

# An Early Iron Age Site at Allen's Pit, Dorchester

By J. S. P. BRADFORD

**D**URING the last ten years, in the course of working Messrs. John Allen and Sons' Burcot gravel-pit at Dorchester, much valuable Iron Age and Romano-British archaeological material has been salvaged<sup>1</sup> and most generously presented to the Ashmolean Museum by the late Major G. W. G. Allen, to whom every gratitude is due, and by his brother, Capt. J. J. C. Allen. The comprehensive Iron Age pottery series, thus acquired, and the occupation site from which it came have been briefly discussed by E. T. Leeds, preparatory to a special memoir and it is with his encouragement and kind consent that I now put forward a more detailed interpretation.

The pit, which covers a considerable area, lies about  $1\frac{1}{4}$  m. N. of Dorchester Bridge on one of the gentle slopes within the broad, well drained, gravel terraces between the confluence of the Thames and Thame, and less than  $\frac{1}{2}$  m. from the Iron Age and Romano-British settlement examined by J. N. L. Myres<sup>2</sup> at Mount Farm, Dorchester. Although no more than 180 ft. above O.D. there is an extensive prospect towards the Chiltern escarpment, and beyond Wittenham Clumps to the N. fringes of the Berkshire Downs. Lying close to the river, the neighbourhood on both sides of the Thames was one evidently favourable to primitive subsistence agriculture from the Bronze Age onwards, as Major Allen's incomparable air-photographs have emphasized. This site should therefore be considered as one element of a cluster of Iron Age settlements along the river, most of which can be re-identified after the Roman conquest when, with improved communications, they probably increased in prosperity.

## THE SITE (PL. IV, A, FIG. 7)

The structural details require only a brief re-summary :—

*Ditch* 1. W. 17 ft., D.  $9\frac{1}{2}$  ft. V-section (see PL. IV, B, and FIG. 7 at A'A' and note height of crop above). Main enclosure ditch with rounded corners, SW. angle of which (not SE. as *Ant. Journ.*, xv, 40) destroyed without record; E.I.A. sherds at all depths, most prolific in upper strata.

<sup>1</sup> Leeds, *Ant. Journ.*, xv, 39 ff.; Savory, *V.C.H. Oxon.*, 1, 252 and Harden, *ibid.*, 305 (R.-B. kilns). See also *Oxoniensia*, 1, 83 ff.; the D-shaped enclosure lay SE. of the kiln marked on the plan, *ibid.*, fig. 13.

<sup>2</sup> *Oxoniensia*, 11, 12 ff.

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The earliest carinated forms of A1 type came from an occupation-layer outside the ditch.

*Ditch 2.* W. 5 ft., D.  $3\frac{1}{4}$  ft. V-section. E.I.A. pottery.

*Ditch 3.* W. 4 ft., D.  $2\frac{1}{2}$  ft. E.I.A. pottery.

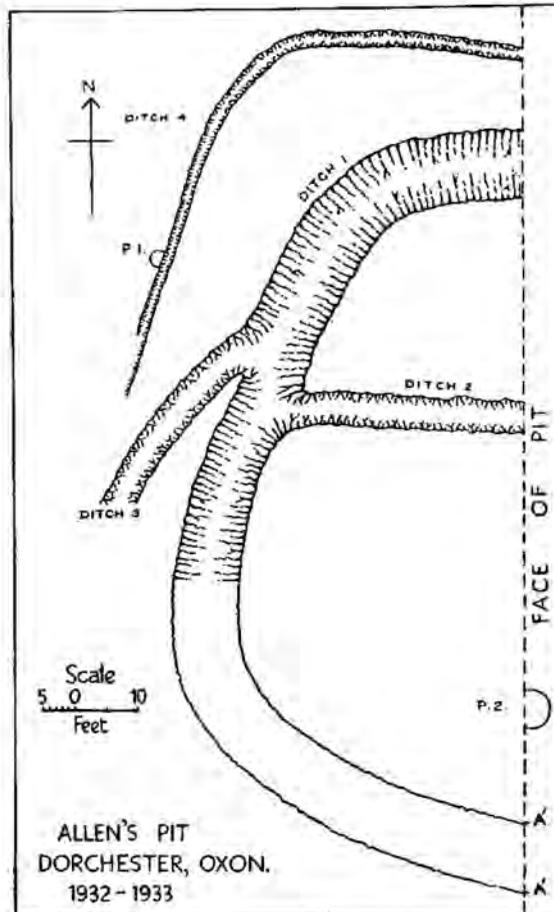


FIG. 7.

Plan showing the W. end of the D-shaped enclosure.

*Ditch 4.* W.  $1\frac{1}{4}$ -2 ft., D. 1 ft. Conforms to earlier enclosure; most probably a palisade trench; R.-B. pottery only. Cut through small pit (? B.A.), impregnated with charcoal, containing an oval scraper and other worked flakes.

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Ditches 2-4 are all invisible in the air-photograph. The length of the large enclosure (ditch 1), is more than twice its width, which measures 120 ft. at the broader, W. end; no post-holes were seen in the limited area examined and only one storage pit (P.2). Its oblong, D-shaped, proportions are very similar to those of a rectangular enclosure<sup>1</sup> in Overy field, S. of Dorchester (PL. IV, c) (a likeness first noticed by Major Allen, cp. *Oxoniensia*, III, pl. xvii) and also to a third enclosure of this character at Markshall, Norfolk (*Proc. Preh. Soc.*, II, pt. I, pl. II).

Other crop-marks can also be distinguished at Allen's Pit :

(1) Two parallel lines at right angles to and across the E.I.A. enclosure, and a third, possibly contemporary, running into it obliquely.

(2) A smaller, straight-sided, rectangular enclosure, probably Romano-British, to the south, similar to one of those just across the river at Long Wittenham (Fox Furlong), cp. *Oxoniensia*, v, pl. xviii.

At some seasons the whole field appears negative. No crop marks have yet been photographed in the three fields nearer Mount Farm, though just beyond, and E. of the farm, there appears to be another intricate group which remains undated.

It has been suggested by Savory (*V.C.H. Oxon.*, I, 252) that this type of rectangular enclosure 'seems to constitute a homestead' and in many respects it may indeed be said to be reminiscent of the independent farms with defensive ditches identifiable in Wessex, one of which was partially excavated at Little Woodbury (*Proc. Preh. Soc.*, VI, pt. I, 30). But while it is certainly improbable that individual farmsteads were restricted to the uplands only,<sup>2</sup> it might perhaps be a little rash to claim that this particular enclosure can yet be thus identified, when nothing is yet known of its inner surface structures. Nor, without proper excavation, can we altogether rule out the presence of other hut-, or house-, sites in the untouched field in which the major part still lies. The precise character of the contemporary site at Mount Farm, close at hand, has also still to be determined.

### THE POTTERY

The bulk of the existing pottery from Allen's Pit belongs to the earlier part of the Iron Age A culture phase. With the exception of the large carinated situlas with flaring

<sup>1</sup> Within the Overy enclosure, but possibly just slightly overlapping the ditch on the N. side, is a zone of irregular, linked, dark patches, from the air somewhat similar in appearance to the aggregate of working hollows at Woodbury (*Proc. Preh. Soc.*, VI, 64). The large, mottled, disturbed area to the S. appears to represent the site of an old gravel pit, which also penetrated into the interior of the ring-ditch, and at this point was easily identified when visited in July, 1941, for the ears of corn had withered and turned black from lack of moisture. The existence of a square (? R.-B.) enclosure close by (PL. IV, c), as at Allen's Pit, should be noticed.

<sup>2</sup> The ploughed out enclosure, shown on O.S. 6-in., Oxon., 32 N.W., and re-identified from the air by Major Allen, which is situated just to the east of the boundary of Eynsham Park may prove to be a ditched homestead of this type.

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rims (FIG. 8, 3 and note) its beginnings at present seem somewhat to postdate the unadulterated A1 culture, fresh from the Continent, at Long Wittenham, although antedating the earliest items yet found at the neighbouring Mount Farm site. The abundance and individuality of the linear ornament is perhaps the most striking characteristic, especially when a range of plain, late, A2 forms, like that from Frilford<sup>1</sup> is compared.

Only seven miles S. of Allen's Pit, on the extreme border of Wessex, an even more suggestive contrast is provided by a large group of contemporary wares collected from an occupation-site on Blewburton Hill.<sup>2</sup> Its constitution differs considerably, showing every indication of well preserved and unmixed Wessex A characteristics, including the practice of haematite slip-coating. We have now grown accustomed to the absence of this specialised technique in the upper Thames valley, yet this must not be taken to suggest any general limitation of southern cultural influences.<sup>3</sup> Indeed from the start the Allen's Pit pottery naturally displays many signs of a receptive contact with Wessex, in common with other local early A2 sites. However the Oxford basin lacks the natural topographical unity of Wessex, and since it was susceptible to cultural influences from many directions, ceramic modifications north of the Downs accelerate until the survivals of significant form and decoration often become vestigial. This tendency demands special watchfulness and we are, for example, even now, only beginning to identify 'Belgicised' pot-types whose real relationships had been obscured by much simplification.

The following Wessex A characteristics are either represented in diluted form only, or are conspicuous by their absence:

(1) *Furrowed ornament*. Seen on a little carinated cup (*V.C.H. Oxon.*, I, pl. XI, c), and probably imitated by the broad tooling on FIG. 10, 15.

(2) *Stamped circlets*, e.g. FIG. 11, 2 and 7. Similar punch-marks occur at Liddington Castle and Blewburton Hill in Wessex A contexts, and also from Standlake and Mount Farm, north of the Thames.

(3) *Incised ornament with white inlay*, e.g. FIG. 11, 7 and perhaps FIG. 8, 3 (chevrons). Cp. not only Liddington, Hagbourne Hill, Blewburton Hill, Lowbury Hill, and probably Ram's Hill, but also Wytham, Berks., and Bampton, Standlake, and Old Marston, north of the Thames.

(4) *Triangular punch-marks*, e.g. FIG. 8, 3. Typical of All Cannings Cross.

(5) *Stroke-filled triangles*, e.g. FIG. 8, 2 and FIG. 11, 11 and 17 (with references). These are typical of Wessex A and its cultural dependencies where the chevron motifs, predominant here, form the basis of linear ornament.

<sup>1</sup> It should be pointed out that the initial dating for that site (and hence probably Radley and Chastleton) ought now to be placed not earlier than 200-150 B.C., since an even greater allowance must be made for typological time-lag than at first seemed desirable.

