



INDEX DATA	RPS INFORMATION
Scheme Title Bobbung, Kent	Details Romano-British Cremation Discovered
Road Number	Date
Contractor ^{SOUTH EASTERN} Archaeological Services	
County Kent	
OS Reference TQ 86	
Single sided <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Double sided <input type="checkbox"/> A3 <input type="radio"/> Colour <input type="radio"/>	

**A ROMANO-BRITISH CREMATION
DISCOVERED AT BOBBING, KENT**

(N.G.R. TQ 889 650)

Project No. 1994/65

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with contributions by

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South Eastern Archaeological Services

South Eastern Archaeological Services (SEAS) is a division of the Field Archaeology Unit, University College London, one of the largest groupings of academic archaeologists in the country. Consequently, SEAS has access to the conservation, computing and environmental backup of the college as well as a range of other archaeological services.

The Field Archaeology Unit and SEAS were established in 1974 and 1991 respectively. Although field projects have been conducted world-wide, FAU/SEAS retain a special interest in south-east England with the majority of our contract and consultancy work concentrated in Sussex, Kent, Greater London and Essex.

Based in the local community, the Field Archaeology Unit sees an important part of its work as explaining the results to the broader public. Public lectures, open days, training courses and liaison with local archaeological societies are aspects of its community-based approach.

Drawing on experience of the countryside and towns of the south east of England the Unit can give advice and carry out surveys at an early stage in the planning process. By working closely with developers and planning authorities it is possible to incorporate archaeological work into developments with little inconvenience. The Unit employs on its staff officers who have previously worked within local government and have experience of archaeology and the planning process, including public inquiry.

Field, desk top and consultancy projects have been undertaken for a wide range of clients, including water and gas utilities, The Department of Transport, major private construction companies, local authorities, English Heritage and a range of other private and public concerns.

CONTENTS

	Page
1. Introduction	1
2. Results	1
3. The Pottery	2
4. The Cremated Remains	2
5. Conclusions	3
6. Acknowledgement	4
7. Reference	4

Illustrations

Fig 1. Location of cremation.

Fig 2. Area of excavation.

Fig 3. Vessel No. 1.

Fig 4. Vessel No. 2.

Fig 5. Vessel No. 3.

Fig 6. Vessel No. 4.

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 South Eastern Archaeological Services (a division of University College London) was informed on the 29th December 1994 that a Romano-British cremation had been discovered on the line of the new A249 Iwade Improvement Scheme. This information was supplied by Dr. Robert Baxter, the Chairman of Sittingbourne Archaeology Group.
- 1.2 The site is located to the north-east of the proposed Bobbing Roundabout at approximate chainage 1250.00. (N.G.R. TQ 889 650). The position of the cremation is marked with a star in Figure 1 (taken from a 1:2500 map extract titled 'Site Plan 2, Junction at Bobbing').

- 1.3 A field officer from South Eastern Archaeological Services visited the site on the 30th December 1994 and confirmed the presence of Romano-British pottery and burnt bone. The readily visible remains were excavated and collected in advance of detailed analysis.

2. RESULTS

- 2.1 Groundworks associated with the proposed road scheme had severely disturbed the Romano-British pottery vessels. Indeed, the remains were found to be spread over an area of approximately 5m².
- 2.2 A burial group consisting of four pots was recovered from the excavation. The largest of these vessels (Vessel No. 1) contained the cremated human remains of a single adult individual. The remaining three vessels appear to have been accessories to the main burial. All of the pots were dated to the mid-2nd to mid-3rd century AD.
- 2.3 No evidence was found during the excavation, for any additional grave goods, burial enclosures or structures associated with the actual rite of cremation.
- 2.4 One sherd of Late Bronze Age to Early Iron Age pottery and a 28mm. long struck flint of probable Mesolithic origin were also recovered from the area of investigation.

3. THE POTTERY by Luke Barber

- 3.1 Nearly all the sherds recovered from the site of the cremation belong to one of the four cremation vessels. Only three other sherds were located in the vicinity of the burial but are all from different vessels, and are thus unlikely to be associated with the cremation group. These sherds consist of the rims from a ~~Black-Burnished Ware 2 (BB2) flanged bowl with bead rim and a~~ Hadham flagon. A single Late Bronze Age or Early Iron Age flint-tempered body sherd is also present.

