Excavations on Blewburton Hill, 1948 and 1949

By A. E. P. Collins, B.A.

INTRODUCTION

THE excavations carried out jointly by the Berkshire Archaeological Society and Reading Museum in 1947 on Blewburton Hill were reported by me on pp. 4-29 of Vol. 50 of this Journal. The main results achieved by those excavations were the establishment of the existence of a former Iron Age hill-fort on the hill and the demonstration that the site was occupied by Iron Age folk both before and after the erection of rampart and ditch defences. The earlier settlement on the hill was shown to have been defended by a timber palisade. Post-holes of several huts, (probably circular) and grain-storage pits and the pottery they contained showed this settlement to have been typical of those occupied by Iron Age A2 farmers on the Wessex chalk. This phase of settlement was brought to an end by the digging of a V-sectioned ditch, and the throwing up of a timber-reinforced rampart inside the ditch to defend the settlement. AB types of pottery and rotary querns showed that subsequent occupation was carried out by a people possessing new fashions and techniques. As at so many other sites in the South of England, the building of earthen defences marked a definite cleavage with earlier traditions. The Marnian invasions of around 250 B.C. have been invoked as, alike, a reason for the new defences and a source for the new fashions in pot-making.

In the 1947 excavations, several perplexing features were revealed in the long cutting (Cutting B), planned to provide a section through the Iron Age defences. One concerned the nature of the rampart (largely ploughed flat and honey-combed by rabbit holes at that point). Rabbit disturbance made it difficult to be certain whether this was of the Hallstatt berm-and-timber-revetted type or of simple glacis construction. Another difficulty concerned the 'step' or shelf cut into the inner edge of the ditch. An explanation of this was sought in the following of fissures in the chalk by the Iron Age excavators who were thus temporarily led astray from the planned line of the defences. A third and most important problem concerned the second ditch (or pit) of which a section was cut at a distance of 33 ft. outside the main ditch. Was this a second defensive ditch whose corresponding rampart had been ploughed flat? I drew attention to the existence a little west of this section of an apparent bank which might be the continuation of such a rampart. Could one also locate the original entrance through the defences on the western end of the hill?

Over and above these problems of the construction of the Iron Age defences, there remained the impressive terraces on the western end of the hill, whose date and purpose had still to be determined. It was thus felt that a further season's work could be profitably

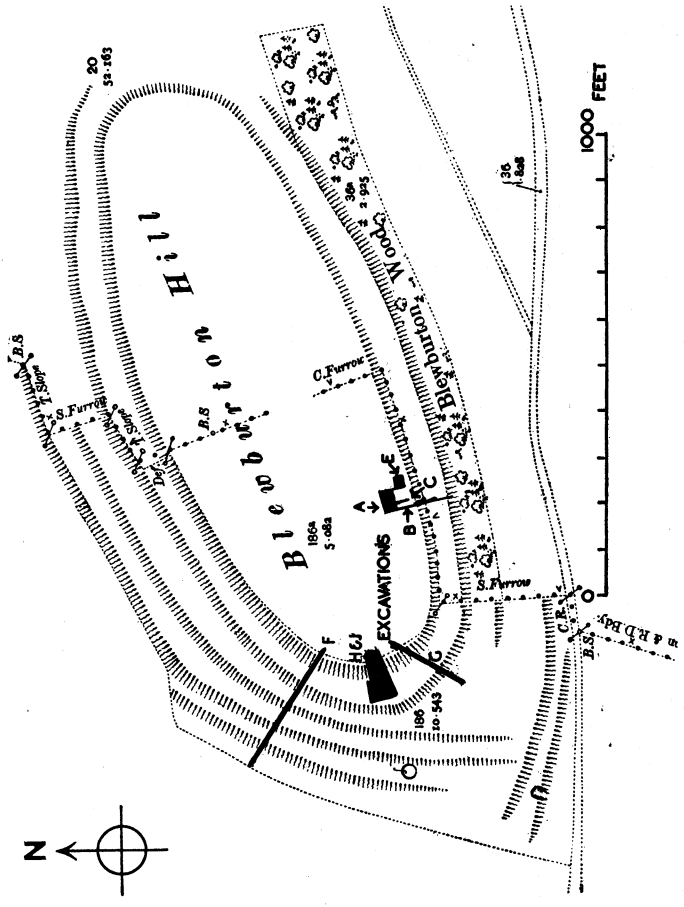

FIG. 1. Blewburton Hill, showing all cuttings of excavations, 1947-49. Based on the O.S. 25″ map with the sanction of the Controller of H.M. Stationery Office.

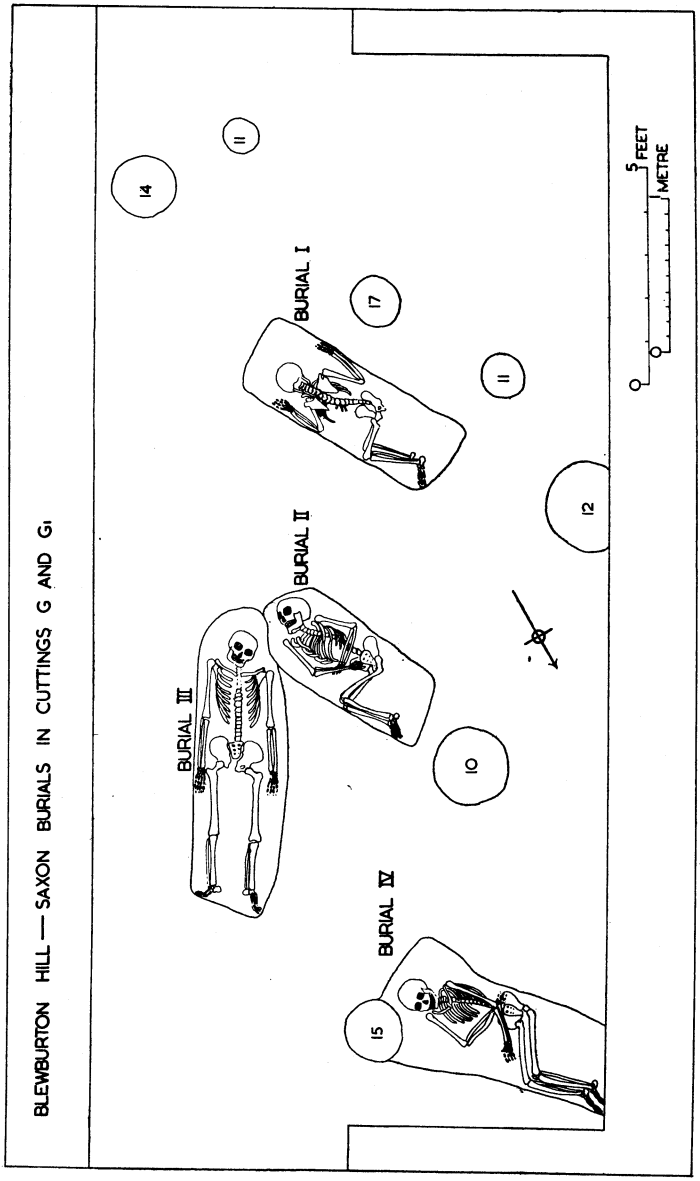

FIG. 6. Plan of Saxon burials and Early Iron Age pits and post-holes, Cutting G and G1. Figures inside holes indicate depth in inches below surface of solid chalk.

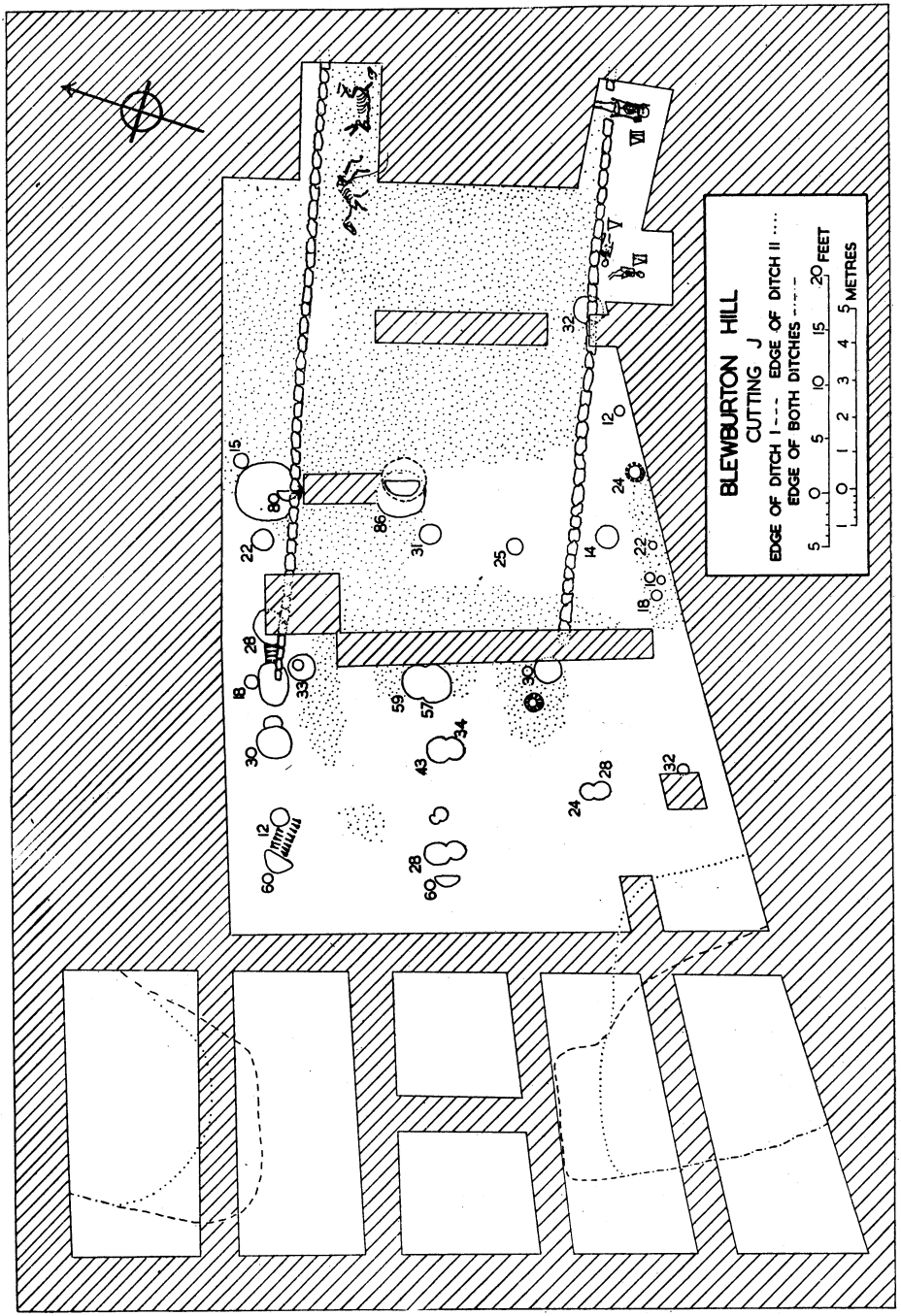

FIG. 7. General plan of entrance, Cutting J. Figures inside post-holes indicate depth in inches below solid chalk surface.

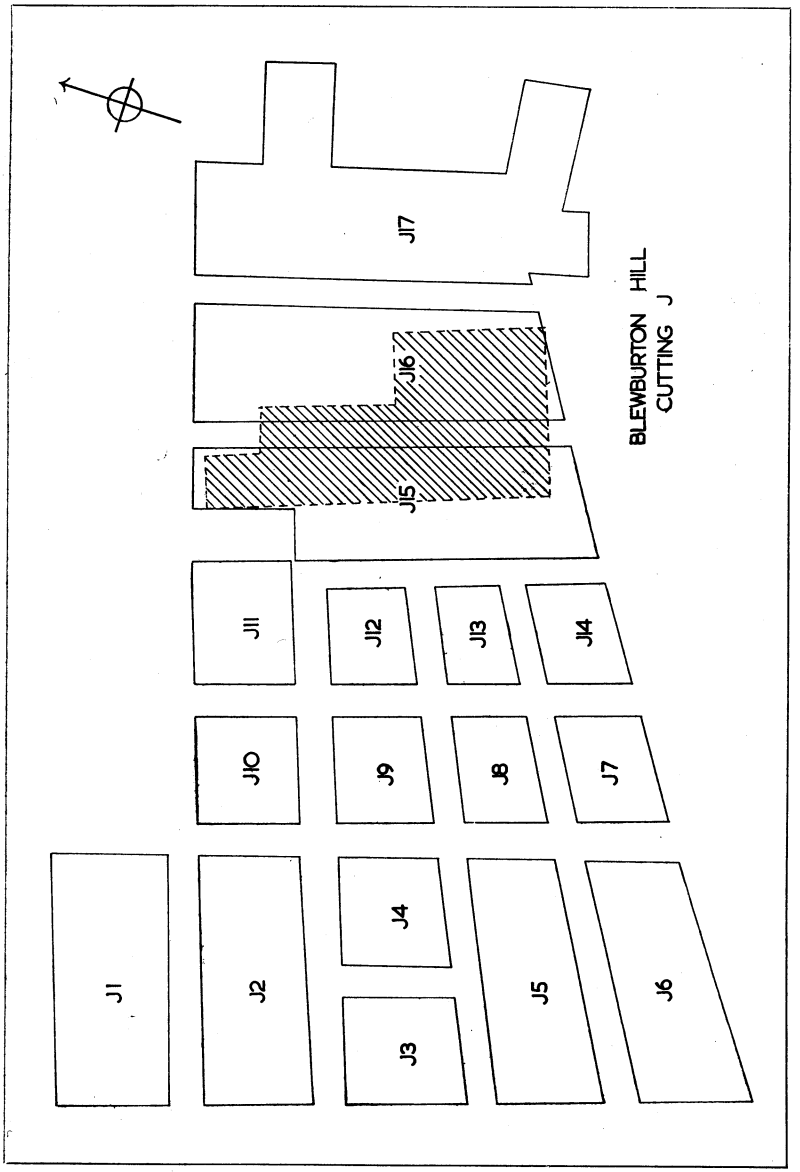

FIG. 8. Sketch plan showing subdivisions of Cutting J. and relation to Cutting H (obliquely shaded).