<sup>2</sup> The pottery appears to date mainly from early A2, with characteristics very similar to those of the analogous series from Ram's Hill (*Ant. Journ.*, XX, 473), a little to the west. Interest also attaches to equivalent Wessex A2 pottery from other occupation-sites on the edge of the Downs, i.e., Knighton Hill; Scutchemer Knob, Hendred (*Trans. Newbury F.C.* VI, 93); E. Lockinge round barrow (*ibid.*, 90); Churn Plain, Barrows B and C (*ibid.*, 164, 167); Lowbury Hill (Atkinson) and Hagbourne Hill (unpub.); all being sites with similar topographical environment suggesting the possibility of a fairly uniform type of settlement, perhaps in terms of individual homesteads.

<sup>3</sup> The belts of gault, and of Oxford and Kimmeridge clays, may be best regarded not as deterrent barriers but as negotiable obstacles during the greater part of the Iron Age.

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(6) *Omphalos bases*, e.g. FIG. 10, 12, and 13. Cp. others from Blewburton and Long Wittenham.

(7) *Haematite coating*. The definition of the northern frontier of the haematite province of the southern Iron Age cultures as roughly coinciding with the periphery of the N. Berkshire Downs, previously suggested (*Oxoniensia*, IV, 15), is further emphasised by its complete absence from Allen's Pit, in spite of the contemporaneity of much of the material with the hey-day of that technique. A very small quantity has been found at Hatford, on the north side of the Vale, as a survival in a late A2/AB context. Across the Thames, one small sherd is recorded from Mount Farm, but the alleged example from Cassington mentioned in the Frilford report had only acquired a pseudo-haematite character in the course of firing.

(8) *Cordons*. These are missing from the bowls, with the exception perhaps of FIG. 11, 6, and are replaced by neck-grooves and carination offsets, which are easier to execute.

(9) *Dimples*. The large vesica-shaped dimples on the shoulders of FIG. 8, 3 and the other massive A1 situla (*Ant. Journ.*, xv, pl. VIII) do not at present seem to be derived from Wessex sources. There are also tiny vesica-shaped dimples below the carination of a bowl (*infra*, FIG. 13, 4), from Linch Hill, Stanton Harcourt. Those of circular form, e.g. FIG. 11, 5, 6 and 16 (p. 44, with references), are evidently also evolved from them rather than mere refinements of finger-printing.

(10) *Forms*. The form of FIG. 8, 3 and FIG. 9, 2 (situlas) and FIG. 10, 11 and *Antiq. Journ.*, xv, 35 b (carinated bowls) suggests a speculative relationship with prototypes of the Long Wittenham genre.

In a somewhat analogous manner, Caburn 1 ware showed obvious Wessex influence, but did not owe its entire range of carinated forms to that source. We must wait for further comparative material before being able to assess the numerical importance of the non-Wessex elements, of which Long Wittenham is the best available example.

During the course of the A2 culture phase, linear ornament adapted from Wessex early A2 sources shrinks and almost disappears, with accompanying degeneration of form and of crispness of detail. Though preserved in some numbers, only a very small percentage of the familiar range of types, which correspond to Radley (*Ant. Journ.*, xi, 401) and Frilford (*op. cit.*, 18), need be illustrated here. Many of them (for example, the heavy, swollen, flat topped rims) persist right up to the Roman conquest. While the rate of this degeneration must eventually be more closely assessed, greater interest attaches to the emergence and development of another distinct but contemporary group alongside that of situliform ancestry.

It has been increasingly clear, lately, that the bowl forms and their variants,<sup>1</sup> conservatively labelled 'La Tène II' at Frilford, described as Iron Age AB wares at Cherbury Camp (*Oxoniensia*, v, 13 ff.) and more accurately defined as Upper Thames AB (being an amalgamation of other already composite AB influences), are not only easily distinguishable from situliform derivatives but comprise a larger and far more homogeneous group than was at first apparent. The various criteria which contribute to the diagnosis correspond to those observed in other AB groups. We may need to differentiate this plain burnished bowl and modified 'flower-pot' element from the later B bowls with

<sup>1</sup> Identifiable at Radley (*op. cit.*, p. 401, nos. 14, 57, etc.), Frilford (56-7), Cherbury Camp, Mount Farm, Allen's Pit; and at Woodeaton, Stanton Harcourt, Hatford, Yarnton, Cassington, Eynsham (Foxley Farm), Minster Lovell (*infra.*, pp. 54ff).

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Armorican-derived decorative motifs (e.g. Frilford, Cassington, Rose Hill, Yarnton, etc.), which, if absorbed from SW. B sources, are unlikely to have appeared in this area before the very latest years of the 1st century B.C., and are perhaps to be dated a decade or two later. Upper Thames AB is a complex entity which can no longer be assigned, *en bloc*, to a vague relationship with the Glastonbury series.

We cannot at present be very positive about the signs of evolution within these plain hybrid AB forms. Well stratified deposits are first of all essential, but when the large series collected from E. and W. Cassington and composed almost exclusively of AB material is published, it should be possible to trace the development (within the limitations of typology) of the embryonic forms of these incipient bead-rims, which at first are of the simplest type (compare the transitional forms at the Caburn, *Suss. Arch. Coll.*, LXXX, 242). By the time they make their appearance at Frilford, Iron Age A linear decoration had fallen into desuetude and since the normal pottery tradition of the La Tène culture was basically one of plain wares, it is not surprising that the local AB forms are, with few exceptions, without ornament (FIG. 10, 21-25). Their evolution in the upper Thames valley occupied the 1st century B.C. and also probably the latter half of the previous century, but for closer dating we require to correlate this with the neighbouring AB groups. Good general parallels already exist in E. Berks., at Southcote (*Proc. Preh. Soc.*, III, 43 f.) and Theale (*Trans. Newbury F.C.*, VIII, 54, no. 10 and 57, nos. 13, 14, 16),<sup>1</sup> and our future objective must be to show the mechanism of, and stages in, this diffusion. Nearer to the coast, and to its points of impact, the analysis of the initial Iron Age B culture admits of greater chronological precision, not obtainable as yet in the hinterland. But we must not consider the southern AB groups exclusively. The bowl from E. Cassington, decorated with stroke-filled lozenges, had its relationship with that at Hunsbury, *Arch. Journ.*, xciii, 75 D. 10, as well as Newhaven, *Suss. Arch. Coll.*, LXXX, 282, fig. 4, 1. Ward-Perkins has already suggested that certain fibulae and metal types<sup>2</sup> were largely introduced into S. England by invading Marnian groups, established in Yorkshire from the mid-3rd century B.C., by way of the Jurassic zone route. At present the flamboyant B bowls of Hunsbury stand in artificial ceramic isolation, but excavation in N. Oxfordshire<sup>3</sup> might possibly show traces of the extension of an additional and distinct strain of AB ceramic influence from the NE., as the pedestrian and later concomitant of the culturally more mobile lynch-pins, three-link bits, etc.

Not only did the Oxford basin, *per se*, contain certain of the qualities of a natural frontier area, but also some of the cosmopolitan characteristics of a culture pool. Thus

<sup>1</sup> Both of these sites are distinctively linked with AB sites in S. Wessex (e.g., *St. Catharine's Hill*, p. 114, 117, and Yarnbury, *Wilts. Arch. Mag.*, xlvI, pl. xvi, 1) by characteristic bowls decorated below the rim with a zone of shallow diagonal tooling, combined with impressed circular dots.

<sup>2</sup> See *Proc. Preh. Soc.*, v, 173 f., for those involved in our area. Their close dating, by comparative typology, is full of pitfalls. It is not intended here to attempt to evaluate the part played by the Thames estuary in the dissemination of Iron Age cultures into its upper reaches.

<sup>3</sup> In discussing the pottery from Chastleton Camp, Savory mentions (*V.C.H. Oxon.*, I, 256) 'certain features' which 'already indicate influences from the Iron Age B culture,' but it is difficult to identify any of much significance among the A2 forms, with the exception of type 3 B, a very elementary form which could be quite naturally evolved from very decadent but still slightly shouldered vessels like *Ant. Journ.*, XI, 401, no. 30. The inturned rim on small basins and cups does however, tend to occur on sites with an A2/AB fusion (e.g. Frilford, *op. cit.* p. 18, no. 42; on several Wessex sites; and even in the transitional phase from Caburn 1-11, *Suss. Arch. Coll.*, LXXX, 242, no. 21) as an extreme simplification of the plain incipient bead-rimmed cooking-pots, and is commonly associated with them at Glastonbury.

in the final stages of the Iron Age we find a coinage distribution with constituent elements drawn from the Atrebatian and Catuvellaunian Belgic groups (p. 51), from the Dobunic area,<sup>1</sup> and also from the Eastern Counties<sup>2</sup>—in fact, from all quarters of the compass. The distribution of the E. Belgic issues certainly suggests some likelihood of a corresponding ceramic reaction, although it was recently claimed (*Ant. Journ.*, xx, 389) that 'There is no evidence that the local B population was subjected to Belgic (Iron Age C) influence; their culture survived to Roman times.' Yet *Belgicised* pottery forms are perceptible in simplified (probably pre-conquest) copies of certain basic SE. types, e.g. tazzas and bowls (Yarnton: Sandy Lane, and Eynsham: Foxley Farm); while the absence of pedestal urns W. of the Chilterns may or may not be significant in view of the salvage conditions which have prevailed locally.

Pedestal urns, probably introduced from the Cambridge region, have been found on the Jurassic extension of the Cotswolds at Duston and Weckley, near Northampton, while bead-rims from Salmonsbury to the south, and other Belgicised pottery nearby, suggest that we should be in no hurry to set bounds to the penetration of this intrusive culture. Probable importations (FIGS. 9, 9 and 10, 29) from actively Belgic areas are easily recognisable, beside the cruder local imitations (FIG. 10, 27 and 28).