The burial group appears to have consisted of four pots, the largest of which contained the actual cremation (No. 1 below). All the vessels are incomplete, although two have reconstructable profiles (Nos. 1 and 2). Two of the vessels have totally lost their upper halves, probably the result of later cultivation (Nos. 3 and 4). All the vessels would fit into a mid-2nd to mid-3rd century AD date bracket.

1. A narrow-mouth jar with thickened everted rim in a medium to hard-fired sand tempered ware with occasional sub-rounded quartz inclusions to 2mm. Core colour varies from light to mid grey with dull brown margins and patchy dull red brown to dark grey surfaces. Decoration consists of burnishing and cordoning on the shoulder. Late 2nd to mid-3rd century A.D.
2. A small jar with everted rim in a medium-fired fine fabric with few visible inclusions. These consist of sub-rounded light grey grog/clay pellets to 1mm. Light to mid grey core with mid to dark grey surfaces. Upchurch-type ware. Second to third century.
3. Jar with missing rim in the same fabric as No. 2. Upchurch-type ware.
4. Base of a jar in medium-fired grog-tempered fabric. Temper is of moderate dull red sub-rounded grog inclusions to 2mm. Core and inner surface colour is dark grey with a buff outer surface.

4. THE CREMATED REMAINS by Lucy Kirk

- 4.1 The cremated remains were found in association with Vessel No. 1. Although the surrounding soil did allow for good preservation, the material is very comminuted with a fragment size range between 2 - 67mm in length and an average size of 20mm long.
- 4.2 All the material had been cremated, but there was evidence for differential burning within the assemblage. A large percentage of the bone is twisted and distorted which would suggest that the bones were subjected to a relatively

high heat. This small size and fragmentary nature of the material does suggest that the bones had been deliberately crushed after burning, perhaps in order that they might be placed into the pottery vessel.

- 4.3 Where possible, fragments were identified and separated into a skeletal elements, primarily skull and long bones with all fragments identified as human. The entire skeleton seems to be represented with evidence of the skull, vertebral column, ribs, one innominate bone, long bone shafts and epiphyses and a number of phalanges. The cremated remains weighed 1.360kg of which 90gms were skull fragments. It was concluded that one individual was represented by the cremated material. Although it was not possible to determine the sex of the individual, the presence of a fully developed third molar indicates an adult.

5. CONCLUSIONS

- 5.1 After the Roman Conquest the rite of cremation became common throughout the south-east of England. Indeed, it was to 'remain the principal funerary practice until the late 3rd and 4th centuries'. (Drewett, Rudling and Gardiner 1988, 233).
- 5.2 The Romano-British burial group discovered at Bobbing, was heavily disturbed. Consequently, little detailed information regarding the character of the site was provided by the post-excavation analysis.
- 5.3 The cremation was in close proximity to a known find spot of late Iron Age and Romano-British material. 'Fragments of two large vessels of Celtic date, together with lumps of clay having holes through them' were found when digging a grave in the new churchyard at Bobbing in 1902 (*Archaeologia Cantiana* 25 (1902), 1x). Further finds of Romano-British pottery have also been made just to the south, behind Bobbing School. These two previous discoveries, together with the present finds, suggest a concentration of Romano-British activity in the area.
- 5.4 Further groundworks are proposed in the vicinity of the burial group. An archaeological watching brief will be maintained on these works by South Eastern Archaeological Services.
- 5.5 It is intended that a short note on the Bobbing cremation will be prepared for publication in *Archaeologia Cantiana*.

