

## Notes

### AN OXFORDSHIRE FACE-NECK FLAGON FROM BEEDON, BERKS.

A programme of excavation and field-walking in the area of Beedon Manor Farm and South Stanmore Farm, north of Beedon Hill (Berks.), has been in progress since 1981 directed by Mr. V. J. Pocock.<sup>1</sup> In 1982 and 1984 two areas were excavated (at SU 482788 and SU 485790);<sup>2</sup> between the two sites on the surface of some ploughsoil a fragment of a white-ware flagon decorated with a female face (Fig. 1) was discovered early in 1985.<sup>3</sup>

Examination of the sherd, macroscopically and using a X20 binocular microscope, revealed that the fabric conforms well to the conventional description of Oxfordshire White Ware.<sup>4</sup> It is fine, hard and white with a groundmass of subangular quartz grains, the average size of which is up to 0.2 mm., with occasional larger grains. Flecks of mica, a little quartzite, feldspar and iron are also present. There are traces of black colour-coat on the exterior surface of the sherd; it is possible that this was originally red or orange and turned black during firing.

The face, moulded from a separate piece of clay, has been luted on to the neck of the flagon. Finger-marks occur on both sides of the face and on the inside of the rim, and smear-marks run horizontally around the neck of the flagon under the chin of the moulded face. The modelling of the hair-style and features of the piece is not well defined: the small size would make this difficult.

Several other examples of vessels decorated in a similar manner, with a moulded female face applied as a plaque to the neck of a flagon, have been recorded as products, putative or actual, of the Oxfordshire Roman pottery industry.<sup>5</sup> This piece differs from previously published examples in three main respects. First, it is made of a white fabric, not the oxidized fabric with red-brown colour-coat of most vessels reported hitherto. Secondly, it is substantially smaller (the face measures c. 2.5 cm. × 2 cm., as against 7 cm. × 4.5 cm. for the parchment-ware vessels, and an average of c. 5 cm. × 4 cm. for the examples discussed by J. Munby). Thirdly, the hair is apparently dressed differently, coming much lower down the forehead and lacking the formalized circular framing effect, although the central parting and ornament are similar. It is possible that the motif was cast from an existing flagon rather than coming directly from an original mould; the blurring of the features could support this. This could account for the small size, though even so the original must have been smaller than the mould recovered from Horsepath.<sup>6</sup>

It is suggested that this vessel was a product of the Churchill Hospital kilns.<sup>7</sup> It

<sup>1</sup> I am grateful to Mr. V. J. Pocock of Hillcrest, Beedon (Berks.) for allowing me to examine and publish this artefact. I would also like to thank Arthur MacGregor and Wendy Page for their help, interest and drawing skills.

<sup>2</sup> An interim statement on the excavation has been written by Mr. Pocock.

<sup>3</sup> By Miss Victoria Marshall.

<sup>4</sup> C. J. Young, *Oxfordshire Roman Pottery* (B.A.R. xliii, 1977), 93.

<sup>5</sup> A parchment-ware flagon, type P3: Young op. cit. note 4, 84-5; red-brown colour-coated flagons, type C11: *ibid.*, 149-50; the vessels discussed by Julian Munby: J. Munby, 'Some Moulded-Face Flagons from the Oxford Kilns', *Britannia*, vi (1975), 182-8.

<sup>6</sup> M. W. C. Hassall, 'A Pottery Mould from Horsepath, Oxon.', *Oxoniensia*, xvii/xviii (1952/3), 231-4.

<sup>7</sup> C. J. Young and L. S. Green, 'Excavations at the Churchill Hospital, Oxford, 1971-3 and 1984', forthcoming.