*Catalogue* (FIGS. 8-11):

FIG. 8

1. Hard, dull reddish-brown, sandy, well-fired, close texture, very roughly incised before firing. Typologically not necessarily much later than no. 2, but the decoration shows how much the inferior technique of a careless or inexperienced potter might suggest advancing typological degeneration, especially on an isolated sherd.
2. Hard, leathery, dark grey-buff, not burnished but well finished, and thin-walled for its size. Situliform. Deeply incised 'pinpoint' decoration (pre-firing) varying a little and reverting to a plain chevron pattern. No white inlay. Four pierced lug-handles, rather irregularly spaced. For pendant stroke-filled triangles of this kind cp. Meon Hill, *Proc. Hants. F.C.*, XIII, pl. 25, esp. P.137 (incised in haematite after firing, with cordons); The Caburn, *Suss. Arch. Coll.*, LXXIX, 189, 6; and Wisley, *Ant. Journ.* IV, pl. XIX, k. For other stroke-filled triangles cp. Fyfield Bavant, *Wilts. Arch. Mag.*, XLII, pl. IV, 5 (incised in haematite after firing); Holwell, Herts., *Ant. Journ.*, XIV, 385, 3 (incised after firing); *All Cannings Cross*, pl. 34, 13, pl. 35, 6 and pl. 33, 4 (incised in haematite after firing, with cordons). Thus in Wessex and its cultural dependencies the motif seems to have remained popular well into the early part of the A2 phase. Cp. FIG. 11, nos. 11 and 17.
3. Hard, buff-pink, carefully fired, well-smoothed surface, elaborately decorated and far better finished than the other similar storage jar from Allen's Pit, *Ant. Journ.*, XV, 41, pl. VIII. Apparently there were six pairs of vesica-shaped dimples, equally spaced, well-formed and slightly countersunk. Though very distinctive, the feature is not easy to parallel closely, and seems more suited technically to metal than ceramic prototypes. The chevron pattern was lightly scratched with less care

<sup>1</sup> Near Letcombe Regis (Nunney hoard type); Wallingford, Standlake, Thame or Witney (Boduoc); Wallingford, Bourton, and nr. Roustage (Antedrigus); Churchill (Comux); Ducklington (Vocorio-ad). This takes no account of the many uninscribed issues in N. Oxfordshire and its borders whose re-analysis is long overdue.

<sup>2</sup> Wallingford (Icenic); W. Hagbourne (E. Counties type); Ipsden, Hinksey Hill, Marcham (Addedomaros).

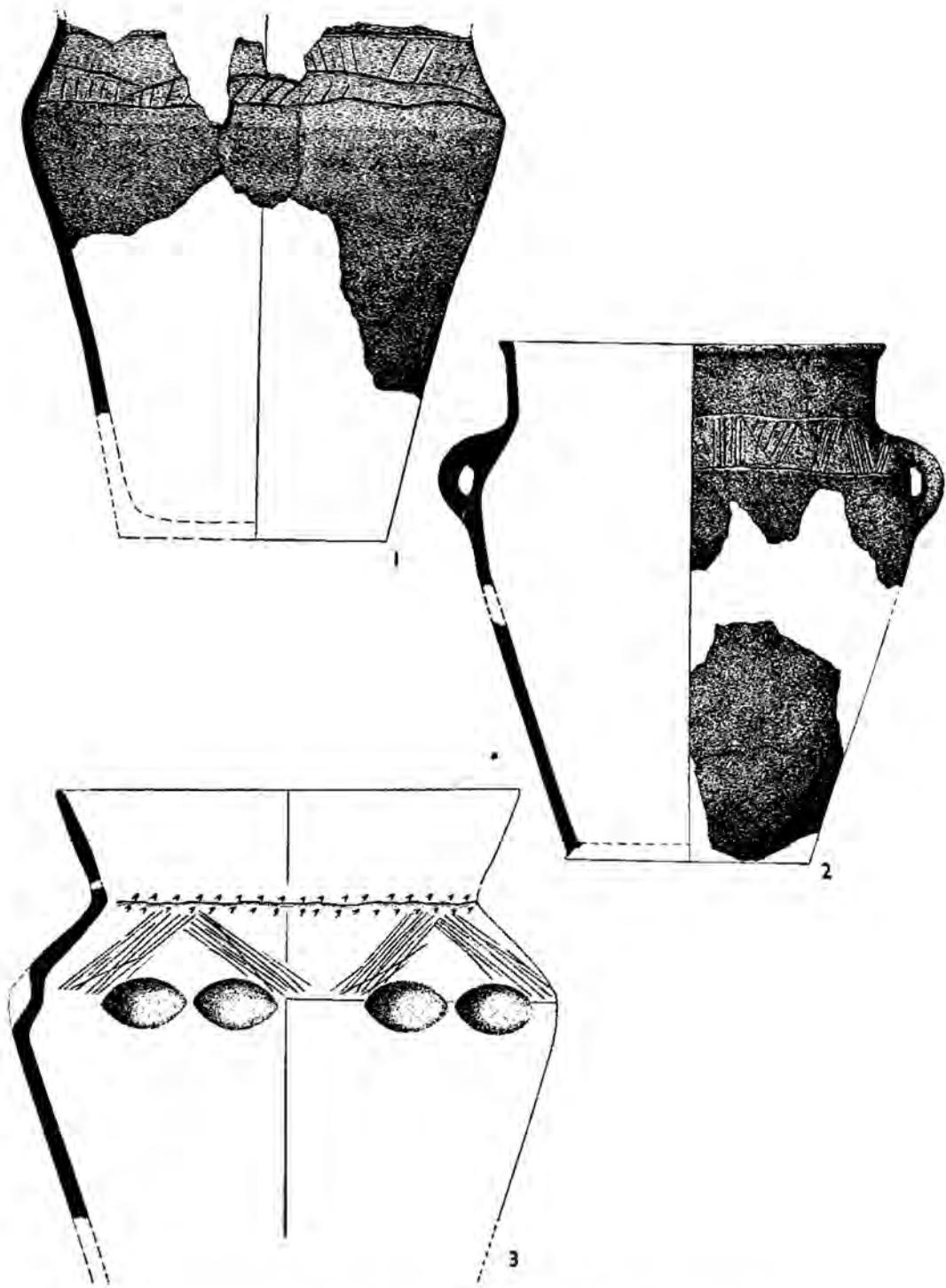


FIG. 8  
 THREE DECORATED SITULAE FROM ALLEN'S PIT, DORCHESTER.  
 Sc.  $\frac{1}{2}$

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before firing, but unlike the double row of triangular punch-marks in the neck (cp. *All Cannings Cross*, pl. 31, 3) has a suspicion of white filling. Several sherds with smaller circular dimples (not finger-printing) were also found, either derived and later formalised from the larger oval type, or parallel expressions of the same

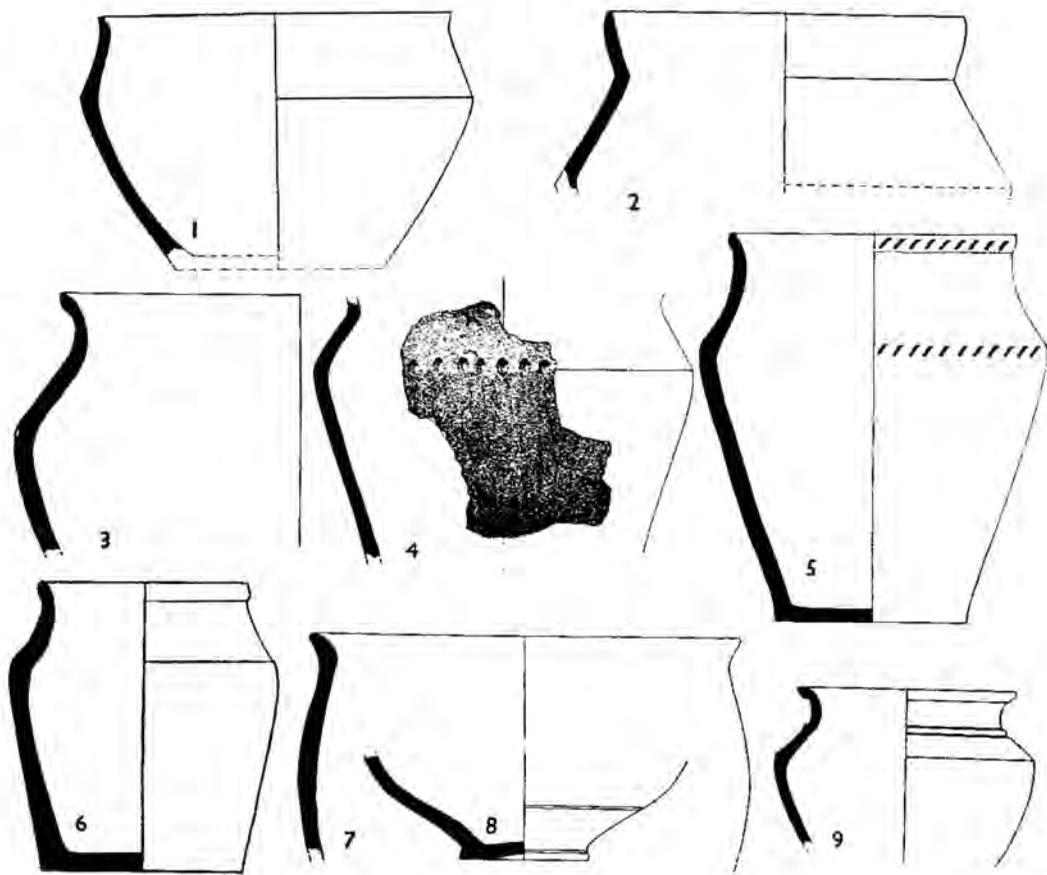


FIG. 9

IRON AGE POTTERY FROM ALLEN'S PIT, DORCHESTER. Sc.  $\frac{1}{4}$ .

mannerism. Two sherds from Mount Farm (*Oxoniensia*, II, fig. 7) with circular dimples above angular shoulders are probably analogous; cp. also diminutive examples from Long Wittenham (*op. cit.* p. 5, 16) Meon Hill (*Proc. Hants. F.C.*, XIII, 25, P358) and Stanton Harcourt (vesica-shaped).

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FIG. 9

1. Roughly smoothed, pale buff, angular shoulder, rim with internal bevel.
2. Smoothed, sandy, warm buff. Everted rim; general form approaching carinated situlas of Long Wittenham type.
3. Coarse, dirty grey-buff, with pounded shell, ? bowl or jar. External lip of rim everted and reinforced, cp. Ram's Hill, *Ant. Journ.*, xx, 474, 6 and 9. Light finger-tipping on shoulder.

