# ARCHAEOLOGICAL NOTES FROM READING MUSEUM

# R. A. RUTLAND AND JILLIAN A. GREENAWAY

During 1969 and 1970 the following objects and sites were brought to the notice of Reading Museum. Objects that have been acquired by the museum are followed by an accession number. Otherwise they remain in private possession. The newsletter of the Berkshire Joint Committee for Archaeology, the first number of which was issued in April 1970, contains interim reports on excavation and fieldwork. In order to avoid duplication these topics are not discussed in detail in these notes.

## AIR PHOTOGRAPHS

The museum has purchased from Mr P. P. Rhodes the air photographs and maps which he used for the preparation of his article on 'The Celtic Field Systems on the Berkshire Downs' (Oxoniensia XV (1950) 1-28).

#### RADIOCARBON DATES

During this period two radiocarbon dates have been obtained for Berkshire sites.

Kintbury Excavations in 1966 at the mesolithic site of Wawcott I (SU 389676) by F. R. Froom revealed a hearth in a pit dwelling. A sample submitted to the British Museum Research Laboratory (BM-449) was dated to 5260±130 BP (c. 3310 BC). This can be compared with the similar date obtained for Lambourn long barrow, given below, and the much older dates for the Maglemosean sites at Thatcham (Proc. Prehist. Soc. XXVIII (1962) 370). A report is forthcoming (for the site see Trans. Newbury Dist. Field Club XI no. 2 (1963) 71; XII no. 1 (1970) 59; and Berks. Archaeol. J. 61 (1963-4) 1-3).

Lambourn In his report on the Lambourn long barrow excavations (Berks. Archaeol. J. 62 (1965) 1–16) Wymer mentions charcoal lying on the natural chalk at the end of the south ditch 'which should be suitable for radiocarbon dating'. A date for this has been obtained from the Geochron Laboratory, Cambridge, Mass., U.S.A. (GX-1178) of 5365±180 BP (c. 3415±

180 BC). This is discussed by Wymer elsewhere (Antiquity XLIV no. 174 (June 1970) 144).

# **PALAEOLITHIC**

Note: References to 'Wymer' in this section are to John Wymer: Lower Palaeolithic Archaeology in Britian (1968).

Cookham Mr Underhill donated a collection of palaeoliths which had formed part of the Darby and Treacher collections. All the Cookham examples come from Danefield Pit, Cookham Rise (SU 878852. Wymer p. 214. 110:69/14-15 & 193:69/1 & 4). Mr Wymer presented a handaxe and four waste flakes from Lower Mount Farm (SU 881842. Wymer p. 214. 19:70/1-5), where further gravel extraction took place in 1969. A pointed handaxe and a ficron which were recovered remain in private possession.

Maidenhead Mr Underhill donated a collection of palaeoliths which had formed part of the Treacher and Pedder collections. The sites represented are Cannoncourt Farm (SU 878831) and St Marks Road (approx. SU 871814. Wymer pp. 217-227. 110:69/16-50, 52-55 & 193:69/2, 3, 5-7). A small cordate handaxe was found in the garden of Mr Lacey (SU 882818), who retains it.

Reading A cordate handaxe of Late Middle Acheulian type was found on the surface of the garden of 12 Fowler Close, Earley. It measures

81 mm in length and is slightly rolled with ochreous staining. It is retained by the finder Dr P. Worsley of the Geography Department, University of Reading. A sub-cordate handaxe was found on the surface of the garden of 124 Silverdale Road, Earley (97:70). There is a marked difference in the condition of the two surfaces, the upper one being heavily stained and frost-pitted. The discovery of two implements in Earley is of interest since only five had been previously recorded (Wymer pp. 168–169).

Remenham Mr MacRae presented a handaxe and a flake from the pit at SU 774841 (Wymer pp. 202-207. 20:70/1-2). These are two of the few pieces to have come from bedded gravel at this site, the bulk of material having come from solution hollows.

Wokingham The two handaxes from southwest of the Emm Brook and near the Town Hall, recorded by Wymer (p. 181) as being in the Sale collection, have now been given to the museum by Mr S. Sale (28:69/1-2). The latter example was found 100 yards south of the Town Hall, as Wymer states, but not in Mr Sale's Chapel Garden which is elsewhere in Wokingham. I owe this correction to Mr Wymer. A handaxe was reported from Westcot Road. However, as it was found on the surface in builders' rubble the findspot is suspect.

