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## Cambridge Antiquarian Society,

20 OCT. 1905—28 MAY 1906.

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## VI. ON THE SECTION SEEN AND THE OBJECTS FOUND DURING EXCAVATIONS ON THE SITE OF THE OLD BIRD BOLT HOTEL.

In working out the history of any town or district it is of great importance to watch carefully all the indications which may be brought to light in the course of excavations, or any documentary evidence which may be forthcoming, respecting the position and character of the outlying stations or buildings, as these have often a direct relation to the principal thoroughfares in the town and the routes and roads outside it.

The site to which I would now call the attention of the Society is interesting from this point of view. It is situated outside the town ditch, beyond the Barnwell Gate on St Andrew's Street, the road which is claimed as the Via Devana, and also on Downing Street, the road which now runs across the King's Ditch by Pembroke to the King's Mill, where there is the greatest interruption in the course of the river which occurs anywhere in Cambridge. Here was the place where it is most probable that the earliest river crossing was situated, but, if Downing Street ran as now into Pembroke Street, it must have crossed the King's Ditch obliquely not far from the Trumpington Gate, a most improbable supposition.

Now when we examine the section along the north edge of Downing Street in front of Emmanuel we find that down to the 17th century at any rate there was no road there.

In fact we have here evidence that we are quite on the outskirts of the inhabited area. A road probably ran out by Christ's College and the monastery of Dominicans or Black Friars, afterwards Emmanuel College. West of this road, now St Andrew's Street, was open country, the lower part of which was full of springs and liable to floods. Just as on the outskirts of an Italian town you see the Trattoria dei Cacciatori, so here was a convenient house of call for sportsmen in the Bird Bolt Hotel.

Of the history of this house I know little, except that it was held from St John's College by John Pink, fragments of ware with his name and date having been found in the debris. It has been recently pulled down, and deep foundations have been dug for the offices of the Norwich Union Insurance Office and the Liberal Club.

It is interesting to note that on Braunius' plan, 1575, the house is represented as standing further back than the site of the house as we knew it, and from under which many of the fragments now described were obtained.

The section, fig. 16, represents what was exposed along the edge of Downing Street—in fact the cesspools full of rubbish



Fig. 16. Diagram Section along north side of Downing Street on site of old Bird Bolt Hotel, 1905. Scale 20 feet to 1 inch.

- A. Made ground.
- B. Rubbish levelled, and at east end especially, consisting of chalk in large lumps.
- C. Old surface soil.                      D. Gravel.
- x and z. Black mud full of household rubbish.
- y. Natural pipe in the gravel.

passed under the pavement of the street. There was no road in the 17th century at the level of the present street, which had evidently been raised quite recently some 5 or 6 feet. The top four feet was made earth, which must have been carried from some adjoining area, and contained scattered fragments of various ages mixed up in the soil. Then came a layer of coarse rubbish, chiefly large lumps of chalk, as if intended for the bottom of a road, but it did not appear to have been ever covered with gravel or other road metal. Perhaps it may have been the marginal unconsolidated portion of a road which ran a little further to the west, but, as seen in this section, it looked like rubbish thrown out and spread over

waste ground. Below this was an old surface soil which rested on the gravel.

In this gravel there were some natural pipes due to the decomposition of the fragments of chalk in the gravel, and also some deep pits or trenches filled with black silty soil full of organic matter and quantities of household refuse—knives and forks, spoons, spurs, glass, pottery, bones of domestic animals, and so on.

As far as I was able to make out, the oldest objects occurred in the bottom of the pits *x*, *z*, and newer remains in the upper part. The objects found in the ancient surface soil *c* were of much later date than those in the black pits *x*, *z*, but, as the workmen did not keep the remains from the different layers separate, I had to draw what inferences I could from the observations made during my visits, and merely question the men as to the circumstances when anything peculiar had been found by them.

As we followed the excavations from west to east there seemed to be a larger proportion of objects which must be referred to the later dates, but this I was unable to follow up, as there came a message that no one was henceforth to be allowed to collect the objects turned out.

I of course gave up the work to my great regret and that of the workmen. I do not gather that any further accurate observations were made. Many objects were found, some of which found their way into the market, but, in the circumstances, I thought that I had better not be a purchaser. Any further evidence that might have been obtained from this site as to the roads and buildings in that part of old Cambridge is therefore lost for ever.

The way to make archæological fossils subservient to history is to arrange the objects which have been obtained at each separate time and place in such a manner that the general *facies* can be studied and the association of each particular type can be observed. Some have a longer range in time than others; respecting the introduction of some we have historical record. Observations by competent persons of the mode of occurrence is the most important, and next to that examina-

tion of the workmen at the time of discovery by those who know the usual sources of error, and are accustomed to deal with the delvers upon whom we must always depend for much of the evidence.

The quantity of material obtained under the Bird Bolt premises was large. I have handed over 19 boxes to the Archæological Museum, and, as I have explained above, that was not nearly all that was found.

I will now call attention to a few of the types that appear to be most interesting. Every one may have seen the long dagger-like steel sharpener that butchers carry hanging from their girdle. The corresponding objects in the kitchen of the Bird Bolt Hotel and its predecessors on the site were hones of schist or fine sandstone or slate. Some are roughly shaped as that shown in fig. 1 (p. 428), which is a piece of a schistose rock. Some, as the piece of fine grained sandstone shown in fig. 2, have a smooth handle which is so rudely fashioned that one cannot help suspecting that it was not trimmed into shape on purpose, but that what looks like a handle may be only the end which was first worn down by use. Fig. 3 represents a small slate hone, square in section, with a cut round one end, and cross cuts from it across the end, as if for tying a cord to, in order to suspend the hone; and in fig. 4 we see a small flat hone of slate partly perforated near one end.

All these hones are smooth on three sides, as if used for sharpening knives, but fluted on the third side as if forks and skewers had been rubbed on them.