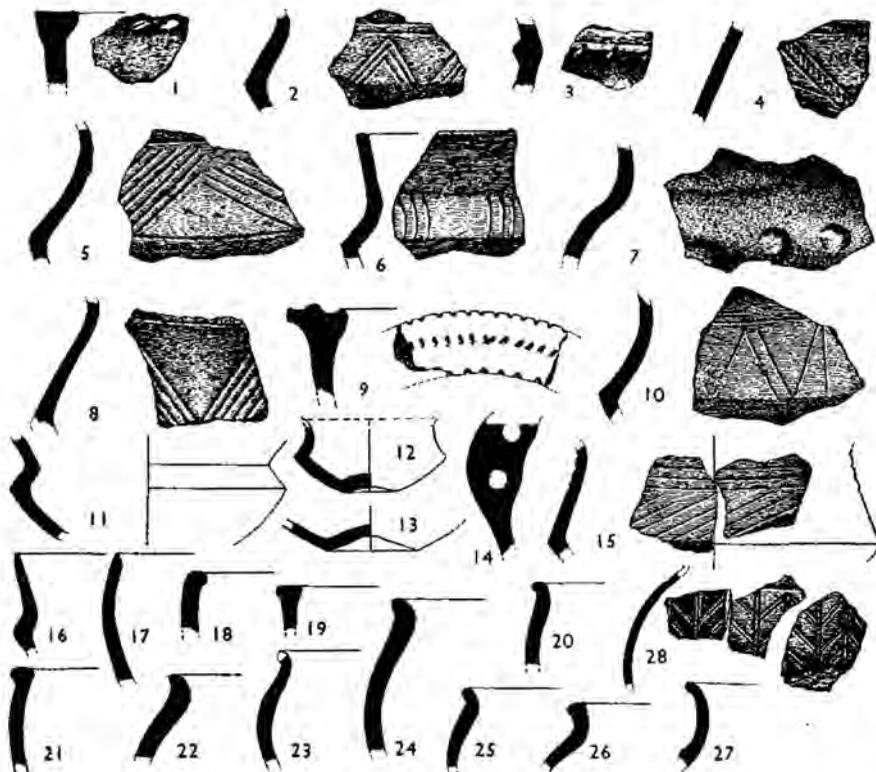


FIG. 10

### IRON AGE POTTERY FROM ALLEN'S PIT, DORCHESTER. Sc. $\frac{1}{2}$

4. Hard, sandy, dull reddish-brown, representing in fabric a large group of unpublished A sherds. Small neat finger-tipping on shoulder with a few roughly added vertically up to the neck, but without the finesse born from familiar practice.
5. Well-fired fabric, as above. Trimly-moulded rim with thickened lip (cp. nos. 3 and 6). Rectangular notches neatly applied obliquely. Composite section. Cp. *St. Catharine's Hill* 101, E.88, and nearer home, Chastleton, *Ant. Journ.*, xi, 395 WN 5.
6. Pale pink-buff, sandy, roughly brushed vertically. Reconstructed small squat jar of typical local A<sub>2</sub> type.

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7. Pink-brown, heavy, roughly burnished. Rim form (with bevel and inner swelling) exhibits modified AB influence.
8. Hard, heavy, sandy, dull grey-black, smoothed, well-finished, wheel-turned. Base of large vessel of Belgicised character; slight foot-ring emphasised by grooves.
9. Very thin, beautifully fired, jet black and highly burnished, soft, sandy fabric. Small bowl with vestigial cordon in neck and sharply carinated shoulder, of distinctively Belgic nature.

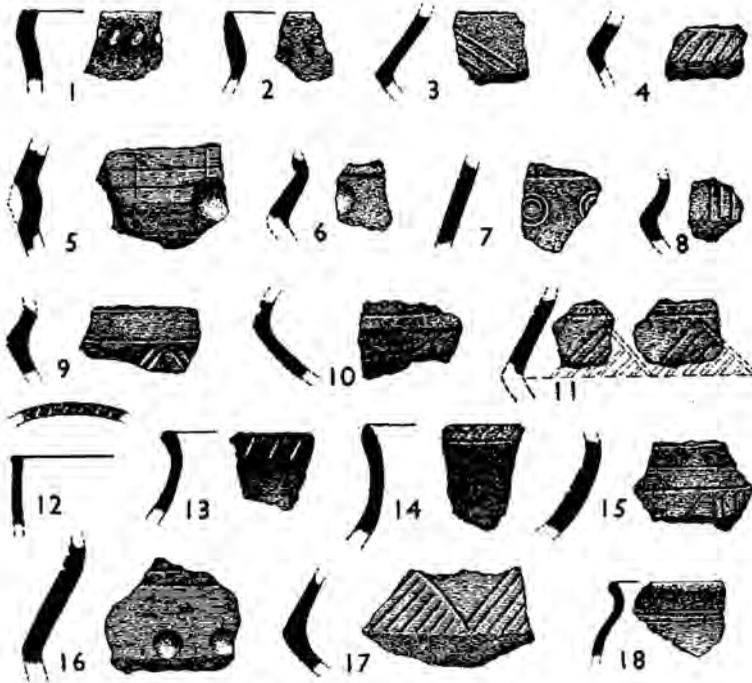


FIG. 11

IRON AGE POTTERY FROM ALLEN'S PIT, DORCHESTER. Sc.  $\frac{1}{2}$ .

FIG. 10

1. Coarse, pink-buff, with pounded shell. Oblique finger-printing on outer lip. Cp. parallel technique at *St. Catharine's Hill*, p. 101, A13, and *Liddington, Wilts. Arch. Mag.* xxxix, pl. II, 12.
2. Hard, heavy smoothed, dark chocolate fabric. Chevron pattern below neck grooves, sharply incised. Continuous multiple-line chevrons occur on numerous bowls from *All Cannings Cross*, pl. 28, etc.
3. Coarse, pale pink-buff, with pounded shell. Oblique stabs along applied band, a refinement of finger-tipping, for which see *Meon Hill, Proc. Hants. F.C.*, XIII, 24, P152.

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4. Hard, dark grey, sandy, well burnished. Sharply incised decoration.
5. Warm reddish, smoothed, sandy. Chevron design. Offset groove on carination.
6. Pale buff-brown, good burnish. Group of deep vertical strokes above angular shoulder. Form similar to Caburn, *Suss. Arch. Coll.*, LXXX, 225, 73.
7. Coarse, heavy, dull grey-buff, unusually large, single finger impressions.
8. Sandy, smoothed, evenly fired rich black, and burnished inside and out.
9. Hard, heavy, dull grey. Ornate expression of flat-topped rim-form of large cauldron with triple row of notches. Probably designed for a lid.
10. Dark brown-black, good burnish. Well-defined shoulder. Very lightly tooled decoration. Form perhaps as *All Cannings Cross*, pl. 31, 6.
11. Hard, smoothed, black, burnished inside and out. Sharply carinated shoulder.
12. Sandy, smoothed dull grey-black. Pygmy carinated bowl with omphaloid base.
13. Sandy, smoothed, dull black, well finished. Omphaloid base of medium-sized bowl.
14. Hard, dull black. Lug handle pierced twice horizontally, a rather unusual feature ; a trifle, but probably not significantly, countersunk.
15. Black, sandy, highly burnished inside and out. Sharply-carinated bowl with ornate tooled decoration.
16. Sandy, pale chestnut, burnished inside and out. A2 bowl with abbreviated, bulbous shoulder.
17. Coarse, dull grey, shelly. Small semi-globular basin. Cp. Lidbury, *Wilts. Arch. Mag.*, XI, pl. VII, 5 ; also Chadlington and Cassington, *Ant. Journ.*, XV, pl. V, 1, etc.
18. Hard, leathery, smoky-black. Flat-topped rim with inner lip ; a very common form on this and other sites in the A2 period, with several sub-varieties.
19. Fabric as above. Internal swelling and external lip. The completed form of these vessels is uncertain.
20. Fabric as above. More emphatic external lip. Modified 'saucepan', like The Caburn, *op. cit.*, p. 244, 67.
21. Smoothed, well burnished inside and out, jet black, well-finished. Rim of AB type, belonging to the series of small compact bowls and globular mugs familiar at Frilford and Cassington. Compare corresponding form from The Caburn, *op. cit.*, p. 244, 63.
22. Smoky-black, roughly smoothed. Internal thickening of rim, as is common with AB bowls. Compare 23-5 with the incipient bead-rims at Southcote, *Proc. Preh. Soc.*, III, 47, fig. 3, and especially Meon Hill, *Proc. Hants. F.C.*, XII, 148, p. 11.
23. Sandy, black, glossy burnished inside and out. Small AB basin with worn incipient bead-rim.
24. Sandy, black, burnished. Internal swelling emphasised behind incipient bead-rim (? AB or AC), approximates to Twyford Down, *Proc. Hants. F.C.*, XIII, 198, 3.
25. Smoothed, dark brown, burnished. (?) Table turned. Incipient bead-rim.
26. Well-fired, good chestnut burnish on exterior. Rim suggestive of derivative Belgic influence.
27. Hard, wheel-turned, pale brown, burnished, but pitted surface. Small cordon in neck.
28. Hard, wheel-turned, smoothed, dull reddish-brown, thin-walled, deeply incised. For decoration cp. May, *Silchester*, pl. LXX, 155 (also between girth-grooves and very similar in appearance) on a late and developed form of Belgic butt-beaker. An even closer parallel may be seen on a decorated sherd in Hambleton Museum

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from the pre-villa strata, in a typical polished, lamp-black Belgicised ware (not described in *Archaeologia*, LXXI, 181, with the other Belgic forms at that site). Among the Allen's Pit series it stands out as an obvious importation.

### FIG. 11

1. Coarse, hard, sandy, grey-black. Also another rim with finger-printing in this position, unillustrated. Closely paralleled by *St. Catharine's Hill*, 108, V1, and compare also Scarborough, *Arch.*, LXXVII, 190, fig. 52.
2. Hard, burnished, black. Trace of white filling in circlets. Wessex A motif, cp. Liddington, *Wilts. Arch. Mag.*, xxxix, pl. III, 22, or (N. of the Thames) Standlake, *Ant. Journ.*, xxii, 212, no. 1.
3. Hard, black, burnished. Small bowl, sharply carinated.
4. Leathery brown. Small bowl, form as nos. 8 and 9. Tooled decoration below neck groove.
5. Hard, black, smoothed, sandy. Large, but neat, circular dimple overlapping carination.
6. Dark brown, glossy burnish, with neat circular dimple below diminutive neck cordon.
7. Hard, black, glossy burnish. Row of concentric circles with white inlay below neck groove.
8. Leathery, dull reddish. Group of short vertical strokes. For decoration, cp. *St. Catharine's Hill*, p. 101, E119 and K4.
9. Leathery, dark brown. Small bowl with decoration *below* carination offset—a rather uncommon feature, but Meon Hill, *Proc. Hants. F.C.*, xiii, 25, P331, also shows it.
10. Smoothed, dull brown, sandy, with broad channelled line.
11. Brownish-black, burnished. Tooled stroke-filled triangles below neck grooves. For decoration, cp. *All Cannings Cross*, pl. 33, 4, with cordons and incised after firing; also FIG. 8, no. 2 *supra*, with references.
12. Hard, grey-black. Thin walled, small neat crescentic notches on rim, cp. *St. Catharine's Hill*, p. 101, E97.
13. Leathery, smoky-black. Rim of situliform vessel slashed obliquely on outer lip.
14. Fabric and form as above. Lightly brushed horizontally. Several others unillustrated.
15. Hard, heavy, sandy, reddish-brown, smoothed. Incised linear design. Form as FIG. 10, no. 10 *supra*.
16. Smoothed, sandy, reddish. Well formed circular dimples just above shoulder.
17. Smoothed, black, well burnished inside and out. Tooled stroke-filled triangles.
18. Smoothed, dull brown-black. (?) Table-turned. Pencilled lines in neck. Form shows AB influence.

