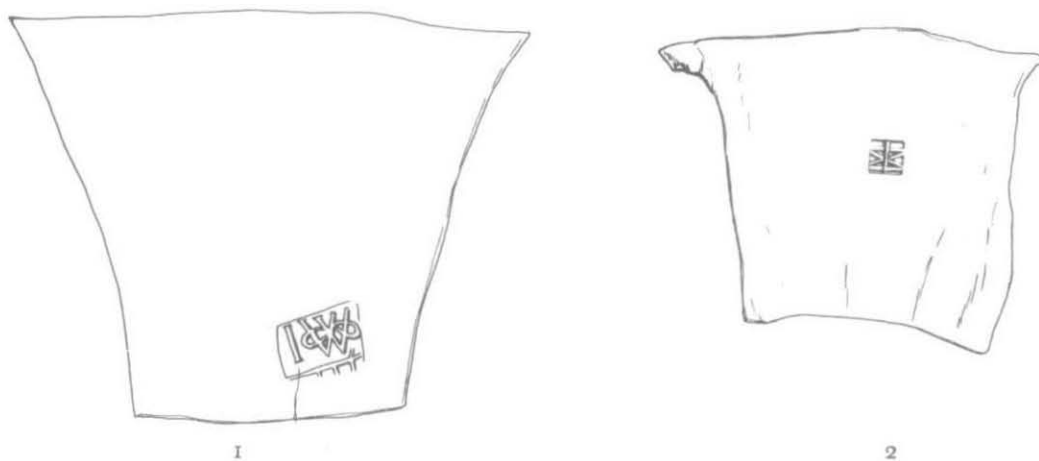
Fig. 5
Stamped leather offcuts, 1 with "IW", 2 with conjoined "MM".
OX 73 CAS layer 12/2, s.f. nos. 99 & 122.

From at least the early twelfth-century, there was a cordwainers' guild in Oxford,[4] and in the next century the customs and liberties of the corvisers and cordwainers were confirmed.[5] Tanners in Oxford seem never to have formed a guild, though they are mentioned in local documents from the thirteenth-century onwards.[6] An inquisition in the reign of Henry IV concerning seven tanners of Abingdon and Oxford who sold leather which was insufficiently prepared (*vendentes in villa Oxoniae corium tannatum false*) gives few details of the case and makes no mention of official searchers.[7] From the sixteenth-century onwards, the Oxford Association of Cordwainers is regularly called a ' guild ' or ' company ' in records. According to one of the Company minute-books of Elizabeth I's reign, two searchers of leather were to make " true and dewe search of workes and matters of the said occupation everie terme of the yeare; and if they found any thinge forfeited, to give dewe and trew accompt of the same to the bailiffes of the towne of Oxforde, towards the payment of the Quene's fee farme of the towne of Oxforde ".[8] These officials, appointed by the town council, are occasionally mentioned in sixteenth- and seventeenth-century records.[9] Among those elected to office in the guild in 1644, Stephen Prince and Michael Cripps " are chosen searchers for the yeare ensueing and are sworn ".[10]

A London ordinance of 1443 refers to " two marks and signs of iron ", one to seal well tanned leather, and the other for that not of a satisfactory standard.[11] In 1511 it was stipulated that a fee of one penny was to be paid to the searchers for every ten pieces of leather thus viewed and marked.[12] The mark was to be applied before the leather could be sold at Leadenhall, the only legal market for tanned hides in the City of London.[13] Searching continued in the capital through the eighteenth-century, with two members of the London Saddlers' Company being fined £20 each for making poor quality wares in 1703.[14] The office of searcher and sealer was still being filled there in 1807,[15] and as late as 1837 nine annual searches were made by the Committee of the Court of Assistants of the Saddlers' Company. No fees were charged, but if defective goods were found, they were destroyed.[16] This very late example of searching, half a century after most of the other London trades had abandoned the practice, was justified, it was claimed, inasmuch as it raised the character of the London-made saddles. Sometimes the searchers were negligent, as is suggested by the complaints of some of the tanners themselves in London, that hides which were gashed and faultily-dressed had been passed as satisfactory.[17] Usually they seem to have been conscientious; for example, imposing fines in 1605 for some pillions " made of evill and naughtie stuffe ".[18] There are several instances of faulty saddles being publicly burned by guild officers in early seventeenth-century London.[19]