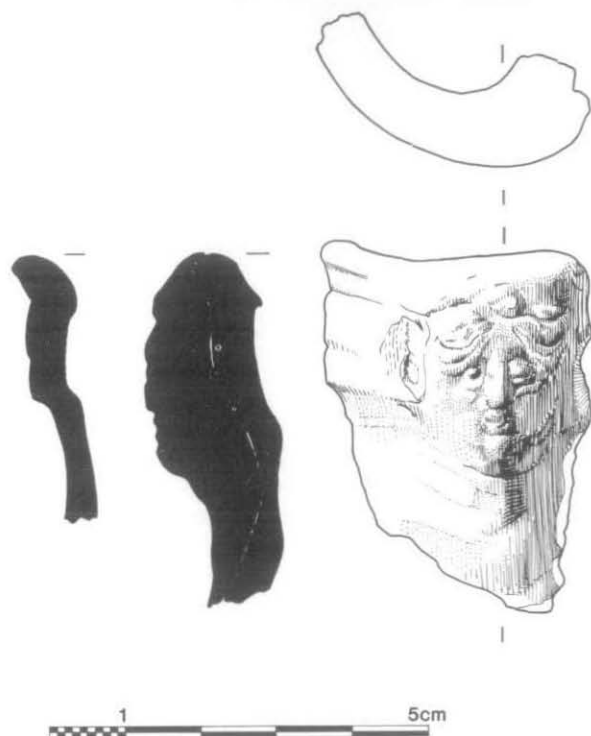


Fig. 1. Face-neck flagon from Beedon.

appears to have been a flagon of type W15, which was manufactured during phase 4a (the late 3rd century) of the site; the Churchill Hospital kilns were the only ones in the Oxfordshire group known, at the moment, to have produced this type.<sup>8</sup> These flagons are sometimes decorated with red, orange or black paint – a unique occurrence on the white-ware flagons of the Oxford industry.<sup>9</sup> A tradition of face-neck flagons from the Churchill kilns is seen in the 4th-century parchment-ware examples.

If this identification and dating are correct, the tradition of the late Roman face-neck flagon which is widespread in Britain may, in Oxfordshire at least, begin in the late 3rd century.<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> Young, *op. cit.* note 4, 101–2.

<sup>9</sup> Another primarily late 3rd-century vessel produced at the Churchill kilns, the mortarium type M17, was found with the face-neck flagon at Beedon.

<sup>10</sup> Hassall, *op. cit.* note 6, suggests a late 3rd-century date for the mould from Horsepath. It should be noted, however, that the face from this mould is very different in appearance from the one under discussion. It also bears little resemblance to the faces on the parchment-ware and red-brown colour-coated flagons.

## A LATE SAXON SWORD FROM CROWMARSH

A sword (Fig. 2.) found near Crowmarsh, Oxfordshire, in 1984 has been bought at auction by the Ashmolean Museum.<sup>11</sup> The two-edged iron blade, 70.5 cm. in length and with a rounded tip, shows no trace of pattern-welding and neither is it fullered. Patches of corrosion on the surface of the blade include areas of mineralised skin and fleece, indicating the former presence of a scabbard lining. The guard is pointed-oval in plan and curves towards the blade; it shows no sign of a slot to act as a seating for the heel of the blade (a feature otherwise common on guards of this type). Attached to the upper face of the guard and designed to mask the junction with the grip is a pointed-oval mount in the form of a plate, centrally perforated and with a raised edge, beaded or segmented around the periphery.<sup>12</sup> The tapering tang, measuring 13.5 cm. to the heel of the blade, is rectangular in section; the end is only slightly burred and shows no evidence of wear from contact with a pommel. Included in corrosion products above the guard are traces of wood packing from the grip, whose cross-section would originally have matched that of the decorative mount.