### THE WORKED FLINTS<sup>1</sup>

These included (1) Scraper (fine work); (2) Scraper (rough); (3) Scraper (? reworked); (4) Saw (? compare with saws found at Radley Neolithic site); and (5) working rejects. They are certainly not earlier than Neolithic and from the fine workmanship of one piece probably not later, though these types were in use in the Bronze Age and into the Iron Age.

<sup>1</sup> For notes on the flints I am indebted to Sir Francis Knowles.

## AN EARLY IRON AGE SITE AT ALLEN'S PIT, DORCHESTER

### RELATED PROBLEMS OF SETTLEMENT AND SOCIAL ORGANISATION

Any analysis of such an incompletely excavated site must emphasise how much remains to be done in the reconstruction of the social and economic life of the Iron Age cultures in this region. This is evident, even when the data appear relatively plentiful and the deductions correspondingly more reliable. Thus, though the preference for the riverside gravel terraces seems consistent and unmistakable, this may be in reality over-accentuated in the pattern of settlement by (1) the relatively far more intensive modern commercial exploitation,<sup>1</sup> area for area, of the gravels than the oolites etc., and (2) by the fact that the number of known Iron Age sites tends to decline progressively *in all directions* as one passes out of the vicinity of Oxford, whence most field-work in this region is initiated.<sup>2</sup> The importance of the communities based on the gravel terraces is not underestimated, but the balance of the picture has not been maintained since the abundant material available within the scope of a few hours' field-work often intercepted much of the attention due to important areas beyond this range.

The interpretation of the distribution is made more perilous by certain artificially negative areas in which the existence of a group of occupation-sites, while as yet insufficiently confirmed, may reasonably be postulated. Though sometimes potentially attractive, their neutralisation may reflect a pure accident of modern topography (cp. Nuneham reach, enclosed in a modern park) but there are other areas of greater size and importance worthy of a more critical attention, for example :

(1) the gravel terraces below Dorchester, complementary to those higher up, though perhaps rather inferior in quality (and limited by the detritus deposited below the Chilterns) ;

(2) The area enclosed by the N. Oxfordshire Grim's Dyke which recent investigation (*Oxoniensia*, II, 74 ff.) has identified as an emergency linear earth-work associated with Belgicised pottery, and which not improbably contained a number of settlements, even though some were perhaps short-lived ;

<sup>1</sup> On the evidence of surface finds alone, some of our best known sites (e.g. Cassington) would probably remain undiscovered but for fortuitous gravel-digging. Air-photographs taken by Major Allen showed very extensive settlements (as yet undated) nr. Lew ;  $\frac{1}{2}$  m. W. of Clanfield ; at Zouch Farm, Culham and E. of Amey's pit, Long Wittenham, yet casual discoveries on these sites have been infinitesimal or non-existent. Prior to the publication of the small occupation site on Hinksey Hill by J. N. L. Myres in 1930, the only detailed account of the excavation of an E.I.A. settlement in this area was that by Stephen Stone of the Standlake site, more than 70 years before. Since the number of known sites has been almost quadrupled during the last decade, the instability of the present pattern of their distribution is patent.

<sup>2</sup> This is much less noticeable in the Roman period, where the material is less perishable more easily recognised and has long been recorded. If the new sites added in the last ten years are subtracted, the main features of R.-B. distribution remain unaffected, whereas that of the Iron Age would become meaningless. Accurate comparison and contrast of settlement effected in the Cotswolds and similar areas, during these two periods is thus at present impracticable.

(3) On a much larger scale we have to consider the almost complete absence of occupation-sites on the eastern flank of the Cotswolds, in comparison with the open 'villages' that congregate at the junctions of the Thames and its tributaries. While the importance of the jurassic zone as a corridor for cultural transit in the later Iron Age is well established, probably little or nothing was done in the A1 phase to adapt it for settlement, from a general disinclination to clearing the oolites of their natural woodland scrub. However, as an area of secondary settlement, sufficient infiltration had occurred during the A2 period to make possible the construction of a dozen or more hill-forts of simple 'A' type in the area between Banbury and Cirencester, presumably by valley dwellers in open 'villages,' who alone would have sufficient labour available. Of the nature or existence of independent upland homesteads almost nothing is known,<sup>1</sup> though storage pits excavated at Chadlington and Churchill may indicate possible examples. It is impossible, however, to proceed further with this *argumentum ex silentio*. The solution of the problem would have far-reaching consequences, not merely in determining the degree and manner of Iron Age settlement, but in helping to assess the economic resources inherited by the belt of fair-sized villas along the cornbrash and oolite (so distinctive a feature of the Roman period), which must have entailed greatly increased capital expenditure. At present we can scarcely even speculate how far an indigenous Iron Age peasantry was capable of supplying the labour pool required for them without being augmented from elsewhere, either by the surplus elements in the riverside villages or from still farther afield.

The absence of occupation-sites NE. of Oxford in the claylands is much more natural, for this forest land seems to have held little attraction for the non-Belgicised population. Whether ceramic influence of Belgic origin, clearly visible at Eynsham (Foxley Farm) and Yarnton (Sandy Lane), and perceptible at Mount Farm, Allen's Pit, Cassington<sup>2</sup> (*infra*, p. 107), and Hinksey Hill was exerted on any large scale from this direction is doubtful. Belgicised infiltration, which was probably accelerating on the eve of the Roman conquest, seems much more likely to have spread up the river. Penetration from the southern ('Bead-rim') Belgic area, across the Vale of White Horse at present seems to have been less effective, judging by the available ceramic and numismatic evidence. Only two new 'Bead-rims'<sup>3</sup> N. of the periphery of the Berkshire Downs have been

<sup>1</sup> Apart from a number of flights specifically directed to the Ditchley villa and its neighbourhood, Major Allen only rarely undertook aerial photographic reconnaissance in the Cotswolds.

<sup>2</sup> Belgicised pottery was found by the O.U.A.S. near the bottom of the large enclosure ditch at Cassington Mill, discovered by Major Allen. The formidable character of the ditch and the siting of the single narrow entrance identify it as a defensive earthwork, apparently built by the local open village(s) on the very eve of the Roman conquest of the region.

<sup>3</sup> Foxley Farm, Eynsham, June 1941, and Wood Eaton; these like Mr. W. F. Grimes' series from Stanton Harcourt may derive from either Belgic enclave.

## AN EARLY IRON AGE SITE AT ALLEN'S PIT, DORCHESTER

added to those noted in 1930 (*Arch. Journ.*, LXXXVII, 330, Swindon, Alfred's Castle and Lowbury Hill) and the only other one yet found on the N. bank of the Thames came from Hambleden, Bucks., (*Archaeologia*, LXXI, 181) well inside the middle Thames area. The evidence for a cleavage is reinforced by the obviously opposed monetary blocs of the Dobuni and Atrebates (Brooke, *Antiquity*, VII, 282-3). On the other hand the prolific SE. Belgic coin series, especially of Cunobeline, in and around Wallingford (*Berks. A. J.*, XLII, 75 ff. and XLIII, 38 ff.) indicates the successful extension of a sphere of influence from that direction, based on the Goring gap, the gateway to the Lower Thames, astride the junction of the Icknield Way and the N. Berks. ridgeway and a recognised point of natural strategical importance in later periods. The original distribution map of the extent of Iron Age C culture (*Antiquity*, v, 91) shows a well-defined non-Belgic salient in the upper Thames valley, but the pottery and coin evidence now seems to suggest that some modifications are desirable.<sup>1</sup> It is improbable that the fruitful area of the upper Thames valley was really disregarded, for neither of the Belgic groups usually neglected opportunities for economic or territorial expansion. This might either occasion a constant state of friction, as on the Icenic border, or else prompt destructive raiding, as in Somerset just before the Roman conquest, but there is no proof as yet of anything but peaceful infiltration in the Oxford basin.<sup>2</sup> Yet while it remains no exaggeration to say<sup>3</sup> that 'some degree of uncertainty surrounds the behaviour of the Dobuni,' their attitude probably inclined to an anti-Belgic bias. It is not without significance that it was not to them, as neighbours, that Caratacus fled for support, but to the Silures.

This situation would make more comprehensible the course of the Belgicised track which, it has been suggested, may perhaps have blazed a trail for part of the course followed by the later Roman advance up Akeman Street. If Belgicised penetration on these lines did take place, this trackway could originally

<sup>1</sup> In our area, no SE. pedestal urns have yet been found W. of the Chiltern escarpment. In *Ant. Journ.*, xv, 40 it was suggested that 'the rarity of Belgic wares' was 'particularly noticeable,' but two probable importations were noted, and to these should be added FIG. 9, 9 and FIG. 10, 28. Such pottery types of Belgic extraction are now being identified in this area in increasing numbers, but without the critical data from the excavation of the rest of the enclosure at Allen's Pit we cannot estimate the degree of Belgicisation—such Belgicisation not of course implying any substantial influx of actual settlers—on what would be a very suitable test site.

<sup>2</sup> The available coin evidence in fact suggests a good measure of economic penetration within the Oxford basin itself. Individual find-spots include: *Tasciovanus*, Goring, Dorchester, Wallingford, Marcham and near Wantage; *Cunobeline* (1) Wallingford, Brightwell, Aston Rowant, N. Stoke; (2) along the E. bank of the Thames, Dorchester, Overy, Garsington, Beckley, Wood Eaton; (3) into the Vale of the White Horse: Wantage, Abingdon, Hanney, Garford and near Cherbury camp; with a stray at Asthall Leigh, near Burford. The situation remains obscure numismatically in N. Oxon. and on the E. flank of the Cotswolds, though not from lack of material.

<sup>3</sup> Dunning & Hawkes, *Arch. Journ.*, LXXXVII, 316.

hardly be other than a route of semi-hostile incursion, since it apparently skirts the important concentration of Iron Age AB population on the gravels, which for purely commercial contacts it might be expected to seek out.

Not only the number, but the nature, of the occupation-sites needs elucidation. All serious estimates of population break down in the absence of any single 'village' site, large or small, in this area which has yet been completely explored. Calculations based on the number and character of huts and other structures could then be usefully compared with the approximate total of pottery vessels in use throughout a defined period. Practically nothing is reliably known of the number<sup>1</sup> of domestic pots or storage pits needed by a small Iron Age household or community on these gravel terraces.