There was a flattened circular stone, fig. 5, found, which appears to be a small boulder, out of the glacial drift, covered with ice scratches. There is no boulder clay so near that this stone can have been transported to this place by natural agencies without obliterating the surface polish and scratches. We must therefore suppose that it was carried here for some purpose. A small patch of fine sand is cemented on to it by iron oxide, which was probably the rust of a nail or some other object thrown out with the rubbish, as the condition of the surface shows that the pebble does not come from any deposit of iron sand. The edge of the stone is bruised, as if it had

been used for pounding, and this suggests the simple explanation that it was selected as of convenient size and shape and used as a bruiser for some domestic purpose.

*Stone.*

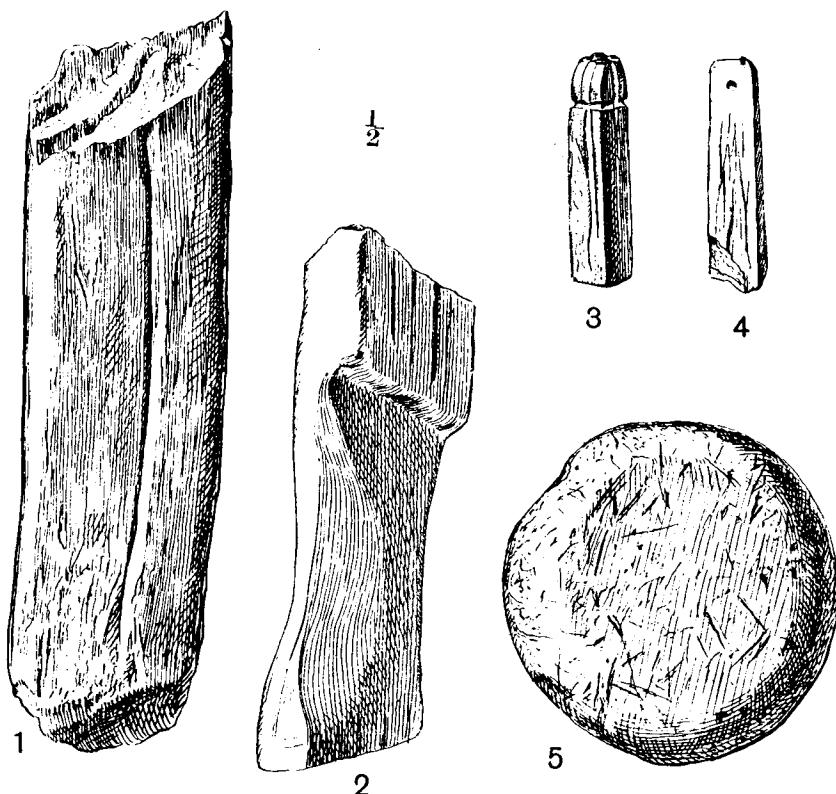


Fig. 1. A broken hone in schistose rock.

Fig. 2. Part of a hone of a fine grained sandstone. This has a smooth handle which was probably also used for sharpening.

Fig. 3. A small slate hone square in section with a cut round one end and cross cuts from it across the end as if for tying a cord on in order to suspend the hone.

Fig. 4. A small flat slate hone partly perforated near one end.

All these hones are smooth on three sides as if used for sharpening knives, but fluted on the third side as if forks and skewers had been rubbed on them.

Fig. 5. A flattened circular pebble evidently out of the glacial drift as it is covered with ice scratches. The edge is somewhat bruised as if it had been used for pounding. A patch of fine sand is cemented on to it by iron oxide.

*Metal Objects. Iron.*

The soil was generally damp, even under the buildings, as the site was on the edge of the great gravel bed which threw water out all along the margin of the lower ground afterwards given to Downing College. The implements and horse shoes show the manner in which iron rusts away and disappears even in comparatively recent deposits.



Fig. 6. One blade of a pair of shears, the top of which has got bent back the wrong way.

Fig. 7. Part of a sickle.

Fig. 8. A chisel or screwdriver which was probably mounted in a wooden handle.

Fig. 9. A spear-shaped fragment which is perhaps part of a door hinge.

Fig. 10. A strong iron staple.

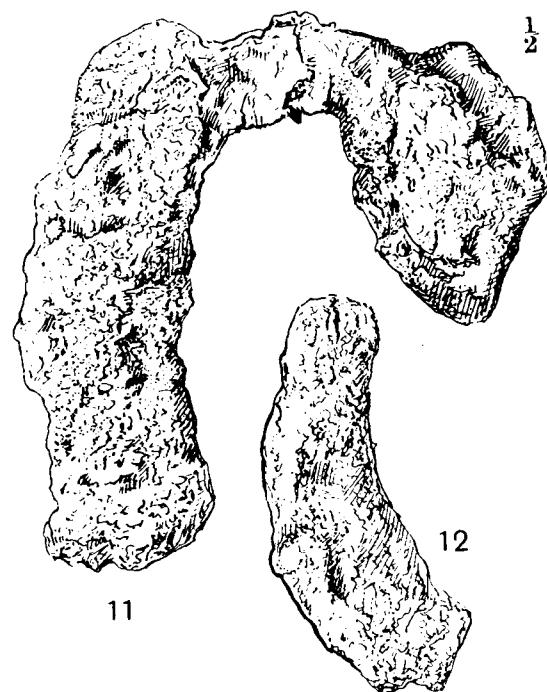
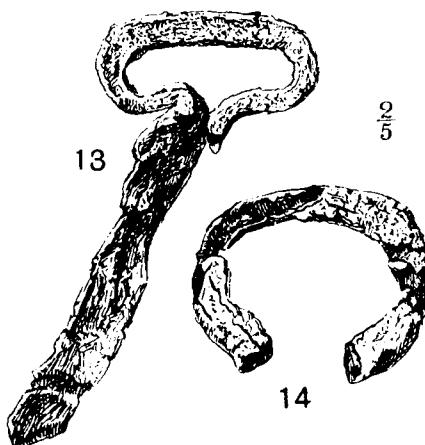


Fig. 11. A large broad horse shoe with no calkins.

Fig. 12. A fragment of a smaller shoe with remains of the nails.



Figs. 13 and 14. Parts of keys.