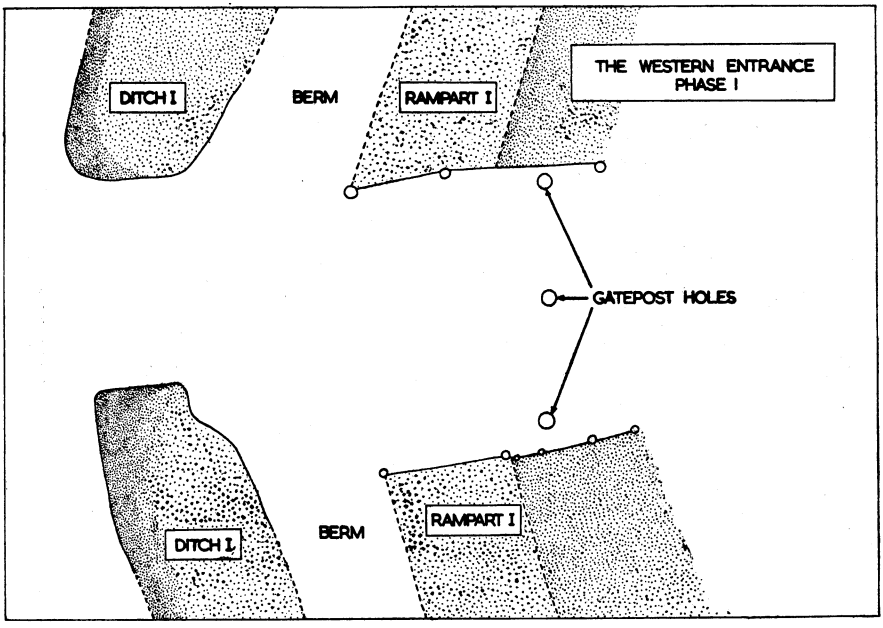

FIG. 9. Sketch-plan reconstruction of the western entrance, phase 1.

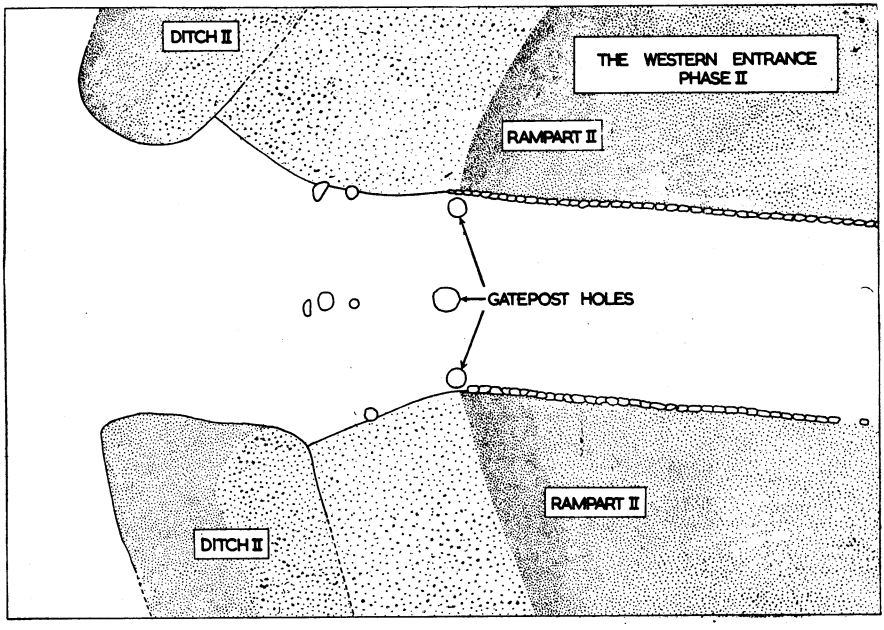

FIG. 10. Sketch-plan reconstruction of the western entrance, phase 2.

undertaken, and since the last cutting of the 1948 season located the western entrance, but was not large enough to reveal its complexities, the work extended into a third season in 1949.[1]

The following account of the excavation deals consecutively with the 1948 and 1949 cuttings. The Iron Age small finds and the Saxon burials from both season's work are then treated together, and the final section summarises the conclusions to be drawn from all three years' work.

THE EXCAVATION.

CUTTING F.

This Cutting, 6 ft. wide and over 280 ft. long, (Figs. 1–3) was laid out to give a complete transverse section of the Iron Age defences and of the lynchets at a point where they all appeared to be well preserved and free from rabbit disturbance.

The first 105 ft. were excavated in 24 ft. sections, separated by 3 ft. baulks; later the system of cross baulks was discontinued. The upper end of the cutting was begun about 25 ft. within the scarp of the uppermost terrace on this end of the hill. It soon showed that the surface profile of the hill at this point was deceptive. As one had suspected, the uppermost 'terrace' proved to be not a lynchet scarp but the rampart of the Iron Age defences. It will be noted from Fig. 2 that the vertical height of this scarp was 14 ft., while the lower (lynchet) scarps ranged from 6 ft. to 14ft. in height. A deposit of up to 6 ft. of brown earth mixed with chalk fragments, flints and quartzite pebbles was found to be banked up against the well-preserved inner face of the rampart, thus completely masking it. This deposit had all the appearance of the plough soil covering the occupation layers in, for instance, Cutting A in the previous year's work. It represents the results of many generations of modern ploughing aided by gravity on the slightly sloping top of the hill. At a depth of 3 ft. at this end of the Cutting a yellow glass bead, apparently of Saxon type was found, perhaps indicating that a Saxon grave had been disturbed by this ploughing. The only other finds were a few small and well-worn sherds of Iron Age types. At a distance of about 20 ft. from the end of the Cutting, black earth intervened between it and the tail of the rampart. This earth was rich in finds, including large quantities of animal bones and

[1] As in 1947, the Society and Reading Museum shared expenses on the site. Funds were considerably increased by contributions from the general public, partly as the result of an appeal launched by the *Reading Standard*. Mr. W. A. Smallcombe, Director of the Museum, again placed me in charge of the work. Labour was provided by members of the Museum staff, and of the Society, by university students, and friends. Permission to dig was kindly granted by Wade's Estates Ltd., the owners of the land. The necessary survey work was done in 1948 by two members of the Reading Borough Surveyor's staff and by Mr. F. J. Collins, and in 1949 by Mr. F. J. Collins and Mr. Lawrence. Thanks are due to all the above and to Dr. Dahne and to Mr. G. W. Smallcombe for help with the Saxon skeletons (pp. 51-4).

sherds of AB types. From it came the 'saucepan' pot with burnished lattice decoration shown in Fig. 12, No. 1. The bones, as in Cutting A (1947) seem to have collected against the barrier formed by the rampart. They included many parts of the skeleton of a small horse (Horse 'B' in Appendix I). Among the artifacts was a ring or 'ferrule' (Fig. 17, No. 4), carved from deer antler. In this layer and resting on the solid chalk was a roughly circular patch of Bunter pebbles. Although there was little trace of burning or of the presence of charcoal, their interpretation as a hearth seems possible.

Continuation of the Cutting towards the scarp of the rampart showed the structure of the latter to be complex. Under it lay a rather 'greasy' black layer, an ancient turf-line resting on decomposing natural chalk. As in the 1947 cuttings, it was found that the rampart here overlay the earlier palisade trench. This, again sealed by turf, had a breadth of about 18 in. and a depth of about 1 ft. The turf-line itself contained several small sherds of good quality cordoned haematite-coated ware. Patches of charcoal also occurred on the turf-line. It petered out inside the rampart, as in Cutting A, an indication that the surface of the ground inside was scraped to provide material for the rampart.

Under the rampart and excavated through the turf-line and into the solid chalk to depths of up to 22 in. were three massive post-holes, clearly for holding revetment posts for the rampart. One of these post-holes was found beneath a well-marked vertical change in the stratification of the rampart. From this point inwards towards its tail, the rampart consisted of a mixture of dark earth and largish chalk fragments; from the same point outwards and towards its scarp, the rampart was composed of large, clean chalk rubble. Perhaps there was a fence or hurdle-work of some kind running from post to post along this line of revetment timbers. Fresh, clean chalk from the ditch outside was thrown up against this hurdling, while a mixture of chalk and earth, probably scraped off the surface, was thrown against it from the inside. The change in colour at this point is clearly brought out in Pl. IIb. Other post-holes were met with both inside and outside the line of postulated hurdling. One, even, had run into the line of the earlier palisade trench (Pl. IIa).

The vertical change in composition of the rampart extended upwards to a height of 4 ft.; at that height the earth and chalk mixture on the inside appeared to spread outwards over the mass of clean chalk rubble. At 5 ft. from the base there was a layer of dark earth about 3 in. thick, apparently a turf-line marking a pause in rampart construction. Over this, again, was a layer up to $2\frac{1}{2}$ ft. thick of large dirty chalk rubble. The continuity of both the turf-line and the last deposit over the position of the hurdling seems to show that no trace of it or of any substantial timbers remained to a greater height than 4 ft. at the time when the rampart was heightened by the addition of this dirty chalk rubble. Unfortunately, no really dis-

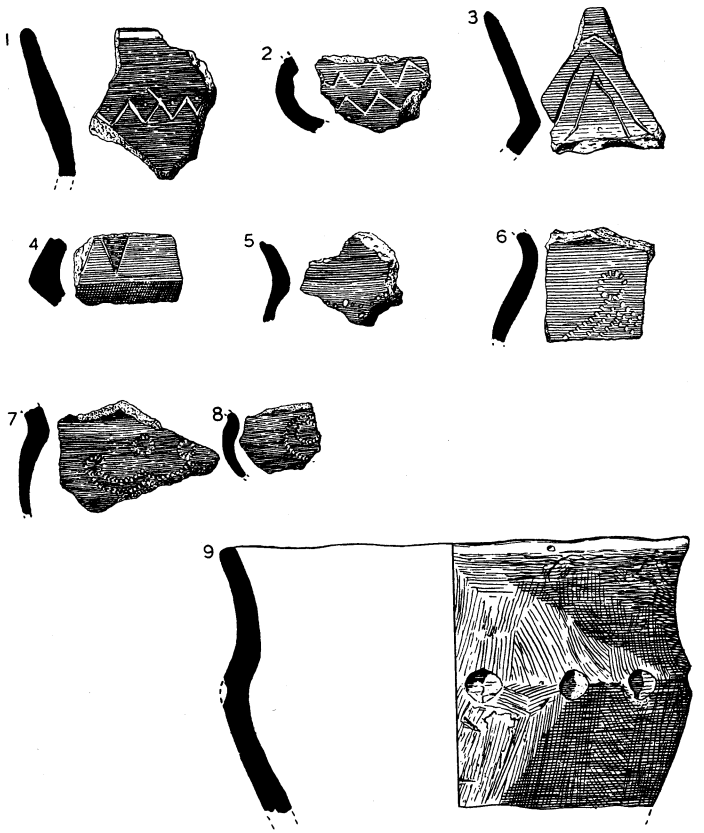

FIG. 11 A-type sherds from the rampart and entrance, Cuttings G, H and J. Scale: $\frac{1}{3}$.

tinctive sherds occurred in the rampart material to make it possible to date either the original construction or the latter addition to the rampart.