#### MESOLITHIC

Basildon A two-platform core was found on the surface of a ploughed field in Upper Basildon (SU 59557675. 121:70/1).

Bisham Among the collection of flints (see below under Neolithic) was a possible tranchet axe (110:69/11).

Hurley Mr Underhill donated a tranchet axe dredged from the Thames between Medmenham, Bucks and Hurley (110:69/8).

Sulhamstead Richard Massey of Abbots Farm donated a small one-platform core found in a gravel pit (SU 648676). It was above a charcoal-filled hollow measuring 3 ft in diameter and 3 ft in depth. However this produced no artifacts and the core was not necessarily associated with it (78:70).

Welford St Bartholomew's Archaeological Society, under the direction of F. R. Froom, continued their investigation of mesolithic sites in the Wawcott area. Further work took place at Wawcott III (SU 400679) and the neighbouring site of Wawcott IV (SU 403679) was trial-trenched. (Trans. Newbury Dist. Field Club 12 no. 1 (1970) 58-67 for references to previous work).

Woodley and Sandford The garden of 75 Quentin Road, Woodley (approx. SU 756727) has produced a number of cores and flakes. A large core and seven flakes have been given to the museum (93:70/1-8) while others are retained by the occupier, Mr Jones. No material has been noted in adjoining gardens.

#### NEOLITHIC

Bisham Bisham has long been known as an area prolific in flint implements and Peake (Archaeology of Berkshire (1931) 39 & 179) refers to a 'flint workshop' here. Mr Underhill has given a collection of implements picked up in this parish, which consist of chipped and polished flint axes, several of them broken, and two scrapers (110:69/1-3, 4-7, 9, 10, 12 & 13).

Hurley A fine example of a chipped and partly ground axehead was found on a caravan site by Mr Hobbs (75:70).

Reading The blade end of a polished flint axe rechipped for hafting was dug up in the garden of 15 Woburn Close, Caversham (approx. SU 703757. 77:70).

Sulhamstead Richard Massey also donated a small pick-like implement which he found on the surface at SU 646680 (129:69). This is an

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area that has already produced a polished stone axe (*Berks*. *Archaeol*. J. 62 (1965-6) 71) and a flint adze, as well as the mesolithic core mentioned above.

Windsor Mr Shergold donated a chipped and ground flint axe said to have been found in about 1950 in Windsor Great Park (128:70).

Woodley and Sandford A late Neolithic flint knife with blunting retouch along one edge (I. F. Smith: Windmill Hill and Avebury (1965) fig. 81 no. F214 for type) was found in the garden of 37 Lunds Farm Road, Woodley (approx. SU 771737) by Mr Rawlinson, who retains it.

## **BRONZE AGE**

Bray A basal-looped spearhead was found at Hoveringham Pit, Bray. The loops are lozenge-shaped and there is a ridge down each face of the blade. The tip is broken off and the length of the surviving portion is 160 mm. It is similar to the spearhead from the Sherford, Taunton hoard and can thus be assigned to the later phase of the Middle Bronze Age (Proc. Prehist. Soc. XXV (1959) 145 fig. 1 no. 11). The exact find-spot is unknown but this pit has produced other implements which may represent a Late Bronze Age hoard (Berks. Archaeol. J. 61 (1963-4) 102). It remains in the possession of the finder.

Burghfield Two ring ditches at Amners Farm (SU 677697) were excavated by the museum in advance of motorway construction. No internal features were discovered but flints and pottery from the ditches date to the Late Neolithic-Early Bronze Age.

Streatley A tanged bronze chisel was found on the surface of a field (SU 57608195) by Simon Williams, who retains it. This class of implement has recently been discussed by Britton (I. M. Allen, D. Britton and H. H. Coghlan: Metallurgical Reports on British and Irish Bronze Age Implements and Weapons in

the Pitt Rivers Museum (1970), 205-6) and several examples are known from Berkshire (John Evans: Ancient Bronze Implements (1881) figs. 193 & 196; H. H. Coghlan: A Report upon the Hoard of Bronze Age Tools and Weapons from Yattendon, near Newbury (1970) Y19, Y20 & Y21). However a close parallel is provided by the Thixendale, Yorkshire example (Evans op. cit. fig. 195 & pp. 168-9) in which the stop also has the appearance of a pin put through the blade. The only significant difference is that the 'pin' is of circular section in the Streatley example. This area, where the Berkshire Ridgeway descends to cross the Thames, has produced pottery of a broadly similar period. (Berks. Archaeol. 7. 62 (1965-6) 72).