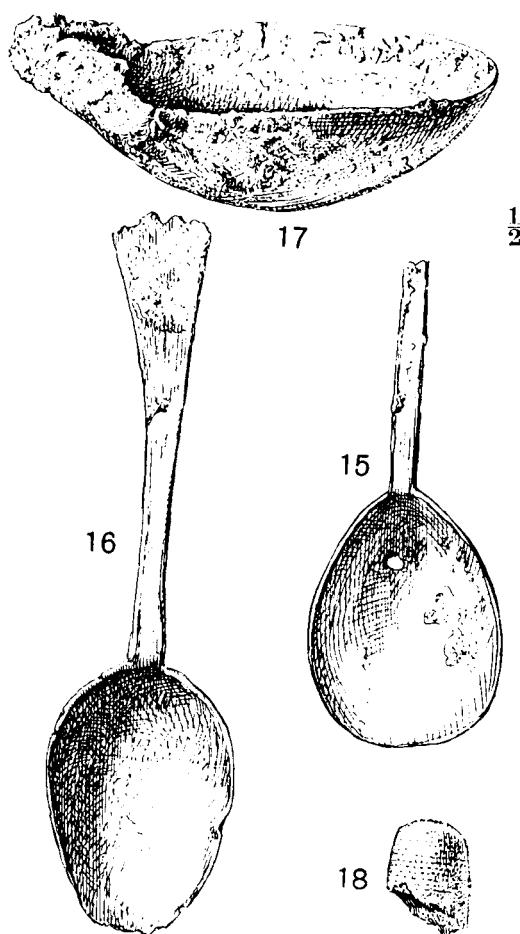
*Red and White Metal.*

Fig. 15. Spoon with white metal surface. It is not clear whether this is plated on copper, or whether it is the copper of an alloy which is so conspicuous in the green of the weathered surface. This spoon has a circular hole in it such as has sometimes been pointed out as characteristic of chrismatories. In this case it is not symmetrically placed in the medial line of the spoon but it is not due to any recent break. Mr Redfern refers this spoon to the 16th century.

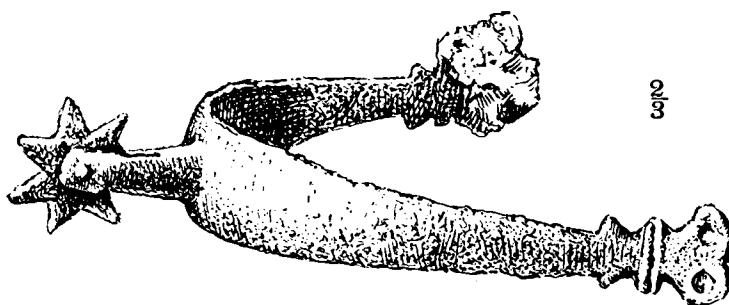
Fig. 16. Copper spoon with deep boat-shaped bowl. This Mr Redfern refers to late 17th century.

Fig. 17. Large copper ladle. The handle has been broken off close to the bowl which is much corroded. A round handle in white metal which was found near may belong to it, but of this there is no positive proof.

Fig. 18. A copper thimble.

These objects have been called copper rather than brass or bronze, although they are probably alloys, because they are so much corroded that it is almost impossible to arrive at any conclusion respecting their

original character. Indeed in some cases, as on the handles of the knives and forks, the former presence of metal is indicated only by a green stain on the handle and a rusty concretion where the blade was fixed.



19

Fig. 19. A bronze spur referred by Mr Redfern to the late 17th century.

*Bone, &c.*

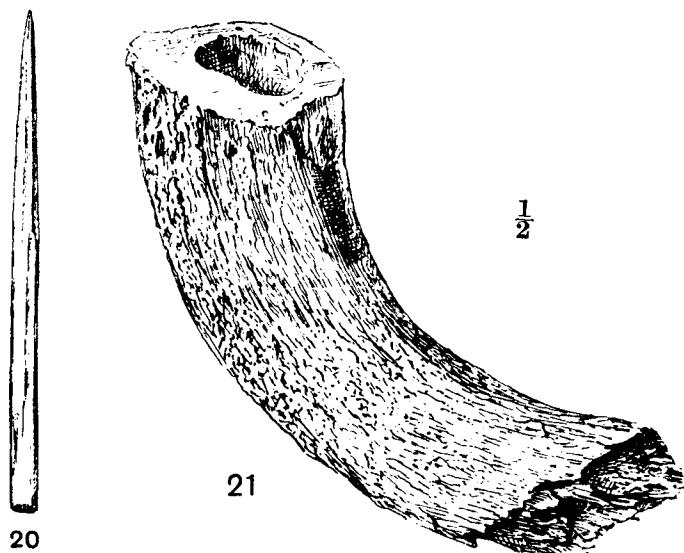


Fig. 20. A bone skewer pointed at one end only.

Fig. 21. The horn of a sheep sawn off near the base as shown by the internal structure. As I have never found any instrument formed of or hafted in sheep's horn, this was probably cut off to trim a head which was being served up whole. This raises the question as to whether we are right in supposing that when we find the antlers of deer sawn off it may not have often been for a similar purpose, and not always with a view to making use of the horn.

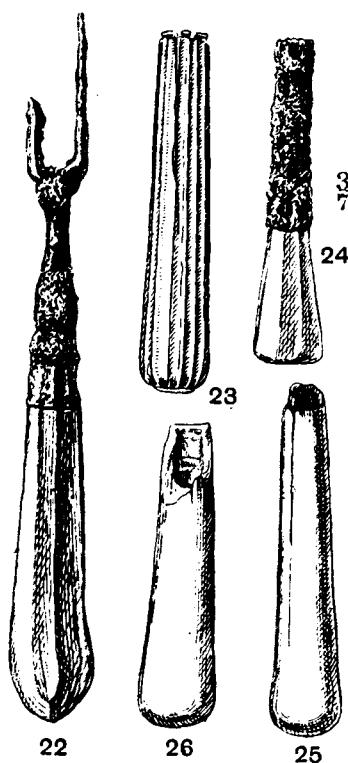


Fig. 22. Two-pronged fork with ivory handle.

