

# Trial Excavations in Field 410, Brockley Hill part 1

STEPHEN CASTLE

THE SITE (fig. 1), comprises the field on the east side of modern Watling Street (A5), immediately opposite the hospital and lying between Hilltop Cafe (now derelict) and the pond to the south of Brockley Grange. It is situated on high ground, some 460ft. a.m.s.l. The entire field was ploughed in January 1972, having previously been pasture for a great many years.

## Site B

Ploughing in the south-west corner of the field (c.TQ 175939) disclosed the brick foundations of a house, believed to have been erected in c.1680.<sup>1</sup> A little to the east was a scatter of 1st-2nd century sherds, including a mortarium stamp of Matugenus (fig. 4, MS1), tile fragments and burnt clay daub. This

area, designated Site B, was trial trenched by Mr. F. Cottrill in 1937.<sup>2</sup> His trench disclosed the foundations of the c.1680 house and to the west, Roman occupation debris, which contained pottery and a 1st century brooch.

## Site C

Ploughing on the south side of the pond (c.TQ 174940) disclosed a scatter of mortarium sherds, one with "FECIT" counterstamp (fig. 4, MS2), tile fragments and burnt clay daub. This area is situated immediately to the south of the Roman kiln (?) excavated in the bank of the pond in 1956.<sup>3</sup>

## Excavations in 1972

Following the harvesting of the barley in late August, the tenant farmer gave permission for the cutting of trial trenches at Sites B and C.

## Site B

Trench I, revealed part of a large clay pit at least 4ft. deep which contained large quantities of 1st-2nd century coarse-ware. In the soil above the pit were two mortarium stamps (fig. 4, MS3-4). Restriction on the time allowed prevented the full excavation of this pit, which was, however, presumably connected with the local pottery industry.

Trench 2, was cut between T1 and the modern Watling Street fence. It revealed part of a field ditch (post-medieval) which is probably a continuation of the one found to the south at Site A (Hilltop Cafe) in March-May, 1972.<sup>4</sup> The ditch had been cut through the infill of a pit, consisting of charcoal, ash, tile fragments, burnt clay daub and potters' clay; containing large quantities of mid-1st century coarseware sherds. Most of these were from flagons of Hofheim type (fig. 2, 15, 17-47) including a neck fragment with part of a potter's stamp (fig. 4, FS1). From near the top of the pit was found a coin (imitation *as*) of Claudius I, A.D. 41-54 (fig. 3) and sherds of a Dr. 30 bowl, c.A.D. 50-60 (fig. 5). A

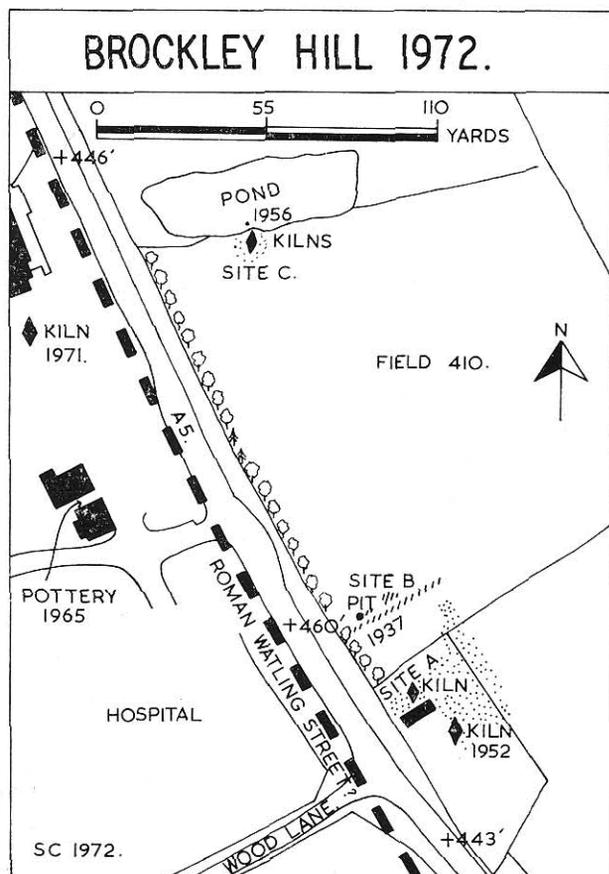


Fig. 1. Map showing the sites excavated in 1972.  
(Crown copyright reserved)

1. K. M. Richardson, 'Report on the Excavations at Brockley Hill, Middlesex, August-September 1947' *Trans London and Middlesex Archaeol. Soc.* (1948) 2.
2. F. Cottrill, 'Note on the trial excavation at Brockley Hill, 1937,' *Trans London and Middlesex Archaeol. Soc.* (1937) 686-687.
3. Information from the late Mr. A. E. Ridley, who discovered a kiln-like structure with walls of burnt clay, and associated with which were quantities of small jars and poppy-head beaker sherds.
4. Excavated by the writer, report forthcoming.