The clean chalk rubble of the original rampart had a maximum surviving thickness of about 4ft. Above it and underlying the old turf-line in the rampart body were two deposits—the lower of dark earth and the upper of a mixture of dark earth and small chalk rubble. The clean chalk rubble extended outwards towards the inner edge of the ditch for a distance of 24 ft. There it merged imperceptibly into a thin layer of decomposing chalk on the inner face of the ditch.

The ditch (Pl. IV) was found to have a width at the top of about 18 ft. and a depth of 10½ ft. (closely paralleled by the 10 ft. 8 in. depth recorded in Cutting B). The upper levels of the ditch filling, to a max-

imum depth in the centre of nearly 5 ft. were found to consist of a mixture of brown earth and small chalk fragments very like the plough soil in the top of Cutting F, inside the rampart. This deposit graded into another, up to 1 ft. thick, which contained larger and more angular chalk fragments. Beneath this, again, at a depth in the centre of 6 ft. was a layer about 6 in. thick, of dark earth, apparently a turf-line which contained a sherd of an AB 'saucepan' pot with shallow-tooled decoration. This turf-line appears to mark the final stage reached in the original silting of the ditch—i.e. the angle of rest of the silting. The inner face of the ditch at a depth of 5 ft. became very steep, with an angle of about 60° with the horizontal. Below the turf-line for a further 2 ft. was a fairly homogeneous deposit of chalk fragments mixed with some earth. At a depth of about 8 ft. the ditch narrowed appreciably and the first traces of a burial began to appear. The loose nature of the rubble filling and the considerable depth through which the bones were distributed made it impossible to uncover more than sections at a time. The first bones to appear were a human femur, tibia and fibula and the bones of the foot. These last overlaid the pelvis of some large quadruped. The discovery of a non-cloven hoof on the right hind leg of the creature revealed it as a horse. Immediately in front of the stifle joint was an iron pin or rivet (Fig. 17, No. 2). A few inches away were several sherds of a burnished black pot (Fig. 17, No. 5). The horse's spine ran parallel with the southern wall of the cutting, while the leg stretched across the cutting from side to side. Most of the ribs were badly shattered. The animal had thus been buried on its left side, with hind quarters close to the inner side of the ditch. The human leg-bones pointed obliquely to the position where the animal's fore-legs could be anticipated. Further clearing in this direction revealed first a human skull lying *inside* two broken ribs. At a slightly greater depth than the skull and more or less parallel with the horse's spine was the human spine in a very decayed state. The skull had been displaced from the end of it and pushed down within the rib cage. The lower jaw was not with the skull. Just beyond the skull and close to the outer face of the ditch were the horse's two fore-legs and the man's arms. The head and neck of the horse rested on the outer face of the ditch, the neck being twisted so that the head was doubled back and facing over the animal's withers.

After the removal of the horse's skeleton a very well preserved example of an iron adze (Fig. 17, No. 1) was found lying on its side (i.e. so that its wooden shaft could have laid horizontally). Close by were further rust stains such as could have been made by a coil spring or a hank of wire. At a depth of about 1 ft. beneath the position occupied by the horse's feet and the man's skull, further clearing revealed small bones and large sherds of black burnished pottery, showing through fissures in the loose chalk rubble. Clearance of the rubble showed these to be the complete skeleton of a dog and the base of an AB pot. Reconstruction of the pot has made it clear

that the sherds already noted by the horse's hind leg belonged to the same vessel (Fig. 17, No. 5). Dog and pot rested in the last few inches of filling on the bottom of the ditch. With them scattered apparently fortuitously through the chalk rubble were over 100 Bunter quartzite pebbles. The final cleaning down of the outer face of the ditch revealed the human lower jaw at about 2 ft. from the skull.

Later study of the ditch section seemed to indicate disturbance caused by the burials. Over part of the inner side of the filling, stratification was regular and included a suggestion of a turf-line at a height of about 2 ft. above the bottom of the ditch. This, however petered out and was succeeded in the outer part by a confused jumble of dirty chalk rubble. It can be suggested that this turf-line was in existence before the burial took place and that the ditch had also silted up to that level before that time. The identity of fabric between the sherds associated with the horse's hind leg and those found with the dog, well below the man's head, demonstrates that all three corpses were buried at the same time. The displacement of the lower jaw and of the skull may have been due to the general settling of the ditch filling after the decay of the flesh, but might have been due to mutilation before burial. The man's general posture is clear, with one leg over and the other under the horse's hind quarters and his body occupying the space between the horse's fore and hind legs. Can this be explained by saying that the man had been cast into the ditch riding the horse, with his feet tied together under its belly? If the man had then slewed round under the horse's belly one could thus account for the position of his legs over and under the hind quarters.[1]

These finds in the ditch filling were the last of Iron Age date that we discovered in Cutting F. The remaining 200 ft. of the cutting, through four successive terraces, was completely sterile. As can be seen from Figs. 2 and 3, no trace of the Iron Age ditch could be seen before excavation. When its existence had been proved, it was clear that the final stages of the filling had had the purpose of making a level terrace or lynchet over the top of it. A glance at the rampart section above the ditch also indicates that the present outer face of the rampart is unlikely to have been its original face. The section of the deposits numbered 3, 5 and 6 on Fig. 3 would surely have been rather different if the present face had been original. As it is, they appear to end in mid-air on the outer face of the rampart: one can only suspect, therefore, that the present face, like the level in-filling of the ditch, represents a product of lynchet making. How far the original rampart face projected beyond that of to-day it is difficult to say; if one is to judge by the slope of the natural chalk face between the ditch proper and the clean rubble of the rampart core, it may perhaps have projected another four or five feet at the summit.

[1] A study of this horse (Horse 'A') and the dog skeleton by Miss Judith E. King of the British Museum (Natural History) is printed as Appendix I.

It was disappointing that no datable small finds were discovered to give a clue to the age of the lynchets. The features of the section itself, though interesting, were ambiguous. No traces of any boundary mark could be seen on the outer or inner edge of any of the terraces. As one had anticipated, each scarp was a combination of positive and negative lynchets. The deposit on the lower edge of each terrace, forming the positive lynchet, consisted of a fine-grained, homogeneous, yellowish-white material with no apparent trace of humus and few chalk fragments. On some of the terraces this was underlaid by a layer of broken chalk, perhaps the result of natural disintegration of the surface of the solid chalk. On the inner edge of each terrace the fine yellowish white material petered out, so that the modern turf rested on the surface of the solid chalk.

CUTTING G.—Cutting G (Fig. 4) was planned to cut a section through the slight outer bank suspected (p. 21) of being the remains of an outer rampart defence for the hill-fort. Between this bank and the line of the main rampart was a level area nearly 40 ft. wide which sloped gently down to the west to merge into the topmost lynchet (Terrace 1 in Cutting F). Work was begun on the south-western end of the cutting, 24ft. below the crest of the small bank. The only feature of note on this part of the cutting was a small ditch, filled with clean chalk rubble about 10 ft. from the end, and just below the outer face of the small bank. At the very end of the cutting was a small scatter of white patinated flint flakes.

The small bank itself proved a surprise; instead of the rampart built of heaped up material which its appearance had suggested, it was shown to be solid natural chalk with a thin layer of chalk rubble and earth on top. Continuation of the cutting across the level area between this 'rampart' and the main rampart revealed the main Iron Age ditch. Immediately inside the pseudo-rampart, Cutting G provided an oblique section through a small filled-in ditch or pit. Its filling, which contained some animal bones and not very distinctive sherds, consisted of a layer of black earth on the bottom, followed by a deposit of clean chalk rubble and a further layer of mixed earth and chalk fragments. Beyond this ditch, although the general trend of the surface of the solid chalk was level, it was rough in the extreme, suggesting that it had been artificially levelled by rough picking or hewing. Thirty-four feet from the summit of the pseudo-rampart, Cutting G struck the outer lip of the main ditch where it had a width of about 14 ft. As in Cutting F, the upper layers of the ditch filling consisted of plough soil. This had a total depth in the centre of about 3 ft. and rested on a 6 in.-thick black band interpreted as a turf-line. Beneath this turf-line the silting comprised clean chalk rubble containing a few stray sherds and bones. Among the bones were a human radius and ulna and among the sherds were two (Fig. 12, Nos. 4 and 6) belonging to decorated AB bowls. Outstanding in this deposit were two massive chalk boulders, the larger of which measured nearly

4 ft. across. The larger lay on the bottom of the ditch with no intervening silting. It was too heavy to move without difficulty but it was possible to see underneath it. All that lay between it and the floor of the ditch were a few flakes of chalk that appeared to have been scaled off the under surface of the boulder by frost. Why the ditch-diggers allowed their newly-excavated ditch to be cumbered with these boulders remains a mystery. The total depth of the ditch was 6½ ft.

The next 25 ft. of Cutting G revealed the scarp of the rampart. The first feature of note was a 'step' about 5 ft. wide and cut into the solid chalk to a depth of 4 ft. at the inner edge. Its level lies about 1 ft. above that of the modern turf covering the main ditch. Its interpretation seems to be bound up with that of the other exceptional features in the cutting:—the pseudo-rampart; the level stretch from this to the main rampart; and the relatively shallow depth of the main ditch. All four features can be explained by the artificial lowering of the level of this area at a date subsequent to the building of the Iron Age defences. There is no definite evidence for the date of, or reason for this levelling. The only hint that can be obtained has already been mentioned: the levelled area grades into that of Terrace 1 in the lynchet series on the western end of the hill. It may have served as an extension of this lynchet or as a means of access to it.

The extension of Cutting G through the main rampart showed a structure comparable with that seen in the upper end of Cutting F. Very extensive disturbance by rabbits has made interpretation difficult and for a space of 2 ft. impossible (as shown by the gap in Fig. 4). This gap is placed just where, on the analogy of Cutting F, one would expect traces of a line of vertical fencing or hurdling. Between this gap and the scarp, the main mass of the rampart consisted of clean chalk rubble to a depth of 2½ ft., lying on an ancient turf-line. The rubble contained some A-type sherds and animal bones. Under the black earth of the turf-line lay 1 ft. of loose natural chalk. An unexpected feature in this part of the section was the absence of a pre-rampart palisade trench. All that a careful search revealed were two shallow post-holes, one of which contained fragments of unburnt wood. Fig. 4 shows that the stratification beyond the rabbit 'hiatus' is very different. Beyond this point the pre-rampart turf-line has vanished, presumably in a general scraping of the surface to provide building material for the rampart. The strata of the tail of the rampart rested directly on the decomposed surface of the natural chalk. At the bottom lay a deposit of black earth containing many A-type sherds and animal bones. This was overlaid by a thin deposit of dirty chalk rubble. Next, there was a narrow black band, presumed to be a turf-line, followed above by another layer of dirty chalk rubble. Backed against this, as in the upper end of Cutting F, was a thin deposit of black earth containing AB sherds, mixed with others of A types.

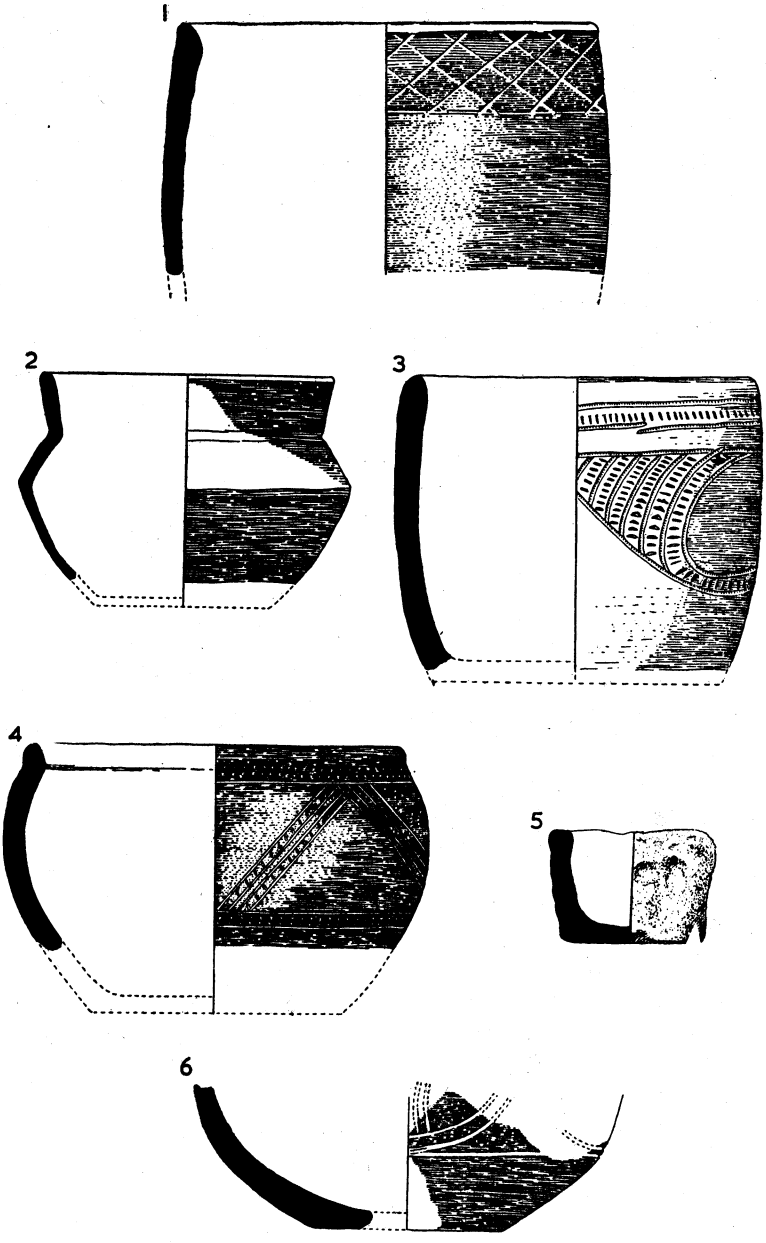

FIG. 12. A-type (No. 2) and AB-type (1, 3–6) pots from Cuttings F—J. Scale: $\frac{1}{3}$.