All these features can be reconciled with an origin in the Late Saxon period.<sup>13</sup> More specifically, the decorative plate on the guard of the Crowmarsh sword links it to a small group of weapons which share this feature. One of these is also in the Ashmolean: ploughed up at Drayton (new Oxon., old Berks.), it features a pattern-welded and fullered blade (now broken), a longer and less acutely curved guard than the Crowmarsh sword, and a bronze plate with expanded terminals and with zones of beading around its edges.<sup>14</sup> A sword from the Thames at Windsor (Berks) again has a pattern-welded and fullered blade, combined with a rather straight guard like that from Drayton bearing traces of a white metal coating; the bronze plate has expanded terminals and in this instance is continuously beaded around the edge.<sup>15</sup> A third example, found during ploughing at Gooderstone (Norfolk), resembles the previous two in form but has a guard more rectangular than pointed-oval in plan, with small silver plaques attached to the sides (originally three to each side). The mount on top of the guard is also of silver in this instance and takes the form of an open strip rather than a plate; the decorative beading here comprises double billets alternating with faceted ovals.<sup>16</sup>

The presence of these beaded mounts implies a close relationship between each of these four swords, even suggesting the possibility that they are the work of one smith.<sup>17</sup> No independent dating evidence attaches to any of these weapons but, with some differences of

<sup>11</sup> The sword (Ashmolean Museum No. 1985.48) is an unstratified find from rising ground to the east of Crowmarsh Gifford. See Christie's (London), *Antique Arms and Armour*, 18 April 1985, lot 13 (where it is incorrectly provenanced to Goring-on-Thames).

<sup>12</sup> The mount was subjected to X-ray fluorescence analysis but produced an inconclusive result. It appeared to be largely of iron but with traces of lead and tin; it is possible, however, that the predominance of metallic iron may be masking the presence of other elements. I am grateful to Fiona Macalister for carrying out these tests, for producing radiographs of the blade and for necessary conservation to the sword.

<sup>13</sup> See R. E. M. Wheeler, *London and the Vikings* (London Museum Catalogues 1, 1927), 35; D. M. Wilson, 'Some Neglected Late Anglo-Saxon Swords', *Medieval Archaeology*, ix (1965), 32-54; V. I. Evison, 'A Sword from the Thames at Wallingford Bridge', *Archaeological Journal*, cxxiv (1967), 160-89.

<sup>14</sup> Ashmolean Museum, No. 1966.1158. See D. A. Hinton, 'Two Late Saxon Swords', *Oxoniensia*, xxxv (1970), 1-4; Idem, *A Catalogue of the Anglo-Saxon Ornamental Metalwork 700-1100 in the Department of Antiquities in the Ashmolean Museum* (1974), No. 9.

<sup>15</sup> British Museum, No. 1929.2-6, 1. See Wilson, op. cit. note 13, No. 11; Evison, op. cit. note 13, 175-7.

<sup>16</sup> Castle Museum, Norwich, No. 11.958. See Wilson, op. cit. note 13, No. 3; Evison, op. cit. note 13, 175-7.

<sup>17</sup> Cf. Evison, op. cit. note 13, 177. The connection, strictly, is between the guards rather than the weapons as a whole. The fact that hilts and blades might change company is well established (see, for example, H. R. Ellis Davidson, *The Sword in Anglo-Saxon England* (1962), 52), and could account for any variety within the blades, such as the lack of pattern-welding on that from Crowmarsh.

