

PROCEEDINGS
OF THE
CAMBRIDGE ANTIQUARIAN
SOCIETY

(INCORPORATING THE CAMBS & HUNTS ARCHAEOLOGICAL SOCIETY)



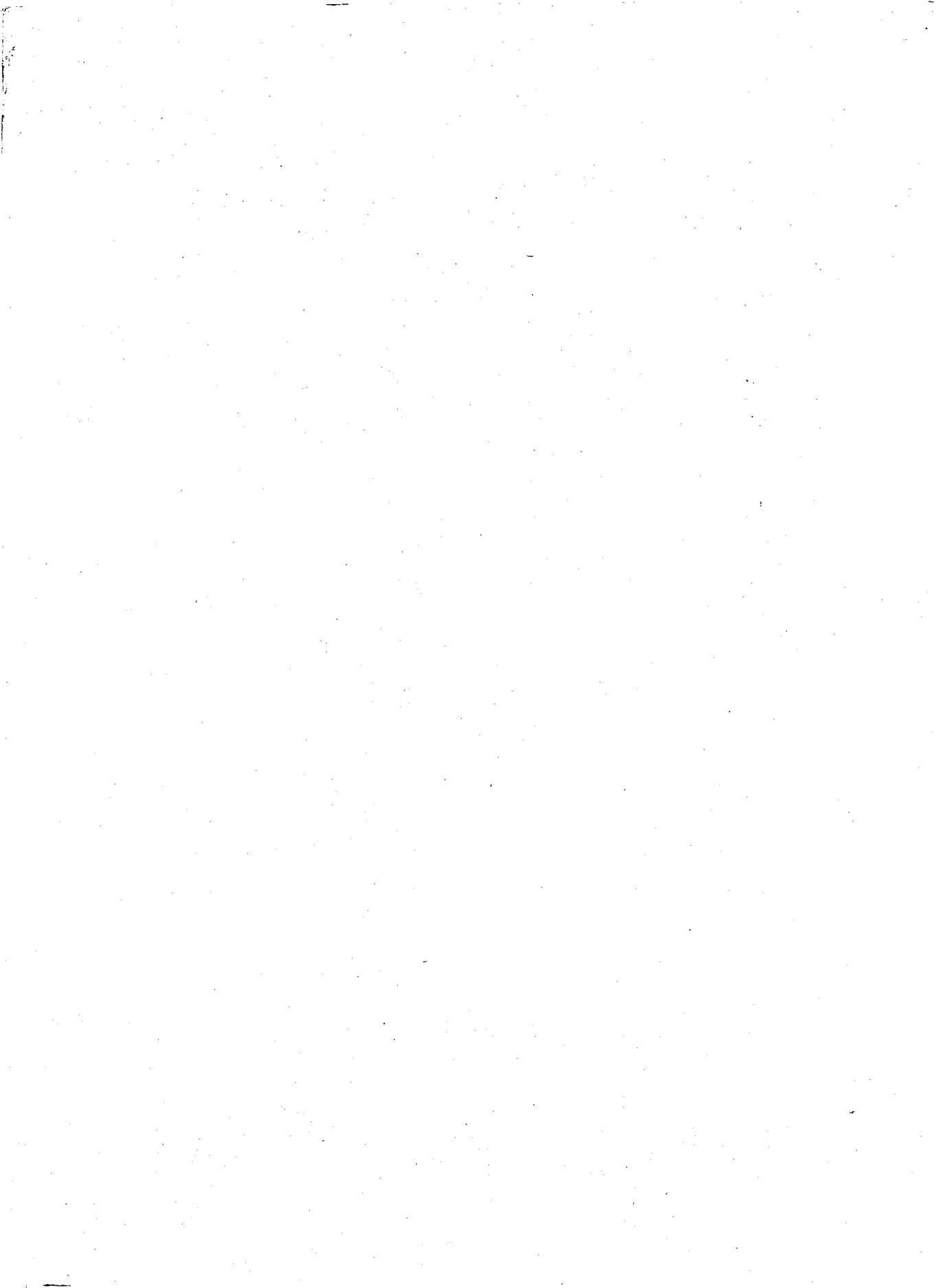
VOLUME LVIII

JANUARY 1965 TO DECEMBER 1965

CAMBRIDGE
DEIGHTON BELL

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THE TREASURE TROVE FROM HARTFORD, HUNTINGDON

P. G. M. DICKINSON, F.S.A.

ON 1 August 1964, while excavating on the line of a road diversion at Hartford, near Huntingdon, a mechanical digger uncovered a hoard of no less than 1108 English and foreign silver coins of the fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries, some 400 of which were in almost mint condition.

The discovery was made in what had been the Vicarage garden, close to the east side of the entrance drive, about 40 ft. from the main road and some 30 in. below ground. The present writer was called immediately. It soon became clear that the coins had been deliberately hidden, rather than accidentally lost. They were enclosed in an earthenware pot with a wide mouth, on top of which a shallower one had been placed to act as cover, both having been wrapped in some sort of bag or cloth tied round with leather thongs, of which some remains were still adhering to the pots. Unfortunately the digger had smashed both pots and scattered the coins, which had to be retrieved by sieving about a ton of earth and finally going over it with a mine-detector, thus finding several coins which had been overlooked.

