Earlier in this volume, in surveying the burial customs of the inhabitants of Norfolk and Suffolk in the first phase of the Iron Age, attention was drawn to the remarkable find from Stutton, Suffolk, now exhibited in Ipswich Museum (pp. 20–23, 97–98; Figs. 2, 3; Pl. ii, 2). On the evidence of the aperture in its side, though the details, especially the dimensions, of the reconstruction by the museum staff were admittedly conjectural, it was classified as a 'hut-urn' of a type well known on the continent and was claimed as the first genuine specimen of this class to be discovered in Britain. Despite the absence of cremated human bones, possibly attributable to the destruction of part of the site prior to its discovery, continental analogies suggested that a cremation was associated—a notion consonant with the charcoal recovered from the site. It was further indicated that the damaged condition of the vessel precluded the possibility of citing any close continental parallels. Some similarity, however, was noted with a hut-urn from Brandenburg and the considerable divergencies in detail seemed comprehensible on the grounds of the isolation of the Stutton vessel—chronological as well as geographical—from its continental ancestors.

Since the full publication of this find, which followed a short note accepting its affinity with continental hut-urns in Catalogue of an Exhibition of Recent Archaeological Discoveries, 1933–1938, 39 (University of London Institute of Archaeology), I have been favoured with observations on the subject from Dr. G. Bersu, Hon.F.S.A., which merit careful consideration. Dr. Bersu's intimate knowledge of the continental hut-urns and his wide experience of excavation on Iron Age settlements, will command a sympathetic examination for his views. With these suggestions in mind, the vessel has been re-examined with the ready co-operation of
the Ipswich Museum staff, which is gratefully acknowledged. From this fresh review of the evidence it emerges that one fundamental feature of the reconstruction, the lower side of the aperture, cannot be sustained. Its presence depends on three sherds none of which is in such a position as to prove the unquestionable existence of a corner to the aperture and all probably came from its vertical sides. Thus the square 'window' becomes a rectangular 'door,' the opening continuing to the bottom. The demolition of this crucial feature of the reconstruction, which was admittedly conjectural, compels assent for Dr. Bersu's view that this is no hut-urn at all, despite its superficial resemblance, and that no burial was ever associated with it. He suggests that it is a specimen of a type of transportable stove, filled with charcoal, which would be placed on flat hearths, such as those at Glastonbury. The top of this example was flat or almost so, and vessels could be placed on it for heating water or cooking purposes. This is one of a number of types of stoves and ovens, fixed and movable, used in this country in the Iron Age for bread-baking, cooking and grain-drying, functions on which much light has been shed by the recent excavations at Woodbury, Maiden Castle and the Caburn, the full publication of which will be eagerly awaited. In Germany, Dr. Bersu has drawn attention to the fragments of ovens found in rubbish pits of this period, as these have often been inaccurately regarded as wattle and daub from the walls and roofs of houses and huts, and he has also cited modern parallels in support of his view. From N.E. Hungary, F. von Tompa has published a reconstruction of a portable oven with perforated top, standing on a clay hearth slab, and dating from period iv of the Hungarian Bronze Age, 1200 B.C. onwards. There is no doubt that this revised estimate of the function of the Stutton vessel provides a more acceptable explanation of the associated finds. The

2 E.g. at Fifield Bavant and Highfield, Wilts.
purpose of the pit in which they were discovered is obscure, storage may be suggested, but it was clearly filled up finally with heterogeneous refuse including the septaria nodules, the remains of the stove, bowl, loom-weight, handbricks, charcoal, goat’s skull, burnt flints and iron fragments—most of which were in a shattered condition abnormal for a funerary deposit. It is possible but not probable, that the stove was actually tended in this hollow and that the nodules of septaria served to retain the heat, but the absence of a hearth is against this view, and it is safer to interpret all the contents of the pit as rubbish from the adjacent settlement of salt-working folk on this bank of a tidal estuary. It is a matter for regret that this site was not excavated with these problems in mind, so that it is impossible now to ascertain if the nodules were packed intentionally round the remains of the stove.

It remains to thank Dr. Bersu for permission to ventilate these views in advance of his report on the Woodbury excavations,¹ and to congratulate Ipswich Museum on acquiring one of the best specimens of an Iron Age stove yet known in this country in place of their ‘unique’ hut-urn. The dexterity of the museum staff in detecting the unusual character of this vessel and in producing any reconstruction at all from such a mass of broken sherds, should also be mentioned.