

FIG. A. PLAN AND SITE-PLAN OF POTTERY SITE NEAR HORSTED KEYNES.

AN IRON AGE POTTERY SITE NEAR HORSTED KEYNES

I. THE SITE

By H. R. HARDY

DURING the process of digging clay at the Freshfield Lane Brickworks, situated near Freshfield Crossways, between Danehill and Horsted Keynes (Fig. A), fragments of pottery were found and were submitted to the Works Manager, Mr. Bennett, who recognized them as obviously of antiquarian interest and gave instructions to dig with care in that area of ground. Before long some 400 fragments had been unearthed, together with pieces of bone, charcoal, iron slag, and other objects.

The site lies some 700 ft. in a north-west direction from the main entrance to the brickworks. All the discoveries have been made in what was once a narrow ditch, dug in clay, but now so silted up as to be invisible on the surface. This ditch has a V-section, and is about $2\frac{1}{2}$ ft. wide at the level of the top of the undisturbed clay, and about $2\frac{1}{2}$ ft. deep below the present surface, and it has been traced running practically straight in a north-west direction for 83 ft., and then turning towards west-north-west for at least a further 63ft. At this point the line is crossed by a boundary bank, beyond which no exploratory digging has yet been undertaken.

Fig. B shows a typical section, drawn by the late Rev. Harold Cavalier. It shows the relative positions of the pottery and charcoal, and also a layer of burnt sandstone, which runs along the whole length of the ditch. These stones measure on an average 3 in. thick by 7 in. long, and are often of a brilliant 'rouge' colour through burning. A small piece of vitrified clay was found, which suggests that the fuel used in the kiln

was oak. Additional discoveries include part of a bronze finger-ring of Roman type, two fossilized sponges (one of which is hollow), a number of flints of varying shapes, derived from the Downs, and several smooth, flat pebbles.

I wish to put on record the valuable help given by

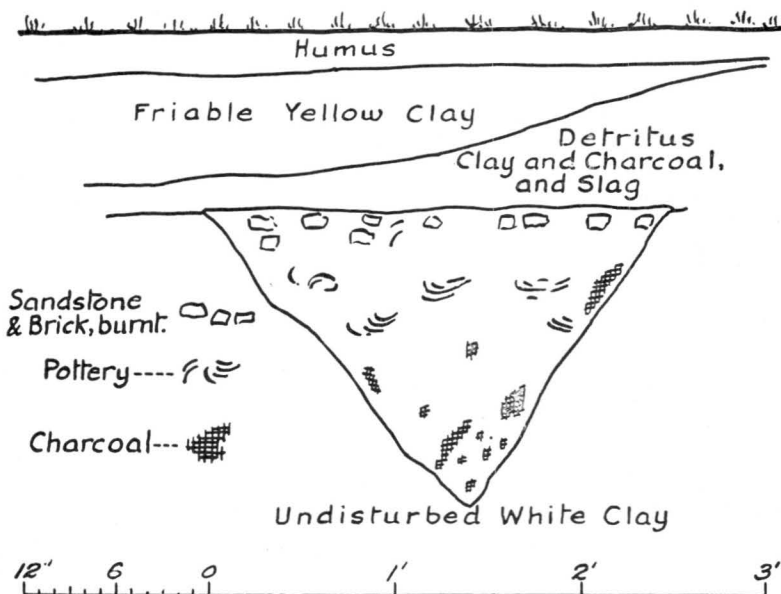


FIG. B. SECTION OF DITCH.

the late Rev. Harold Cavalier. This was the last occasion on which he was able to follow his favourite hobby, and his sudden death shortly afterwards was a very great loss to all who knew and loved him.

During the months to come I shall be delighted to welcome any who care to give their help or advice on the site. There is undoubtedly a great amount of pottery to be excavated, and much work to be done. Owing to the heavy clay soil it is advisable to bring rubber boots, as great difficulty is being experienced in draining off the water which collects in the trenches.

II. THE POTTERY

By E. CECIL CURWEN, M.A., M.B., F.S.A.

Of the considerable quantity of pottery found on this site a representative selection is illustrated in Figs. 1-32. It will be convenient to describe these collectively under the headings of shape, fabric, and decoration, and then to comment on some of the individual pieces.