By the early seventeenth-century the Oxford leather industry was widely renowned, particularly the making of saddles.[20] It is likely that the marks on the two pieces of leather considered here were applied in Oxford (despite the lack of documentary references to local sealing), probably in the sixteenth- or seventeenth-century. These two offcuts seem to be the legstumps of hides, stamped at the edge of the dressed portion. No. 1 is noticeably thick (4–6 mm.) and could have come from a hide used for saddle-making.

G. EGAN

[4] *V.C.H. Oxfordshire*, ii, 254.
[5] *V.C.H. Oxfordshire*, iv, 312–13.
[6] *V.C.H. Oxfordshire*, ii, 254.
[7] Quoted in *Oxford City Documents 1268–1665*, ed. J. E. Thorold Rogers, (Oxf. Hist. Soc. xviii), 237–241.
[8] J. Wilson, ' The Cordwainers and Corvesers of Oxford ', *Arch. Jnl.*, vi (1849), 154.
[9] Bodl. MS. Morell 20, *passim*, and *Oxford Council Acts 1583–1626, passim*, cited in *V.C.H. Oxfordshire*, iv, 313.
[10] Wilson, op. cit. in note 8, 273.
[11] Quoted in W. H. Black, *The History and Antiquities of the Worshipful Company of Leathersellers*, (privately printed, 1871), 26.
[12] E. Mayer, *The Curriers and the City of London*, (1968), 67.
[13] Statute 5 Eliz. I, c. 8, quoted in Sherwell, op. cit. in note 3, 194.
[14] Sherwell, op. cit. in note 3, 203.
[15] Mayer, op. cit. in note 12, 151.
[16] G. Unwin, *The Guilds and Companies of London*, (4th edn. 1966), 345.
[17] Order in Council of Charles I, mentioned in Mayer, op. cit. in note 12, 101.
[18] Sherwell, op. cit. in note 3, 199.
[19] Sherwell, op. cit. in note 3, 198–200.
[20] *V.C.H. Oxfordshire*, ii, 255.

MEDIEVAL POTTERY FROM OAKLEY, NEAR CHINNOR, OXON. 1978

This note records some medieval pottery found during the excavation of a vehicle inspection pit in a garage behind the Oakley Stores at Oakley[1] (grid reference: SP 7500 0041). This hamlet, first mentioned in 1215, is sited just inside Chinnor parish boundary 0·8 km. south of Chinnor village. Oakley has been much enlarged this century but a nucleus of seventeenth-century houses[2] remains in the vicinity of the Oakley Stores.

The majority of the pottery came from an undisturbed soil-layer approx. 0·6 m. beneath the present garage floor, although soils directly above yielded a range of early to late medieval fabrics. In addition, large portions of two vessels illustrated in FIG. 6 came from the top of what appeared to be a large pit. The jug or baggy pitcher (FIG. 6, no. 1) is of a type not previously recorded in Oxfordshire. The cooking pot, no. 2, provides the first complete profile of a particular type of pottery first recognised during the M40 motor-way excavations at Tetsworth in 1972. At the present time evidence from seven sites suggests that this type of hard, sandy, grey cooking pot with this distinctive heavy combed decoration does not occur any further westwards into Oxfordshire than Tetsworth.[3]

DRAWN POTTERY (FIG. 6)

Colours quoted are from the Munsell Soil Colour Chart.