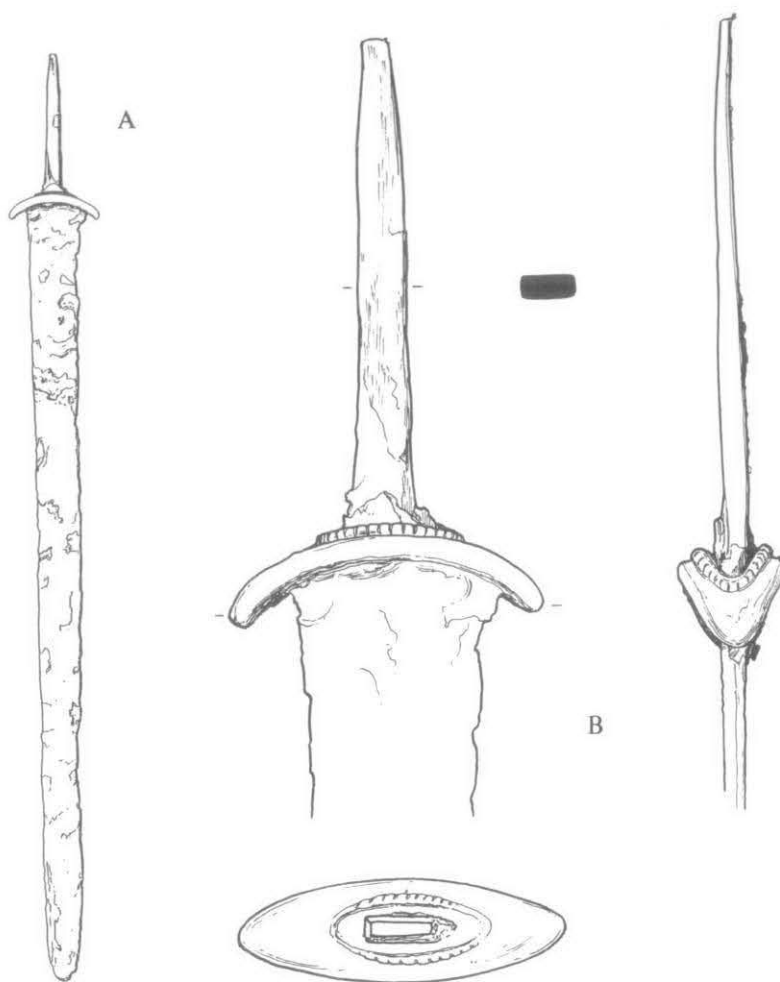


Fig. 2 Late Saxon sword from Crowmarsh. A General view (overall length 84 cm.); B Details of hilt (scale 1 : 2). (Drawing by Pat Jacobs.)

opinion in detail, a 10th- or 11th-century date is generally favoured. The group represents a development of the swords with curved guards contained in Wheeler's Type V, which make their appearance *c.* 875.<sup>18</sup> The Gooderstone sword is dated by Wilson to the late 9th or 10th century on the basis both of its form and of the patterns impressed on its silver mounts, while Evison assigns it to the 10th or 11th century.<sup>19</sup> For the Windsor sword Wilson conjectures a 10th- or 11th-century date, while Evison inclines towards the 11th century.<sup>20</sup> The Crowmarsh sword can add little to this debate but similarities of detail permit it to be included in this distinctive and expanding group of weapons whose current distribution begins to suggest a Thames Valley bias.

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<sup>18</sup> Wheeler, *op. cit.* note 13, 35.

<sup>19</sup> Wilson, *op. cit.* note 13, 35, 51; Evison, *op. cit.* note 13, 175.

<sup>20</sup> Wilson, *op. cit.* note 13, 44; Evison, *op. cit.* note 13, 175.

## A CANTERBURY PILGRIM BADGE FROM STANDLAKE OLD RECTORY

The Old Rectory, Standlake, Oxon. (SP 399 034) is a large medieval house with a chamber-block of c.1300 and an early 16th-century hall (survey in progress). A pewter pilgrim badge was recently found in the bank of the Windrush beside the Rectory. It represents a scabbard (lacking its sword) superimposed on a round shield, and is one of a familiar group of Canterbury tokens depicting the sword of Becket's martyrdom. Castings from the same mould have recently been found in London at Queenhythe and Trigg Lane; Mr Brian Spencer comments: 'Its quality is typical of Canterbury souvenirs of the last quarter of the fourteenth century, when the pilgrimage was at the height of its popularity. Other scabbards from the same mould have turned up at London'.<sup>21</sup> The find therefore suggests that a rector of Standlake in the age of Chaucer made the Canterbury pilgrimage.

I am very grateful to the owners, Mr. and Mrs. R. Claridge, for allowing me to see and publish their find.

JOHN BLAIR

## REGULATING OXFORD: MINISTERIAL INTENTIONS IN 1719

'Our Parsons, our Schools, our Universities propagate principles contrary to a Protestant Succession; and are tenacious of high strained loyalty, and an unalienable, indefeasible hereditary right. This characteristic undoes all notions for liberty, property, and fear of popery and slavery.'

