

## Bronze Age and Late Celtic Burials from Yateley, Hants.

By STUART PIGGOTT.

**D**URING 1926-27, while digging for gravel at Moor Place, Yateley, a quantity of Bronze Age pottery was found, and was given by the owner of the pit, Mr. B. W. English, to the Reading Museum. The pottery forms two groups: the one from the first discovery, in 1926, of several urns in a domed chamber in the gravel, and the other from a second find in December, 1927, of burnt ashes, etc., in an artificially scooped out pit in the gravel, which had been cut through in the digging<sup>1</sup>. The field in which the pit is dug is called "Ash-hole Field" on an estate map of 1875.

The first group of pottery, of which only fragments now remain, appears to have consisted originally of three or possibly four burial urns, and was found in the spring of 1926, in a chamber in the gravel, and with the urns a long piece of wood which crumbled away on exposure to the air. The urns were broken up by the workmen as soon as they were found, but from the fragments some idea of the originals can be obtained. One urn of well-made reddish ware was of the characteristic Late Bronze Age 'bucket-urn' type, with a row of indentations 3 in. from the rim made in the body of the ware<sup>2</sup>, and not, as in slightly earlier examples, on a raised fillet. This style of decoration is characteristic also of the first (Hallstatt) phase of the Early Iron Age, and vessels of this type belong to the overlap period when bronze was in general use, and iron known, but still a rarity. At Colchester, a bucket urn was found in association with an iron spearhead<sup>3</sup>, thus affording proof that the type of urn must be dated very late in the Bronze Age, somewhere about 600 to 700 B.C.

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<sup>1</sup> See Reading Mercury, Jan. 21, 1928.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. Abercromby Vol. II., Pl. XCV., No. 473.

<sup>3</sup> Abercromby, Vol. II., p. 51 and Pl. XCV.

Two other fragments, each from separate urns, show decorations of incised lines on applied bands<sup>4</sup>, as mentioned before. One piece shows a small portion of the rim, also decorated with transverse cuts made when the clay was soft. On the only other ornamented piece it is clearly noticeable that the fillet was applied as a strip of soft clay to the body, for it has broken off in part. The rest of the fragments are unornamented, belonging to the bodies or bases of urns. The urns all appear to have been bucket-shaped, and the ware is in all cases coarse and gritty, varying from red to black, and badly baked.

The remaining fragments from the second site, consisting of two pieces of the upper part of an urn, and a few plain pieces, require little comment. The ornamentation is made with the tip of the finger on an applied raised band just below the rim. The ware is very good for Bronze Age pottery:—dark brownish black with a smooth surface. The latest discovery from the pit is the base of a very large cinerary urn of coarse pottery, measuring nearly a foot in diameter. It was found in a shallow excavation in the gravel near the last site, on April 23, 1928, and probably more pieces of the sides were unearthed but not noticed and so destroyed by the workmen.

In association with the former burial were found several pieces of heavy ferruginous sandstone ("pan"). Two of these fit together, and one face of these, and the face of another larger piece, have been ground down smooth and flat, as if in use as a rotary quern.

In all the interments there was no trace of any mound or barrow. Late Bronze Age burials were almost invariably in the form of cemeteries of urns deposited in shallow excavations in the ground over a limited irregular area.

In connection with this site, it may be as well to give a few notes on another discovery of Late Bronze Age pottery at Yateley. This was made some years ago in gravel digging near Hillfield House, about  $\frac{3}{4}$  mile S.E. of Moor Place, and I am indebted to Capt. J. Stillwell for his courtesy in allowing me to examine and

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<sup>4</sup> As Abercromby, Pl. XCV., No. 470 a.

make drawings of the pottery, which is in his possession. The details of the various fragments are as follows :—

1. Part of rim of urn, the flat top decorated with oblique finger-tip decoration. Good smooth black to reddish ware. Original diam. 10in.
2. Parts of small well-made vessel with degenerate collar. The ware is very good, hard, smooth and cream-coloured. Diam. at mouth 6in. Originally 8in.-9in. high. Diam. of base about 4in. 'Food-Vessel'?
3. Parts of upper portion of a large well-made urn with degenerate collar. Richly decorated with groups and zig-zags of impressed cord-pattern decoration. Flat rim, coarse gritted ware, brick-red to black. Exterior fairly smooth. Original diam. 15in.<sup>5</sup>
4. Parts of upper portion of clumsy urn of badly baked coarse red ware. Flat rim 1in. wide. Decorated with faintly impressed cord-pattern zigzags. Original diam. 12in.
5. Small food vessel of black ware with few flint grits. Black on inside, grey to red on outside. The rim is uneven, but smoothly rounded in section. Height 3¾in., diam. at mouth 3½in., base 2½in.<sup>6</sup>

The decoration on top of a flat rim is a Late Bronze Age and Early Iron Age characteristic; it occurs on urns Nos. 6 and 7 from a Late Bronze Age urnfield at Sulham<sup>7</sup> (in Reading Museum) and on pottery which might well be Early Iron Age from near Basingstoke, also in the same Museum.

