

PROCEEDINGS
OF THE
CAMBRIDGE ANTIQUARIAN
SOCIETY

(INCORPORATING THE CAMBS & HUNTS ARCHAEOLOGICAL SOCIETY)



VOLUME LIII

JANUARY 1959 TO DECEMBER 1959

CAMBRIDGE
DEIGHTON BELL

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ARCHAEOLOGICAL NOTES

J. C. WILKERSON, J. LIVERSIDGE, G. BRISCOE AND
W. E. LE BARD, G. H. S. BUSHNELL AND M. D. CRA'STER

BRONZE AGE BARROWS AT MELBOURN

Deep ploughing on Mr J. J. Wedd's land in the parish of Melbourn revealed dark soil marks of one ploughed-out barrow and part of another in the chalk, and turned up fragments of bone and pottery. The site is south-east of the village (Grid Ref. 389439).

Near the centre of the complete barrow circle was a skeleton, apparently buried in a crouched position in a scooped-out hollow no more than 2 ft. below ground level. It is reported that there were some fragments of thin pottery with it, but I did not see them; possibly they were in fact pieces of the skull. The hollow was filled with yellow sand, and may be the primary burial.

A second depression nearer the ditch was filled with black soil and contained some fragments of unburnt bone and pottery; this could have been Early or Middle Bronze Age.

There was also one cremation in a poor-quality jar within the circular ditch, and at least six more outside and just north-east of it. These were all buried in yellow sand; it would appear that natural sand pockets were chosen for the burials as it made easier digging, rather than that holes were dug in the solid chalk and then filled with sand.

The pottery from the cremations is all of the Late Bronze Age, 'Deverel-Rimbury' type, with plain applied cordons, straight sides, and an excessive amount of tempering.

Between the edge of the barrow ditch and the cremations outside it, there was a 'floor' of closely packed flints just below plough depth, covering an irregular area of about 10 ft. by 12 ft. In the middle of this there was a small patch of black soil and calcined bones.

Some fragments of Roman pottery were found on the surface of the site.

J. C. W.

POTTERY FROM A ROMAN WELL IN COLDHAM'S LANE, CAMBRIDGE

The group of Roman pottery illustrated (Pl. IV) was discovered in 1958 during quarrying operations by the Cement Marketing Company in Coldham's Lane, Cambridge. It came from the bottom of a well at least 30 ft. deep and in this connection it is interesting to note that the modern water-level is found at 45-50 ft.

The group includes a buff flagon, four large narrow-mouthed jars in grey ware with one smaller version of the same type, and a small medium-mouthed jar of familiar local type which can be paralleled in the Braybrooke Collection of material from Great Chesterford, and from elsewhere. Unluckily the flagon, which would have provided the best evidence for a close dating, has lost its rim and part of its neck. The four large jars, however, closely resemble those from the War Ditches, type 1, described by Mr Hartley in this volume (p. 25, Fig. 1) so it seems likely that the group should be ascribed to the late first or early years of the second century A.D.

We are indebted to the Cement Marketing Company for reporting this discovery and making it available for study. The group is now exhibited in their office in Coldham's Lane.

J. L.

AN ANGLO-SAXON CEMETERY ON LAKENHEATH AIRFIELD

In July 1957 human bones were discovered by workmen who were digging a hole for the installation of an oil tank adjacent to the south-west corner of the U.S.A.F. Medical Supply Building (Grid Ref. 732809) at Lakenheath Airfield, Suffolk. The skeleton was examined by Mr Edwardson, Curator of the Moyses Hall Museum, and Dr Parsons, Chairman of the Mildenhall Archaeological Society. The grave goods (two annular brooches, one bronze pin, tweezers and an iron knife) are deposited in the Mildenhall Museum and are included in the list of finds made this year.

In September 1959 workmen dug a ditch to a depth of 3 ft. and 300 ft. in length along the west side, and trenches for new construction on the east of the same building. Bones were found at frequent intervals and it was clear that a considerable cemetery lay all around and presumably beneath the building. The discovery was reported to the Ministry of Works. Group-Captain G. M. Knocker and Dr C. P. B. Wells came to inspect and decided that the area should be explored. As the building operations were for the purpose of providing a hospital, it was necessary that construction should not be hampered. It was clear that the whole area could not be examined in time to permit the work to proceed on schedule. It was agreed between the Air Ministry, the U.S.A.F. authorities and the Ministry of Works that the ground to the west of the Medical Supply Building should be examined at once, and that the urgent construction on the east side should proceed on schedule. The work of excavation was undertaken by American volunteers under the control of Captain Le Bard, with general supervision by the writer (G. B.).