Fig. 23. Ivory handle probably of fork, with stain of bronze on one side.

Fig. 24. Very short handle of knife or fork, with a good deal of the metal remaining.

Fig. 25. Handle with a little of the metal remaining.

Fig. 26. Handle broken at end and showing thread of screw by which the metal was held in.

The forks were small two-pronged iron forks, and the handles, which were of ivory or bone, were either smoothly tapering or fluted, or curved round into a small protuberance at the end to give a firm hold. It is not clear whether any of the handles were intended for knives, as no blades have been preserved.

### *Pottery.*

What strikes one in going over any fairly large collection of late mediæval pottery is its great variety, especially where it

consists chiefly of cooking vessels. Most of them seem to be made without any attempt at uniformity of pattern. Even in the case of the pipkin, which is one of the commonest vessels, we seldom find two handles exactly alike. Some are solid, flat, and tapering, some are round and perforated, some with one kind of ornament, some with another. In some the hole through the handle passes into the vessel, in others the perforated handle is closed at the end next the vessel and stuck on over any grooves or lines that may have been drawn on the vessel. Some have the clay of the handle pinched out into a flower-like pattern, others have only two indents, while in others the impressions are smoothed away altogether.

The oldest class of remains which I procured were the fragments of black pottery of which I have already offered a description to the Society, and which in my opinion represent ordinary cooking vessels, which, with slight modifications, were handed down from Roman times to the 16th or 17th century. They are of the form of the Roman *olla*, often with a rounded and slightly recurved rim, and so exactly similar to those found associated with undoubted Roman remains that when I exhibited some of them at the Soc. Antiq. of London some high authorities said I had made a mistake somewhere, and that they were Roman. In a plate accompanying my paper on the Cambridge ditches<sup>1</sup> read before this Society, and in that read before the Archæological Institute on the early potters' art in Britain<sup>2</sup>, I gave a series of sections of these rims, showing the transition from the common rounded form to that which is flattened out and strongly bent back upon the bulging side of the vessel, and these last are the forms which are distinctive of mediæval times.

There were pipkins, and pans, and stewing pots of various kinds; and, as time went on, faience appeared among them.

There are pieces of Delft of considerable beauty, and white ware approaching Leeds in appearance. There is a good deal of the mottled ware originally imported from Cologne and

<sup>1</sup> *Proc. Camb. Ant. Soc.* Vol. viii. Jan. 25, 1892, p. 44, Pl. III.

<sup>2</sup> *Archæological Journ.* Vol. lix. No. 235, pp. 219, 237, Pl. I.

hence known as Cullen ware. The usual forms of bellarmine or greybeard are well represented.

There are a few pieces of glass, one of a very delicate thin flask-like vessel, some bits of window glass, and a few pieces of thick black glass flagons. Some of it was beautifully iridescent, but readily flaked away.

There are flowerpot-shaped vessels of a tough grey ware deeply fluted horizontally inside and smoothed on the outside. What purpose these deep uniform grooves were intended to serve I cannot conjecture.

The common patterns seen on the dark grey ware of Horningsea are common, such as the vertical bands laid in relief on coarse ware, with thumb marks regularly impressed along them (fig. 37), or the rough wavy lines incised horizontally round the vessel when the clay was soft (fig. 36).

There were (figs. 32, 33) small vessels, like two shallow saucers connected by a stem, which may have been for condiments, or perhaps for some sort of night-light or lamp.

There was an immense quantity of dark grey ware still black with the soot of the fire, and all the gradations from those which exactly resemble the commonest Roman cooking vessels to those with the strongly recurved flat broad rim which as far as I have yet seen is distinctly mediæval.

A rough grey ware was occasionally found, which was burnt reddish-brown on the inside and black-brown on the outside with conspicuous white calcined chips of flint which are often considered to be characteristic of British pottery, but are found also in ware of undoubted Roman and mediæval times.

There were perforated handles which, when the hole passed through into the vessels, seemed to be intended to be used as a handle or a spout, and some vessels had a spout consisting of a hole with a small rim and a flower-like margin as if it had been pinched on.

Some of the pipkins had a green glaze on the outside and a lustrous brown glaze on the inside, while some were red and green inside, the handle being squeezed on with a thumb-pressed floriated pattern and a linear radiating ornament.

There are all sorts of shallow pans, some with the sides

nearly vertical, others with the sides opening out at various angles. Some are tall jug-like vessels reminding us of the mode of cooking "jugged" hare.

There are large vessels with solid handles projecting in vertical planes and often perforated as if to pass a cord through, and there are large and often highly ornamented vessels with handles looped obliquely round the vessel just below the rim.

There were many varieties of rough crocks and jugs, some with a flat fluted and variously ornamented handle starting from the rim, and some with a handle twisted like a rope. These had generally a small lip.

A small portion of the rim of a vessel symmetrically undulating (fig. 45) reminded one of the sides of the pinched Roman drinking vessels.

