



FIG. 1. BEAKERS FROM CHURCH HILL, BRIGHTON.

Sussex Archaeological Society

TWO BEAKERS AND AN EARLY IRON AGE URN

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MR. JOHN D. HOPER, of Cowfold, has made a notable presentation to the Society's Museum, consisting of two Bronze Age beakers, and an Early Iron Age urn.

The beakers are of special interest because with the exception of a specimen found some years ago at Telscombe, and since lost,¹ they are the only examples of beakers of Type A that have been recorded from our county. This type consists of a globular body with a high more or less straight diverging neck with thin straight lip, the neck being differentiated from the body by a definite constriction. Dr. Grahame Clark has shown² that both the distribution of Type A beakers and objects found with them point to a Nordic origin, in contrast to a Rhineland and Low Country source for the ovoid, or Type B, beakers which in England are found mostly in the south-eastern counties. Ten Type B beakers have been found in Sussex, and of these some may be seen in our Museum at Lewes, and others in the Brighton Museum. Beakers are provisionally dated from 2000 to 1600 B.C.

These beakers have been in the Hoper family for more than a century. There can be no reasonable doubt that it is to them that the following note refers written by the Rev. Henry Hoper, Vicar of Portslade from 1815 to 1859:

'These urns were discovered by some men employed in a chalk-pit on Church Hill, Brighton, Nov. 1830. In clearing away the earth above the chalk a square hole about seven feet deep was observed, at the bottom of which two skeletons were found in an apparently

¹ There is a photograph of it in the Brighton Museum.

² *Antiquity*, v. 415-26.

sitting posture, one of an adult, the other of a child. That of the adult had the larger, that of the child had the smaller urn, placed above the skull.'

Though these vessels are described as urns they must have been beakers, for beakers are the only kind of vessel found with skeletons in a crouched or sitting posture in the south of England.

The larger beaker (Fig. 1) stands 7 inches high and is $5\frac{1}{2}$ inches wide at the mouth; the neck and the body are of equal heights. It is of a fine, well-mixed clay, evenly baked, free from fragments of flint, and of a pale red colour. The exterior surface is almost entirely covered with ornament which consists of rows of lines made with a roulette, and of panels containing crosses with horizontal roulette shading in their upper and lower quadrants. Each roulette line is narrow, and consists of a row of oblong depressions two or three times as long as wide, and separated from one another by but short intervals. The inner surface is of the same colour, but unornamented.

Of the smaller beaker (Fig. 1) only portions of the body and a fragment of the neck survive. Enough, however, to enable a restoration to be made at the British Museum, through the courtesy of Mr. Reginald Smith. The height of the neck is conjectural, as no portion of the lip has survived. The paste is of fine texture, and of a browner red than the larger vessel. Its exterior surface is covered by three wide bands of roulette ornamentation separated by plain bands, which latter show some degree of polish or lustre, as if the vessel had been washed over with a thin slip, and then burnished, more especially along the plain bands. The zones of ornament consist of vertical rows of square dots, as broad as they are long, bordered by horizontal lines made with the same instrument. These horizontal lines are two in number in the lowest band, three in the middle, and four in the upper one; with each such band is one line of depressions that are broader and longer.

It is pleasing to record that the existence of these rare beakers was made known to Mr. L. V. Grinsell by Miss

E. G. Hoper after she had read his paper on 'Sussex in the Bronze Age' in *S.A.C.* LXXII.

The Early Iron Age cinerary urn, Fig. 2, has also come down to us from the Rev. Henry Hoper, but in the intervening years knowledge as to the exact site of its discovery has been lost, though it may be regarded as certain that it comes from somewhere on the Sussex Downs.

The vessel stands 7 in. high and is $6\frac{1}{2}$ in. in maximum width, and 4 in. across the mouth. The most pronounced feature is the broad and somewhat rounded shoulder narrowing down to a relatively small mouth with out-curved lip. This shoulder is a characteristic feature of La Tène III ware in Sussex (roughly 50 B.C. to A.D. 50), but in this case there is also a slight tendency to carination at the widest part. The level of maximum width is neither high, as in the early La Tène III vessel from Little Horsted,¹ nor low, as in the late La Tène III urns from Asham;² similarly, in the ratio between the width of the mouth and the maximum diameter across the shoulder this vessel falls intermediately between the two examples mentioned. Developmentally, therefore, it should be intermediate also in date.

The external surface is rather soapy to the feel, and is of various shades of dark brown. The impression obtained is, once again, that the paste is intermediate between the dark grey 'tarmac' surface of La Tène II and early La Tène III, on the one hand, and the browner, less soapy, ware of late La Tène III, as typified by the Asham urns. There are horizontal tool-marks, probably produced by the use of a hand-turned wheel. The inner surface is gritty and greyish-brown.

The shoulder is decorated by a double line of roughly parallel, but irregularly drawn, deep grooves suggestive of Hallstatt-La Tène I technique, between which are a series of oblique grooves less deeply cut, crossed by a horizontal line of roulette markings. Oblique roulette markings also occur round part of the circumference of

¹ *S.N.Q.* IV. 151-3.

² *S.A.C.* LXXI. 255-6.

the vessel, as short straight lines placed irregularly either between, across, or along the oblique grooves. Above



FIG. 2. EARLY IRON AGE URN.

the shoulder is a series of double-line arcading, lightly tooled—a form of decoration characteristic of early La Tène III ware, as exemplified at Little Horsted and

Charleston Brow;¹ and below it two rows of a somewhat indistinct criss-cross pattern which became common in Romano-British times and which appears on two of the Asham urns. The base has a slight foot-ring.

In all probability this vessel dates from the latter part of the first century B.C., and is interesting as exhibiting an unusual combination of conservative features. For example, the ornament on the shoulder is a survival or recrudescence of that found in one class of neolithic vessel, such as those from Whitehawk Camp²—a form of decoration that is believed to represent the stitches with which the upper and lower halves of a leather vessel were united over a hoop. In many La Tène III vessels (as at Charleston Brow) this ornament survives in the form of oblique slashes on a raised band. The line of small holes that runs through this band of decoration, made with a roulette, takes us back to the early days of the Bronze Age (c. 1800–1600 B.C.), for, though not entirely confined to that period, the roulette was the chief instrument used in the elaborate decorations of the beaker. Lastly, the deep grooving of the shoulder recalls the technique of the first period of the Early Iron Age (c. 600–250 B.C.), as mentioned above.

The La Tène III pottery of Sussex must be studied very largely on its own merits, for, as Mr. Hawkes has shown, it differs markedly from the contemporary wares of the neighbouring counties of Kent and Hants, which were Belgic wares recently introduced from the Continent.³ The La Tène III of Sussex, on the other hand, was a natural development from La Tène II, showing no more than a very moderate degree of Belgic influence, the chief signs of which were, perhaps, the high, rounded shoulder and the foot-ring base.

The student is recommended to study the two cases recently arranged at the Society's Museum at Lewes, illustrating the development of Early Iron Age pottery in Sussex.

¹ *S.A.C.* LXXIV. 172–3, figs. 17, 22.

² *S.A.C.* LXXI. 64, 66, figs. 1, 3, 6, 15, 16, &c.

³ C. F. C. Hawkes, F.S.A., and G. C. Dunning, 'The Belgae of Gaul and Britain', *Arch. Journ.* LXXXVII. 297–9.