George Tilson, 1722<sup>22</sup>

The intention of this note is to draw attention to a letter showing how the Whig ministry planned, in 1719, to use the storm created by a seditious sermon by a Tory Oxford academic as a means of regulating the University. The Whig ministry had long been concerned to suppress the strident Toryism of Oxford. The Stanhope-Sunderland ministry was, by 18th-century standards, a radical one, happy to envisage sweeping changes to be achieved by government legislation. The attempt to remodel the House of Lords – the Peerage Bill – and the proposals for a new ecclesiastical settlement based on a substantial extension of the rights of Dissenters matched the purging of the Justices of the Peace and the passage of the Septennial Act. Compared with these measures the regulation of the Universities could only seem a minor step, albeit a necessary one in the context both of the new religious settlement and of the drive to suppress the expression of dissident political views. In 1717–19 a number of measures for the regulation of the Universities circulated. The idea was supported by George I, Stanhope and Sunderland. An undated draft manuscript in Sunderland's papers pressed for the reform of the Universities,<sup>23</sup> whilst the former Lord Chancellor, Lord Cowper, was sent a proposal for instituting a regular system of visitations of colleges, similar to episcopal visitations.<sup>24</sup>

<sup>21</sup> *Trans. London and Middlesex Arch. Soc.* xxiii (1982), 313–14, Pl. 9, where the Trigg Lane badge is illustrated. Another from this mould is illustrated *Jnl. of the British Archaeol. Assocn.* xx (1864), Pl. 3.

<sup>22</sup> Tilson, Undersecretary of State in the Northern Department, to Charles Whitworth, Minister at The Hague, 30 Aug. 1722: Brit. Lib., Add. MS 37389 f.138.

<sup>23</sup> Brit. Lib., Add. MS 61705 pp. 41–2.

<sup>24</sup> John Taylor to Cowper, 13 Sept. 1718: Hertford, County Record Office, Panshanger papers, D/EP F57 ff. 7–8.

Given these Whig attitudes, the continued expression of Tory sentiment in Oxford was hardly propitious. On Restoration Day (29 May) 1719 the Professor of Poetry, the Tory Thomas Warton, preached a pointed Jacobite sermon on the text 'Oh Israel, thou hast destroyed thyself; but in me is thine help'.<sup>25</sup> Restoration Day celebrations often served as the basis for Jacobite propaganda, with the theme of the return of the rightful King, and Warton was in no way constrained by the public nature of his sermon from underlining the historical analogy. In his excellent work *Georgian Oxford* W. R. Ward has shown how sycophantic self-serving Whig academics, including that most insinuating of Oxonians, Dr. Meadowcourt of Merton, drew the attention of the ministry to Warton's sermon and how the Vice-Chancellor was instructed to take action, without success as Warton was never punished. Professor Ward was not aware that this incident was seen by the ministry as an opportunity to take action, and he unfairly claimed that 'the lay Whigs abandoned their clerical allies'.<sup>26</sup> In fact a letter in the Public Record Office reveals that the ministry hoped to profit from Warton's sermon in a way that would have satisfied Meadowcourt.

In the summer of 1719 George I went on a visit to Hanover, taking with him his leading minister James Viscount Stanhope. He took with him one of his Undersecretaries, George Tilson, and left the other, Charles Delafaye, in London. Delafaye served as the secretary of the Lord Justices, the ministers left to run the country while George was away and the group to whom Meadowcourt complained. On 26 June 1719 Delafaye wrote to Stanhope informing him of Warton's University sermon, and adding,

The Lords thought it best to put it upon the Vice Chancellor to punish him: If he refuses to do it, this may surely give a fair handle to bring the matter into Parliament and shew the necessity of passing some Law by which the Universitys may be better regulated.<sup>27</sup>

This letter is most valuable, because the Lord Justices left no detailed account of their meetings, and in particular, no guide to why they took decisions. It makes it clear that the response to Warton's sermon, including the failure to ensure that the Vice-Chancellor took sufficient action, was neither an isolated episode nor a failure to act due to inattention and poor supervision on the ministry's part, as was so much of 18th-century government: in fact it was part of a planned campaign to gather material for use against the Universities. It is also interesting as showing that it was thought necessary to find evidence that could be used to persuade parliamentarians. There is no suggestion of a pliant majority who would not need persuasion.