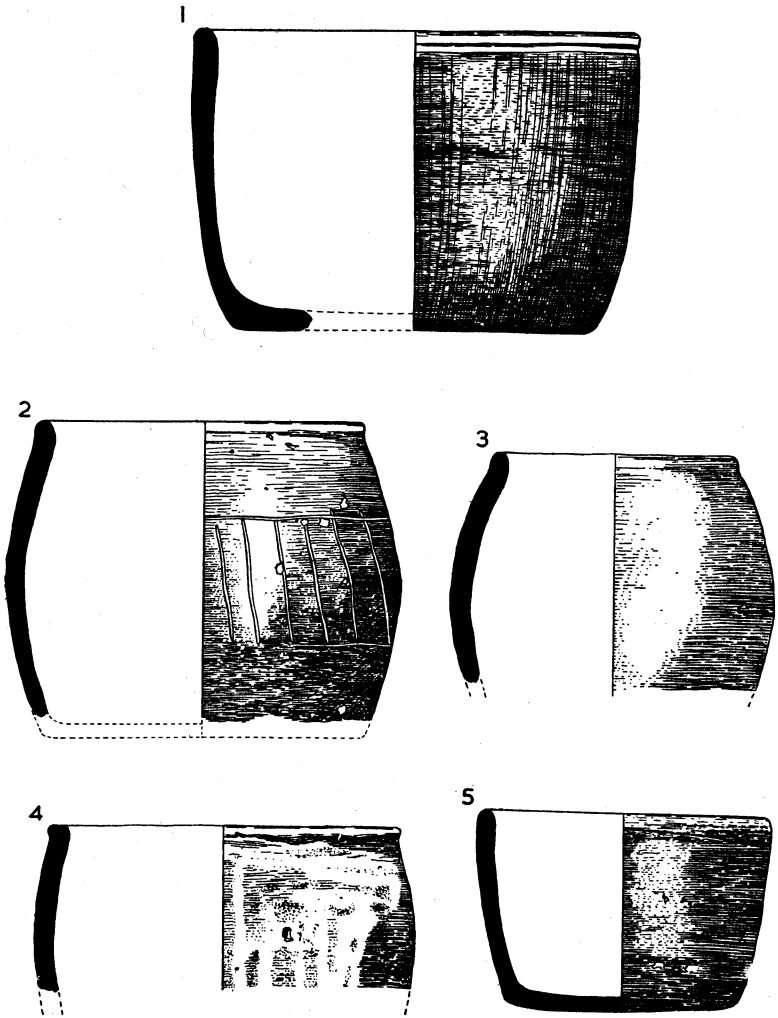

FIG. 13. Associated group of pots from two pits in Cutting G1. Scale: $\frac{1}{3}$.

At a point about 17 ft. from the scarp of the rampart, a soft patch of filling began to appear in the solid chalk. In this, a skull was uncovered, lying on its face. Five feet beyond this, a second skull, lying on its left side was uncovered in a similar pocket. These finds at once recalled the pagan Saxon burial discovered in 1945 about 30 ft. from the line of our cutting (R. J. C. Atkinson, *Oxoniensia* X (1945) p. 193) and a Saxon cemetery was suspected. Shortly afterwards a third grave began to appear. To enable these graves to be cleared, the cutting was doubled in width for a distance of 25 ft. This extension was called Cutting G1. A first result was the recovery of large quantities of pottery and bones from the AB occupation level through which the graves had been cut. The final cleaning down to solid natural chalk revealed a fourth grave, besides the rest of Burials I and II and several post-holes and pits. Fig. 6 gives a plan of the burials, including a part of Cutting G and all of Cutting G1. The burials are described separately in a following section. It will be noted that the grave of Burial IV impinged on a large Iron Age post-hole. The two holes of most interest were those whose depths are shown as 10 in. and 12 in. These both contained large AB-type sherds of which a representative selection is shown in Fig. 13. The small black 'saucepan' pot, Fig. 13, No. 5, had a deposit of a rather frothy, light slag on the inside. More of this occurred loose in the filling of both pits.

CUTTING H.—This cutting was an attempt to discover the original entrance through the rampart into the hill-fort. It was expected—and the expectation proved to be justified—that the modern footpath crossing the hill which here traverses the rampart through a slight depression, would preserve some memory of the ancient entrance. As the area covered by Cutting H was included in the 1949 Cutting J a description of its stratification and features is included in the following account of Cutting J.

CUTTING J.—Cutting J (Figs. 1, 7 and 8) was planned to cover the whole of the gateway through the western defences. Fig. 8 shows its relation to the previous year's Cutting H.

The Causeway.—A causeway, struck in Cuttings J2, J3 and J4, was readily demarcated by the lips of the ditch on each side and had a width of between 27 and 28 ft. Its solid natural chalk showed almost immediately under the modern turf. No trace of road metalling remained and it would appear that the original Iron Age road-surface had been removed in the course of Mediaeval lynchet making. The present ground surface at this point forms part of the topmost of the series of 4 lynchet terraces on this end of the hill. From a study of the levels shown, in Fig. 5, this later levelling has reduced the height of the causeway, and, of course, correspondingly, the depth of the ditches by about 2 ft. Road metalling was not struck until a point 37 ft. from the western end of Cutting J was reached.

Ditch I.—Excavation of the ditches began on the south side of the entrance, in J5. With the memory of the main ditch revealed in 1947 and 1948 fresh in one's mind, it was surprising to find how small were the dimensions of the ditch where it abutted on the causeway. Its width at the lip was a mere 12 ft., compared with a width of 18 ft. in Cutting F. Towards the southern end of J5 the ditch suddenly widened to more than 18 ft., the increase in width taking place on the inner lip of the ditch, towards the front of the rampart. The upper levels of ditch filling consisted of a mixture of earth and small chalk rubble with a few nondescript sherds and animal bones. A feature that was at first puzzling was a line of massive chalk blocks in this filling, indicated by a dotted line in Fig. 7, which occurred at the point where the ditch increased. The bottom of the ditch was reached unexpectedly at a depth of 5 to 6 ft., as compared with over 10 ft. on Cuttings B and F. In section it was a shallow U-shape, compared with the V-section seen in earlier years. North of the line of large chalk blocks, the ditch filling was of fairly clean loose chalk rubble; south of that line was a layer of sticky brown earth mixed with chalk fragments and flints. Also, by the southern edge of J5 the ditch bottom was just beginning to deepen, suggesting that it was shelving down steeply beneath the baulk between J3 and J6.

All these unusual features suggest that there were two periods of ditch cutting. The first phase produced a ditch about 12 ft. wide and 5 ft. deep (plus the additional 2 ft. accounted for above). This ditch was then allowed to silt up before being re-excavated on a larger scale. Fortunately, for ease of interpretation, the re-excavation stopped short of the causeway, leaving some 4 ft. to 5 ft. of the original ditch intact. To prevent slipping of the loose rubbly remnant of filling of this Ditch I, a layer of large chalk blocks was laid in it.

When our excavation had reached the same stage in the ditch north of the causeway, very similar features were revealed, though here Ditch I appears to have been rather broader than on the south of the causeway. The re-cut ditch (i.e. Ditch II) again did not quite reach the causeway, leaving 4 to 5 ft. of the original silting of Ditch I *in situ*. Here, again, this remnant was prevented from sliding by a layer of large chalk blocks.

Ditch II.—The re-cutting of the ditch could best be seen to the south of the causeway Cuttings J6 and J7. The total width at the top was 35 ft. (compared with 12 ft. in Ditch I). Its depth was equally startling: Cutting J6 reached a maximum depth of 13 ft., while the ditch bottom obviously dipped still further beneath the southern face of the cutting. If the additional 2 ft. removed in lynchet making is added, this gives a total depth of at least 15 ft. A cross-section of the ditch filling was obtained, complete except for the intersection of the baulk between J6 and J7. Stratification was fairly

straightforward and contained sufficient small finds to date stages in the process of silting. In the following paragraph the numbers in brackets refer to the numbering of the strata in Fig. 5.

Lying on the bottom of the ditch was a layer (17) up to 18 in. thick of loose, clean chalk rubble with many pieces of Corallian limestone. The limestone is of the type used in constructing the revetment walls for the ramparts further within the entrance and seems to show that a collapse or intentional destruction of the walling led to quantities of the stone pouring into the ditch. Among these stones and blocks of chalk lay a quarter of the upper stone of a rotary quern (p. 49). Above this chalk rubble and walling stone lay a dark 6 in. band of earth (16), probably a turf-line. This was followed by a foot or more of loose, slightly dirty chalk rubble (15), which, in turn, was sealed by a dark layer (14), probably another turf-line. Above this lay about 1 ft. of pale brown, sticky earth (13) with some rounded chalk fragments. In this, near the outer face of the ditch, lay a dark grey wheel-turned sherd (Fig. 16, No. 1), crushed into many smaller pieces. This sticky deposit was succeeded by up to 2 ft. of fairly clean small chalk rubble (12). This was, in turn, sealed by a layer (11) of dark gritty earth containing many large flints, some Bunter quartzite pebbles and a scatter of pieces of Corallian limestone. This, probably another turf-line, can be dated by several sherds of late Roman pottery (Fig. 16, Nos. 2-4). Above this, again, was about 1 ft. of pale brown sticky earth (10), containing rounded chalk fragments, which passed upwards into about 5 ft. of old plough soil—i.e. pale brown earth with many small rounded chalk fragments (9).

Since Cutting J had been laid out somewhat asymmetrically in relation to the causeway, less of Ditch II was revealed in J5, on the north side of the causeway. Yet sufficient was seen to demonstrate that, on this side as well, Ditch II was much wider than Ditch I had been and that the increased width had been achieved by cutting back the inner face of the ditch. Few small finds of significance occurred in the filling of Ditch II. A major contrast with Ditch II on the south side of the causeway was provided by the scarcity of Corallian limestone; very few pieces indeed were met with. At a depth of 3 ft. 9 in. in the plough-soil silting was the broken greenstone axe (Fig. 18, No. 4).

The Street.—The street surface was first met with at a distance of about 27 ft. from the western edge of Cutting J. Here it consisted of a thin layer of pebbles of quartzite and chalk. The extent to which this surface was traced throughout the cutting is shown by the dot stippling in the plan (Fig. 7). In some areas, as for instance north of the north revetment wall, the cobble stones were of large size (2-2½ in. in diameter) and had been laid to considerable depth. In one pocket the metalling was over 1 ft. thick. In other areas, notably south of the south revetment wall, the surface had

very few small cobbles of quartzite but many small chalk pebbles embedded in a muddy matrix. Over much of the surface was a muddy khaki coloured layer which was interpreted as an actual accumulation of mud on the street.

Well within the line of the gates, as in J16 and J17, the surface was fairly regular, sinking towards the centre of the street. No traces of wheel ruts were noticeable. In J15 the surface was more uneven and on the southern side showed evidence of 'patching' of the surface with fresh layers of quartzite pebbles.

The overburden lying on the street surface consisted of collapsed material from the ramparts on either side on the entrance. The upper courses of the drystone revetment walls (p. 56) were tumbled in heaps across most of the width of the street, intermingled with and overlaid by dark earth from the ramparts which they had held up. Only in the centre did the overlying plough-soil rest on the street itself. Lying on the street and under the fallen masses of stones were sherds of late AB-type pottery (Fig. 14, Nos. 2 and 3 and Fig. 15). In the same position were several corpses. Thus, skulls of a horse and cow were lying in the centre of the street and close to the western edge of J15. In J16, under the fallen stones of the south revetment wall lay the skeleton of a deer, complete and articulated except for its hind quarters. Under the fallen northern wall in J18 and J20 lay two complete horse skeletons (Fig. 8). On the centre of the street in J18 lay parts of the skull and forearm of a small child. The horses appear to have been of the same general small type as the one reported on in Appendix I.