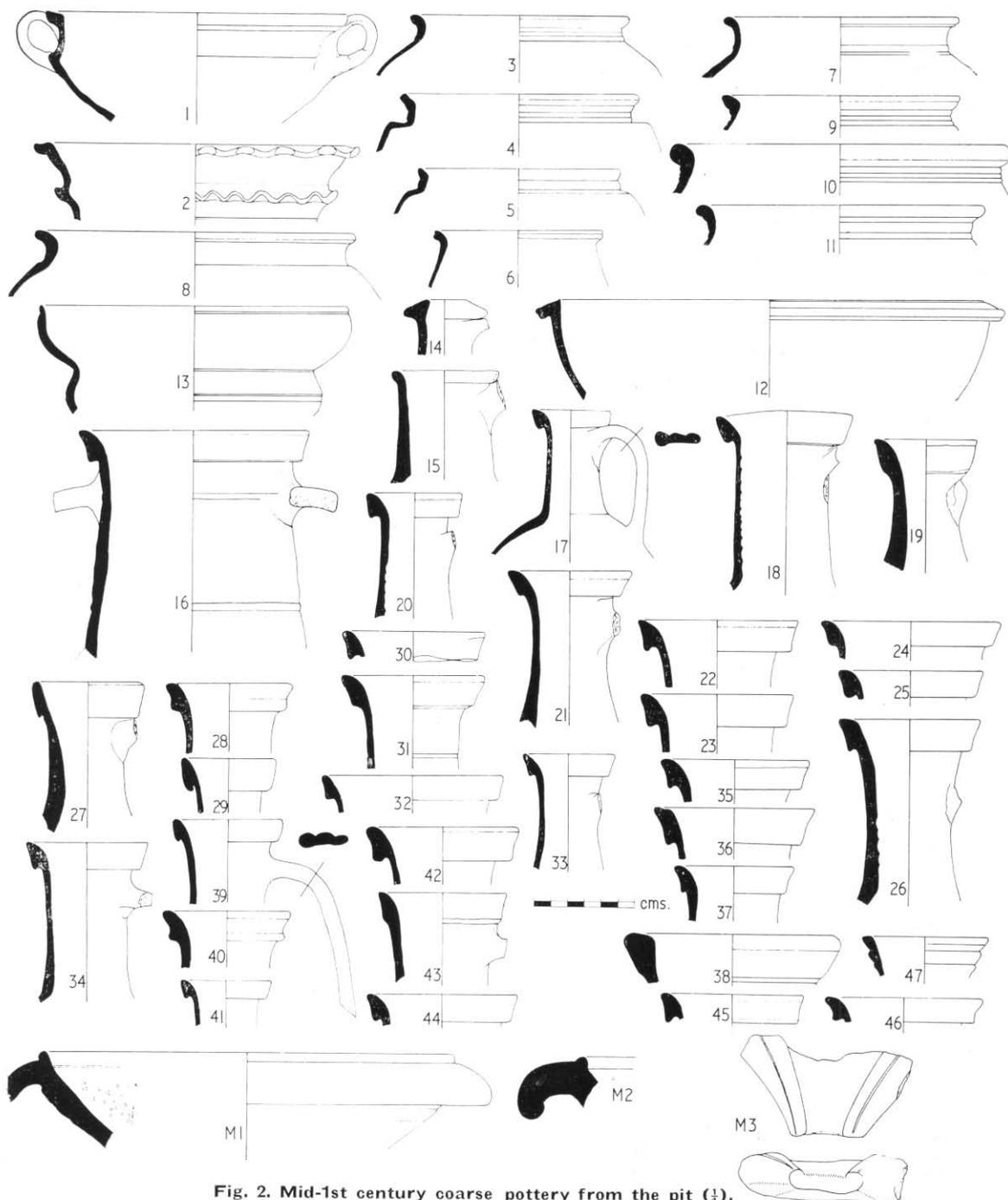


Fig. 2. Mid-1st century coarse pottery from the pit (‡).

notable feature of this pit was the exceptionally large quantity of charcoal (oak, *quercus robur* type<sup>5</sup>) and burnt potters' clay. The natural yellow clay at

5. Charcoal fragments kindly identified by Dr. D. F. Cutler of the Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew.

the west end of the trench was burnt reddish-orange.

#### Summary of Results

This pit is presumably connected with the pottery industry and would seem to date from c.A.D. 50-60. The coarse-ware sherds from its infill include wasters

(fig. 2, 1, 16, 18); indeed it is clear that this group comprises rejects from a nearby kiln or kilns. Prior to the discovery of this pit, there was no clear evidence of activity at Brockley Hill before c.A.D. 65-70.<sup>6</sup> In view of the probability of a kiln or kilns of this period lying fairly close by, and the threat of continual ploughing, further excavation is clearly desirable and should provide a wealth of information about the early Roman pottery industry at Brockley Hill. It seems likely that late-1st-early 2nd century pottery kilns are also situated in the vicinity.