Woodley Mr P. Allen donated a fine tanged flint arrowhead found in his garden at 35 Wroxham Road (SU 757740. 96:69).

#### IRON AGE

Brightwell In 1969 the museum acquired the collection of the late Dr H. Watts. This included a collection of animal bones and Iron Age pottery from Dr Watts' excavations at Brightwell Barrow in 1923 (Grinsell: Berks. Archaeol. J. XL (1936) 26 & XLIII (1939) 12). According to Grinsell the pottery from these excavations was in the British Museum. However there is nothing from this site in the British Museum and this is probably the material in question. There are no diagnostic pieces (215:69).

Easthampstead In March 1969, a gas pipeline skirted the north side of Caesar's Camp. An inspection of the trench revealed no archaeological features.

West Hagbourne Miss L. F. Chitty, O.B.E., donated a collection of Iron Age and Roman sherds from several localities on Hagbourne Hill (SU 497868) and it is hoped that these will be published in a reappraisal of the puzzling hoard of Bronze Age and Iron Age bronzes found on the hill in 1803 (Peake op. cit. 65–66 & 199. 141:68 & 23:69).

Maidenhead Gareth Thomas investigated a series of pits in Prior's Pit (SU 887832) and recovered from loose soil beneath one of these the complete profile of a small cup, just over an inch high and  $2\frac{1}{2}$  inches in diameter with flat base, curved side and simple rim (36:70). Although difficult to date in isolation, it is similar to 'a small amorphous pot in the Iron A tradition' from Maiden Castle (R. E. M. Wheeler: Maiden Castle (1943) 202 no. 72 & fig. 60) and an 'Early Pre-Roman Iron Age' rim from Darmsden, Suffolk (Ant. J. XLVIII (1968) 186 no. 41 & fig. 3).

Mr Underhill donated pottery which once belonged to Llewellyn Treacher. This had been recovered from Treacher's museum by Mr Williams-Hunt and handed to Mr Underhill during the last war. A note on the box refers to 'Ancient Pottery Maidenhead' and a pencilled note on the lid to 'Furze Platt'. An accompanying card refers to 'Fragments of base of large Urn, probably Bronze Age, from FURZE PLATT, Maidenhead, Presented by the late Ll. Treacher, F.G.S.'

Examination of the material shows that there are two bases represented, of which one is in coarse flint-gritted ware and could be from a Bucket urn or similar vessel. The other base is a harder flint-gritted ware and may belong to an everted rim in similar ware which appears to be of Iron Age type. Neither of these pots is the Bronze Age urn from Furze Platt mentioned by Peake (op. cit. 190 under Cookham) since this was given to the museum by Treacher in 1890. To confuse matters further this pot is again an Iron Age type and examination of the remains again revealed part of the base of a further pot. There are thus at least four pots now represented in Reading Museum with a Furze Platt provenance, but in view of the obvious confusion and the fact that Peake mentions only one pot from Furze Platt judgment must be reserved about this recent acquisition.

Midgham A complete handcut rough-out for a shale armlet was found in Midgham Marsh (SU 549664) by Mr R. Allen in digging a hole

for the Southern Electricity Board. By analogy with similar fragmentary examples from Eldon's Seat (*Proc. Prehist. Soc.* XXXIV (1968) pl. VI) this has been assigned to the Iron Age (71:70).

Little Wittenham Excavations in 1970 by the museum revealed further traces of the Iron Age settlement outside Sinodun Camp, first investigated by P. P. Rhodes (Oxoniensia XIII (1948) 18-31).

#### ROMAN

Abingdon The Abingdon and District Archaeological Society carried out a number of excavations in Abingdon. On the Tithe Farm estate (SU 484963), excavation revealed two walls at right angles to each other, the robber trench for one producing a corroded 3rd century coin; a hearth containing two 4th century radiates; and a pitched stone floor (see Berks. Archaeol. J. 64 (1969) 37 for earlier work on this estate).