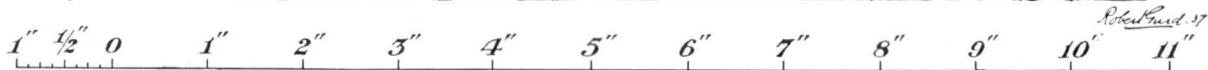
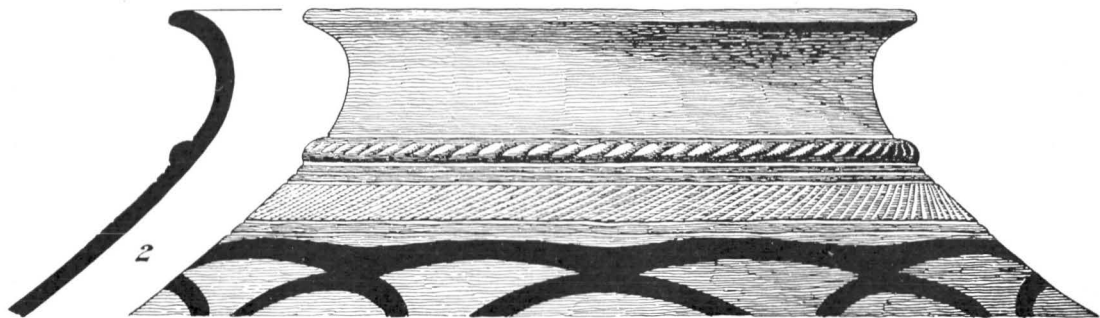
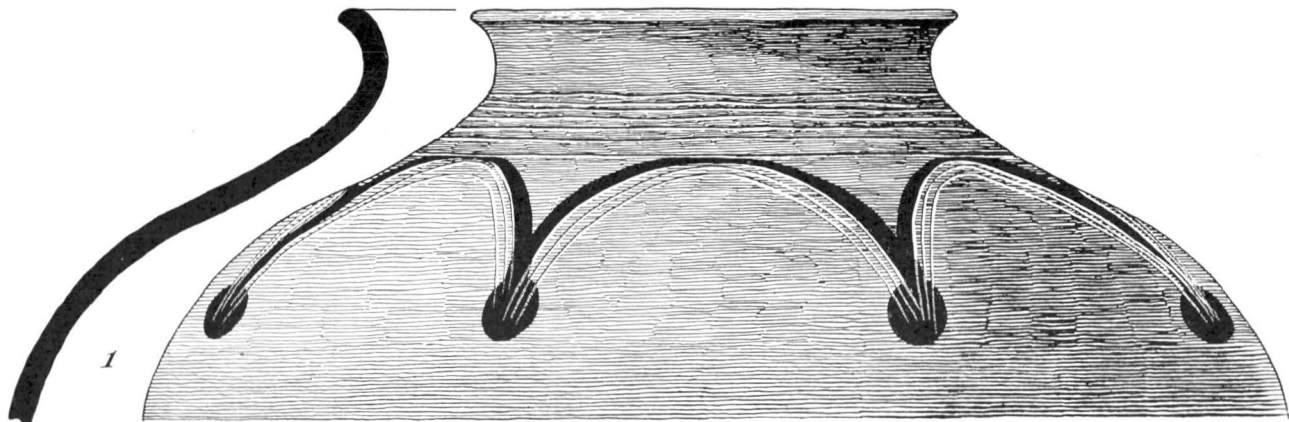
Shape. There is very little variety under this heading, nearly all the vessels, whatever their size, consisting of a swelling body surmounted by an out-curling lip. They range between the high, rounded shoulder with wide mouth (Little Horsted type)¹ and the low, swelling belly with narrow mouth (Asham type),² the former being apparently the earlier shape. To the former class belong Figs. 4-9, 12, 13, 31, while among the latter are Figs. 1-3, 14, 15. Bases vary from the simple flat form (19) to the spreading flat base (20, 23), the foot-ring (18), and the omphalos (10, 24). High pedestal bases are absent.

Fabric. The fabric varies from the smooth clay with dark grey 'Tarmac' surface characteristic of our Iron Age AB (La Tène II) to buff or red ware with markedly soapy feel. This variation goes *pari passu* with the evolution from the Little Horsted to the Asham form, so that the sequence of development is clear. There is an absence of the sandiness and harsh feel that are present in most Roman wares.