Is it, indeed, accurate to speak of 'villages' (or preferably 'hamlets') along the river, as in the Frilford report (*Oxoniensia*, IV, 5, 57)? Cassington, Eynsham (Foxley Farm), Stanton Harcourt and Standlake can all show extensive 'occupation areas' which would appear to merit the title—and so, probably, do the smaller ones of Frilford type<sup>2</sup> (though the fluctuations in the number of their families might make this more doubtful), but at what point these merge into individual 'homesteads' with accessory outbuildings remains undecided.<sup>3</sup>

The social aggregate (we do not yet know its status—though at some stage it became a communal stronghold) best suited to reveal any deliberate internal planning would appear to be the settlement within Dyke Hills, Dorchester. Air-photographs taken by Major Allen show an occupation of some intensity, though this might possibly be exaggerated by a temporary influx of refugees from the open villages during a crisis (cp. *Oxoniensia*, III, pl. XVIII, which is also very effectively reproduced in *Luftbild und Vorgeschichte*, p. 46). One characteristic and uniform structural feature can, however, be detected; namely, the circular or semi-circular ditched enclosures, well over 50 of which are visible from the air inside the western half alone. These ditches are generally interrupted (thus essentially differing from ring-ditches) on the side orientated towards the entrance, and presumably (*solvitur excavando*) they are to be identified as hut-sites for the most part.

<sup>1</sup> The average length of life of E.I.A. pots of fine or coarse ware and the functions for which specialised forms were fitted are admittedly difficult problems but are rarely sufficiently discussed.

<sup>2</sup> Although it was quite obvious that the excavation of the whole of the E.I.A. settlement area at Frilford was desirable this was not practicable at the time. There is little doubt that a number of other hut-sites await future investigation.

<sup>3</sup> The tangible apparatus of occupation, e.g. customary ornaments and tools, silage pits, daub from ovens, and huts, hearth-debris, 'loom-weights,' post holes of surface granaries, etc., are shared so much in common by contemporary farms and 'hamlets' at parallel but basically similar stages of economic evolution, that there may be some danger of precipitate distinctions between half-excavated sites.

## AN EARLY IRON AGE SITE AT ALLEN'S PIT, DORCHESTER

A single large, roughly rectangular enclosure, with a broad, well-defined ditch appears to dominate the whole group but the nature of their social and chronological relationship also awaits the test of excavation. The site possesses many individual features, not the least of which is the uniquely broad, flat-bottomed ditch between the two massive ramparts on the landward side, whose construction on level ground must have necessitated a plentiful labour force. The abnormal form of the ditch strongly suggests that a wet moat was utilized in the defences, as in the subsequent Romano-British town (see Hogg and Stevens, *Oxoniensia*, II, 45 ff.), since, with the removal of more recent silt, an inflow from the Thames, at its modern level, would seem to be assured. Incidentally its excavation could probably establish, with the aid of soil and ecological analysis, a useful estimate of the height of the river level in this area during the Iron Age, about which little is known with certainty.

Hampered by so many unknown quantities, the need for qualified statement has almost brought the expansion of knowledge of this period to a standstill throughout the region, and this impasse cannot be solved by casual discovery and occasional salvage. On the other hand, the complete examination of one representative 'hamlet' site could revolutionize the standards of precision we usually apply not only to the economics and structure of Iron Age society in the upper Thames valley, but consequently to our interpretations of the Romano-British culture superimposed upon it. Post-war archaeology in Oxford will inherit this as one of its most urgent obligations.

### APPENDIX

#### NOTES ON UNPUBLISHED EARLY IRON AGE POTTERY FROM THE OXFORD DISTRICT

Through the kindness of the Keeper of the Ashmolean Museum and others, it is possible to add supplementary material from a number of sites, to complete the review of unpublished E.I.A. pottery from the upper Thames Valley; excluding only the pottery from E. and W. Cassington which is of such uniform character that it has been reserved for fuller analysis as a local type-series of the Iron Age AB culture.

With the exception of no. 61 (FIG. 13) which is in the British Museum, all the pottery illustrated is in the Ashmolean. It has not been thought necessary to describe every sherd in detail or give exhaustive references for the more familiar forms, though they are included to show the general character of the different series. It should also be observed that:—

- (1) Several sites (*e.g.*, Adwell Cop, Bourton-on-the-Water, etc.), lie outside the Oxford area, strictly speaking, but have been added because of the scarcity of published material in their neighbourhood.

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- (2) A certain proportion of the border-line sherds of Belgicised character (Foxley Farm, site B; Sandy Lane, Yarnton, and Blackthorn Hill) may perhaps ultimately prove to be survivals of an immediately post-conquest date; but if published now, they can later be correlated with parallel forms in stratified deposits. Belgicised wares from Abingdon and Benson, whose post-conquest origin is even more certain, have been excluded.
- (3) There are several notable sites whence we have good evidence for Iron Age occupation, but which are not yet represented by pottery, for example, Wallingford, Swalcliffe and Beckley, while others are only known by a single sherd or two that has survived.
- (4) To avoid repetition, full references to the coins, fibulae and other objects from these sites have been omitted. They are, however, indexed in *V.C.H. Oxon.*, 1, 262 and Peake, *Arch. of Berkshire*, and must be considered in conjunction with the pottery evidence.

### EYNESHAM (FOXLEY FARM), OXON.

*Site A* (FIG. 12). A settlement of fair size, see *Oxoniensia*, VI, 85 and fig. 13.

This small series begins with A2 forms, which include rims of carinated bowls (1, 2). There are traces of white inlay in the motif incised on the latter, whose form and decoration invites comparison with Woodeaton 14, below. A slack-shouldered jar (3) shows a remote inheritance of situla form. Note the 'set' (4, 5, 6) of almost uniform large storage jars (coarse reddish ware) from the filling of the same pit. Such heavy rims are common in an A2 context.

Several simple AB types can be identified, *i.e.*, a rough, incipient bead-rim (7) and a heavy, internally-thickened rim (10), both in dark unburnished ware; together with another form (8) commonly in an AB association (cp. Frilford, *Oxoniensia* IV, fig. 6, 44). A more distinctive type fossil is the base (9) of an AB bowl in well-burnished black ware, with two tooled circumferential lines (cp. Mount Farm, Frilford and Cassington), and with a suggestion of further, more unorthodox ornamentation on the base itself. No Iron Age AC and no R.-B. sherds were observed.

*Site B* (FIG. 12). By contrast, another group of storage pits about 440 yards away (see *Oxoniensia*, VI, fig. 13, K.K.) contained Iron Age AC ('Belgicised') sherds exclusively. These were all wheel-turned. It was difficult to determine whether they were in whole, or in part, of pre-conquest date. Some, *e.g.*, the simple bead-rim bowl (12) and jar (19)<sup>1</sup> in a tall, black, leathery fabric, and no. 13 with its feeble carination and stunted rim are more post-conquest in quality. The Belgic forms with the highest capacity for survival in this area seem to be the well-finished black-burnished bowls (16, 17, 18) retaining small neck-cordons and grooves. No. 11 (? bowl or beaker) is fired pale buff and is also highly burnished. The tazza (14) with its very angular shoulder and flaring rim, fired a characteristic buff-brown, has a freshly Belgicised appearance. The majority of the bases possessed a small foot-ring, like no. 20.

### WYTHAM, BERKS. (FIG. 12).

Most of these sherds<sup>2</sup> were recovered by Rolleston and others from 1870 onwards in the vicinity of Northfield Farm, below Wytham Hill. The site lies close to the

<sup>1</sup> Compare Grim's Dyke, *Oxoniensia* II, 86, no. 13.

<sup>2</sup> Rolleston, *Scientific Papers and Addresses*, II, 940: 'Very coarse British, . . . angular . . . with Vandyck [chevron] figuring. Much Roman pottery.'

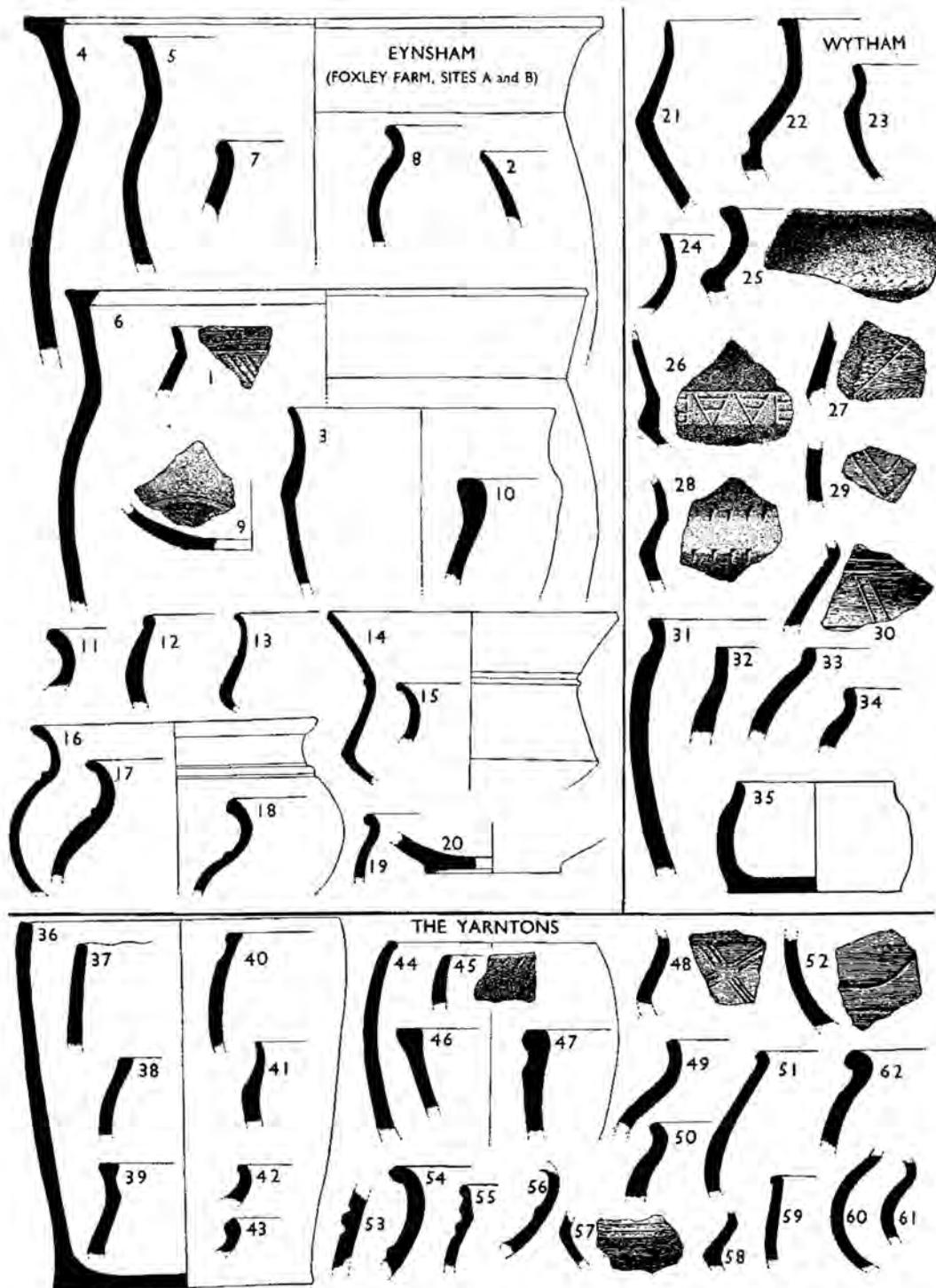


FIG. 12

IRON AGE POTTERY FROM EYNESHAM, WYTHAM (BERKS.) AND YARNTON  
now in the Ashmolean Museum. Sc.  $\frac{1}{4}$ .