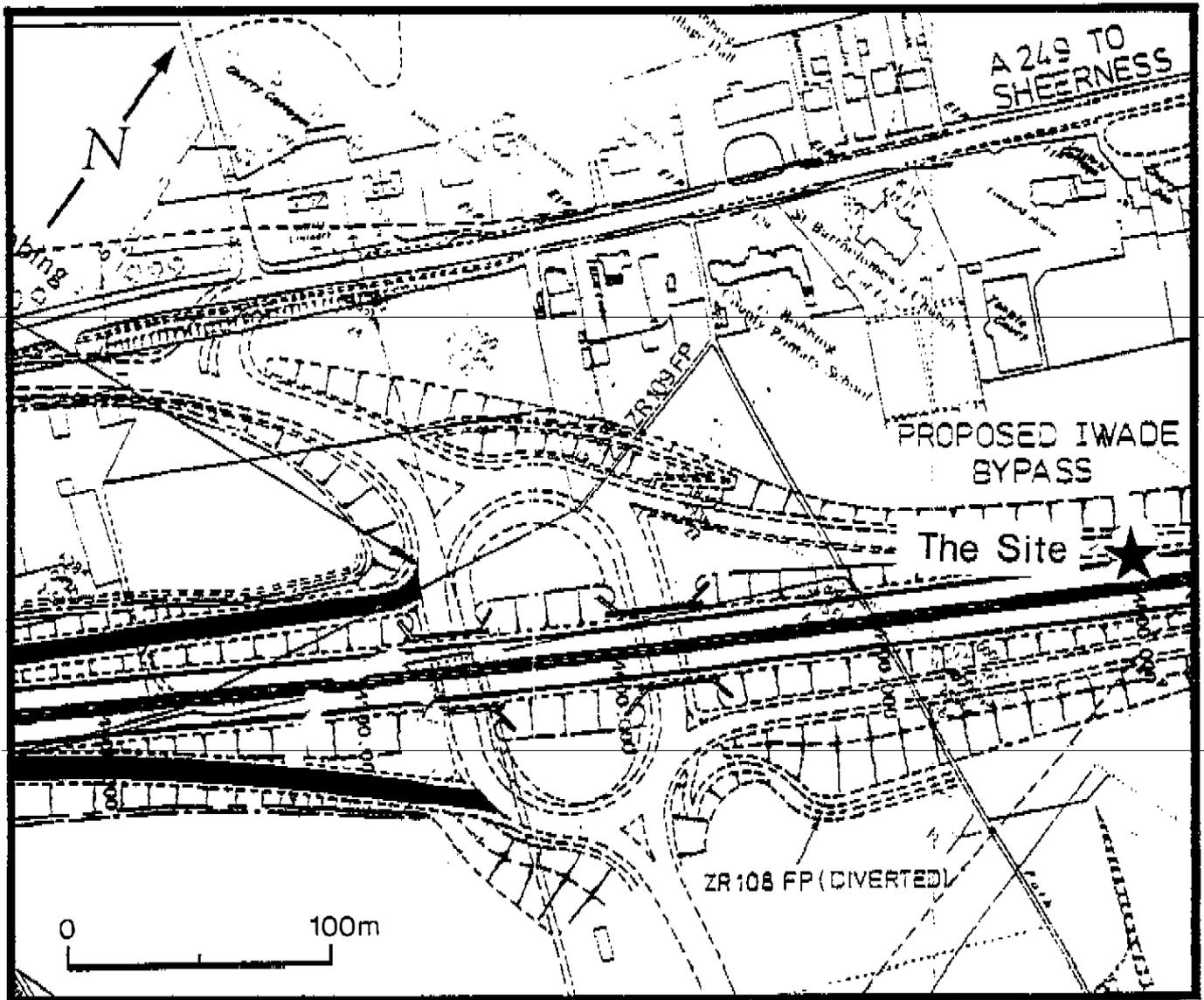
6. ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

- 6.1 Sittingbourne Archaeology Group are gratefully acknowledged for their assistance with this project.