In addition to the pottery described above, a 'bucket-urn' was found at Round Close, quite near to the Hillfield pit, and is now in the Winchester Museum. It was found about 18in. from the surface. The upper part is missing, the base is 8¼in. in diam. and 6in. of the sides remain. It contained the burnt bones of a child. The ware is coarse reddish brown with much grit. The absence of the upper part may be due to the fact that it had been buried upright, and the top, being nearer the surface,

<sup>5</sup> For the type, see Abercromby, Vol. II., Pl. LXVI., No. 62.

<sup>6</sup> For the type, see Abercromby, Vol. I., Pl. XLII., No. 220.

<sup>7</sup> Proc. Soc. Antiq., Vol. XXI. (1907), p. 308 et seq.

would have been broken by ploughing. Unfortunately, there are no details as to the discovery of the other Hillfield pottery, but from the absence of the bases (or rather their presence in small fragments only) of the larger urns it may be suggested that they may have been buried inverted, so that the upper parts of the vessels would be deeper and therefore safe from the plough-share. As well as the pieces particularly described above, there are several fragments of unornamented ware belonging to the sides and bases.

In response to an enquiry made to Mr. J. Patterson of Farnham concerning a find of pottery in a gravel-pit of his at Darby Green, near Yateley, which I had heard of and thought might be Bronze Age, two groups of pottery were very kindly sent to the Reading Museum on loan for the exhibition of the Moor Place pottery before the Berks Archæological Society at its meeting at Reading University on April 14th, 1928.

These two groups appear to be grave groups of either the latter (La Tène) period of the Early Iron Age, when the Belgic invaders introduced cremation and burials were made in 'flat' cemeteries—probably about the 1st or 2nd century B.C., or early Roman-British—about the 1st century A.D. These burials closely resemble those found at Haslemere, Surrey, in 1903-5<sup>8</sup>, and assigned to the last phase of the Early Iron Age, before the Roman Conquest, but when Roman influence was being felt in England via Gaul.

The details of the burials are as follows :—

Burial No. I. (1928)—

Well-made urn of light grey thin hard ware. Two grooves round bulge and two lines just under rim. Rim broken and top of urn cracked. Below the bulge the sides quickly taper to a small foot, which has an incised line on the bottom. It appears to have contained the burnt bones of an adult. Found in a shallow depression in the gravel about 2ft. from surface.

Burial No. II. (1922)—

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<sup>8</sup> Proc. Soc. Antiq., Vol. XXI., pp. 216-228.

Guide, Haslemere Museum, p. 3 and Pl. IV.

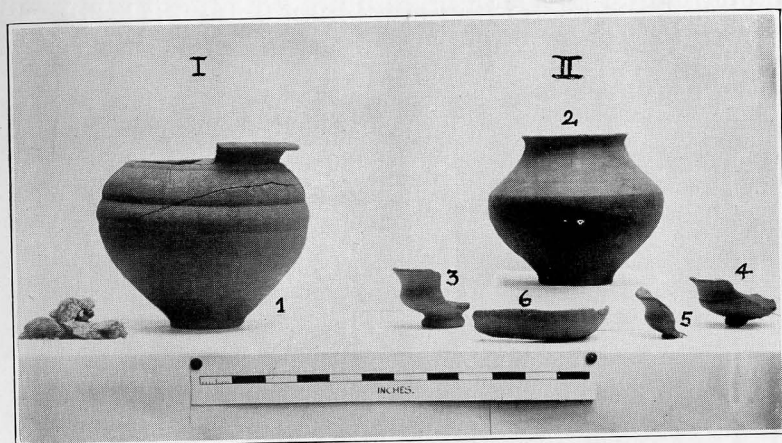
2. Cinerary Urn. Good dark grey thin ware, plain rim and well marked carination of shoulder. Incised ring under foot. Contained burnt bones, probably of a child.

3 and 4. Associated vessels of tazza form, pale red ware, grey core, smooth surface on outside.

5. Part of cup of brownish-red ware. Grey core. Polished exterior.

6. Saucer of thick grey-cored pale red ware, shading to brown in parts. Probably used as cover to urn.

This burial was found in similar circumstances to the other, but there were abundant evidences of burnt earth, etc., surrounding it, which were absent in the other find.



Since the above account was written, three further burials in fragmentary urns have been found at Moor Place Gravel Pit, and are in the Reading Museum. These urns, so far as can be decided from fragments, are of the 'Globular' type, which dates from the same period (Late Bronze Age) as the 'bucket urns' previously found.