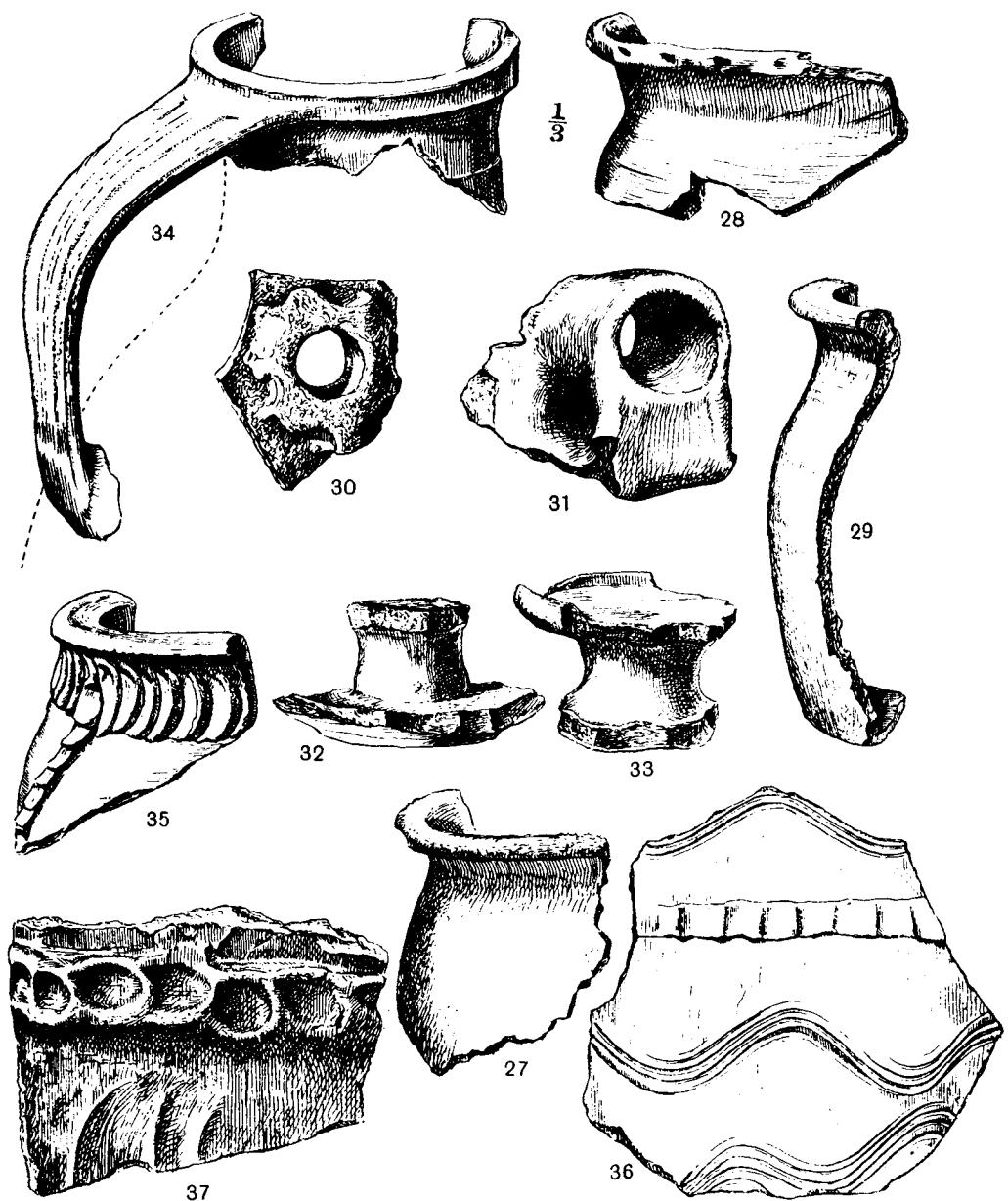
A red ware with a yellow colour overlaid had an ornament incised so as to show the red ware through the yellow surface.

There were many strongly glazed dark-coloured vessels, some were globular with handles, some dark brown, some black and straight-sided. Tighes with two or more handles in a red ware with a strong black glaze were not uncommon.

Many varieties of bellarmine, some with a pinched, some with a plain base.

Fragments of marbled and combed ware, and white ware with and without a moulded ornamentation.

Of Delft many fragments were found, two of these I figure. Dr Glaisher considers them to be English ware of the end of the 16th or the beginning of the 17th century.



Figs. 27—37. For description see p. 438.

Fig. 27. Portion of rim and side of a vessel the form of which is Roman and the texture common to British Roman and mediæval times.

Fig. 28. Portion of rim of large vessel of black ware, burnt red on the outside and inside and showing small sand grains through the red. The rim is ornamented with a regular series of indents apparently made with the broken feather edge of a stick.

Fig. 29. Side from rim to base of cooking vessel of dark grey ware, blackened on the outside as if by fire, with a flat base which shows evidence of sagging, and a narrow flat rim.

Fig. 30. Flat spout stuck on to a vessel of red ware, fired black outside, almost fluxed to glaze. The spout forms a six-rayed star through the middle of which the circular hole passes.

Fig. 31. Spout and handle of coarse brown ware.

Fig. 32. Base, stand, and part of flat bowl of small dish.

Fig. 33. A similar vessel with more of the flat bowl and less of the base preserved.

Fig. 34. Handle and large part of rim of a jug in grey ware. The top of the handle starts from the rim, which is rectangular in section and has a small lip or spout. The lower part of the handle has come off where attached to the body of the jug, and shows by the angle it makes with the axis that it was a very full-bodied jug. Some curious cuts given before firing appear on the rim and handle.

Fig. 35. Part of rim and side of large vessel in brown sandy ware, more red on the inside. It has a curious ornamentation round the neck, as if a number of flat circular pats of clay about the size of a half-penny and twice as thick were laid on overlapping one another about two-thirds of their breadth all round, while a narrower band of somewhat similar ornament runs from the rim down the side.

Fig. 36. Part of the side of a vessel in dark brown ware, much decayed and flaking on the inside, with a thin plated ribbon band running down or round, and wavy bands incised with the feathered end of a broken stick. It is interesting to notice that the cut given in this way has determined the direction of the fracture in one case.

Fig. 37. Piece of coarse ware with brush or stick marks on the inside, about  $\frac{1}{2}$  an inch thick and  $\frac{3}{4}$  where the bands come; ornamented with bands of clay laid on and impressed with close thumb marks and bands plastered on down the side.