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Thames, on the gravel terrace, at a point where crop-marks appear on several of the late Major Allen's air-photographs.

As at Yarnton the survival of Late Bronze Age fabrics (very light and corky, with crushed flint in the paste) into the Iron Age seems to be most marked. This series begins with forms of early A2 type, *i.e.*, situlas, with finger-printing (22), raised bands<sup>1</sup> with notched ornament (25) and deep triangular stabs (28) and carinated bowls, highly burnished with deeply incised decoration (30), or plain (21, 23). The punch-marks with white inlay in lozenges (27, note herring-bone motif) and chevrons, exemplify a popular Wessex-A practice. Two small A2 jars (one with finger-tipped rim) were illustrated by Leeds in *Antiq. Journ.*, xv, pl. iv, 3. The little cup (35) has a good parallel at Hunsbury; later sherds (33, 34) exhibit a much modified AB character.

### YARNTON, OXON. (FIG. 12)

Discoveries on the gravel terrace here have been varied and intermittent and the exact location of the occupation-sites is now not always easy to determine.

(1) The first was discovered in 1854 in a field of the Manor farm, called the Park (between Yarnton church and station) in which lay a ballast-pit. Boyd Dawkins relates that there was 'a considerable quantity of urns and human remains' (*Proc. O.A. and H.S.*, I, III) but 'all scattered save one.' This is our FIG. 12, 36, said to have had a smaller pot inside, but with no traces of ash. Its coarse gritty fabric and form are paralleled at Radley, *Antiq. Journ.*, xv, pl. vii, 3a.

(2) Sherds were collected by Boyd Dawkins in 1861 on the SW. side of the cutting on the Witney line,  $\frac{1}{4}$  mile W. of Yarnton station, from storage-pits which greatly increased in number towards the W. end of the cutting. Iron Age A2 pottery was plentiful and included FIG. 12, 48; the decoration recalls Mount Farm, *Oxoniensia*, II, 31, A.I. 12. Bases ornamented with finger-tipping were found by James Parker (Manning MSS.). Other A2 sherds were recovered at a later date by Manning on the NW. side of the cutting.

(3) In 1875-6, Rolleston re-examined the old quarry of 1854, and excavated two probable ring-ditches and a number of contracted burials, near one of which was found the well-known Iron Age sherd with South-western-B decoration (*B.M.* no. 1876.8.2.1; *B.M. Iron Age guide*, fig. 183). These discoveries were made near the edge of the gravel-pit about 860 ft. SW. from the SW. angle of the church tower (see plan in Dryden MSS., Northampton Museum).

(4) The great majority of the forms illustrated were salvaged in recent years from storage-pits, full of hearth debris, in Sandy Lane gravel-pit, near the railway crossing, about 1 mile N. of the village. This series demonstrates the characterless level to which Iron Age pottery in this area could ultimately sink. Linear ornament of A type was forgotten and Iron Age AB curvilinear motifs had made a very limited impression (52, with simple swag). Belgicised influence is most perceptible (53-56 etc.), though the forms are simplified and continue to persist during the gradual arrival of R.-B. forms in this tiny rural community.

<sup>1</sup>The form and decoration is closely paralleled at Lidbury, *Wilt. Arch. Mag.*, XI, pl. VIII, no. 3.

## AN EARLY IRON AGE SITE AT ALLEN'S PIT, DORCHESTER

STANTON HARCOURT, OXON. (FIG. 13)

Sherds salvaged from storage-pits in Linch Hill gravel-pit by E. T. Leeds and R. T. Lattey in 1936. Though only a small series, it probably represents a settlement-site of some size, which seems to have had a continuous run of occupation through the A2, AB and AC culture phases—with a ceramic range equivalent to Woodeaton (*v. infra*). It is only one of a number of similar sites on the gravel terraces in the salient formed between the Windrush and Thames.

The shouldered bowl, with lipped rim (buff-pink, with admixture of pounded shell) recalls Allen's Pit (FIG. 9, 3) and Frilford, *Oxoniensia* IV, fig. 6, 24. The rim of no. 5 is also decorated with finger-tipping; on no. 3 this is combined with short deep vertical jabs like Wytham 28. There are a number of carinated bowl-forms (4, 6, 7), some (*e.g.*, 7) being diminutive and noticeably thin-walled. The tiny well-formed vesica-shaped dimples on 4 are not to be confused with finger-tipping; see p. 44 above and FIG. 8, 3. No. 8 lacks the earlier A2 angularity; compare Wytham 23, at a similar stage of devolution. Still later, familiar, transitional A2-AB forms make their appearance, *e.g.*, 9, 10 (compare Hatford, *infra*, 56, 54). The base with the moulded foot (hard, burnished buff) seems deliberately fashioned, possibly through indirect Belgic influence.

WOODEATON, OXON. (FIG. 13)

The important Iron Age occupation-site which lies S. and SW. of the copse on the boundary between Middle and South Hills has yielded many surface finds of coins, fibulae and pottery. These were only very briefly discussed in *V.C.H. Oxon.*, I, 259, while the subsequent Romano-British material has received much fuller treatment (*ibid.*, 299 and *J.R.S.* VII, 98). The site is one of the most interesting in the upper Thames valley, and I have little doubt that it inherited the character of a ritual site or local mart from the pre-conquest era. There was already good reason<sup>1</sup> for supposing that the life of the Iron Age settlement extended over several centuries before romanisation, and this is reinforced by the corresponding pottery evidence, while the AB and AC types, which follow the abundant early A2 sherds, suggest that occupation was continuous.

The present series seems to cover much the same period as that from Linch Hill (*v. supra*), beginning with early A2 carinated bowls<sup>2</sup> with angular shoulders, mostly unburnished, and none with haematite coating. Modified Wessex-A motifs inspired the decoration, *e.g.*, the stroke-filled triangles on 14 (dull buff-pink); the rudely scratched chevrons (20); the tooled lines on 16 (black, burnished) and the incised herring-bone pattern (25), arranged chevron-wise (compare *All Cannings Cross*, pl. 48, 1). There is no white inlay in the circular punch-marks on 24. The slashed rim (17) and finger-nail ornament (23) have numerous parallels on contemporary sites.

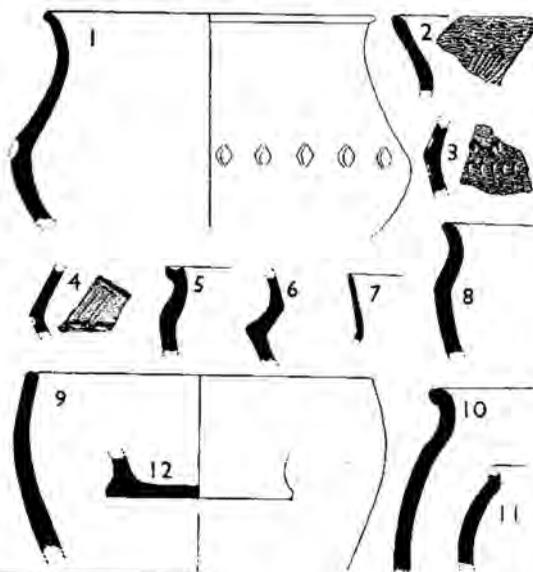
There are several roughly smoothed bead-rims (26, 28) which we have now learnt to expect in this area, while the ornament on the handle (not countersunk) of the mug (28) and the twin grooves<sup>3</sup> below the rim of 29 (speckled, dull pink ware) are also mainly indicative of AB influence. The well-marked bead rim of 30 (probably wheel-turned, sandy, black burnish) may, however, owe more to Belgic prototypes, while the crude hand-made cordons of 30 strive to imitate those of an Iron Age C 'butt-beaker.'

<sup>1</sup> *I.e.*, the swan-necked and ring-headed pins, besides La Tène I-II fibulae (*J.R.S.*, VII, 112), and an extensive coin-series.

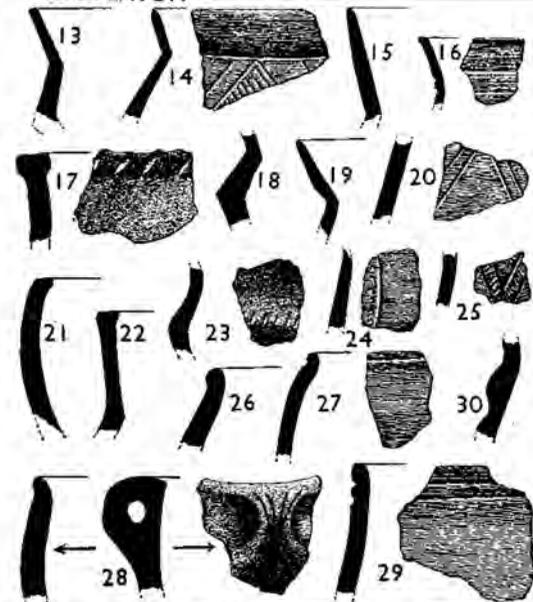
<sup>2</sup> The small carinated bowl with incised ornament, listed under Wytham, FIG. 12, 26, should, in fact, be assigned to Woodeaton. The stroke-filled rectangles are an unusual variation on the chevron theme.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. Selsey Bill, *Antiq. Journ.*, XIV, 45, no. 3, and The Caburn, *Sussex Arch. Coll.*, LXVIII, pl. XII, no. 84.