Systems of Entrance Revetment.—As can be seen from a comparison of Figs. 9 and 10, the rampart was originally revetted by means of timbering and later by dry-stone walling. Evidence for the timbering was plain on the southern side of the entrance, where ran the line of posts whose holes are seen in Pl. IVb. These holes varied in depth from 10 in. to 24 in. and in diameter from 9 in. to 16 in. Evidence for at least one horizontal member laid behind these posts can also be seen in Pl. IVb, where the bottom layer of clean chalk rubble behind the scale is separated by a gap of about 5 in. from the chalk rubble to its left. One can probably assume a succession of such horizontal timbers carried up to the top of the rampart. The opposite series of revetment posts came just within the northern edge of Cutting J, giving a total entrance width of 37 ft. As stated below (p. 43), it is presumed that this timber revetment is contemporary with the first (i.e. berm-and-timber-revetted) phase of rampart construction. In effect it was only a continuation round the ends of the rampart of the method of revetting its outer face, fronting the ditch.

The later phase, represented by the stone wall revetment, achieved a marked narrowing of the entrance from about 37 ft. to about 25 ft. The wall on the northern side was found to be fairly well preserved

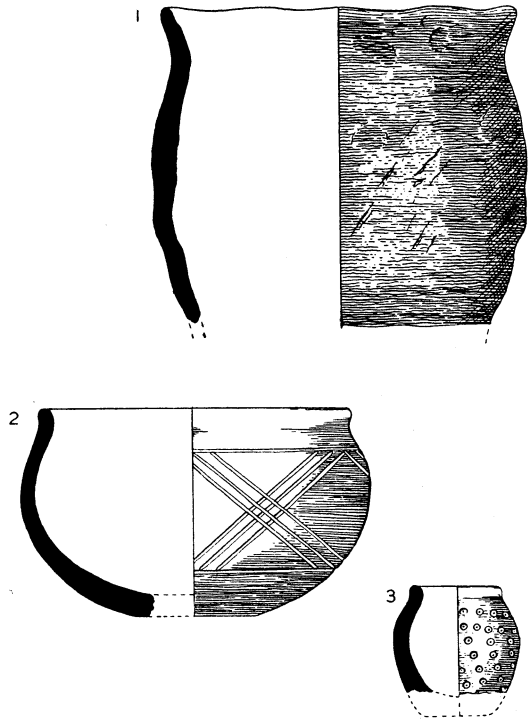

FIG. 14. Pottery from the entrance, Cutting J. Scale: $\frac{1}{3}$.

towards its western end, to a height of 10 or 11 courses, though poorly preserved towards the east. With the southern wall the position was reversed. Towards the west, only the bottom course of stones with here and there one of the second course survived, whereas towards the east the wall was preserved to a height of 6 or 7 courses intact. The condition of this southern wall can be explained by postulating a collapse of the rampart. Where the rampart was highest, the overthrow of the stones was almost complete; the tail of the rampart either did not collapse or else was not weighty enough to overthrow much of the walling at this point. The wholesale collapse of the western end of this wall can presumably be correlated with the abundance of walling stones found in the bottom of Ditch II on this side of the entrance causeway. A feature not seen

in the 1948 Cutting H but observed in 1949 was the use in the bottom course of both walls of more or less rectangular blocks of chalk up to 1 ft. long.

Rampart Structure.—The structure of the rampart is best seen in the southern side of Cutting J. The northern side of the cutting is too close to the line of revetment clearly to reveal its structure. In Fig. 5 the core of the original rampart can be seen as a mass (7) and (8) of freshly quarried chalk rubble resting on the original pre-rampart turf-line (5). The outer face of (8) is preserved to a height of 1 ft. On the line of this face and 4 ft. N. of the section was a post-

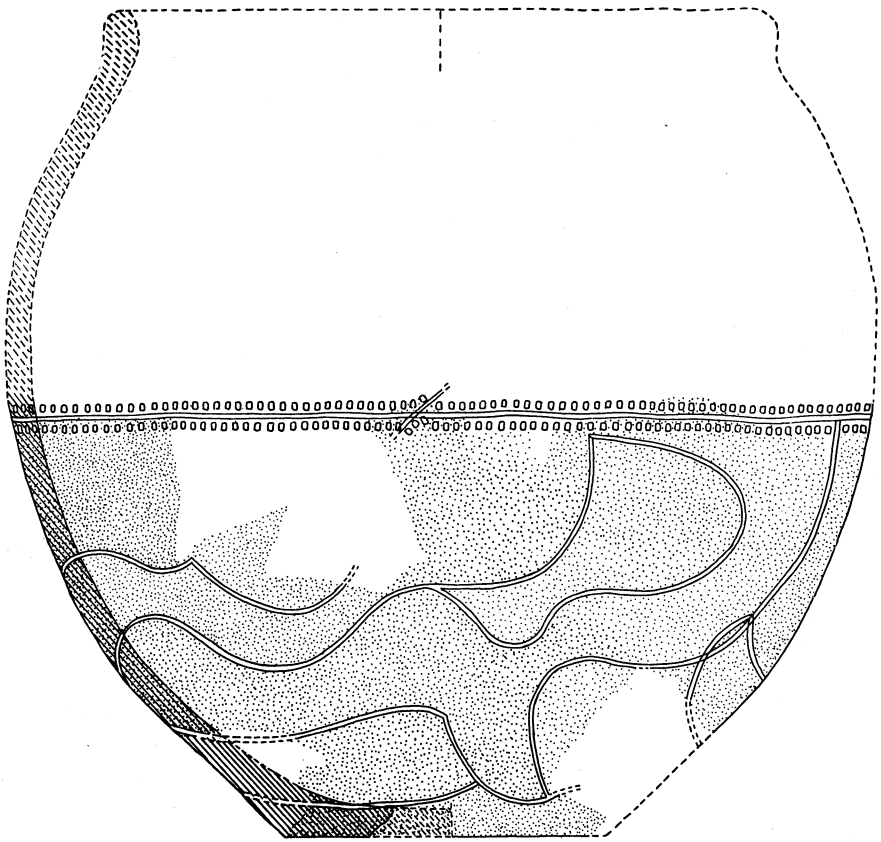

FIG. 15. Large decorated bowl found on street surface, Cutting J. Dot stipple indicatess surviving areas of pot. Scale: ⅓.

hole, evidently for one of the timber revetting posts for the outer face of this rampart. The inner face of this chalk rubble is similarly vertical for a height of 1 ft. and then slopes forwards, rather in the manner of the rampart section in Cutting F (Fig. 3). Backed against this face was a mass of dark brown earth (4) comparable with the deposit (4) in Fig. 3 and showing that here, too, the inner line of the revetting was masked with a mass of earth scraped up from the land surface within the rampart. On top of this was the old turf-line indicated by (3).

The second phase of rampart construction is shown by (2), the dirty chalk rubble dumped on the tail of the earlier rampart to heighten it. The re-excavation of the ditch, probably provided the source of material for this heightening. The same re-excavation almost completely destroyed the berm facing the original ditch, as can be most clearly seen in the plan.

The Gateway.—It is evident (Fig. 7) that two or more sets of post-holes must have served at one time or another for gate-posts for double gates at the entrance. The three uncovered in 1948 in Cutting H and shown also in Fig. 9 are evidently earlier than the phase of stone revetment walling for the ramparts. The side holes are consistent with the phase of timber revetting for the ramparts and were later buried under rampart extension when the gateway was narrowed at the time the stone walls were erected. Excavation at the southern side of the entrance suggests that the gate was set slightly behind the point of greatest height of the rampart, thus allowing defenders on the rampart to harass attackers at the gate with unobstructed cross-fire. The two large holes (Fig. 8) that once contained split tree-trunks just within the northern of the two gates are unexplained. When discovered, they both were almost devoid of silting. The hard surface of the street above them had apparently acted as a silt-proof lid or vault over the stumps of the tree-trunks which they had contained. The walls of the cavities had a fairly continuous thin covering of charcoal, pointing to the original charring of the baulks which they had contained. Of whatever structure they had formed a part, the cobbled street appeared to have been laid over them after all surface traces had vanished. Situated as they were, any timbers they had contained would have blocked half of the entrance. The revetment wall passed over one of them. Another comparable, and perhaps contemporary, hole can be seen under the line of the southern revetment wall, further within the entrance. The great size of these holes, even when compared with the main gate-post holes is worthy of comment.

The next phase of the gateway is shown in Fig. 10. Here, the pattern of holes is more complicated but bears close relationship with the stone revetment walls. The main gate-posts were set close to the outer ends of these walls. Evidence of rebuilding is provided by the double hole (Pl. IIIb) for the central post. Here, the

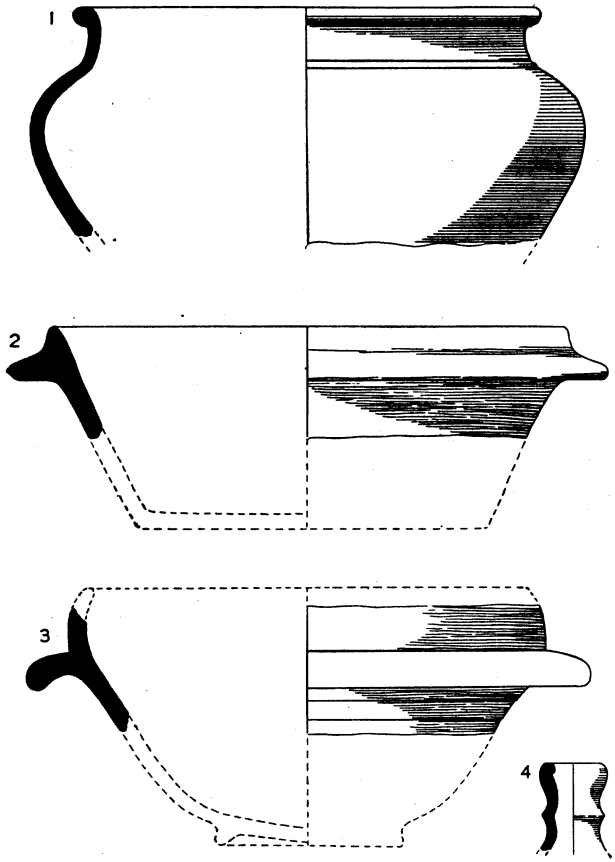

FIG. 16. Romano-British pottery from silting of Ditch 2, Cutting J. Scale: $\frac{1}{3}$.

southerly of the two poles was the earlier and had been sealed over the top by a layer of trampled chalk. The later hole was proved to be contemporary with or later than the erection of the revetment walls as it contained several pieces of the walling stone in its filling of loose black soil. Similarly the gate-post hole against the end of the northern revetment wall contained stray pieces of the stone in the packing material within it. The central post-holes had a depth almost double that of the two lateral holes adjacent to the walls. Can this mean that only the central post was free-standing and that the other two were braced or tied by timbers running into the rampart, and so did not need to be set into the ground so deeply?

Outside these gatepost holes two further groups of holes continued the division of the main entrance-way into two lanes of approach. One cannot be certain to which phase, or phases, of entrance construction they belong, but it seems highly likely that the lateral holes at least held posts which helped to revet the glacis-type ramparts of the latest phase of the defences. In several cases the posts appear to have been renewed. Split tree-trunks were used in two of these holes. The central partition between the two carriage-ways recalls the far more elaborate double entrances of Maiden Castle from its Phase I onwards.

THE FINDS

POTTERY.—The pottery found during 1948 and 1949 necessitates some revision of the analysis of the 1947 Iron Age pottery. As in that year's work, both A2 and AB types occurred. In addition several significant sherds of Romano-British wares were found in the silting of Ditch II by the entrance. Since no extensive clearing of areas inside the rampart was attempted, very little undisturbed A2 pottery was found in either 1948 or 1949. As in 1947, much of the rampart material was shown to contain, as 'derived fossils', a quantity of A refuse, presumably the sweepings of A occupation levels heaped together to form the rampart. This was clearly noticeable adjacent to the entrance. Many more occurred in collapsed rampart material lying on the street surface in the entrance. It is not surprising that these 'doubly derived fossils' were here found mingled with some late AB types. Few significant sherds can be ascribed to the stage between phases I and II of rampart building. Fig. 14, No. 1 came from the turf-line between the two ramparts but is difficult to define typologically. As in the 1947 work, pottery of AB types occurred abundantly in levels post-dating phase II of rampart building—i.e. in occupation levels on the tail of the rampart and in the lowest levels of the silting of Ditch II.