Decoration. A considerable proportion of the vessels show some decoration, and of these the great majority show the 'swag', i.e. a pattern resembling arcading or an inverted festoon (Figs. 1-12, 30, 31). In most cases this was lightly tooled in the wet clay and consists of one, two, or three parallel lines, sometimes supplemented with impressed circles (8, 10, 11) or horizontal lines (4-7, 9, 11, 12). This form of decoration is found on both the Little Horsted and the Asham types of vessel. The most remarkable feature of this pottery is the discovery

¹ *S.N.Q.* iv. 151.

² *S.A.C.* LXXI. 255.



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FIGS. 1 AND 2. PAINTED POTTERY.

of fragments of at least two large vessels of Asham form decorated with swags painted on in black (1, 2). This stands out in bold contrast to the reddish-buff colour of the vessels. In one case (1), and probably in others (e.g. 28), the tooled pattern has been reinforced and partly overlaid by a painted swag. In the other pot (2) a horizontal band filled with oblique hatching surmounts the painted swags, and above this again a raised cordon lies at the base of the neck, decorated with oblique incisions forming a cable-pattern. The band of oblique hatching is also found on No. 3.

In Nos. 11 and 12 the swag has been applied with a roulette, the enlarged drawing showing the character of the rectangular impressions so produced. At least one other vessel shows the same technique, including a band of oblique hatched lines executed with a roulette.

No. 13 has hatched diamonds on the shoulder, and closely resembles a very large jar from Broadwater¹ in the Worthing Museum.

No. 16 has a crude chevron formed of groups of three parallel incised lines intersecting so clumsily as to form almost a trellis pattern.

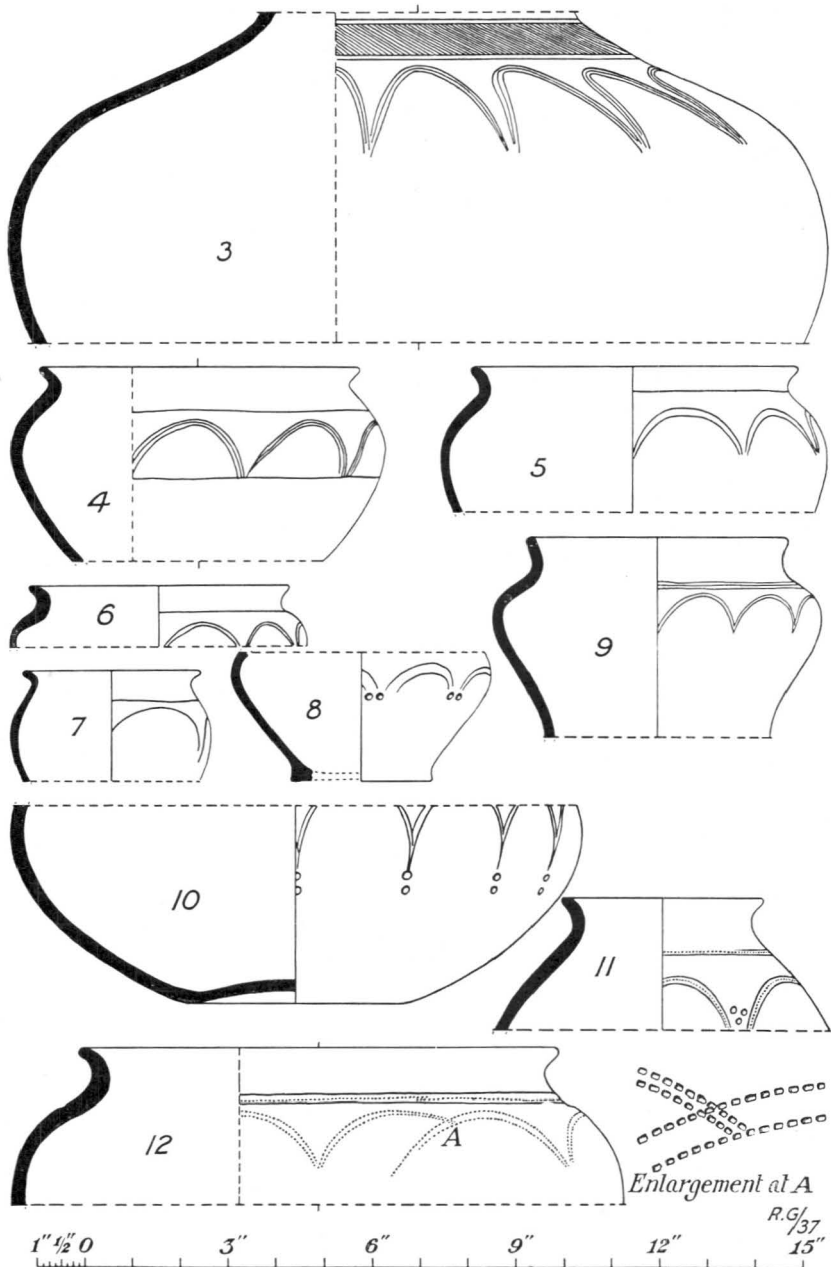
No. 18 is the lower half of a vessel decorated with horizontal bands filled with oblique hatching, the direction of which varies in alternate bands so as to produce a herring-bone effect.