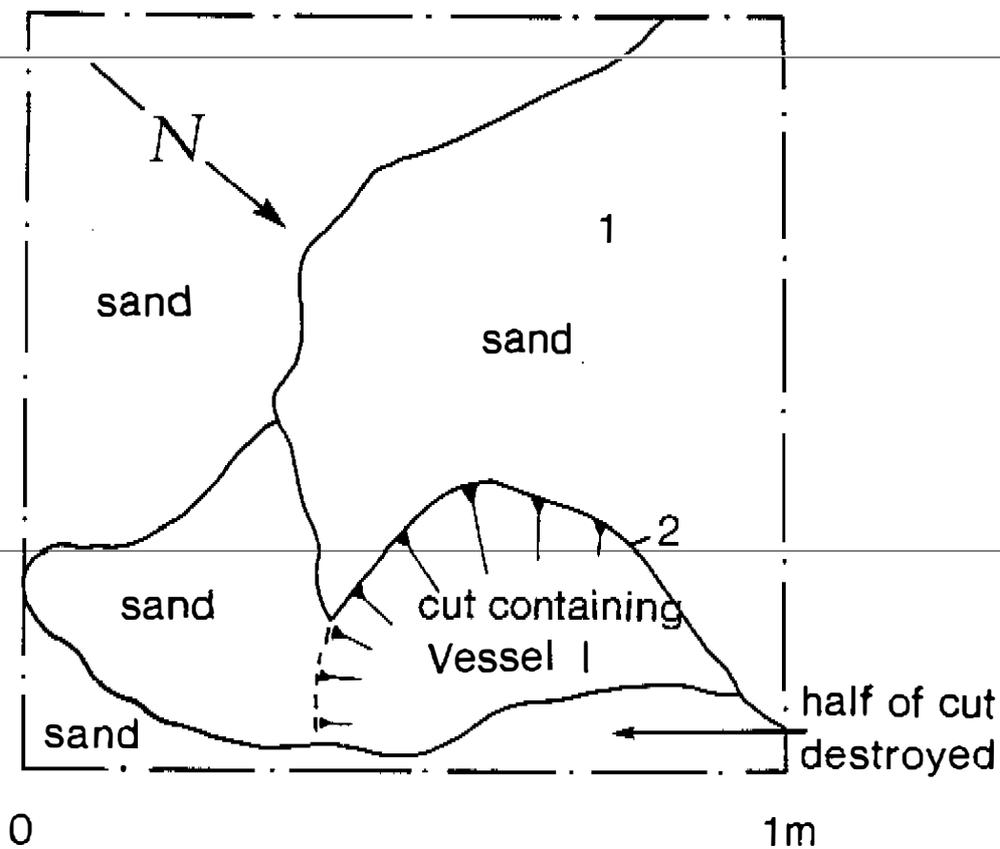
7. REFERENCE

Archaeologia Cantiana 25 (1902).

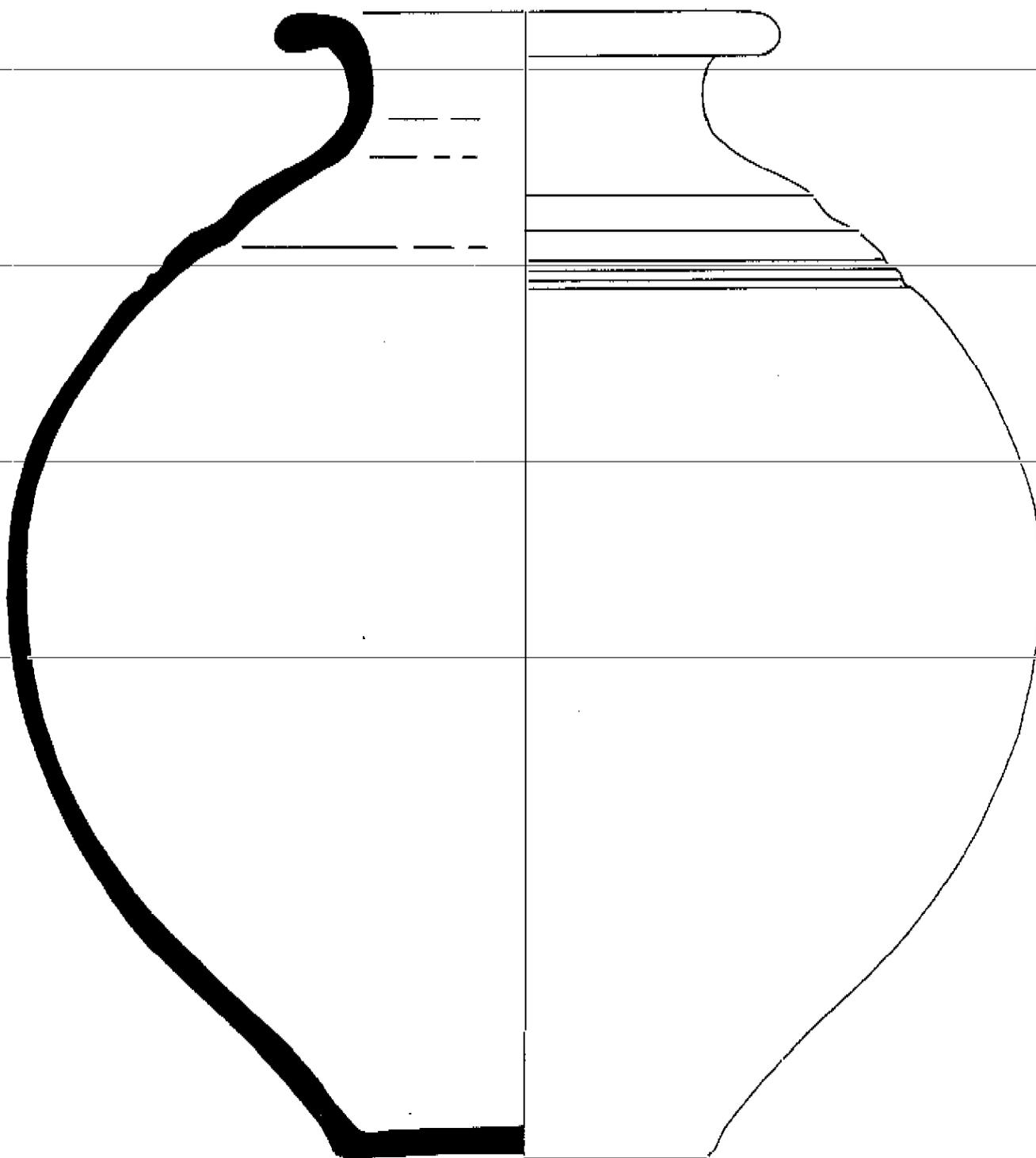
Drewett, P., Rudling, D., & Gardiner, M. 1988. *The South-East to A.D. 1000*. Longman.