#### The Coin (fig. 3)

From near the top of the pit. An imitation as of Claudius I, A.D. 41-54. Obv. Head of Claudius left. Rev. Minerva with shield.



Fig. 3. Imitation as of Claudius.

#### Local Coarse-Ware (fig. 2)

All of the vessels described below are in the granulated fabric typical of pottery produced at the kilns in the Brockley Hill-Radlett and Verulamium region.

##### Trench 2, pit.

1. Two-handed bowl in hard cream ware; slightly blackened on the rim. There is heat cracking on the handle which indicates that this vessel is a waster. Similar, though not identical to Richardson,<sup>7</sup> 8, 1-10.
2. Tazza (frilled incense cup) in cream ware. Cf. Richardson, 13, 53-14.
3. Jar with moulding below the rim, in hard white ware with blue-speckled slip.
4. Jar with pronounced shoulder, in ware as 3.
5. Jar similar to 4 in white ware.
6. Small jar or beaker in cream ware, blackened externally.
- 7-8. Cordoned jars in creamish-buff ware.
- 9-11. Jars with moulding below beaded rims in greyish-white ware with light blue-speckled slip.
12. Reed-rimmed bowl in ware as 3 and 4.
13. Campanulate bowl in pink ware.
14. Disc-mouthed flagon in reddish-brown ware, partly blackened. Cf. Richardson, 12, 44.
15. Two-handed Hofheim type flagon in buff ware, with cordons and four-ribbed handles. Cf. Camulodunum<sup>8</sup> 140/161b.
16. Roughly-made single-handed flagon with beaded-rim, in whitish-cream ware with burnished exterior.

6. Excavations by the writer at Site A, 1972, revealed large quantities of waste pottery in a clay pit, c.A.D. 65-100. Associated with this pottery was an unworn sestertius of Vespasian, A.D. 71 and pre-early Flavian Samian ware.

- 17-47. Single-handed Hofheim type flagons (Camulodunum 140). Flagons of this type were being produced at Kiln 26 at Camulodunum in c.A.D. 60.<sup>9</sup> This type had only previously noted from Brockley Hill in 1937 (Cottrill's trench at Site B) and the west side of Watling Street (1968 report nos. 13 and 44-45). It occurs at Camulodunum, London and Verulamium in pre-early Flavian contexts and was superseded by the ring-necked flagon.
17. In light buff ware with three-ribbed handle. The rim is badly finished.
18. In buff ware and with badly buckled rim. A waster.
- 19-25. Cream ware.
- 26-40. White ware. No. 30 has a badly finished rim.
- 31-32. Cream ware with pink core.
33. Pink ware with smooth exterior.
- 34-38. Buff ware. No. 38 probably with two handles.
39. Drab greyish-cream ware.
40. Pinkish-buff ware.
41. Pink ware.
- 42-43. Creamish-buff ware.
44. Ware overfired to grey with lighter grey heat-glazed exterior. A waster.
45. Cream ware with blackened rim.
46. Overfired buff ware with dark grey and red core. A waster.
47. Ring-necked flagon in hard cream ware.

#### Mortaria.

- M1. In cream ware with grey core and with grey, red and white flint grits.
- M2. In cream ware, partly overfired to drab grey.
- M3. The spout from a vessel which has flaked off where the extra clay has been added. Drab greyish-cream ware.

#### The Mortarium Stamps (fig. 4)

By Mrs. K. F. Hartley

- MS1 Surface find from Site B. Flange fragment in buff ware with part of a retrograde name-stamp of Matugenus. A date of c.A.D. 100-125 is indicated for the products of this Brockley Hill potter.
- MS2 Surface find from Site C. Flange fragment in brown ware with grey core with FECIT counterstamp used by the potter Marinus. A date of c.A.D. 70-110 is indicated.
- MS3 Trench I, above pit. Flange fragment in cream ware with pink core and unworn grey flint grits. It bears the retrograde namestamp of Gissus. His rim-forms suggest activity in the period c.A.D. 100-135.
- MS4 Trench I, above pit. Flange fragment in cream ware. It has the final D of a stamp, which when complete reads LVGVD (an abbreviation of Luguduni or Lugudunum?). Other stamps from the same die are known from London (4); Old Winteringham, Lincs; and Verulamium. It has never been found in

