

EXCAVATION OF AN IRON AGE AND ROMAN SITE AT MONUMENT HILL, OLD WOKING

BY

F. A. HASTINGS

ON THE drive to Pyrford Court, the residence of The Earl of Iveagh, is a small roundabout,¹ used in the nineteenth century as a turning point for carriages by visitors enjoying the view from the top of Monument Hill. This is the presumed site of Zouch's Monument.² In April 1960 a trial trench was dug here under the direction of Mr. N. P. Thompson, to try to locate the foundation of the monument. The attempt was unsuccessful, but a small occupation site was exposed. Romano-British pottery and fragments of glass were found at a depth of 15 in. on what appeared to be a pebble floor. A layer of ash some 2 in. thick was also noted. Three sherds of coarse gritted pottery of Iron Age type were found but were unstratified.

A further excavation was undertaken in April 1961 under the direction of Messrs. W. H. Dean and F. A. Hastings, during which

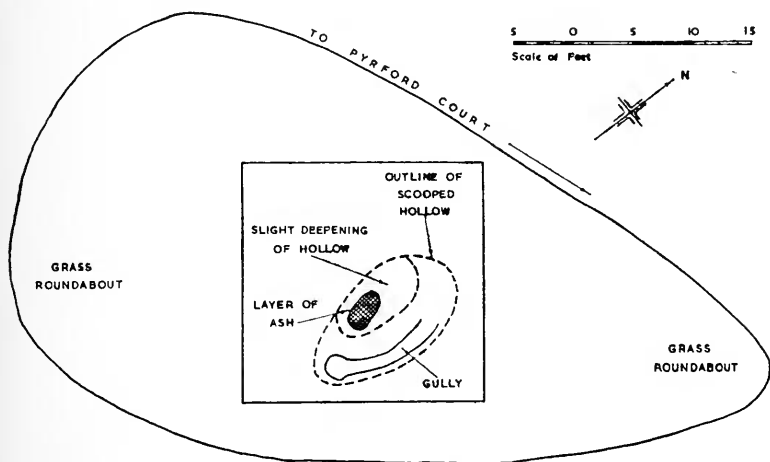


FIG. 1.—PLAN OF EXCAVATION.

¹ N.G.R. TQ (51) 02185775: Geological formation, Bagshot Beds: Height above O.D., approx. 150 ft.

² *Sy.A.C.* XXXVIII, i, 107.

a trench 20 ft. square was dug, at the centre of the roundabout. At an approximate depth of 18 in. a shallow oval scooped hollow some 12 in. deep and 8 by 14 ft. in area was encountered. Within the hollow was a layer of ash and a small gully (Fig. 1). The hollow and gully were not very definite, since the filling differed little in colour and compactness from the surrounding subsoil. Occupation-debris from the soil above the hollow included Iron Age and Romano-British pottery, portions of triangular baked clay loom-weights, a couple of pot-boilers, a fragment of glass, other fragments of baked clay and a glass bead. The pebble floor thought to have been observed in the trial trench of 1960 was now revealed as a natural stony layer. The hollow was surrounded by natural soil. No post-holes or structural remains were found.

Trial-trenching and a resistivity survey in the adjoining field failed to find any extension of the site, and examination of air photographs was of no assistance.

Description of the pottery

1. Rim of bowl, burnished, faint scratched lattice ornament. Cf. *Sy.A.C.* LVII p. 55, Fig. 3, B 33, dated 1st/2nd cent. A.D.
2. Hand-made bowl with incipient bead rim, rather coarse, undecorated, of Belgic derivation. Cf. *Claesentum*³ p. 70, type BBR 4 and p. 97, Fig. 21, 9, c. A.D. 100-120.
3. Small sherd decorated with incised circle.
4. Foot-ring base of wide mouthed bowl, unusual but probably early and of Belgic derivation. Cf. *Claesentum* p. 70, type BER 1 and p. 95, Fig. 20, 16 which is of Flavian date but elsewhere can be as late as A.D. 120.

The above are black-surfaced ware.

- 5 and 6. Rims of wide-mouthed carinated jars. Cf. *Sy.A.C.* LI p. 20 and Fig. 5, Holmes' type 20, which with type 19 he regards as "succeeding the bead-rim as the standard native jar-type of the Flavian period in Surrey." Cf. also *Sy.A.C.* LVII, p. 52, Fig. 2, B 1.
7. Flaring rim of wide-mouthed bowl or jar.
8. Flat base of thick-walled storage jar or urn.
9. Flat base of bowl or dish with tooled groove on under side, representing the last element of the devolved foot-ring.
10. Foot-ring base of bowl or jar.
11. Rim of almost vertical-sided dish. Cf. *Claesentum* p. 74, type DP 1a and p. 110, Fig. 26, 14 and 14a, which were common by A.D. 120.