Three months later, in September 1719, the Earl of Sunderland, the first Lord of the Treasury, then in Hanover with George I, informed a supporter, the Chancellor of the Exchequer John Aislabie, that George was favourable to the idea of a bill to reform the Universities.<sup>28</sup> It is not clear why the ministry did not persist with their plans. The most likely reason is that they were aware that their parliamentary position was weak.<sup>29</sup> In September 1717 the Earl of Stair, a keen supporter of the ministry and Ambassador in Paris, had written to James Craggs, the Secretary of State for the Southern Department, to urge that the ministry abandon its ecclesiastical legislation and legislation against the Universities.

<sup>25</sup> Hos. xiii. 39.

<sup>26</sup> Ward, *Georgian Oxford* (1958), 90-2.

<sup>27</sup> P. R. O., State Papers Regencies (43), vol. 61, unfoliated.

<sup>28</sup> Sunderland to Aislabie, 21 Sept. 1719, Leeds, District Archives, Vyner MSS. 5709.

<sup>29</sup> J. Black, 'Parliament and the Political and Diplomatic Crisis of 1717-18', *Parliamentary History*, iii (1984), 77-101.

By attempting things, even right things, which you are not able to carry, you expose yourself, in our popular government, to the having the administration wrested out of your hands . . . if heat and impatience will make you go out of the entrenchments, and attack a formidable enemy with feeble forces, and troops that follow you unwillingly, you will run a risk to be beat.<sup>30</sup>

The defeat of the Peerage Bill in the session of 1719 was scarcely a good augury for renewed contentious legislation, and with the prospect of a difficult war against Russia it is scarcely surprising that the ministry shelved its ecclesiastical and University plans. The deaths of Stanhope and Sunderland in 1721 and 1722 respectively, and the rise to power of Walpole, led to an ending of contentious radicalism. Walpole was willing to execute sweeping changes in the fiscal sphere, but he preferred to manage the Church and Universities by means of patronage rather than by legislation and administrative innovation. Filling vacant bishoprics became the accepted method of management, and the staunchly Anglican Whig Lord Perceval was able to write to his cousin Charles Dering in November 1722,

When a few more of the Dignitaries drop off and a little care shall be taken of the Universities, we may hope to see a thorow [sic] change in the clergy, and then they will recover the esteem which they have forfeited thro' the misbehaviour of too many yet remaining among them.<sup>31</sup>

JEREMY BLACK

#### A 19TH-CENTURY EXCAVATION ON PORT MEADOW, OXFORD

The evidence of aerial photography demonstrates that Port Meadow, 300 acres of Thames floodplain N. W. of Oxford, was intensively occupied during the prehistoric period.<sup>32</sup> However, despite the potential importance of this area in our understanding of the prehistory of the Thames Valley, the excavation of a barrow on Port Meadow in 1842 has not previously been recorded in the archaeological literature.

Round Hill, the only archaeological feature on the Meadow which is readily discernible at ground level, is positioned on the edge of a gravel bank near the eastern margin of the Meadow.<sup>33</sup> In about 1720 this was a sufficiently prominent feature to be identified on Benjamin Cole's map of Port Meadow, and it seems to have been a well-known landmark up until the time of its excavation in 1842.

In 1841, following the appointment of the popular and energetic Freeman James Hunt as Sheriff of Oxford, a series of improvements to Port Meadow was embarked upon. The work inspired by Hunt included the building of a bridge at Walton Well Ford, the construction of a raised walk from the Toll Bridge and a programme of tree-planting.<sup>34</sup>

<sup>30</sup> Stair to Craggs, 5 Sept. 1717: Edinburgh, Scottish Record Office, G.D. 135/141/9.