During the digging of a trench to lay an electricity cable in West St Helen's Street (SU 497968) a quantity of Roman pottery was recovered. At one point the trench had cut through a rubbish pit. The pottery is mostly coarse grey ware of the 2nd to 3rd centuries but included two pieces of figured Samian. A small excavation 4 ft west of the rubbish pit failed to find any further traces of the pit itself but revealed a small length of possible beam slot parallel to the street. This yielded several pieces of Roman grey ware, a coin of Cunobelin (Mack no. 249) and a piece of medieval pottery.

A copper as and an orichalcum dupondius of Nero (R.I.C. Vol. I p. 167 no. 329 and p. 164 no. 287) were dredged from the Thames at SU 50159695. They were retained by Mr Anderson.

Appleford In 1969 Reading Museum excavated a human skeleton, a rubbish pit, a number of boundary ditches and postholes ranging in date from the 1st to 4th centuries in Amey's gravel pit (SU 522934). The most interesting discovery was the bottom of a

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wicker-lined storage pit with a proportion of the wooden lining in situ. The pit had twelve upright posts at intervals around the edge with smaller branches woven around them, the gap between the wooden lining and the side of the pit being packed with clay.

Aston Upthorpe A solidus of Honorius (Sear: Roman Coins and their Values (1970) no. 4144) was found by Julian Powell in 1969 18 inches down when he and his father were digging preparatory to laying a garden path at Little Thorpe, Thorpe St., Aston Upthorpe (SU 552863). The coin was the subject of an inquest at Abingdon on 14th January, 1970. It was declared not to be Treasure Trove and was returned to Julian Powell, who retains it.

Baydon Excavation by the Newbury Museum Archaeological Group of a Roman occupation site on the edge of the M4 (SU 291774) revealed part of a rubbish pit, part of a chalk-built rectangular drier, much early Roman pottery and one of the side ditches of Ermin Street. Nearby (SU 293774) the road itself was sectioned. The metalling was 50 ft wide and one of the side ditches had been redug.

**Bradfield** A Roman pottery kiln was excavated by Reading Museum on the line of the M4 (SU 602738).

A follis of Constantine I (R.I.C. Vol. VII p. 645 no. 14) was dug up in a garden (SU 609726. 114:70).

Bray Excavations by the Middle Thames Archaeological and Historical Society at Hoveringham Pit, Bray (SU 918781) revealed a Roman site in which five phases, dating from circa AD 320 to the early 5th century, were detected. A number of cremation and inhumation burials were found in the earliest levels, whilst metalworking took place in the latest phase and continued into the early 5th century.

West Challow Mr A. V. Grover dug three trenches through the known Roman villa site at SU 375859. One of his trenches revealed a

chalk wall about 2 ft wide and 12 ft long. Visible in the section were a two-period chalk floor and a rubbish pit filled with black soil. Iron Age and Roman sherds were found. The villa was planned in the 19th century by E. C. Davey (Archaeological Journal XXXIII (1876) 382-392).

Eye and Dunsden Workmen in a gravel pit at Play Hatch, Sonning Eye found a group of 2nd century Roman pottery lying in a patch of dark soil, probably a rubbish pit (SU 733741). Nearby, to the north, were three skeletons orientated north-south. (109:69/1-4). For a Viking burial from this gravel pit see Ant. J. XLIX (1969) 330.

Hurley Most of the sherds of a one-handled flagon of the 1st century AD (cf Thomas May: The Pottery Found at Silchester (1916) pl. LXII type 117) were found on the surface near Littlewick Green. The sherds were very abraded as if they had been in the topsoil for some time (99:69). Roman tiles and sherds were found nearby (SU 841808) in 1965 and the Maidenhead and District Archaeological and Historical Society investigated a 2nd century site in the area (Berks. Archaeol. J. 62 (1965-6) 73).

East IIsley A barbarous imitation of a bronze coin of Constans was found on the surface (SU 493811) by Mr Hibbert, who retains it.

Pangbourne Two 4th century Roman buildings overlying a Roman pottery kiln and a 1st century ditch system were excavated by Reading Museum on the line of the M4 (SU 619738).

Radley Excavations by Radley College at Peach Croft Farm (SU 514986) revealed a Roman habitation site with two rubbish pits and a large number of postholes which may represent one rectangular and two round huts.