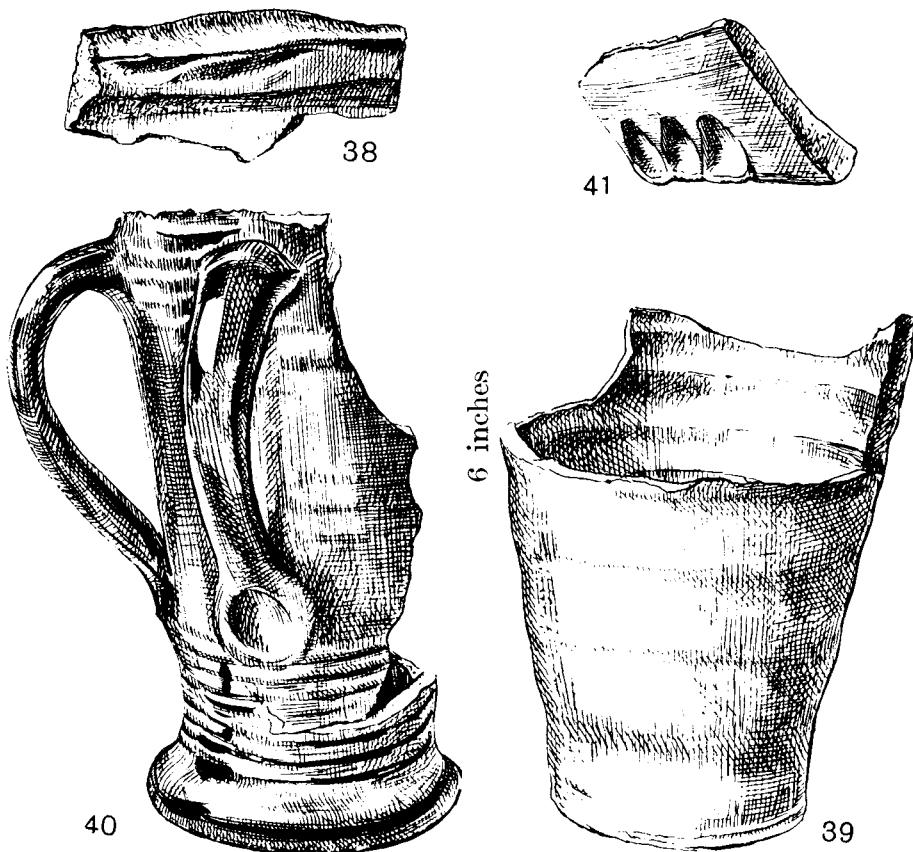


Fig. 38. Portion of such bands.

Fig. 39. Coarse yellow vessel with very deep horizontal furrows round the inside.

Fig. 40. Tighe or two-handled mug of red ware with a bright black glaze inside and outside except under the base.

Fig. 41. The bottom of a jug, probably like that of which the handle is represented in No. 34. Three calkins have been pressed out to correct the sagging of the base. This does not appear to have been done with the finger but with a rough-edged piece of wood.

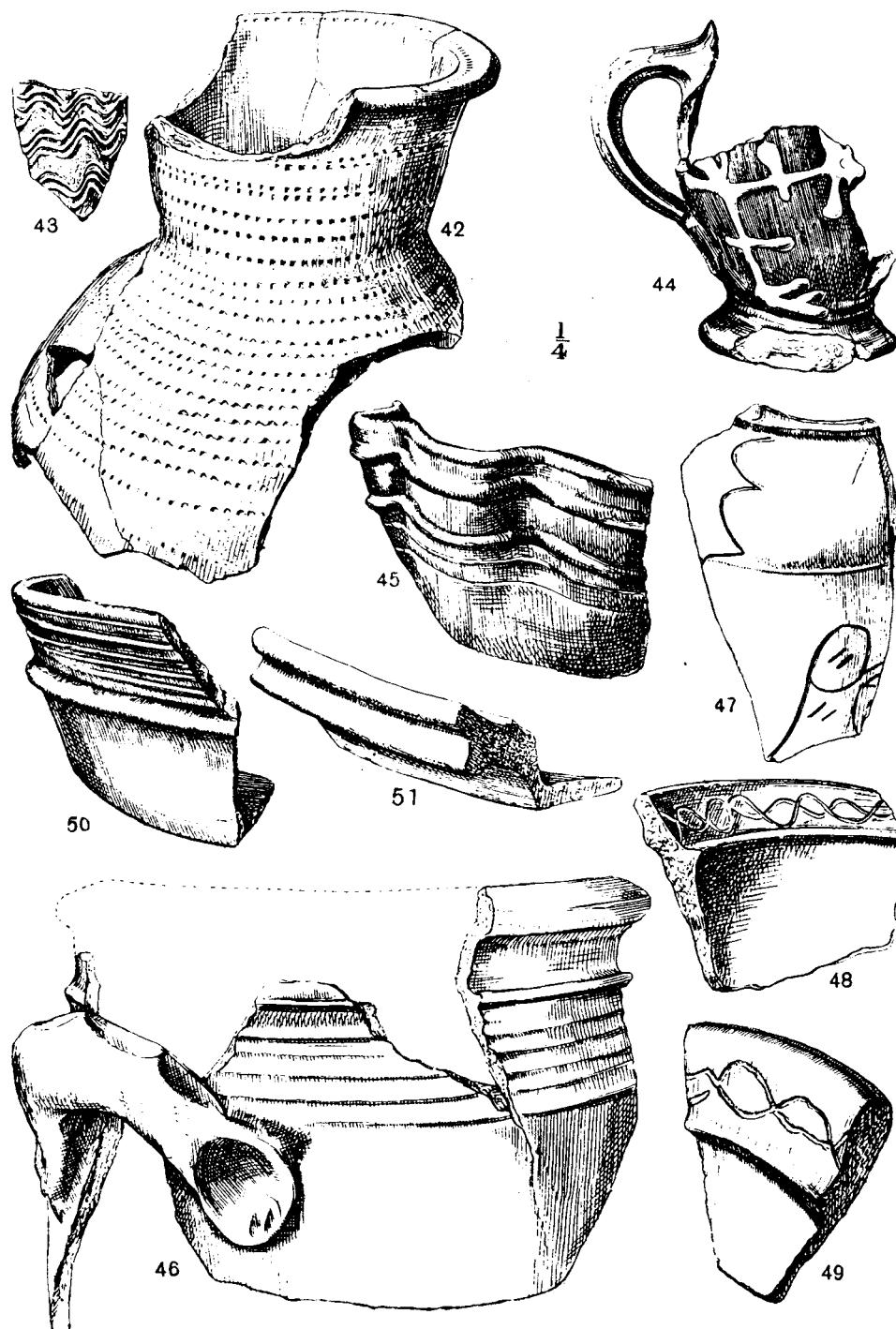


Fig. 42. The upper part of a handsome jug in grey clay, burnt a bright red on the inside and on the outside. The neck is ornamented with irregularly horizontal lines of small rectangular marks impressed directly at right angles to the surface. The body is similarly covered with impressions made obliquely in a downward direction so as to produce a somewhat triangular mark.