<sup>31</sup> Egmont to Dering, 22 Nov. 1722: Brit. Lib., Add. MS 47029 f.132.

<sup>32</sup> R. J. C. Atkinson, 'Archaeological Sites on Port Meadow', *Oxoniensia*, vii (1942), 27-35, for the earliest aerial observations. G. Lambrick & A. McDonald in G. Lambrick (ed.), *Archaeology and Nature Conservation* (1985), 97 for the most recent plotting of sites.

<sup>33</sup> Grid reference SP 49620840. Oxfordshire County Council, Department of Museum Services Sites and Monuments Record PRN 3223.

<sup>34</sup> City Archives, N.3.5.



Included with these items in Hunt's account book for 1842 is an entry for £6 16s. 3d. expended on 'Turning over the round hill, to see what was under it, and making its shape correspond with its name'; the entry makes it clear that the money for this project was raised by subscription.<sup>35</sup>

Further details of what would seem to be Oxfordshire's earliest-recorded barrow excavation appeared in *Jackson's Oxford Journal* at that time.<sup>36</sup> The account makes clear that by this date the mound was an irregular shape (24 × 19 yards), some of it having been quarried away a few years previously to repair a nearby track. The plan was that 'the whole of the tumulus should be removed and that with the earth forming it a similar mound should be constructed immediately adjacent.'

Early on the morning of Tuesday 29 June twenty-five labourers were set to work with 'the Mayor, Sheriff, several of the Aldermen, and other respectable citizens, either superintending or from time to time inspecting the progress made.' Interestingly the excavators discovered that there had been a previous investigation of the mound, a shaft filled with loose earth being found sunk through the centre. Topsoil finds of a coin of Charles II and a 1651 trade token of Oxford fishmonger Nicholas Orum suggest that the mound had attracted some interest over the years.

As the mass of the mound was removed the report tantalizingly records the discovery of several human bones – 'merely the extremities'. The excavators were however increasingly disappointed at their failure to locate any more substantial evidence of a burial, such as an urn or a cist – 'the conviction soon became overpowering that antiquarian expectations would not be gratified.' On reaching undisturbed gravel the excavation was terminated.

The day was concluded with a dinner held in a tent pitched near the excavation. All those involved 'found ample solace in the good cheer and harmony which ensued' and 'the labourers were all highly satisfied with the reward and entertainment they met there.'

The excavation caused a considerable amount of local interest and amusement which is captured by a contemporary caricature depicting Sheriff Hunt standing by the partially excavated barrow and the pitched tent (Pl. 1).<sup>37</sup> 'Port Meadow or the People's Park,' a piece of humorous verse published anonymously in 1853, concludes its fourth verse with the following lines –

'A Sheriff once, as we are told,  
Hunt-ing to find a hoard of gold,  
Or coins, or coffins, moved the mould  
Of what is called "Round Hill"!'<sup>38</sup>

The last recorded occasion when a spade was taken to the mound was in about 1900 when the young T. E. Lawrence and his brother Will are reported to have spent a day investigating the barrow.<sup>39</sup> The excavation produced no finds, but Lawrence's interest in archaeology continued to develop.

Today Round Hill consists of a low irregular grassy mound 0.5 m. high and 35 m. in diameter. The mound is surrounded by a circular ditch, visible on the south side and proven by probing around the rest of the circumference. A smaller mound some 13.7 m. in diameter with steep sides rising to a height of 1.3 m. above the surface of the Meadow

<sup>35</sup> Bodl. Lib., G.A. Oxon. c.201.

<sup>36</sup> *Jackson's Oxford Journal*, Saturday 2 July 1842, p.3.

<sup>37</sup> Bodl. Lib., MS Top. Oxon. c. 211, f.85.

<sup>38</sup> Bodl. Lib., G. A. Oxon. c.201, f.10.