<h1>SEAS</h1>	Site Romano-British Cremation, Bobbing, Kent		
	Title Location of Cremation		
South Eastern Archaeological Services Turner Dumbrell Workshops, North End Ditching, Sussex BN6 8TG Tel. or Fax 0273 845497	Date May 1995	Ref. 1995/65	Drawing No. Fig. 1



<h1>SEAS</h1>	Site Romano-British Cremation, Bobbing, Kent		
	Title Area of Excavation		
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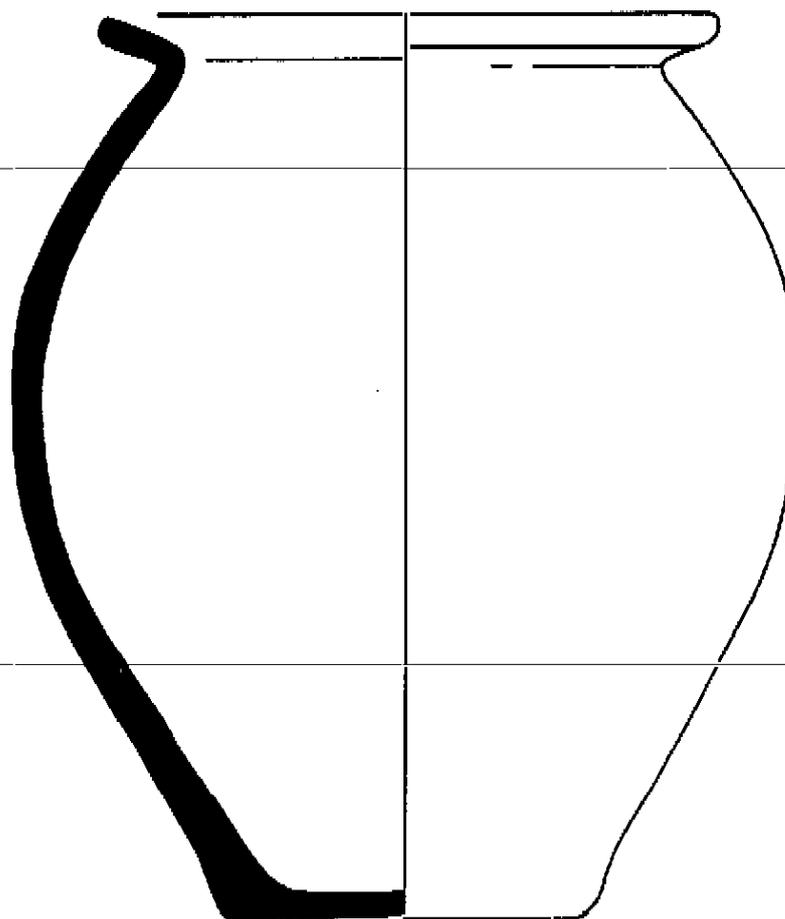
Site **Romano-British Cremation, Bobbing, Kent**