Iron Age A Pottery.—It will be recalled that the main types of A pottery found previously consisted of bowls with flaring rim and more or less pronounced carination on the shoulder, executed in burnished black, grey or haematite coated paste, and coarse situliform jars with gritty or leathery surface. The second and third years' work provided little fresh evidence in respect of the coarse situliform types. Fig. 11, No. 9 was found in one of the post-holes of the early timber revetment of Rampart I. It had been broken into many pieces and had formed part of the packing round the post which had stood in the hole. It is typologically early, with its finger-tip impressions on a relatively sharp shoulder and, from its position, must be either contemporary with or earlier than Rampart I. With

regard to the bowls, however, the additional material from 1948 and 1949 has allowed a reconsideration of typology, if not of dating. It will be recalled that I agreed with Bradford[1] in placing the initial Iron Age occupation of the hill at not long before the Marnian invasions of about 250 B.C. But finds of sherds in the pre-rampart turf-line in Cutting F hint at a rather earlier initial date. Here were several small sherds, nearly all of haematite-coated wares. Their small size was probably due to trampling into the turf. Several were from a bowl with cordons, a type generally considered early in the Wessex sequence of haematite-coated bowls. In Cutting G, too, a large part of a sharply-carinated haematite-coated bowl (Fig. 12, No. 2) came from the rampart material. These samples all appear to be earlier than any found in 1947 or reported on by Bradford.

A further glance at the 1947 Report will show that the sharply carinated or high-shouldered bowls, where ornamented, show merely relatively early A motifs, such as incised chevron patterns (cf. 1947 Report, Fig. 8, Nos. 7, 8 and 9, and Fig. 11, Nos. 1, 3 and 4 in the present Report); yet a gentler-profiled (though still A2) type with swelling, almost bulbous body and gently curved, everted rim has a tendency to show the unusual rosette-stamped impressions (cf. *op. cit*, Fig. 8, Nos. 1-5). These rosette stamps are circles—a motif which, apart from plain finger-tipping and circular punch-marks, is rather alien to the traditional A repertoire of ornament. Their use in groups, or combined with other impressed motifs, was noted in the 1947 Report. Furthermore, several examples have occurred in which the rosettes have been combined with other impressed curvilinear ornament to give an effect which shows strong B influence —cf. Fig. 11, Nos. 6, 7 and 8 in the present Report. No. 6 shows the familiar B motif of pendant swags with circles at their meeting points. No. 7 elaborates this theme with paired pendant swags, while No. 8 shows the typical B motif of one circle arranged eccentrically within another. All this agrees with the A2 bowl published by Bradford (his Fig. 1, No. 24), where a B decorative motif is employed.

While the exact position chronologically of these bowls has yet to be determined by excavation (since they have hitherto occurred only in strata containing both early and late types), on typological grounds it seems reasonable to place them intermediate between the early A2 types and the demonstrably later AB bowls with bead-rims. Can one suggest that they are contemporary with the first (i.e. berm-and-timber-revetted) phase of rampart building?

Iron Age AB Pottery.—The AB pottery found in 1948 and 1949 was closely similar to that discovered in 1947. As then, the two main types comprised 'saucepan' pots and thick-walled, swelling bowls

[1] J. S. P. Bradford, " An Early Iron Age Site on Blewburton Hill, Berks.", *Berks. Arch. Journ.*, XLVI, pp. 97–104.

with bead-rims. To the knowledge gained in the previous year, a little more can be added, due to 'closed' finds and associations. In the former category stand the contents of two small pits (p. 36) in Cutting G1, illustrated in Fig. 13. All but No. 3 are 'saucepans'. Nos. 1 and 5 are in hard burnished black ware. No. 3 is in pinkish buff ware with sandy paste, smooth but unburnished on the surface. It will be noticed that these pots show little ornament, save for a slight bead on the rim. No. 5 has the interrupted bead seen on the pot from the bottom of the main ditch in the 1947 excavation (1947 Report, Fig. 11, No. 2); here, however, the bead has been scratched in after firing, instead of before.

The burnished black pot shown in Fig. 17, No. 5 was found with the burial in the main ditch in Cutting F. Here, the iron adze, of a type met with elsewhere in AB and B contexts, is fittingly associated with the pot.

A few new decorative motifs are to be seen on the 1948 and 1949 pots. Most striking is the 'saucepan', (Fig. 12, No. 3), found in part in 1948 on the cobbled street surface (Cutting H) and in part in 1949 as packing in one of the later gate-post holes. This pot, although badly fired, shows decoration almost worthy of Glastonbury or the best of the Frilford decorated wares. Like so many La Tène patterns, it is based on an undulating line. This has been converted into the favourite 'S' motif by filling in alternate 'spandrels' between this basic line and the band at the top of the pot with concentric recurved lines. Another decorated 'saucepan' (Fig. 12, No. 1) shows burnished lattice pattern comparable with that on one of the Southcote pots.[1] This pot came from the AB level on the tail of the rampart in Cutting F. Of the same general category is the ornament on the small bowl (Fig. 14, No. 2), found in pieces on the cobbled street surface in Cutting J. This is an extremely hard piece in well-fired stone-coloured ware with an unburnished, slightly sandy surface. From the same level came Fig. 14, No. 3, a small, well-made pot with impressed circlet ornament (perhaps executed with the tubular part of a bird bone), and the large bowl conjecturally restored in Fig. 15. This vessel was lying in a heap of shattered fragments in the middle of the road, on the actual surface. Its ornament is carried out in very shallow tooling, apart from the girth-band which appears to have been done with a wooden or bone comb with teeth of rectangular cross-section. The curvilinear ornament shows no attempt at regularity or symmetry, but nevertheless employs broken-backed scrolls and 'comma' motifs reminiscent of, for example, the late and degenerate bronze mirrors.[2] The extreme delicacy of the tooling seems to indicate that it did not stand alone. Some surface finish, such as paint, seems called for to emphasize the pattern. Nevertheless, it is difficult to see traces of any paint remaining.

[1] C. M. Piggott and W. A. Seaby, "An Early Iron Age Site at Southcote, Reading", *Proc. of Prehist. Soc.*, N.S., III, Fig. 3, No. 4.

[2] cf. E. T. Leeds, *Celtic Ornament*, Oxford, 1933, Fig. 15.

Among bead-rim bowls were the two decorated examples shown in Fig. 12, Nos. 4 and 6. These two, found together in the clean rubble filling of the main ditch in Cutting G, show completely different techniques in decoration. No. 4, made in dark buff, sandy paste, has a burnished surface which has tended to flake off. Ornament is of the most delicate nature, so lightly tooled as to be invisible in some lights. The delicacy of the work and the straight-line style are comparable with the same features in Fig. 13, No. 1 in the 1947 Report. In form, this bowl is closely similar to the plain bead-rim bowls shown in Fig. 10 in the same Report. The bowl base shown in Fig. 12, No. 6, displays deep tooled decoration of interlocking swags. The fabric is a hard, black, well-fired paste with burnished surface. It is closely reminiscent of some of the Glastonbury bowls.

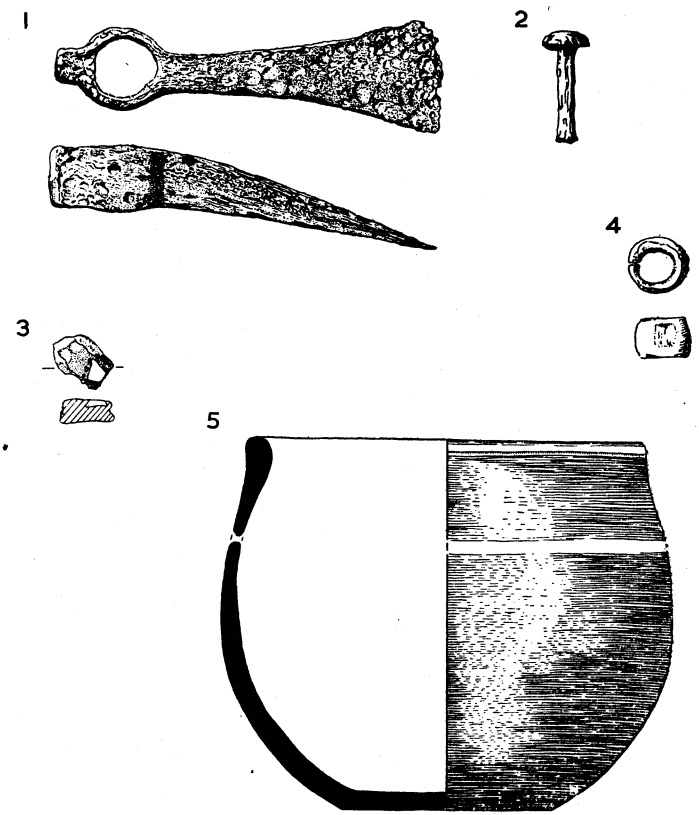

FIG. 17. Finds from Cuttings F & G: 1, 2 and 5 associated with burial in ditch, Cutting F. Scale: $\frac{1}{3}$.

Another pot recalling Glastonbury is Fig. 12, No. 5. This almost complete example is poorly baked in dark brown sandy paste. Although no traces of slag can be seen on the inside, it is very like the circular or globular type of crucible from the lake-village.[1] Not all these showed slag, but all were, like the Blewburton example, poorly baked.

The small sherd Fig. 17, No. 3, from the AB occupation level on the tail of the rampart in Cutting G, has a method of ornamentation for which I have so far failed to find a parallel: the body of the sherd is of a medium brown colour, while its exterior has been ornamented by an 'inlay' in a cream coloured slip. As the section shows, this inlay has been keyed into position by having bevelled edges on to which the clay of the body of the pot has been tamped after its insertion. This action has provided an extra decorative motif with the row of resulting punchmarks.

Romano-British Pottery.—One or two sherds of this were found in 1947 in high levels above the latest Iron Age occupation levels. Similarly, in 1948, a sherd of plain Samian came from a high level in the silting of the main ditch in Cutting G. In 1949, several sherds were found in significant positions in the silt of Ditch II, close to the entrance. The earliest of these, stratigraphically, is Fig. 16, No. 1. This pot, in burnished dark grey ware, is typical of the Belgic-Roman overlap of the 1st century A.D. The remaining three illustrated pieces (Fig. 16, Nos. 2-4) come from a high level and can all be classed as 3rd or 4th century A.D. No. 2 is a flanged, straight-sided dish in hard, gritty, dark grey ware. No. 3 is a flanged bowl in light red ware, perhaps originally colour-coated. No. 4, the neck of a small flagon, is made in a fine stone-coloured paste with no trace of grit.

OTHER SMALL FINDS

Worked Flint.—As in 1947, primary flint flakes constituted the most abundant type of stone artifact found. A group of heavily patinated flakes from the lower end of Cutting G appear to be of Neolithic or Early Bronze Age type. One of them has the steeply trimmed 'bevelled' edge noted by Miss D. Liddell on flakes from Hembury causewayed camp. Apart from this small group, the remaining flakes are unpatinated and show the same high flaking angle noted in the previous year. They were most numerous in the collapsed rampart material in the gateway.

Stone Axe.—The blade end of a polished axe of dark greenish grey crystalline rock was found in the lower levels of the plough soil silting of Ditch II on the north side of the entrance. While such stone axes have occurred at many Iron Age and Romano-British

[1] Bulleid and Gray, *The Glastonbury Lake Village*, Vol. I, Pl. XLIX, Nos. C10, C11, C14, etc.

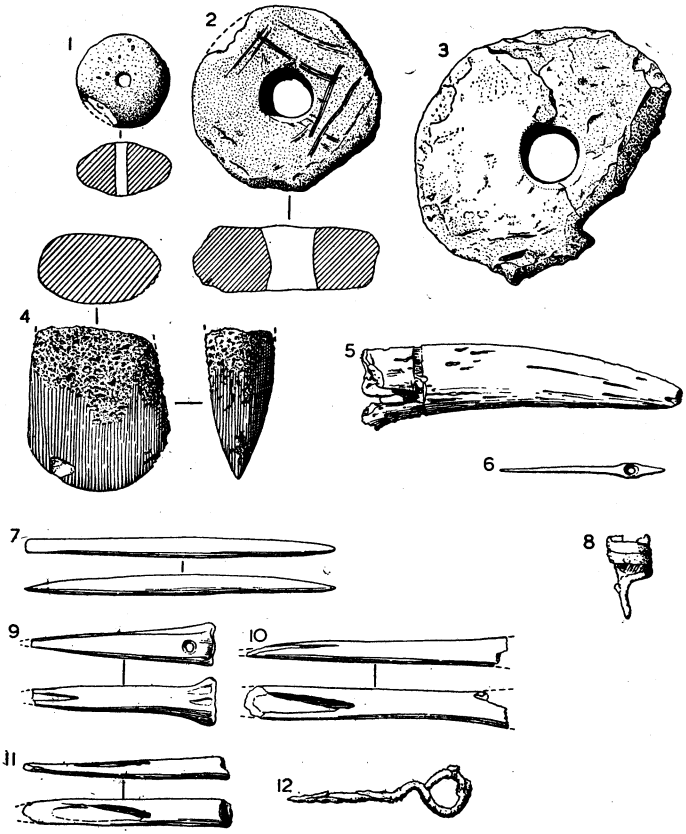

FIG. 18. Miscellaneous small finds. For description see pp. 48-51. Scale: $\frac{1}{3}$.

sites, with the strong presumption that they were earlier objects rediscovered and valued for ritual, if not practical, reasons, there is no definite evidence for this at Blewburton. The find did not come from a sealed Iron Age level and can be classed as a 'stray'. Axes similar in material and form are by no means uncommon in the Middle Thames region.