1   Jug or baggy pitcher. Hard sandy fabric, interior and exterior surfaces a light reddish-yellow (Hue 5YR, 6/8), core light grey (Hue 2·5Y, N8/1). Slight traces of colourless glaze on the exterior. Plain strap handle.
A carefully potted, thin walled vessel similar in fabric to several fragments from decorated jugs or pitchers with thumbed bases from mid-thirteenth-century levels at Tetsworth.[4]

2   Cooking pot in hard, grey, (Hue 5Y 3/1) sandy fabric throughout. Vertical combed body-decoration, cf. several cooking pots from twelfth- to late thirteenth- or early fourteenth-century levels in sady fabrics with similarly incised combed decoration from Tetsworth[5] and Sadler's Wood,[6] although in none of the examples quoted does the rim show the acute angle of the example illustrated here.

R. A. CHAMBERS and M. MELLOR

EYNSHAM ABBEY

The former Editor and the authors of the article on the excavations at Eynsham abbey, published in vol. XLIII, very much regret that Brown Willis's version of the drawing of Eynsham abbey (Bodl. MS. Willis 46, fol. 96) was published as Plate IV to illustrate the text contributed by Bishop Eric Gordon, instead of Wood's original sketch from Bodl. MS. Wood E 1, fol. 45. Wood's drawing shows that the arcaded wall on the north side of the church is the internal face of the north aisle, not the wall of the cloister or burial ground (see pp. 103–4 of the excavation report). It is hoped to publish a note on the history of Wood's sketch in a later volume.

[1] The pottery and site records will be deposited at the Oxfordshire County Museum, Woodstock. P.R.N. 12,103. I would like to express my thanks to Mr. Major for reporting the finds and also for his assistance in recording the material.
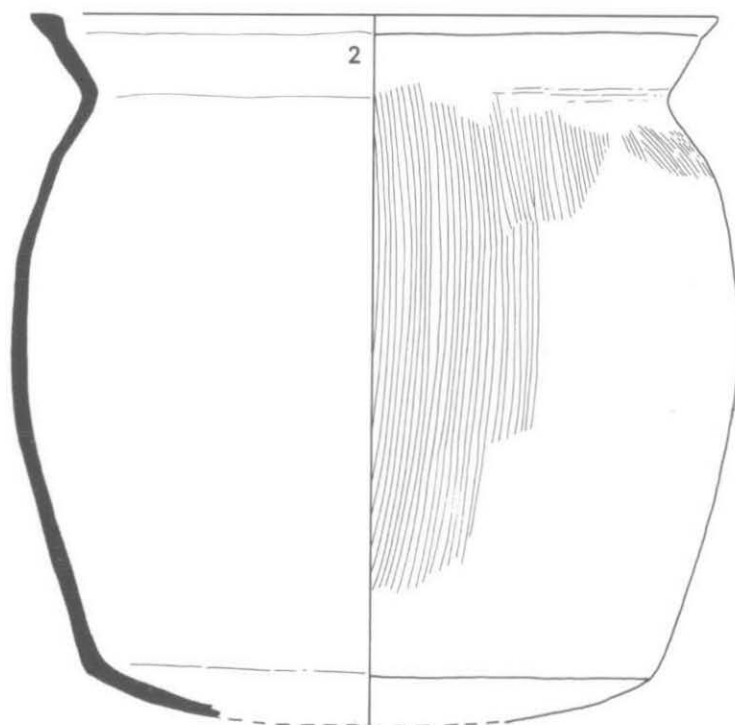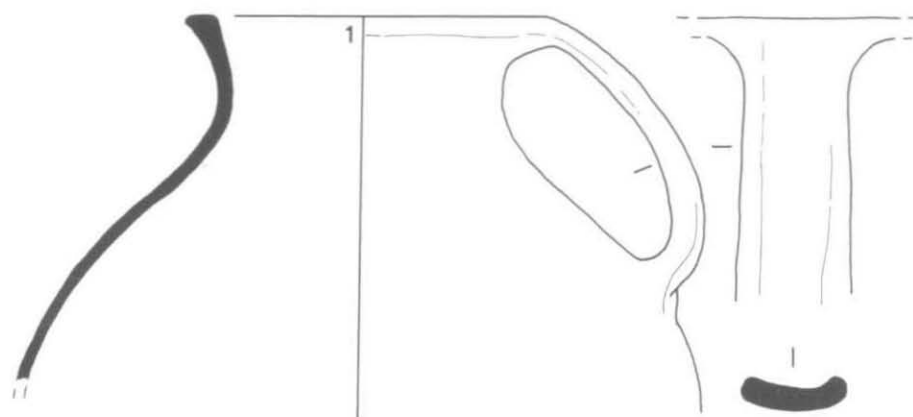[2] *V.C.H. Oxon.* viii (1964), 64 and 57.
[3] D. A. Hinton, " M40 Ware ", *Oxoniensia*, xxxviii (1973), 181–3.
[4] M. Robinson, " Excavations at Copt Hay, Tetsworth, Oxon. ", Ibid. 89. These fragments from Area 1, Phase V, layer 46/2 were not illustrated.
[5] Ibid. Fig. 16, nos. 11 and 12; Fig 17, nos. 40 and 41.
[6] R. A. Chambers, " A Deserted Medieval Farmstead at Sadler's Wood, Lewknor ", Ibid. 163.