Title **Vessel no.1**

Date **May 1996**

Ref. **1995/65**

Drawing No. **Fig. 3**



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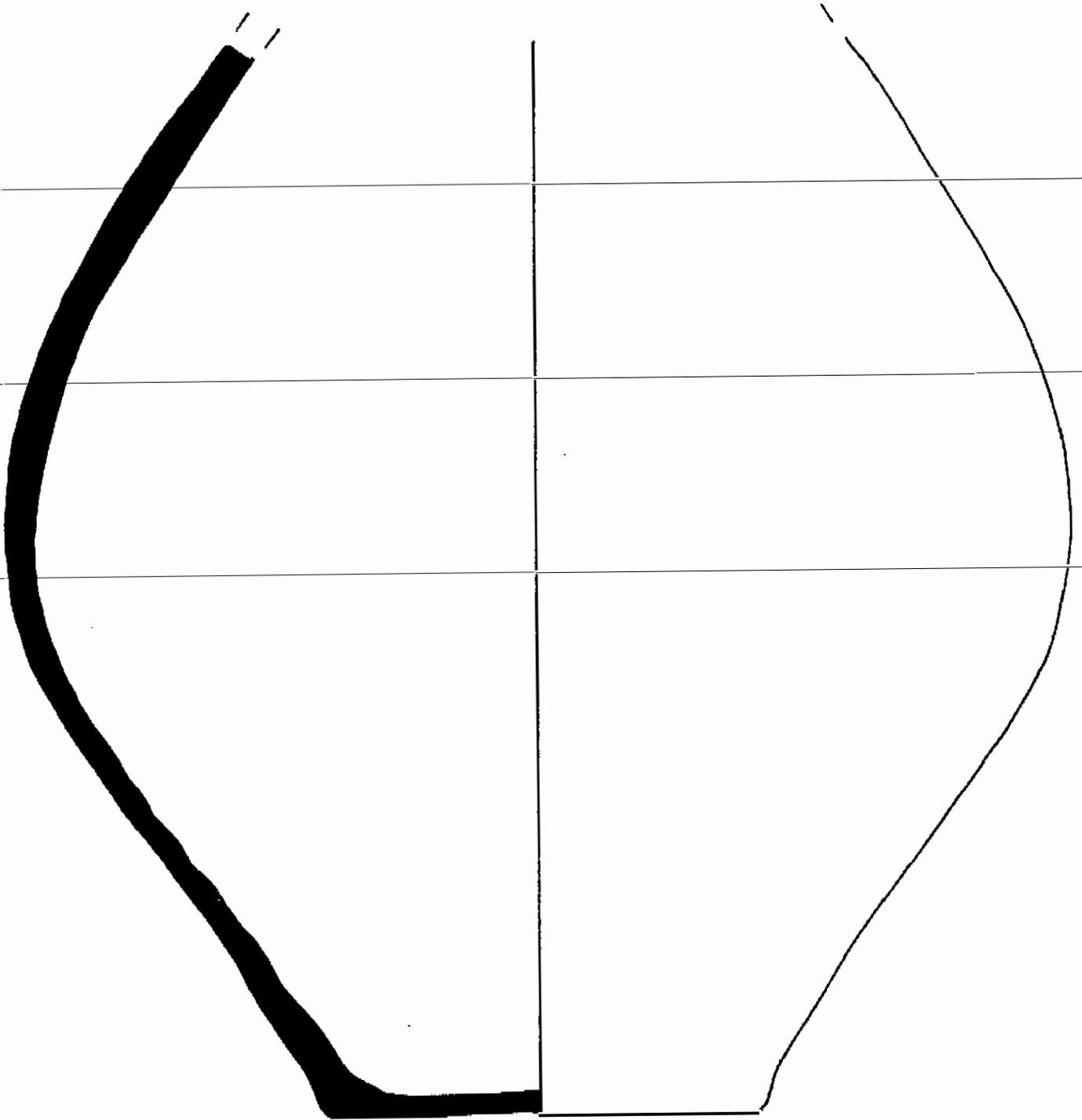
Site **Romano-British Cremation, Bobbing, Kent**