Quern Stones.—In the 1947 Report it was noted that saddle querns at Blewburton appeared to have been made exclusively of a coarse-grained calcareous sandstone while the rotary querns were all of a much finer grained material. A few finds of pieces of saddle quern and rubbers in 1948 supported this distinction, but the quarter of the upper stone of a rotary quern found in 1949 in the bottom of Ditch II at the entrance was made of the coarse-grained material.

Worked Chalk.—The only pieces of worked chalk found were three perforated chalk discs, two of which are illustrated. All three came from the silting of Ditch I, beside the entrance causeway.

Baked Clay.—Apart from the pottery described above, the only object of baked clay found was a spindle whorl (Fig. 18, No. 1). In section, it approaches the bi-conical type. It came from the collapsed rampart in the entrance.

Worked Bone and Antler.—Three bone 'gouges' were found in 1949. Two, (Fig. 18, Nos. 10 and 11) came from the silting of Ditch II, close to the entrance causeway. The third, (Fig. 18, No. 9 was found in the earlier of the two central gate-post holes in the second phase of the gateway. Like the example figured in the 1947 Report, it is cross-drilled through the socket. Another tool of interest is Fig. 18, No. 7. This double-ended awl or bodkin is bluntly pointed at one end and has a narrow chisel edge at the other. It came from the collapsed rampart material on top of the street in the entrance. A long, much slenderer single-ended awl was found in a similar position in 1948. The bone needle (Fig. 18, No. 6) also came from collapsed rampart material. It is a well-made example of Bulleid and Gray's type B.[1] Fig. 18, No. 5 shows a horn-core of goat with a groove formed by a broad-toothed saw all round the larger end. This feature was also observed in earlier years at the site on horn-cores of the Celtic shorthorn. The explanation appears to be a saw-cut to sever the outer horny layer for use as a receptacle or drinking-vessel.

Few pieces of worked antler have occurred. Fig. 17, No. 4 shows a 'ferrule'.[2] It came from the AB occupation level on the tail of Rampart II in Cutting F.

Metal.—Metal objects remained rarities. Two were recorded in 1948, both with the burial in the ditch, Cutting F. Lying under the body of the horse was the iron adze blade (Fig. 17, No. 1). The only trace of the original haft was a small fragment adhering inside the eye. Judging from the complete example from Glastonbury (*op. cit*, Vol. I, Pl. LX), the handle was originally about 1 ft. long. It is interesting to speculate whether this was one of the tool-types used in the quarrying out of the main ditch, or whether adzes were strictly carpenters' tools, as now. Unfortunately, no tool-marks were noticed on the chalk in the ditch sections. Parallels to this adze are fairly numerous, especially on sites showing strong B influence. Thus, Glastonbury produced 7, Ham Hill 2, Hunsbury 4, and Hengistbury Head 1. Their probable use in boat-building[3]

[1] *Glastonbury*, Vol. II, p. 410.
[2] *Glastonbury*, Vol. II, Pl. LXV, No. H5.
[3] E. V. Wright and C. V. Wright, "Prehistoric Boats from North Ferriby, Yorkshire", *Proc. of Prehist. Soc.*, N.S., XIII, p. 122.

could well account for the Glastonbury and Hengistbury examples, though their presence in inland hill-forts suggests a use in general carpentry.

The other object from the burial was the pin shown in Fig. 17, No. 2. This lay against one stifle joint of the horse. It is difficult to suggest a function as part of a normal harness, though it could, conceivably, have helped to hold a hobble round the hind legs.

In 1949 a piece of a single-edged knife blade of iron was found in a hearth with iron slag on the old ground surface under Rampart I on the north side of the entrance. The iron ring-headed pin (Fig. 18, No. 12) came from collapsed rampart material in the entrance. It is a purely A type and presumably equates with the derived A sherds from the same situation. Fig. 18, No. 8 shows a small object of coiled iron wire from the late Roman turf-line in Ditch II. It appears to be a cock-spur.

THE SAXON GRAVES

As can be seen from Fig. 6, the four Saxon graves in Cuttings G and G1 show little regularity in their layout. Burials I and IV are roughly parallel with and equidistant from Burial II. All three are orientated approximately N.E.-S.W. and all are fairly shallow. Burial I was that of a girl aged about 17. She lay flexed, with her spine twisted so that her head faced downwards. Two small iron wire brooches, one annular and one penannular, lay close to the skull; near these was part of an iron wire bangle. Burial II was that of a girl of about the same age. She lay flexed on her right side. Beneath the occiput lay a large amber bead nearly 1 in. in diameter; two smaller ones were on her chest. An applied brooch (Fig. 19, No. 3) lay close to the left shoulder. The design on this is exactly paralleled by one from the Fairford cemetery.[1] Just above the left ilium lay the bronze buckle with iron pin (Fig. 19, No. 5). The treatment of the two hippocamps confronting each other is reminiscent of those on buckles from the late Gallo-Roman graves at Vermand, Dept. Aisne.[2] A few inches from the buckle lay an indeterminate iron object, possibly another buckle. Burial II, that of an adult man, was the only extended skeleton of the four. A plain disc-brooch lay on the right shoulder. An iron annular brooch $1\frac{1}{2}$ in. in diameter lay close to the left temporal bone. An iron buckle, evidently from a waist belt, lay within the right iliac fossa and a knife, presumably slung from the belt, was under the left ilium. Burial IV contained a flexed skeleton, also of a man. A pair of tin-plated disc brooches with engraved and punched geometric designs (Fig. 19, Nos. 1 and 2) lay on the chest, close to the upper end of the sternum. A parallel to this pair of brooches is to be seen in Grave Group 36 in the

[1] E. T. Leeds, "The Distribution of the Anglo-Saxon Saucer Brooch . . .", *Archaeologia*, LXIII (1911–12), p. 166 and Pl. XXV, 3.

[2] E. T. Leeds, *Anglo-Saxon Art and Archaeology*, Pl. V (Oxford, 1936.)

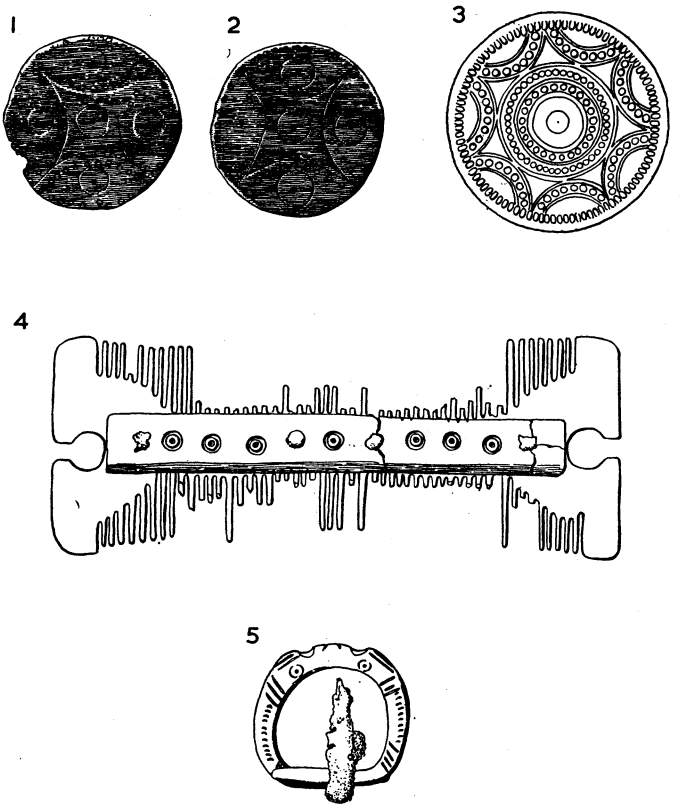

FIG. 19. Disc brooches (1, 2), applied brooch (3), comb (4) and buckle (5) found with Saxon burials in Cuttings G and G1. Scale: $\frac{2}{3}$.

Abingdon cemetery.[1] Close to the skull lay the double-sided bone comb (Fig. 19, No. 4). An iron buckle and a knife blade similar to those in Burial III completed the list of grave-goods.

The three Saxon burials found in 1949 in Cutting J are shown on Fig. 8. As both these and the 1948 graves formed compact groups, it is fair to assume that the ground intervening between the two groups contains a similar density of burials. Burial V (following in sequence Burial IV of 1948) was the first to be discovered. It consisted of the grave of a small child, probably aged about 8 years, buried extended at a depth of about 10 in. to 1 ft. below the present ground surface. Modern ploughing had done much damage; most of the skull had been shorn off, the feet were missing and all leg bones but one tibia had gone. Grave-goods comprised: a small square-headed

[1] E. T. Leeds and D. B. Harden, *The Anglo-Saxon Cemetery at Abingdon, Berkshire*, Pl. X (Oxford, 1936).

brooch (Fig. 20, No. 3) of tinned bronze with a decoration of punched circlets comparable with those on Fig. 19, Nos. 1 and 2; a string of beads; and a plain iron pin. The beads consisted of ten glass beads of varying colours, three tubular spacers of sheet bronze with lapped joints and a pair of pendants made from Roman coins. One of the last is a small bronze coin of Constantine I (cf. Cohen, *Description Historique des Monnaies*, Tome VII, No. 699. Paris, 1880-92); the other is illegible. The straight iron pin lay close to the beads, on the chest. Although the skeleton was too fragmentary to be sexed, the brooch and beads suggest that it was that of a girl. About 18 in. from the head of this skeleton lay the feet of another small child, Burial VI. The skeleton lay slightly flexed, with its head to the south. The only surviving object buried with the child was an iron knife, 4 in. long. Judging by the state of the teeth, this child was of about the same age as the one in Burial V. Burial VII, that of an adult man, lay about 11 ft. east of Burial V. The skeleton lay extended with its head to the south. To the right of the skull was an iron spearhead with split socket (Fig. 20, No. 2), pointing, when found,

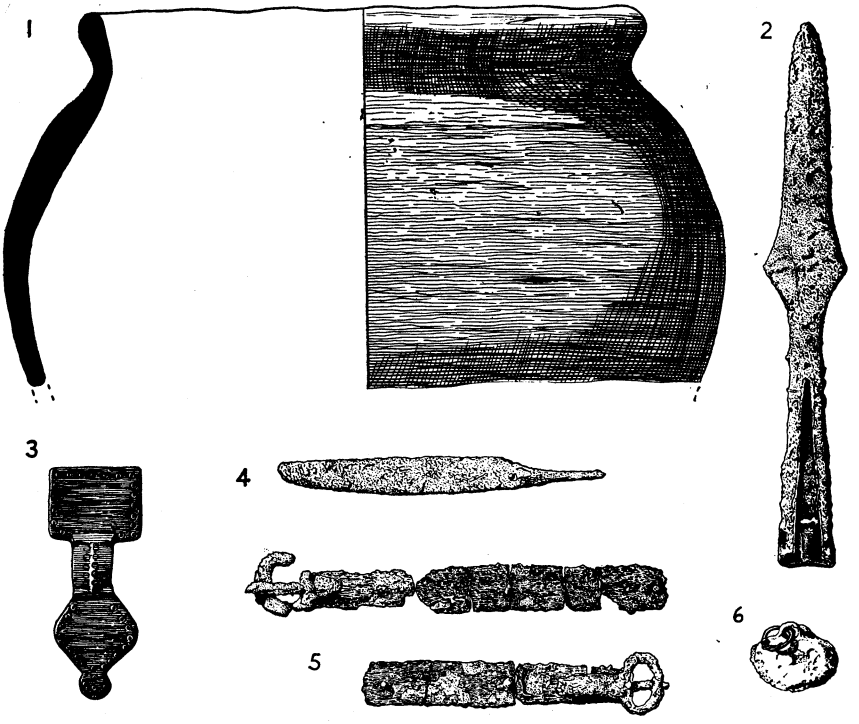

FIG. 20. Grave-goods with Saxon burials in Cutting J. Scales: 1-2 and 4-6 are $\frac{1}{3}$ 3 is $\frac{2}{3}$.

upwards towards the surface of the ground. Over the left shoulder lay two sherds of a large, plain hand-made pot (Fig. 20, No. 1). Other sherds, apparently from the same vessel, lay against the right elbow. It is clear that these were nothing more than sherds at the time of burial and were deposited as such in the grave. Closer parallels to this pot can be found among domestic wares at Sutton Courtenay, than among funerary wares, though urns Nos. 29 and 37 in the Abingdon cemetery are not unlike it. Around the body just above the pelvis had been some kind of belt with two solid sections of wood bound with iron (Fig. 20, No. 5) in the front, ending at the sides with buckles; these buckles were presumably for attachment of a leather section which passed round the back. Although the wood has decayed, clear impressions of the grain can be seen in the rust on the surface of the iron. Underneath the spine at this point lay the iron knife blade (Fig. 20, No. 4). Near the left ilium, on the edge of the grave, lay the small pendant or talisman (Fig. 20, No. 6) made from a pierced bone with a small bronze wire ring inserted through the hole for suspension. A similar pendant was found in Grave 30 in the Nassington, Northants, cemetery.[1]

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

To take the original A2 settlement phase first: arguing from the lack of furrowed or cordoned haematite-coated bowls and from the rather slack shoulder profiles of those found, I suggested a fairly late initial date compared with, say, All Cannings Cross, and agreed with Bradford[2] that it was very little before the Marnian invasions of about 250 B.C. But the discovery (p. 45) of small fragments of cordoned haematite bowls in the old turf-line under the rampart in Cutting F. has modified this view in favour of an initial date nearer to 300 B.C. As no appreciable area within the early palisade trench was cleared, no further details of pits or house structures were uncovered to add to those found in 1947.