FIG. 6
Medieval Pottery from Oakley, Chinnor. (¼ nat. size).

THE OXFORDSHIRE ARCHAEOLOGICAL COMMITTEE IN 1978

A full description of the Committee's Unit's work in 1978 can be found in CBA Group IX *Newsletter*, 9 (1979), 108–36. The Committee produces a Newsletter which appears approximately monthly, subscription £1·50 per annum, obtainable from the Oxfordshire Archaeological Unit, 46 Hythe Bridge Street, Oxford, OX1 2EP.

1 *Surveys* Published

R. Chambers, *North Weston*, deserted medieval village, (CBA Group IX *Newsletter*, 9 (1979), 130–1.

R. Chambers, *Shipton-under-Wychwood*, medieval village earthworks, Ibid. 133–4.

2 *Field Surveys in Progress*

Oxfordshire Parish Survey (with Oxfordshire Department of Museum Services).

3 *Excavations* (a) Published

M. Parrington, *The excavation of an Iron Age settlement, Bronze Age ring-ditches and Roman features at Ashville Trading Estate, Abingdon (Oxfordshire) 1974–76*, (Oxfordshire Archaeological Unit Report I, CBA Research Report, 28).

M. Parrington, ' Excavations at Stert Street, Abingdon, Oxon ', *Oxoniensia*, xliv (1978), this volume.

B. Wilson, R. Thomas and A. Wheeler, ' Sampling a profile of town soil-accumulation: 57 East St. Helen's Street, Abingdon ', Ibid.

D. Wilson, ' Inhumation and Roman Settlement Features at Box Hill, Abingdon, Oxfordshire ', Ibid.

R. Cowell, 'The Roman Settlement at Kingstonhill Farm, in the Parish of Kingston Bagpuize, Oxfordshire ', Ibid.

R. Chambers, ' Medieval Pottery from Oakley, nr. Chinnor, Oxon, 1978 ', Ibid.

G. Egan, ' Two leather offcuts with quality control marks from the Moat of Oxford Castle' , Ibid.

R. Chambers, ' Excavations in Westcote Barton Parish Church ', Ibid.

(b) In preparation (* indicates Interim report in CBA Group IX *Newsletter*, 9 (1978), 113–17).

Abingdon: Roman villa and Saxon settlement at Barton Court Farm.

Berinsfield, Mount Farm: Neolithic, Bronze Age, Iron Age, Roman and Saxon settlement*.

Berinsfield, Wally Corner: Pagan Saxon Cemetery.

Farmoor: Iron Age and Roman settlement.

Hardwick: Iron Age Settlement*.

Oxford: All Saints; medieval tenements at Church Street, the Greyfriars; the Hamel.

Towcester, Northants: Roman and medieval town site.

(c) Other sites recorded or dug: brief notes in CBA Group IX *Newsletter*, 9 (1978), 118–36.