Fig. 43. A fragment of similar ware, but more deeply burnt red and covered with an ornament of treble incised wavy lines.

Fig. 44. A small jug of red earthenware, thickly glazed and well fired and covered with a geometric ornamentation in thick yellow slip.

Fig. 45. Portion of the side of a pan from rim to base of red earthenware, glazed red on the inside and green on the outside. The whole of the margin left has a wavy outline.

Fig. 46. A large deep vessel of red earthenware, irregularly glazed green on the inside and on the outside, with probably two semicircular flat handles, having a scalloped upper edge, squeezed on with one deep imprint.

Fig. 47. A more compact red ware, strongly fluted horizontally but not glazed inside, and on the outside covered with a yellow wash, through which thin incised lines show the red body, the glaze extending over the yellow and the red.

Fig. 48. Part of the side and rim of a red earthenware pan, covered with a green glaze and ornamented on the flat rim with crossing wavy lines.

Fig. 49. A similar portion of a similar vessel, the form of which was different and the ornament more symmetrically looped.

Fig. 50. Part of the side from rim to base of a red earthenware pan, glazed red on the inside and green on the outside.

Fig. 51. Part of the side from rim to base of well burnt compact red earthenware pan, red glazed on the inside and unglazed on the outside.

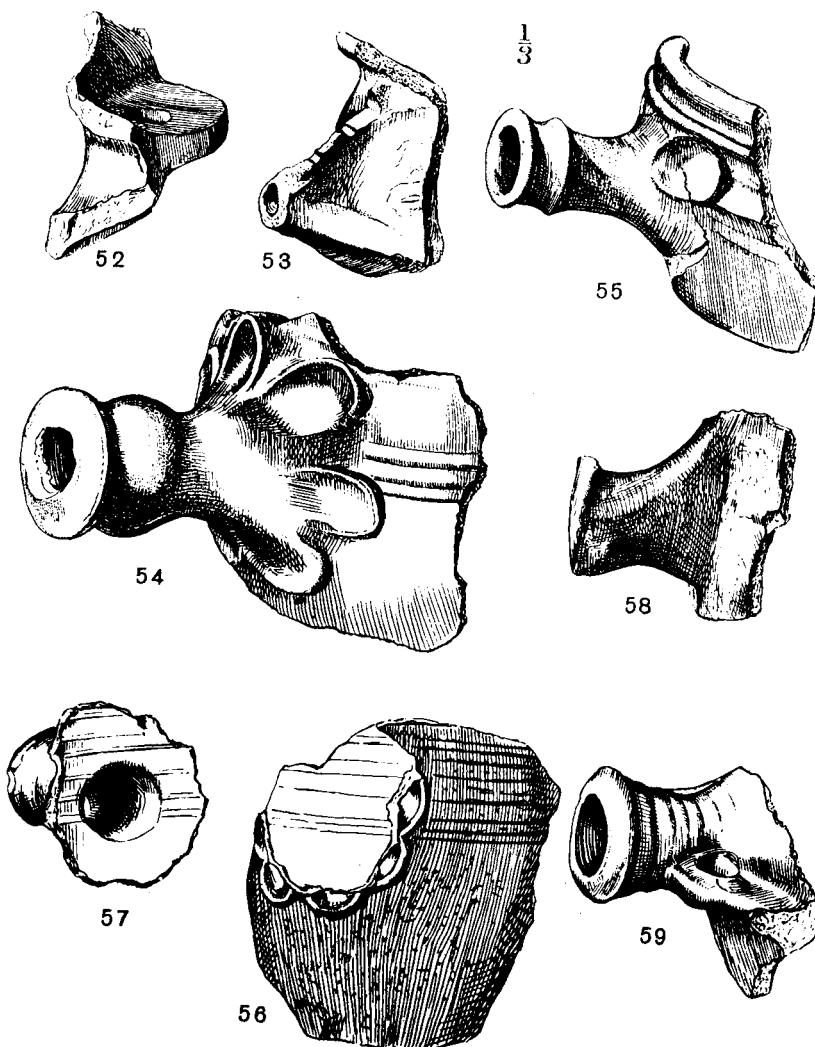


Fig. 52. Part of the side from handle to base of a compact well burnt red earthenware vessel with a horizontal perforated flange handle and a spout-like hole coming through close by the handle; red glazed on the outside and unglazed on the inside.

Fig. 53. Part of the side from rim to spout of a red earthenware vessel with a horizontal flange through which a spout is carried. This flange has a thicker flat projection extending from the top of the spout to the rim with marks of three cross perforations along which the exterior portion of this projection has broken away. The interior and the exterior below the spout is unglazed. The rim above and below and the side above the spout is red glazed with ornamentation in a yellow clay wash brushed on.

Fig. 54. Hollow handle of pipkin of red earthenware, fully glazed red on inside and partly glazed brown and green on the outside. The handle is fastened on with seven impressions well finished and four or five horizontal flutings and ridges run horizontally from it on either side.

Fig. 55. A fragment of a similar pipkin from rim to base but differing in the mode of attachment of the handle and the ornamentation.

Fig. 56. A fragment of a somewhat similar pipkin of thinner ware. The handle is broken off and shows the mode of attachment. The bowl of the vessel was completed and ornamented; the handle was then pinched on and the whole vessel fired and glazed. The horizontal lines of ornament are clearly seen on the handle (57) as well as on the red unglazed surface from which the handle has become detached.

Fig. 57. Handle of 56.

Fig. 58. Fragment of a similar vessel, the handle of which is solid, and of a harder blue grey ware, glazed a light nacreous green on the inside, and dark blotchy green on the outside.

Fig. 59. Fragment of top of costrell of red ware, glazed black on the outside, with patches of red brown glaze on the inside. On either side of the neck are two small handles or perforated flanges for passing a cord through.