<sup>39</sup> A. W. Lawrence (ed.) *T. E. Lawrence by his Friends* (1937), 33–34.



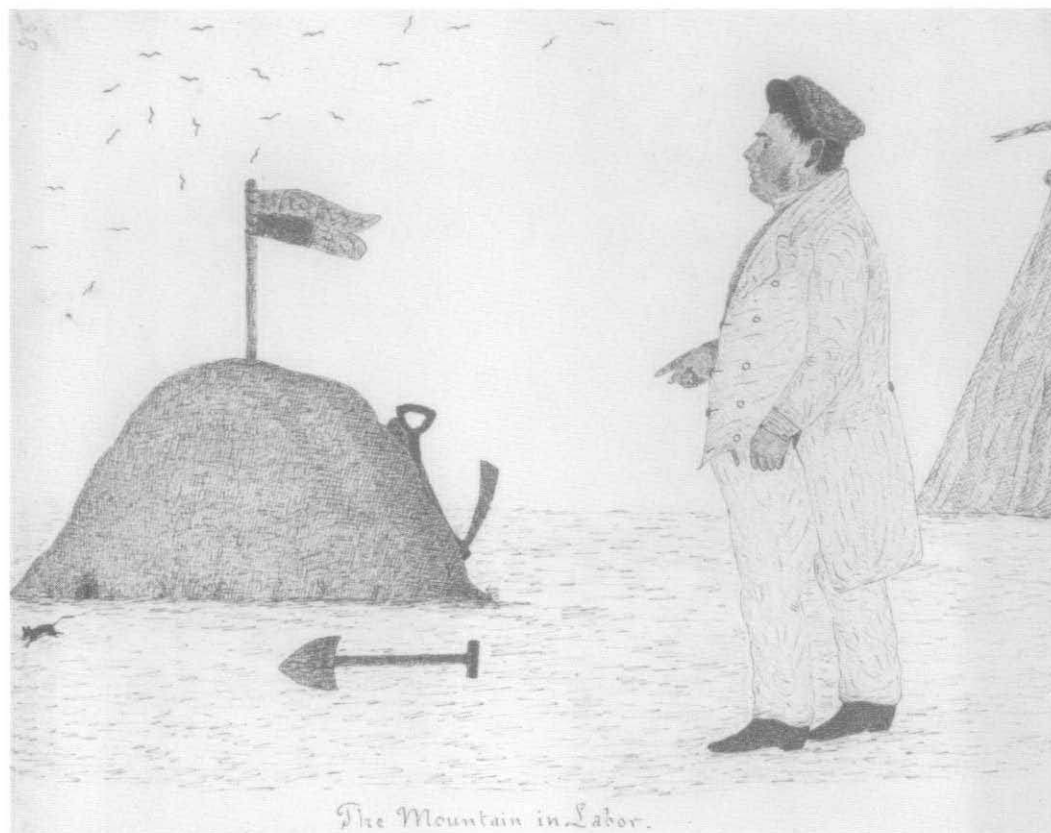


Plate 1. Sheriff Hunt at the Round Hill excavation. Pen Sketch by William Mathews, 1842. (Bodl. MS Top. Oxon c 211 f.85; reproduced by permission of the Curators of the Bodleian Library.)

overlies the south-west section of the primary ditch. The peak clearly represents the remodelling of the mound from excavation spoil in 1842; it is equally clear that the total area of the original mound was never completely levelled. The recovery by the writer of a small flint flake from an animal scrape on the mound hints at the lamentable standard of recovery during the excavation.

Whilst little useful archaeological information can be deduced from the scanty account quoted, the publication of the above details does help to explain the present morphology of the site and enable erroneous interpretations of its history to be discarded.<sup>40</sup> It can be seen that the spate of undisciplined barrow-digging which overtook many areas of this country during the 1840s–1860s did not leave Oxfordshire unscathed.

STEPHEN PENNEY

<sup>40</sup> Atkinson op. cit. note 32, p.28, suggests that the present form of the mound may result from remodelling as a grazier's viewing platform.