The work lasted for a month and thirty-three graves were discovered. All the graves were oriented east-west, with the heads varying only 12 degrees from magnetic west. The skeletons of those that had been buried on chalk were quite well preserved, but those which lay on patches of acid sand were either partially or entirely decomposed, leaving only a dark smudgy outline or gelatinous particles of bone.

In fifteen graves there were ornaments consisting of five cruciform brooches, four small long and eighteen annular brooches, two Kentish-type square-headed brooches,

six sets of wrist clasps, five girdle hangers, two silver rings, two bronze hair fasteners, eight strings of beads and one pottery bowl. Many of the wrist clasps and brooches contained textile. There were weapons in three of the graves, including one sword, two shield bosses, three spears and four iron disks about 3 in. in diameter which were probably for shoulder protection. The other fifteen graves had no ornaments, were generally larger and more carefully dug for burial than the other graves, and the skeletons appeared to have been more neatly organized.

Specialist reports will be published later. Mr Rainbird Clarke is preparing that on the grave goods, Dr C. P. B. Wells that on the skeletons, Miss E. Crowfoot that on the textiles, and Dr N. H. Pizer that on the soil conditions associated with the burials where there was bad decomposition.

We wish to record our thanks to the U.S.A.F. authorities for the many facilities placed at our disposal.

G. B., W. E. LEBARD

PAGAN SAXON BURIALS AT ELY

In the autumn of 1959, a machine, which was cutting foundation trenches for houses on the High Barns housing estate on the north-east outskirts of Ely, brought up some fragments of human bones and some other objects from pagan Saxon burials. The site lies on the west side of Newbarns Road just beyond the cemetery on the opposite side, and is approximately 350 yards north of the cemetery chapel. The National Grid reference is 547812. Lieut.-Col. J. G. A. Beckett and Mr S. R. Hopkin kindly told us about the find. When we visited the site we observed nothing in place except the fragmentary leg bones of one individual.

The following objects were found (references are to Fox, *The Archaeology of the Cambridge Region*):

Two iron shield bosses much damaged about $3\frac{1}{2}$ in. in diameter. Cf. Fox, pl. 32.7, Fleam Dyke.

A sword, total length $33\frac{3}{4}$ in., of which the blade is 29 in. Cf. Fox, pl. 36.6, Barrington.

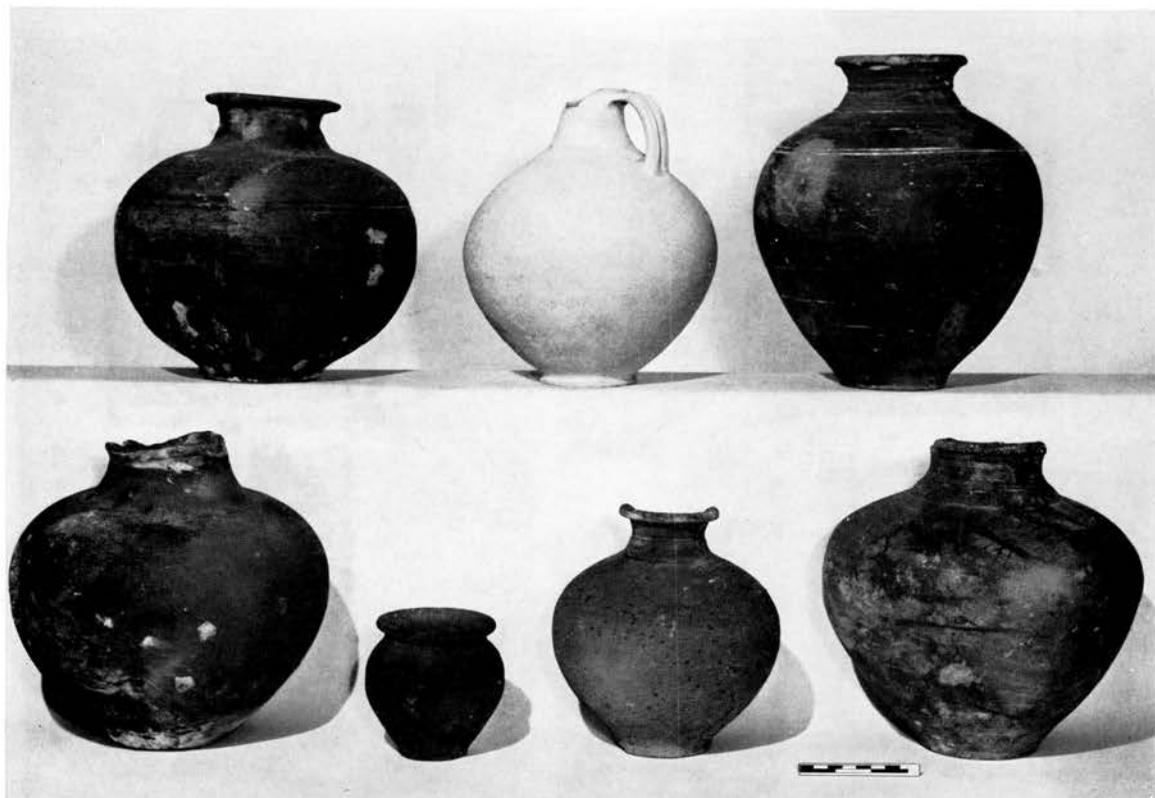
A bronze small-long brooch. Cf. Fox, pl. 30.5, Girton.