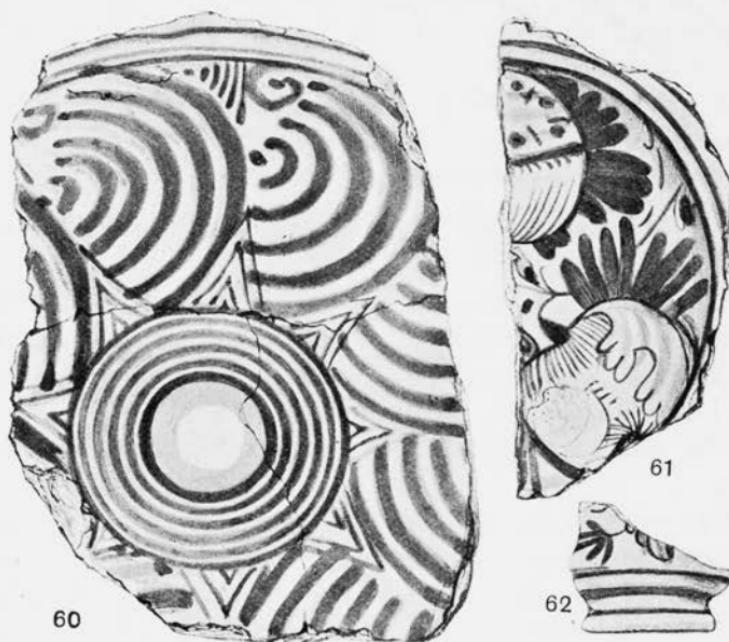
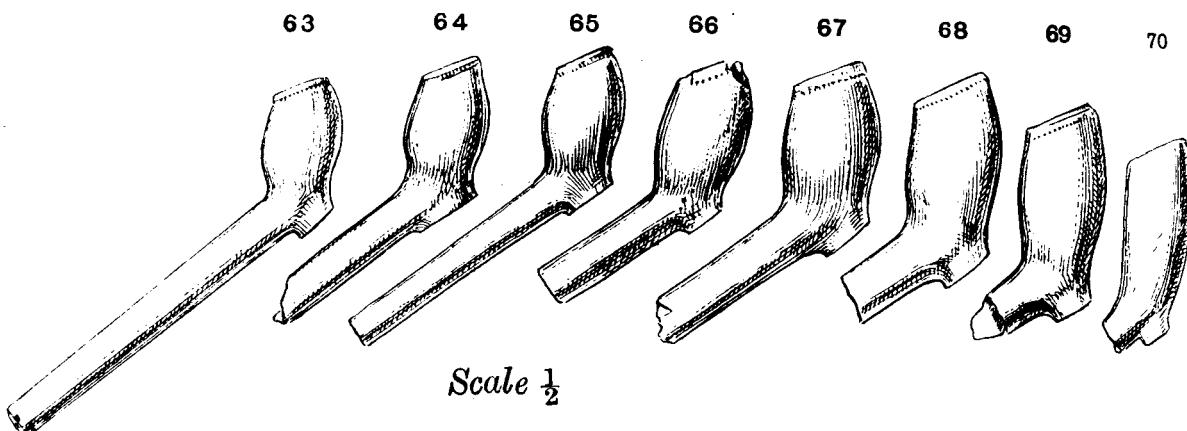


Fig. 60. A plate of Delft ware with blue concentric marks on white. Underneath it is unglazed and shows only the rough yellow surface of the paste. The stand was perforated previous to baking to allow a cord or wire to be passed through for suspension. Dr Glaisher refers this plate of which a large piece from rim to centre is preserved to the 16th or early 17th century. The diameter when whole was  $10\frac{1}{2}$  inches.

Fig. 61. Piece of similar plate of red ware, painted above with conventional designs. The underside is roughly glazed with curious weathering. The colour is white, while the centre within the stand is light yellow as if a thin yellow clay wash had been laid on over the red ware. Patches of the white glaze of the underside have apparently accidentally strayed over the base within the stand.

Fig. 62. Fragment of the base of a small jug or similar vessel in red ware, painted and glazed on the outside with a fine white glaze on the inside.



Figs. 63—70. Tobacco pipes ranging from 16th to 18th century.

The bones of domestic animals were those of horse, ox, sheep, pig, goose.

It is difficult to explain the constant occurrence of the bones of horse among those of other domestic animals and in precisely the same condition except on the supposition that the horse was used for food.

The cattle were all of the small modified *Bos longifrons* type.

One could not but remark the small size of the calves that had apparently been used for food. Many of the jaws found were smaller than those of the sheep. This quite agrees with the inference drawn from other excavations that the small degenerate breed founded on *Bos longifrons* and reverting to it after the withdrawal of Roman protection, lasted down to quite late times as the common animal used for food.

The sheep were of the old horned breed.

Oysters and mussels occurred sporadically, and this makes one inclined to refer their presence to accident, as the shells of

a dish of them would be thrown out together. Bones of dog were found, probably a few of the disturbed bones of a dog which had been buried.

Of the age of the objects found it is difficult to speak with great certainty. There does not appear to be anything that would necessarily carry us back to the time of the Dominican Friars who lived nearly opposite on the other side of the road. Indeed we may suppose that the frugal brethren did not break, perhaps did not possess, a large stock of ware. We generally find a larger quantity of household refuse around what is known to have been a house of public entertainment than anywhere else. Perhaps the greater conviviality that usually pervaded the life of a hostelry would account for this.

The black pottery might be contemporary with the friars, but most of the other objects associated with it could not. Much of it was beneath the walls of the Inn which has just been pulled down, and this we must therefore refer to an older house upon the same site. The College opposite, whose earliest statutes are dated 1585, was cut off from St Andrew's Street by a high wall.

The Delft Dr Glaisher refers to the 16th or 17th century, and the metal objects Mr Redfern believes to belong to about the same range of time.

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Thursday, 15 February 1906.

Mr R. BOWES, Treasurer, in the Chair.

Dr HADDON delivered a lecture on SOUTH AFRICAN NATIVES.

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