The duration of the interval between this phase and the erection of earthed defences is still unknown. It was sufficient for a substantial turf-line to establish itself over the silted-up palisade trench. The 1947 dating of the rampart and ditch to the period of the Marnian invasions has to be modified. The inter-rampart turf-line shown in Cuttings F, G and J has made it clear that the rampart is of two periods of construction. The AB-type sherds found on the tail of the *second* rampart are therefore of no value in dating the *first*. No distinctive sherds occurred in Rampart I or in the inter-rampart turf-line. Since, too, the ditch was re-cut at the time of building Rampart II, material from silting of Ditch II is equally useless for dating Rampart I. One is therefore left with construction methods as the

[1] E. T. Leeds and R. J. C. Atkinson, "An Anglo-Saxon Cemetery at Nassington, Northants", *Antiq. Journ.*, XXIV (1944), p. 110 and Pl. XXX.

[2] J. S. P. Bradford, " An Early Iron Age Site on Blewburton Hill, Berks", *Berks. Arch. Journ.* XLVI, 97–104.

main key to dating this phase. While Cutting B in 1947 unfortunately struck the defences at a point where ploughing and rabbit disturbance had between them obliterated nearly all the rampart, Cutting F, on the other hand, showed a section damaged only by the slight cutting back of the rampart face in the later lynchet making. While no berm or outer line of post-holes for timber revetting was apparent, the clearly defined position of the inner line of post and (?) hurdle revetting, plus the obvious lynchet damage make a berm-and-timber-revetted rampart almost a certainty. The section by the gateway, shown in Fig. 8 had fortunately suffered less from lynchet making and the position of the outer revetted face of Rampart I is clearly visible. Yet the construction of Rampart I departs in one respect from the classical Continental Hallstatt tradition in that the inner line of revetment was masked by a slope of earth, as at Hollingbury in Sussex and Chalbury in Dorset. It is tempting to suggest that this type of construction is intermediate in date, as it is in type, between the true Hallstatt type and the later 'glacis' type which dispenses with elaborate timber revetting.

The length of interval represented by the inter-rampart turf-line and the silting of Ditch I cannot be determined. It is likely that it indicates a fairly considerable pause during which either the site was deserted or defences were no longer considered necessary. The structure of Rampart II is interesting in that only one post-hole has so far been linked with it. This hole, on the northern side of the entrance penetrated a distance of 2 ft. into the material of Rampart I and might have held a post for a breastwork on top of the rampart. The method of construction of Rampart II by simply dumping material on top of Rampart I makes it comparable with the construction of Phases 1–3 of the extended Maiden Castle.

Finds made on the tail of the rampart, plus finds from the silting of Ditch II are relevant for dating Rampart II. They include the "saucepan" (Fig. 12, No. 1) on the rampart tail and the pot (Fig. 17, No. 5), found with the burial in the ditch. This latter is also an AB type, judged by the shallow-tooled attempt at a bead-rim. The adze, too, is a type met with where B influence was strong. The bowls from the ditch (Fig. 12, Nos. 4 and 6) are also as late as any AB types found on the site.

At first glance, this sequence of rampart structures based on the cuttings of 1948 and 1949 seems to be at variance with the 1947 section (1947 Report, Fig. 4). Yet the ditch section here could be interpreted as a result of re-cutting which has cut so far back as to destroy all traces of timber revetting of the rampart at this point, leaving only the black earth (4) which can be equated with (4) in Fig. 5 in the present Report. The chalk rubble (3) in the 1947 Fig. 4 can then be equated with the chalk rubble (2) in the present Fig. 5. My siting of the two lines of timber revetment in the reconstruction attempted in the 1947 plan is now obviously an error. Their probable position is now seen to be some 20 ft. further down the hillside.

The possibility of multiple defences suggested by Cutting B has been dispelled by the section displayed in Cutting G.

The western entrance shows several important features. The post-holes point to the former existence of double gates, the inner set contemporary with Rampart I and the outer set contemporary with Rampart II. Their proportions are sufficient to account for massive posts supporting a footway overhead. Taking all its features together, phase I of the gateway shows much in common with phase I of the eastern gateway at Maiden Castle[1]. The rampart is revetted with timber work whose post-holes survive, and the entrance is laid out for two carriageways, though, of course, at Blewburton these are divided merely by the central gatepost and not by an "island" of rampart. If Blewburton possessed anything comparable with the cobbled "market-place" or the extensions of the timber revetments outwards as fencing on either side of the entrance causeway at Maiden Castle, these have been lost in the course of later lynchet-making.

The revetment walls of phase II of the entrance are very significant. The use of dry-stone walling to revet earthworks is characteristic of the Iron Age B hill-forts of south-western England. That the stone[2] is an oolitic limestone and came from the Corallian ridge, between the rivers Ock and Thames, seems to point to influence from the direction of Cherbury Camp and, ultimately, from such sites as Salmonsbury in the Cotswolds. Bradford[3] dates this Cotswold influence in the Upper Thames Basin to the first decades of the 1st Century A.D. He uses it to explain the presence of the elaborate, almost south-western B element in the designs on decorated pots from Cherbury, Frilford and Cassington. Thus, it may well be that Rampart II and its corresponding ditch, plus phase II of the entrance may be as late as the opening years of our era. In this connection it is fitting to recall that some of the purest B designs on Blewburton pottery (e.g. Fig. 12, No. 3, and Fig. 15) all came from the cobbled surface of the street. Supporting this evidence is the interlocking swag design on Fig. 12, No. 6, a motif typical alike of South-western and South-eastern B cultures. But to point out these apparently late B elements in the AB pottery at Blewburton is not to deny the existence of earlier B influence reaching back to the Marnian invasions. In this connection the B elements in the designs on Fig. 11 Nos. 6 and 7 may be recalled. Also, on the Sussex evidence[4] the "saucepan" type of pot goes back to around 250 B.C. and is definitely not one of the South-eastern B forms.

Arguing from the lack of pure B decoration on pottery and from the virtual absence of Romano-British pottery, the writer suggested in the 1947 Report that the site had ceased to be occupied well before

[1] R. E. M. Wheeler, *Maiden Castle, Dorset* (London), 1943, Fig. 4.
[2] Kindly identified by Prof. H. L. Hawkins, Dept. of Geology, Reading University.
[3] "The Excavation of Cherbury Camp, 1939", *Oxoniensia* V (1940).
[4] Prof. C. F. C. Hawkes, "The Caburn Pottery and its Implications", *Suss. Arch. Coll.*, LXXX (1939), p. 231.

the Roman conquest. But from the evidence adduced above it now seems likely that occupation continued well into the 1st Century A.D. It is tempting to ascribe the destruction of the defences at the western entrance to the advancing Romans in or soon after A.D. 43. The evident signs of violence, with corpses of animals strewn about the street and covered by the crashed-in ramparts with their revetment walls, plus abundant traces of charcoal, perhaps from burnt gateway timbers could fit such an explanation. But unlike the eastern entrance at Maiden Castle, there is not a shred of evidence to date the disaster. It could equally well have happened as a result of westward Belgic expansion in the years just prior to the Roman conquest. Against this latter explanation can be set the absence of Belgic pottery and coins. The earliest non-Iron Age AB sherd at the entrance is Fig. 16, No. 1. This, though Belgic in profile is probably post-Claudian conquest in date. Its stratigraphic position is not too satisfactory either, since 4 ft. of silting had accumulated in the ditch before it found its way in. The one salient point which the ditch section makes clear is that it was open and kept clean at the time of the overthrow of the limestone revetment walls behind the gates. The stratification of the filling between the bottom and the level where the Roman sherd lay is too even to be the result of intentional filling of the ditch with rubble from the slighted ramparts. It is thus hardly possible that this sherd can be contemporary with the site's overthrow.

The late Roman sherds (Fig. 16, Nos. 2–4) are too few in number to be regarded as anything but strays and merely corroborate the 1947 conclusion that the site was deserted during the Roman period. The discovery of the Anglo-Saxon graves, however, adds interest to the post-Roman period. Mr. E. T. Leeds, to whom the grave-goods found in 1948 were submitted, reported some of the brooches and the "hippocamp" buckle to be early. He drew a parallel with the Anglo-Saxon graves found in the Dorchester Dykes, 6 miles to the north. In his view the earliest burials can be of 5th Century date and are attributable to the very earliest phase of Saxon penetration into the region, a phase when burials were sometimes made inside earlier earthworks. In connection with these burials, it should be pointed out that no trace has yet been observed of habitation in, or re-fortification of the site in post-Roman times.

Turning to the final phase at Blewburton, that of the lynchet-making, it is disappointing that Cutting F shed so little light. That the lynchets are post Iron Age is established beyond doubt. The filling-in of the Iron Age ditch and the cutting back of the rampart scarp, on the one hand, and the complete removal of all Iron Age pottery or other debris, on the other, alike demonstrate this. Yet no date can be given to their construction, since they yielded no small finds at all. On their method of manufacture and function, the section raised more problems than it solved. The solid nature of the chalk into which they had been cut make it difficult to credit the

theory that terracing on chalk hillsides is an unintentional by-product of the cultivation of strip-fields. It is my own view that the terraces can only have been formed by the intentional levelling with pick and shovel of each terrace. But, however formed, their widths are well within the range of Mediaeval strip-field widths. These varied from about 9 to about 66 ft., according to the nature of the soil.[1] From top to bottom, the Blewburton terrace widths are, respectively, 36, 28, 36 and 24 ft.

In support of this view that the terraces were formed intentionally and at one time is the apparent lack of humus in the accumulation forming each positive lynchet. If this were the result of ploughing, one would expect it to be comparable in colour and texture with the plough soil in the upper levels within the rampart. Against this view is the finely divided nature of the deposit; this suggests a gradual accumulation during which frost and cultivation broke down all the larger lumps of chalk. Samples of this deposit were taken for analysis by a soil scientist, but his report is unfortunately not yet available. That this finely divided yellowish material needs investigation is shown also by its occurrence in the positive part of "Celtic" lynchets on Streatley Warren sectioned by Miss Alison Mills in 1948–9.

The absence of any soil between the modern turf and the solid chalk on the inner (negative) half of each lynchet seems to show that the cultivation of, say, corn would have been impossible on that half. Against this, of course, it could be argued that weather removed such soil as had been there before the modern turf had established itself. If the purpose of such terraces was still agricultural, what crop, if any, would have been suited to them ? Local tradition says that vines were grown there; but this seems to ignore the fact that the bulk of the terraces, at least as they survive at present, face north-west, whereas, if vines are to succeed in the English climate a southerly aspect would seem imperative. No trace of planting-holes for such a crop was noted. Nor was any light shed on the vexed question of uncultivated baulks or other barriers between the terraced strips. Yet the steep angle of the scarps between the terraces seems to point to some kind of barrier to retain soil on each terrace.

If the Blewburton terraces were made to provide additional level ground for ordinary cultivation, why was this vast labour expended on such poor soil ? All around the foot of the hill stretch fertile and level, well-drained fields on the Upper Greensand. One would hesitate to see in the terraces the utilization of marginal lands under population pressure. It seems best, therefore, to leave the purpose of the terraces as an open question.

[1] C. S. and C. S. Orwin, *The Open Fields* (Oxford, 1938), p. 43.