A much-corroded spearhead.

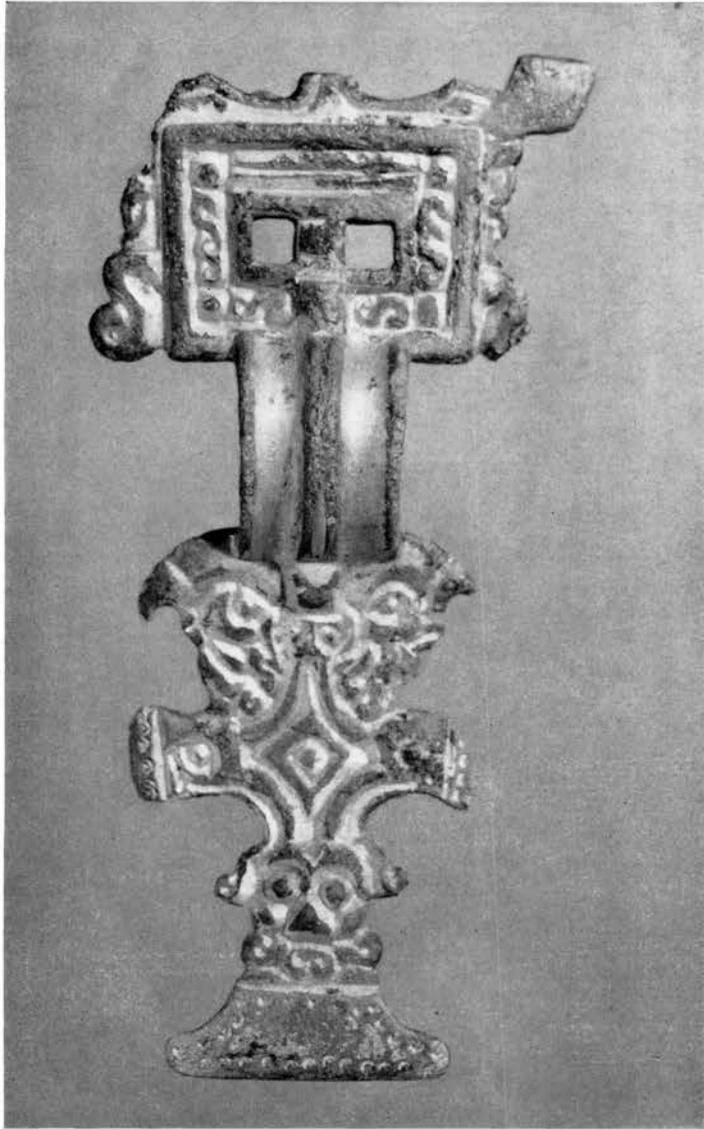
A gilt-bronze square-headed brooch. (Pl. V.) This appears to be a new form of hybrid between types A 3 and B 1 (Leeds, *Square Headed Brooches*). Several hybrids between these two are mentioned by Leeds as dating from about the mid-sixth century. This one is unusual in that the head and bow are like those of B 1 brooches, and the base is of A 3 type, whereas in general the opposite is the case.

In addition to Lieut.-Col. Beckett and Mr Hopkin, our thanks are due to Mr J. V. G. Shilston, the City Surveyor, for rescuing the objects found, and to Messrs Buckingham and Sparrow, the contractors, and their staff for their co-operation.

G. H. S. B., M. D. C.



Roman pottery from a well in Coldham's Lane.



Square-headed brooch from pagan Saxon burial at Ely. 1:1

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