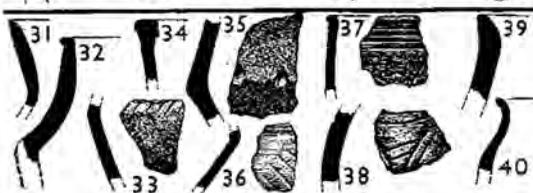
## STANTON HARCOURT



## WOODEATON



## ADWELL COP



## MISCELLANEOUS

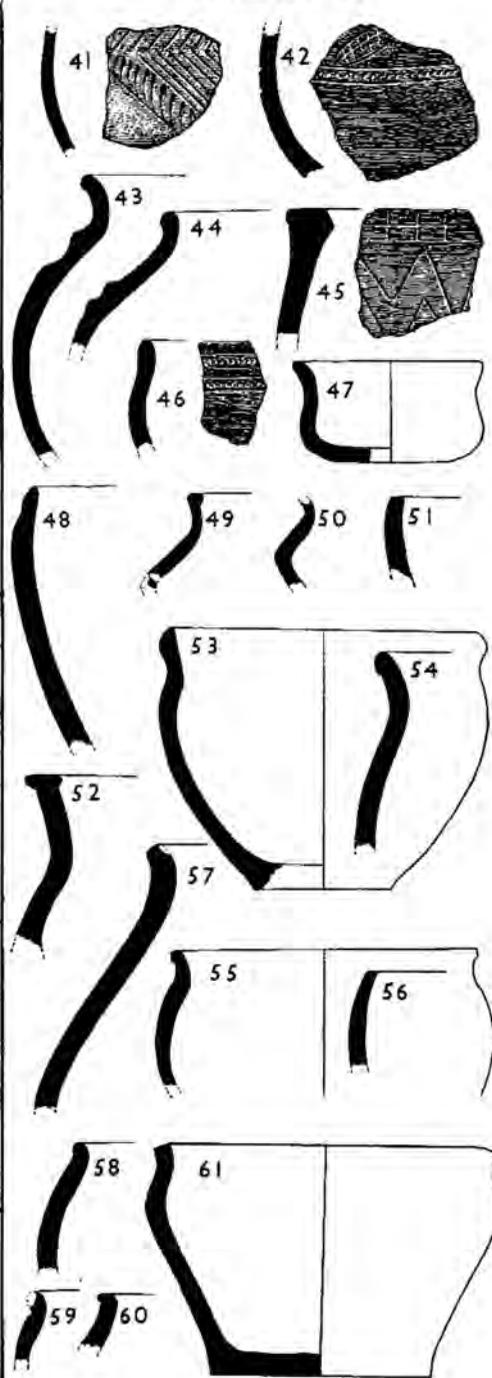


FIG. 13

IRON AGE POTTERY FROM STANTON HARCOURT, WOODEATON, ADWELL COP AND OTHER LOCAL SITES.

Nos. 1-60, are now in the Ashmolean Museum; no. 61 is in the British Museum. Sc.  $\frac{1}{4}$ .

## AN EARLY IRON AGE SITE AT ALLEN'S PIT, DORCHESTER

ADWELL COP, OXON. (FIG. 13)

A small detached hillock, about midway between Tetsworth and Lewknor, some  $1\frac{1}{2}$  miles from the foot of the Chiltern escarpment. These sherds are surface finds<sup>1</sup> and were very kindly placed at my disposal by Mr. J. F. Head, who has now given them to the Ashmolean Museum. All too little Iron Age material is available from this section of the Icknield Way route.

Iron Age A2 wares preponderate: they include bowl-forms, e.g. 36 and 38 (black burnished with decoration incised *after* firing); also situliform vessels like 32, 33, 35, decorated on their still fairly angular shoulders with finger-ornament. No. 37 is a Wessex-A type in a thin, dark, burnished ware with a slightly lipped rim. The punch-marks combined with pendent triangles match a motif at All Cannings Cross (*A.C.C.*, pl. 32, 3) and the rather unusual form is also paralleled there (*ibid.*, pl. 31, 7). The tooled geometrical pattern on the body of 38 (pale brown, burnished) might be of either late A2 or AB character, but no. 39 (with typical inner level), and no. 40 (burnished on both surfaces) undoubtedly reflect the latter influence. No distinctively Belgicised or Romano-British sherds have as yet been found.

OTHER SITES (FIG. 13)

41. *Alchester, Oxon.* Sherd marked '7.4.1892,' from the area excavated by Manning and Myres (see plan, *V.C.H. Oxon.*, I, 282). Thin, hard, dark grey, smooth ware. The 'dragged' impressions in the diagonal band are close to a late A2 sherd from Standlake, *Antiq. Journ.*, XXII, 210, no. 5, in technical execution, but here the design has an archaistic quality, and is doubtless a post-conquest survival (but compare Wisley, *Antiq. Journ.*, IV, fig. 19).

42. *Appleford, Berks.* Sherd marked 'bought at sale of Jesse King,' and assumed to be of local origin. Warm brown, smoothed fabric, (?) table-turned. The only example of true cross-hatched SW. ('Glastonbury') B ornament from this area. Its position on Ward Perkins's distribution map of this characteristic decoration is distinctly isolated (*Proc. Prehist. Soc.*, 1938, 153), but taking into account other SW.-B motifs identified in this area, is not entirely anachronistic.

43-4. *Bicester (Blackthorn Hill), Oxon.* Sherds from a quarry on Akeman Street (*B.B.O.J.*, IV, 11). Rather leathery, greyish-black, wheel-turned fabrics. The cordoned forms indicate fairly recent Belgicisation, but may prove to be survivals into the post-conquest period.

45. *Bourton-on-the-Water, Glos.* Sherd from 'Bury Banks.' Hard, heavy, purplish-grey ware. Similar zones of incised chevrons may be seen on sherds from Standlake, *Antiq. Journ.*, XXII, 210, no. 6, and *All Cannings Cross*, pl. 36, 1; the rectilinear panels are more unusual (but cf. *A.C.C.*, pl. 33, 7, and Meon Hill, *Proc. Hants. Field Club*, XIII, 28, p. 193).

46. *Bampton (Calais Farm), Oxon.* Sherd from a gravel-pit in a field called 'The Pieces,' whence came the well-known carinated bowl with white-inlaid punch-marks (*V.C.H. Oxon.*, I, pl. XI, a); see *B.B.O.J.*, IV, 11, and *Antiquary*, XXIII, 155. This is a rim of a typical local AB bowl, in black, burnished hand-made ware, with crescentic stamp-impressions executed precisely as at Cassington and Frilford. The site was evidently of some importance. Worked bones, two fragments of querns,

<sup>1</sup> 'Urn near Windmill on Adwell Cop': Manning, quoting Delafield, *B.B.O.J.*, IV, 10.

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a quantity of burnt daub and 'iron slag' (see Manning MSS.) were found in the fillings of the storage-pits: Romano-British wares (including 'Samian') were found, suggesting possible continuity of occupation.

47. *Bullington Green, Oxon.* Found in 1886. Rather coarse greasy black fabric. This little cup is more probably Saxon.

48. *Chadlington, Oxon.* From Catsham Lane gravel-pit, *Antiq. Journ.*, xv, 31. Hard, corky, buff ware; small basin with rim just delineated by thumbing, as often found on A2-AB sites.

49. *Culham, Oxon.* Found 'In a field, nr. Culham Station, 1875.' Very hard, smooth, dark brown ware; carinated situla. For the form, cp. Standlake, *Antiq. Journ.*, xxii, 212. This may come from the crop-mark sites at Zouch Farm or Fullamoor Farm not far away.

50, 51. *Cassington (Purwell Farm), Oxon.* An occupation site of some size was almost destroyed by gravel-digging in 1941-2 on the summit of the ridge overlooking the Evenlode (see p. 64). A few A2 forms were found in the filling of storage-pits.

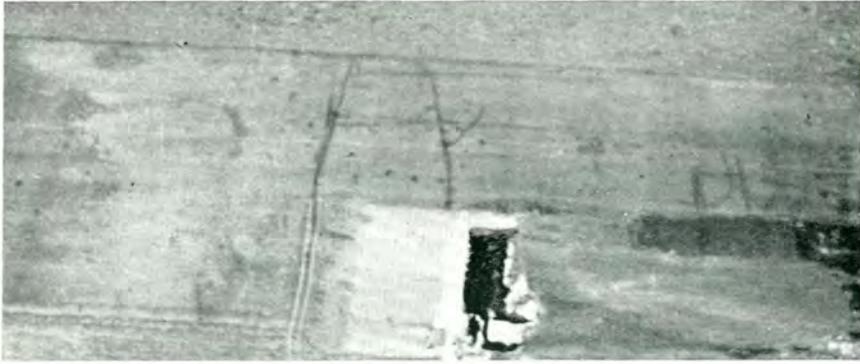
52-56. *Hatford, Berks.* An important Iron Age late A2-AB site (see *Oxoniensia*, iv, 196; v, 162; vi, 88). No. 55 is roughly, and no. 53 is evenly, burnished. Almost all the forms so far recovered are paralleled at the contemporary sites at Frilford and Cassington.

57. *Long Wittenham (Wittenham Court, 1939), Berks.* Smoothly burnished, unevenly fired, unusually globular form, of AB character.

58. *Minster Lovell, Oxon.* Smooth, brown, incipient bead-rim AB bowl form with 'soapy' feel. Find-spot not known.

59, 60. *Oxford (Crick Road).* See *Oxoniensia*, iii, 164; collected by Mr. R. T. Lattey. No. 59 is undoubtedly an incipient bead-rim of AB form; it is emphasised by a tooled line, and was originally burnished.

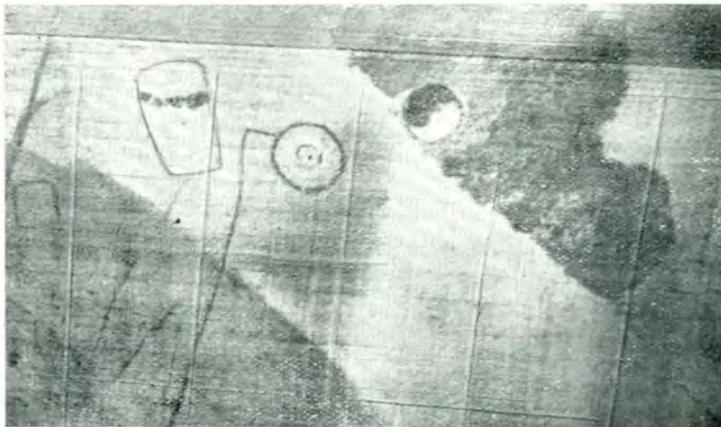
61. *Tubney, Berks.* Sherd bought at Austin sale and now in British Museum; from a drawing in the Manning MSS. Small squat late A2 bowl.



A



B



C

DORCHESTER, OXON.

- A. Air view of the D-shaped Iron Age enclosure at Allen's Pit, June, 1933, from W. (p. 36).  
B. Section through the ditch (p. 36 and A'A on plan, FIG. 7).  
C. Air view of Overy field showing D-shaped and square enclosures, etc. (p. 38).

*Plhb. the late Major G. W. G. Allen*