Reading A quantity of Belgic and Roman pottery has been found in pits or ditches in the old clay pit south of the Meadway shopping

precinct (SU 683727). 110:71 & 113:71). Some pottery from this area was in the museum in 1907, and a quantity of 1st century pottery, bones and the upper stone of a quern were recovered during commercial excavations in 1930. (This was the Prospect Park Brickworks. See *Berks. Archaeol. J.* XXXIV (1930) 72 & XXXVII (1933) 84).

A bronze coin of Constantius II (Late Roman Bronze Coinage no. 252) was dug up in the grounds of Presentation College (SU 695724) and retained by Mrs Dean.

An ae 3 of Valens was found on allotments (SU 717723) and retained by Mr Bliss.

Silchester Small bronze coins and pottery picked up at Silchester have been brought to the attention of the museum. Samian stamps of Clemens of Rheinzabern and Ianuaris of Lezoux have been added to the Silchester Collection (143:69 & 137:71).

Waltham St Lawrence An as of Gordian III (R.I.C. Vol. IV pt. III p. 48 no. 300) was found on the surface at Shurlock Row (SU 833746). It was retained by Mr D. J. Hitchman.

Mr E. J. Winter found a number of Roman tiles and a little Roman pottery in Downfield Pit, (SU 839765). He retains them.

Wargrave Excavations by the Maidenhead and District Archaeological and Historical Society revealed a linear series of shallow pits which produced pottery and pieces of pierced clay blocks (SU 817796). The site is dated to the 1st century AD by the presence of the handle and neck of a Hofheim flagon.

Long Wittenham Mrs Margaret Gray directed excavations at Northfield Farm (SU 553953), long known as a crop-mark site (Berks. Archaeol. J. 59 (1961) 24–25). The features revealed were an undated penannular ditch, pits with possibly Bronze Age pottery, parallel ditches cut by Roman features, Roman enclosure ditches and pits and a 3rd century inhumation.

Wokingham A hoard of 4th century bronze coins in a pot was discovered at Matthewsgreen (SU 803699). The top of the pot had been sheared off, presumably by the plough, and the coins scattered. Coins examined so far are of Constans, Constantius II, Magnentius and Decentius, and are chiefly from the mints of Arles, Amiens, Trier and Lyons. Although there were sherds from a number of vessels in the soil around, no trace of any structure was found.

#### SAXON

Childrey Part of a Saxon spearhead was found on the surface of a ploughed field just north of the Ridgeway (SU 360843) by Mrs J. Crome, who retains it. It is similar in type to the spearhead illustrated by R. E. M. Wheeler in London and the Saxons (1935) pl. XII no. 5 and probably dates from the 8th to 9th centuries.

Henley-on-Thames An iron axe (London and the Vikings (1927) type II) was found by a skin diver immediately downstream of Henley Bridge at SU 764826. It remains in his possession.

## MEDIEVAL AND LATER

Abingdon A small excavation at Fairlawn Wharf, East St Helen's Street, by the Abingdon and District Archaeological Society revealed substantial portions of two earth-packed stone walls, one built upon the other. 12th to 13th century pottery was associated with the lower wall.

An excavation by the same Society beneath the cellar floor of no. 3 Stert Street (SU 498972), a 16th century timber framed building, revealed a rubble stone wall dated by pottery to the 14th century. This wall cut into an earlier rubbish pit containing 13th century pottery and part of a bone flute.

Bracknell Part of a wooden waterpipe was dug up in Station Road (10:70).

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Burghfield A large pit producing early medieval pottery and bone was seen during M4 construction at Pingewood by Mr Ron Murphy. The pottery dates from the 13th century.

Cholsey Observation was kept on the trench for a sewer pipe at Cholsey (SU 583871-586871). A number of postholes and pits were observed in the section. One of these contained bones of four adults and one child, and another contained several sherds of Roman and medieval pottery.

Finchampstead A collection of pottery of 13th to 15th century date was found in a trench at SU 763646 by Mr Ron Murphy (224:71).

Maidenhead Work was completed at the medieval moated site at Spencers Farm (SU 886828).