The English coins consisted of groats and half-groats, with a few halfpennies, covering the reigns of Edward IV, Edward V, Richard III and Henry VII; they gave a good cross-section of the kinds of coin in use at the beginning of the sixteenth century. Ten groats and one half-groat of 1503 showed the sovereign's head in profile; this issue is the first where a true likeness is employed instead of the formal full-face of 'a king', and another innovation is that the name of the mint is omitted. This particular issue is considered to mark the beginning of our modern coinage. All eleven coins were in near-mint condition (Pl. VII).

The other English coins were of the usual medieval type, showing the sovereign full-face on the obverse with an inscription round the perimeter, and on the reverse a cross with inscriptions, including the name of the mint. The proportions of different mint names in the hoard are of interest as an indication of the comparative scarcity of each. The coins are listed in Table 1.

The hoard also included 84 coins of Brabant, of which there were three types, 82 having either a large, or a small shield of arms, and two having the shield enclosed in a trefoil. There were also two small silver Portuguese coins.

Ten days after the find, an inquest was held in the Town Hall of Huntingdon; after two hours' inquiry, a verdict of Treasure Trove was given, and the hoard thus became the property of the Crown. The coins were taken to the British Museum, where they are at present being examined and classified; a full account will later be

published in the *British Numismatic Journal*. An *ex gratia* payment of the equivalent of their market value will be made to the two finders in due course.

The great size of the hoard indicates a wealthy man, and the comparatively large number of foreign coins shows that he was probably a merchant trading abroad. The fact that hardly any of the coins were clipped suggests that he was a man of business and no mere hoarder; he must have selected the best to hide away, which would account for so many being in such fine condition. As the latest coins found were minted in 1503, the hoard must have been hidden shortly after that date.

TABLE I

<i>Groats</i>		
London		430
Bristol (Type 1. BRISTOW)		5
(Type 2. BRISTOLL)		3
(Type 3. BRESTOLL)		2
		} 10
Coventry		3
Norwich		1
York		23
Waterford (Ireland)		1
Calais (France)		1
	Total	469
 <i>Half-groats and halfpennies</i>		
Canterbury (Type 1. CANTOR)		451
(Type 2. CANTER)		37
		} 488
London		25
Norwich		1
York		16
Edinburgh (Scotland)		2
Dublin (Ireland)		4
Calais (France)		6
	Total	542

As a postscript, two unrelated incidents may be of interest. Three months before the find was made, Mr Agger, the digger-driver on the site, had been employed on a road improvement scheme involving the levelling of part of the writer's garden. This opportunity was taken to instruct Mr Agger as to what he should do, if he ever came across any unusual finds. Little did either think that in so short a time this would bear such fruit. Then again, a week before the discovery, the writer and one of the surveyors were discussing the possibility of any interesting finds being made during the road excavations. Had they known that they were standing at the time directly above the treasure, it might have been found sooner and in different circumstances.

THE POTS CONTAINING THE HOARD

J. CHERRY

Department of British and Medieval Antiquities, British Museum

The two pots found with the coin hoard were broken into fragments. It appears that the coins were in the cooking pot, over which the bowl was placed upside down. They are both unglazed and wheel-made (Fig. 1).

The cooking pot is made of grey gritty ware fired to a light red on the exterior. It has a flat base and an inturned rim moulded for a lid seating on the exterior. An incised horizontal line, double at one point, runs round the middle of the pot. The bowl is of smooth red ware, with grooving inside. On the exterior of the rim there remain rusted traces of two iron wires which ran around the whole pot and presumably were used for suspending it, though no trace was found of an attachment for wires across the top of the bowl. The outside of the bowl is marked with irregularly spaced light staining in streaks about $\frac{1}{4}$ in. wide.