Abingdon: Medieval tenements at 37–41 East St. Helen's Street, 40–46 West St. Helen's Street, St. Helen's Mews.

Bicester: Romano-British settlement at Kings End Farm.

Chalgrove: Medieval manor house at Hardings Field.
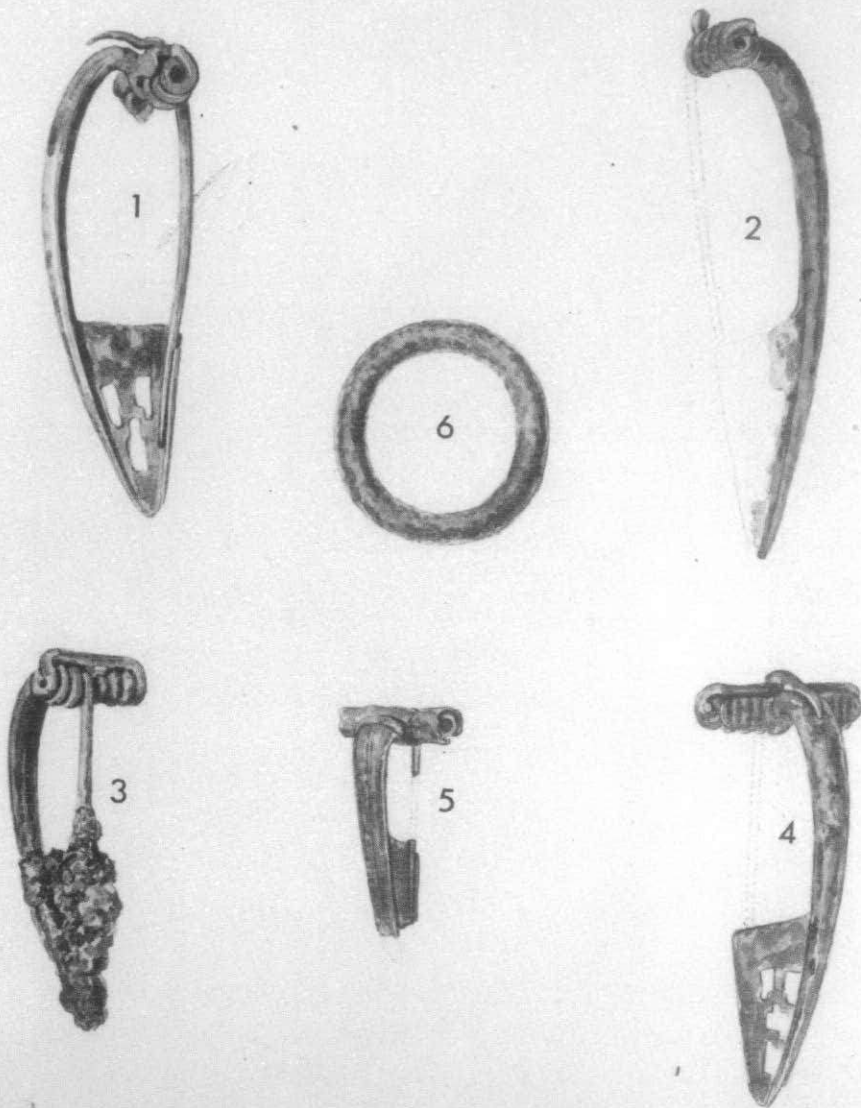
Cumnor: Iron age settlement on Wytham Hill.

Dorchester: Burials at 11 Rotten Row.

Henley on Thames: Post-medieval tenements at 87–91 Bell Street.

Little Farington: Iron Age and Roman Settlement.

Oxford: Medieval defences at George Street; burial from site of St. Mildred's Church, Turl Street.

Wallingford: Medieval burials from site of St. Michael's Church, New Road.

PLATE II

Roman fibula, and large brass Ring found by the two Urns, interred with the Body. Sutton belonging to the Seville Pole.