Nos. 5 to 11 are grey ware.

12. Cable rim of large storage jar of pinkish-buff ware. This type is common in Surrey in the fourth century A.D. Cf. *Sy.A.C.* L,

³ M. A. Cotton and P. W. Gathercole, *Excavations at Claesentum, Southampton, 1951-54* (1958).

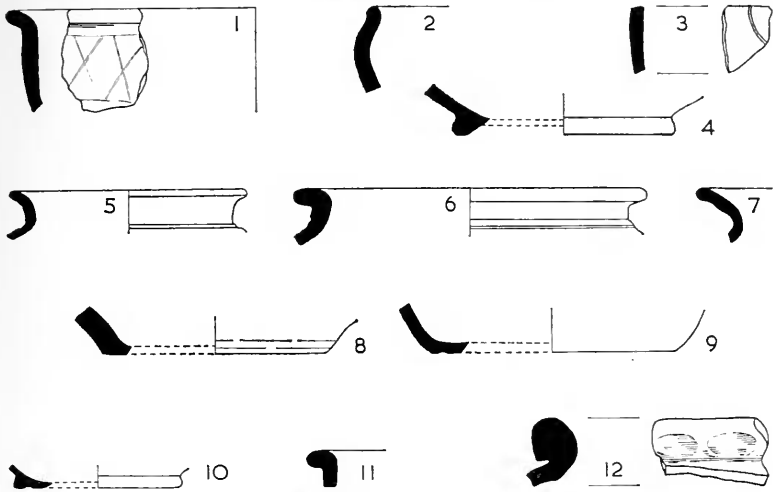


FIG. 2.—ROMANO-BRITISH POTTERY. (4)

p. 91, Fig. 8, No. 41; LI, p. 79, Fig. 8, No. 35; and *Claesentum* Fig. 27, No. 13, dated A.D. 370-390. But see *H.F.C.* XXII, p. 14 and p. 15, Fig. 3. Cunliffe cites a number of examples of early date, some of which are unpublished, including one from Twyford Down dated to the second half of the 1st cent. A.D. (*H.F.C.* XIII, Fig. 8, No. 57).

Other sherds which could not be closely dated included sixteen which are probably of Iron Southern Second B fabric but of no recognizable forms, and thirty-two of Romano-British type, a few of which were reddish ware probably of fourth-century date.

Description of the bead

This is a green glass bead of flattened tubular shape with faint fluting, the actual cross-section being an elongated hexagon with rounded angles, pierced at the centre. It is 8 mm. in length, 5 mm. across the wide section and 3 mm. across the narrow section. It was submitted to Dr. D. B. Harden, Director of the London Museum, who, although in hospital at the time, reported on the bead as follows: ". . . these longish beads of green or blue glass of various sections are very common in late Roman times . . ." and he suggested that this specimen was probably of the fourth century.

There are a number of similar beads in the collection from Cold Kitchen Hill, in Devizes Museum. Unfortunately they are not closely dated, but occupation of the site continued into the fourth century.

Conclusions

The site consists of a small pocket of occupation beginning in Iron Southern Second B, denoted by pottery, loom-weights and pot-

boilers. It then continues into the first and second centuries A.D., and finally there is evidence of fourth-century occupation, denoted by the green glass bead and pottery.

It is difficult to imagine such a small amount of habitation-debris covering such a wide range of time and confined to this small scooped hollow with no stratification. Presumably this may be explained by disturbance, and by the fact that only a small part of the site has so far been uncovered.

Acknowledgments

Thanks are due to The Right Honourable The Earl of Iveagh, K.G., C.B., C.M.G., for permission to excavate; to Dr. D. B. Harden, M.A., Ph.D., F.S.A., F.M.A., for the report on the bead; to Mr. K. Annable, F.S.A., for checking the bead with the collection in Devizes Museum; to Miss K. Rose for the excellent drawings; to Mr. A. J. Clark, F.S.A., for carrying out the resistivity survey; and to the volunteer helpers, particularly those who worked so industriously to fill in and make good the site.