Title **Vessel no. 2**

Date **May 1995**

Ref. **1995/65**

Drawing No. **Fig. 4**



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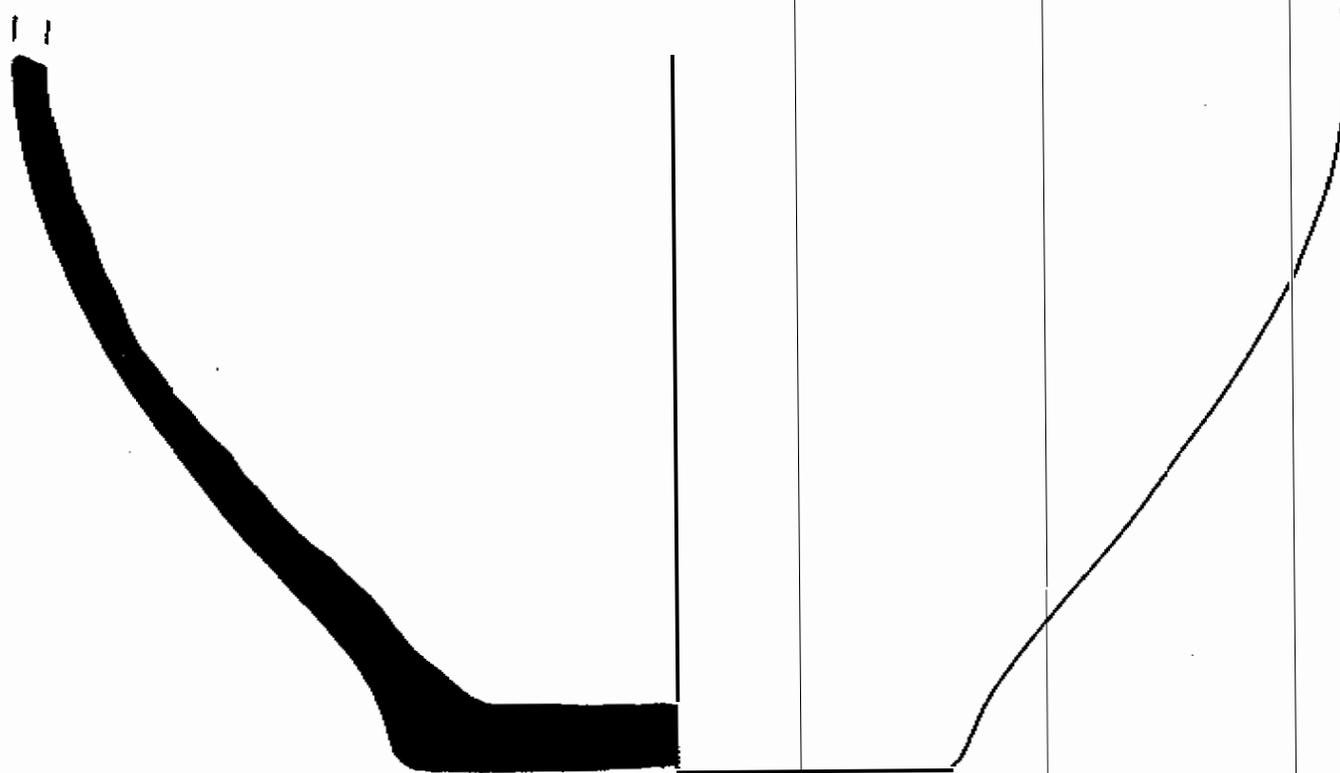
Site **Romano-British Cremation, Bobbing, Kent**

Title **Vessel no. 3**

Date **May 1996**

Ref. **1995/65**

Drawing No. **Fig. 5**



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Site **Romano-British Cremation, Bobbing, Kent**

Title **Vessel no. 4**

Date **May 1995**

Ref. **1995/65**

Drawing No. **Fig. 6**