Reading During redevelopment in St Mary's Butts some post-medieval pottery was found including a stoneware wine jar with the neck and handle broken off. On the shoulder of the jar is inscribed T, F. SOWDON WINE, &, SPIRIT, MERCHANT READING. The Reading directory for 1842-3 lists T. F. Sowdon's premises in Bridge Street (6:70).

Observation was kept on the site at 52-53 Minster Street during redevelopment. A quantity of medieval to modern pottery, including some 12th to 13th century sherds, were found scattered over the area. The only feature noticed was a depression filled with black soil, which was probably the bottom of a rubbish pit and produced a group of 12th to 13th century sherds, including thumb-impressed rims, and some chicken bones (51:69/1-3). Amongst the post-medieval pottery was a stoneware jug inscribed on the shoulder BOTL 5, FYNMORE AND JENNER, NEXT THE POST OFFICE, READING. Ingalls directory for 1837 records that W. S. Fynmore, Grocer was at 119 London Street, whilst the Post Office was at Miss White's at 118 London Street. The Post Office directory for 1842 records Fynmore and

Jenner, Grocers at 119–120 London Street and the Post Office Receiving House at George Lovejoy's, Bookseller, Stationer and Librarian, 117 London Street. The jar is in the possession of Mr Thomas Fiddy.

Shinfield Further discoveries of medieval material were made at Spencers Wood (SU 721663. See *Berks. Archaeol. J.* 63 (1967–8) 74) and a trial excavation was carried out in September 1969. This revealed, at a depth of 10 inches, a hearth constructed of tiles set on edge. A layer of darker soil, some flint tumble and a quantity of broken tile suggested occupation, but no other features were discovered. The pottery is possibly of 12th to 13th century date.

Upton Two rim sherds of Norman pottery (cf Dunning: Early Norman Pottery from recent excavations in Winchester in *Proc. Hants. Field Club* XXI Pt. III (1960) fig. 2 nos. 4 & 5) were found in the garden of Turstins, High Street by Mr Underhill who retains them.

# THAMES CONSERVANCY LOAN COLLECTION

The following are some of the objects dredged from the Thames, unless otherwise stated, in 1969 and 1970 by the Thames Conservancy and added to their loan collection in Reading Museum. The numbers in brackets after each entry are the Thames Conservancy catalogue number and museum accession number respectively.

#### IRON AGE

Sword and scabbard An iron sword in a bronze scabbard, found downstream of Abingdon Lock by A. Wiltshire (TCB 330. 118:69).

## ROMAN

Pottery A number of sherds of coarse pottery, found downstream of Abindgon Lock by A. Wiltshire and J. Hutton (TCB 329 & 331. 116:69 & 117:69).

Tiles and pottery Tiles and pottery, including a waster, found by D. Pudwell above Sandford Lock (TCB 337-341, 172-176:69. TCB 343-345, 178-180:69).

Bracelet A bronze bracelet with simple decoration and a hook and eye fastening found downstream of Abingdon Lock by D. Pudwell (TCB 346, 181:69).

Pottery A small 3rd to 4th century thumbindented beaker with black colour coating found by A. Loryman in the river Wey at Coxbridge Farm, Farnham (TCB 334, 121:69).

#### SAXON

Spearhead An iron spearhead of 8th to 9th century type found by D. Pudwell above Culham Weir (TCB 383, 163:70).

Spearhead An iron spearhead of 8th to 9th century type found by D. Pudwell above Sandford Lock (TCB 349, 184:69).

MEDIEVAL AND LATER

Pottery A 17th century green glazed pottery

water bottle found by D. Pudwell downstream of the Swift Ditch entrance in Culham Reach (TCB 384, 164:70).

Pottery A 16th century brown glazed pottery water bottle found by D. Pudwell above Culham Weir (TCB 370, 150:70).

Wine measure A small pewter baluster wine measure, c. 1650–1680, found by D. Pudwell below Sandford Lock (TCB 366, 146:70).

Bottles A collection of stoneware and glass bottles, some with Berkshire names, found at Cookham, Iffley, Sunbury and Windsor (TCB 360 & 361, 14 & 15:70).

Sword A cavalry trooper's sword of the 1908 pattern made by Wilkinson found by L. E. Payton in the river Mole at Dorking (TCB 333, 120:69).

Sword A British regimental officer's sword c. 1880 found by L. Painter in the river Blackwater at Frogmore (TCB 365, 145:70).