7. Richardson, *op. cit.* 7-23.

8. C. Hawkes and M. Hull, *Camulodunum* (1947).

9. M. Hull, *Roman potters' kilns at Colchester* (1963) 158-161.

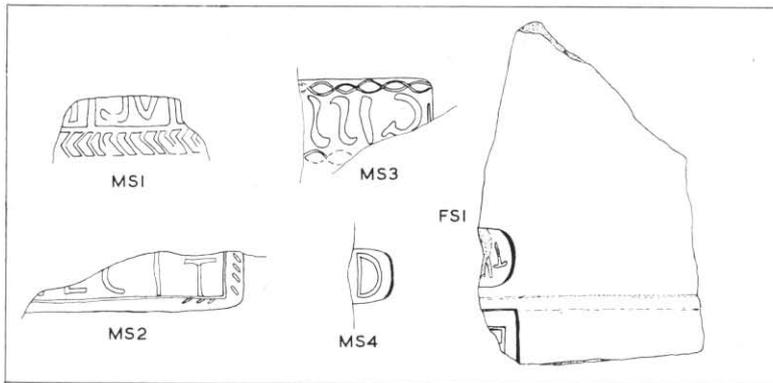


Fig. 4. mortarium and flagon stamps.

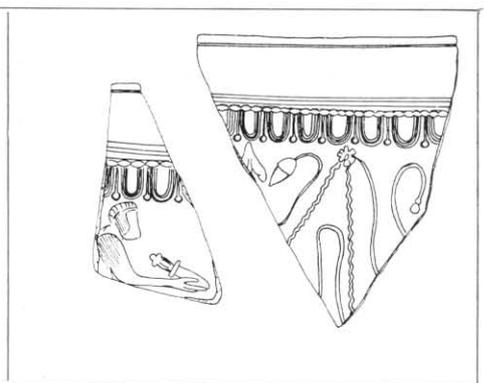


Fig 5. Samian, 5. Gaulish, Dr. 30

association with a namestamp. The form of this fragment would fit well with a date of c.A.D. 60-95.

All four stamped mortaria are in the granulated ware typical of the Brockley Hill potteries.

#### Flagon Stamp (fig. 4)

Part of a double-stamp on the neck of a flagon in granulated pinkish-buff ware. Almost certainly from a flagon of two-handled, Hofheim type and similar to No. 15. It is not at present possible to identify this stamp and only the finding of more complete examples will enable it to be read. It is the first recorded flagon stamp from the Brockley Hill potteries.

#### Samian Ware

By Miss C. Johns

*Dr. 30 South Gaulish* (fig. 5). This is by far the earliest and the most interesting piece of Samian from Brockley Hill.

The fabric is pink and fine, with small cream-coloured flecks, the slip red and very glossy. Like the ware, the form of the vessel suggests an early date. There is a small double-bordered ovolo with a plain,

bead-tipped tongue. Relatively little of the decoration survives; it consists of panels, some with figure-types, some with cruciform arrangements of stems and leaves. One figure-type only remains, the Vulcan, 0.70A.

There are two very close parallels for this vessel. One, unstamped and not attributed to a potter by Knorr, is from Mainz, and is illustrated in *Knorr* 1952, Taf. 67B. The other is from Usk, Monmouthshire, and was published by G. C. Boon in *Monmouthshire Antiquary* 1 (Part 2), 1962, p.29. The Usk vessel bears the mould-maker's stamp MARTIALIS F. There is no doubt that the three vessels, Mainz, Usk and Brockley Hill, are products of the same workshop. Knorr dates Martialis c.50-60 A.D., and the general style of these pieces supports this. Recent excavations at Usk have produced much Neronian and some Claudian material, showing that the MARTIALIS form 30, found in the 19th century, fits in well at the site.

The Brockley Hill piece should be of Claudian to early Neronian date.

## Current Activities

### EXCAVATIONS

**Fulham**, by Fulham and Hammersmith Historical Society. Excavation of Fulham Pottery under the direction of V. R. Christophers. Experienced diggers required to excavate and record key areas; also to survey, record architectural detail and work on processing (see *the London Archaeologist* Vol. 1 No. 11). Inquiries to V. R. Christophers, c/o 10 Church Gate, Fulham, S.W.6.

### PROCESSING

**Fulham**—see above.

**Putney**, by Wandsworth Historical Society. Work on the prehistoric and Roman material from Bemish

Road, Putney takes place 7.30-9.30 p.m. on Friday nights (except the last one of the month) during term times at Hotham School (top floor), Hotham Road, Putney, S.W.15.

**Southwark**, by Southwark and Lambeth Archaeological Society and Southwark Archaeological Excavation Committee. Mondays and Thursdays 6.30-9 p.m. at Montague Chambers, Montague Close (adjoining Southwark Cathedral near London Bridge); Tuesdays 6.30-9 p.m. at Archaeological Workshop, Archbishop Temple School Annexe, Westminster Bridge Road (near Lambeth North Underground Station). General inquiries to Graham Dawson, Cuming Museum, Walworth Road, S.E.17 (703 6514).