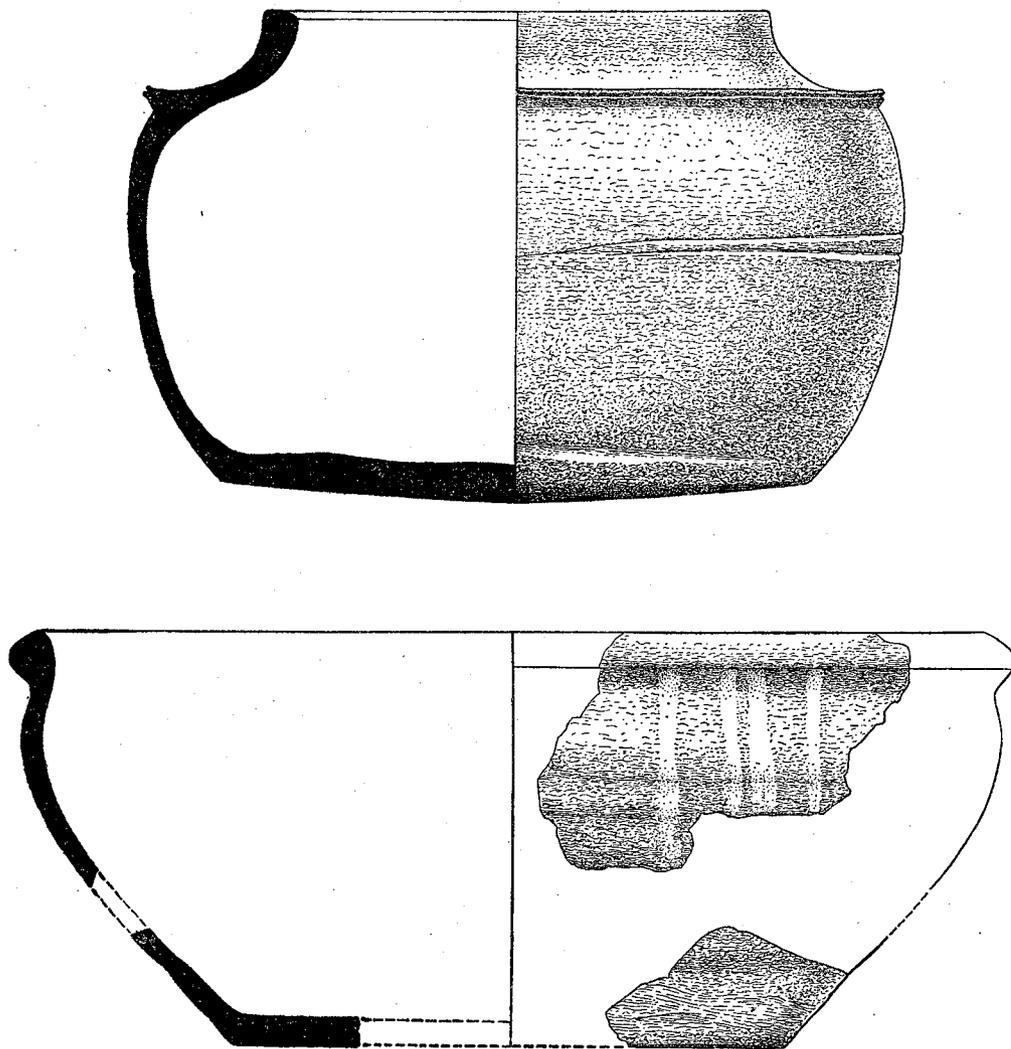
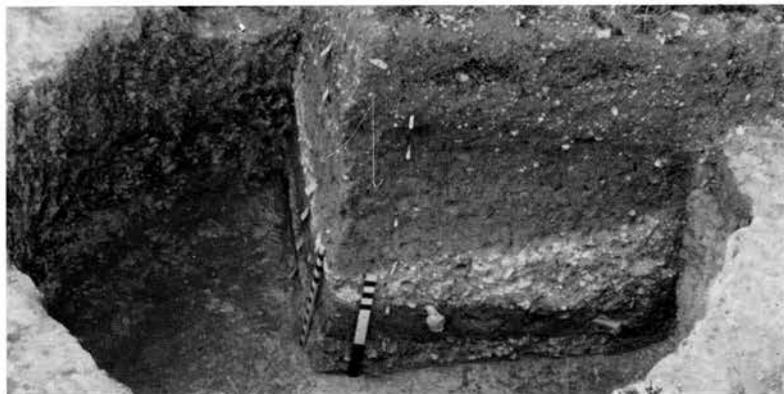
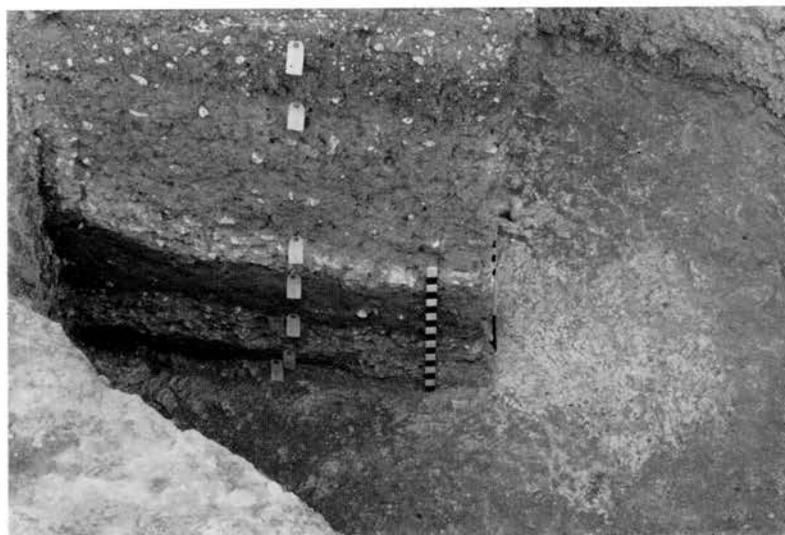


Fig. 1. The pots. Scale $\frac{1}{2}$.



(a)



(b)

Aldwick, Barley; Pit B.

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