Nos. 14 and 15 have spaced horizontal cordons between furrows, showing strong eastern Belgic influence.

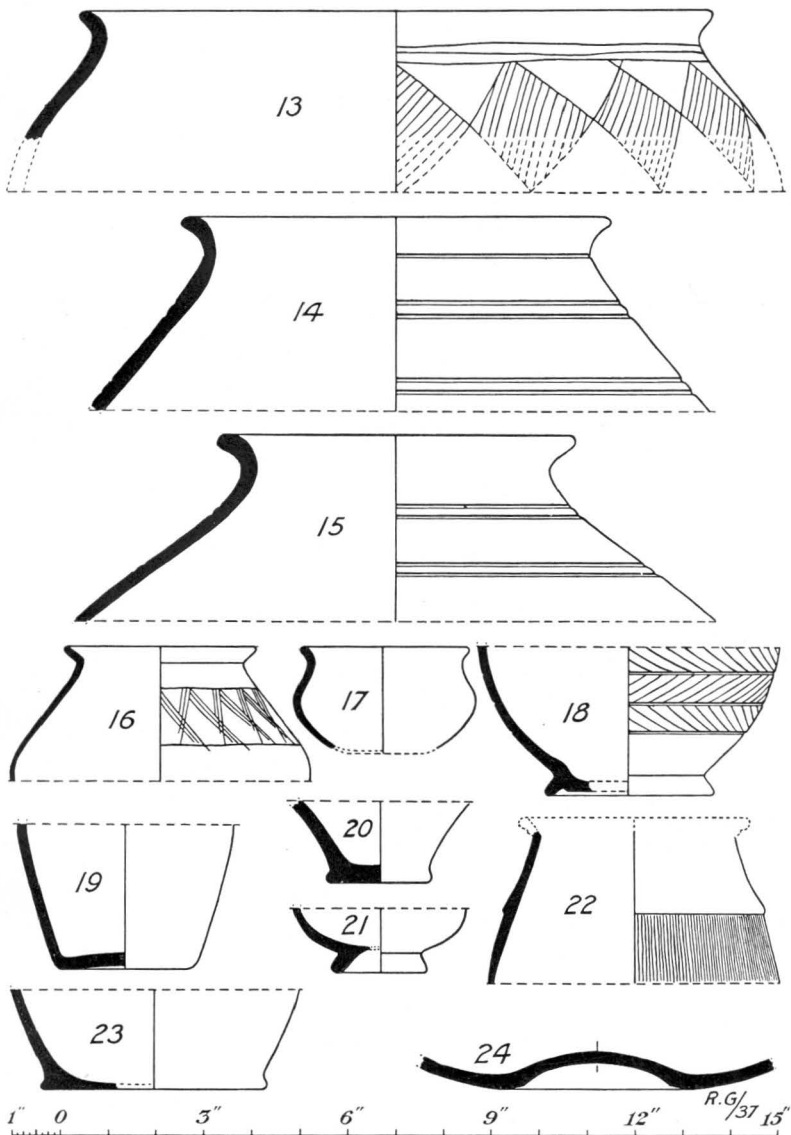
No. 24 is an omphalos base closely resembling that of an urn of Asham type from Saltdean, near Brighton (Brighton Museum). The latter is also decorated with rouletted swags.

No. 25 shows a row of finger-tip impressions on a raised horizontal cordon. This is a typical feature of East Sussex pottery of about the middle of the first century A.D.; Mrs. Stuart Piggott (Miss C. M. Preston) has given a list of other examples in *S.A.C.* LXXVII (1936), pp. 215-17. A similar feature occurred on some

¹ E. C. Curwen, *Arch. of Sussex* (1937), p. 279, fig. 81, 1.



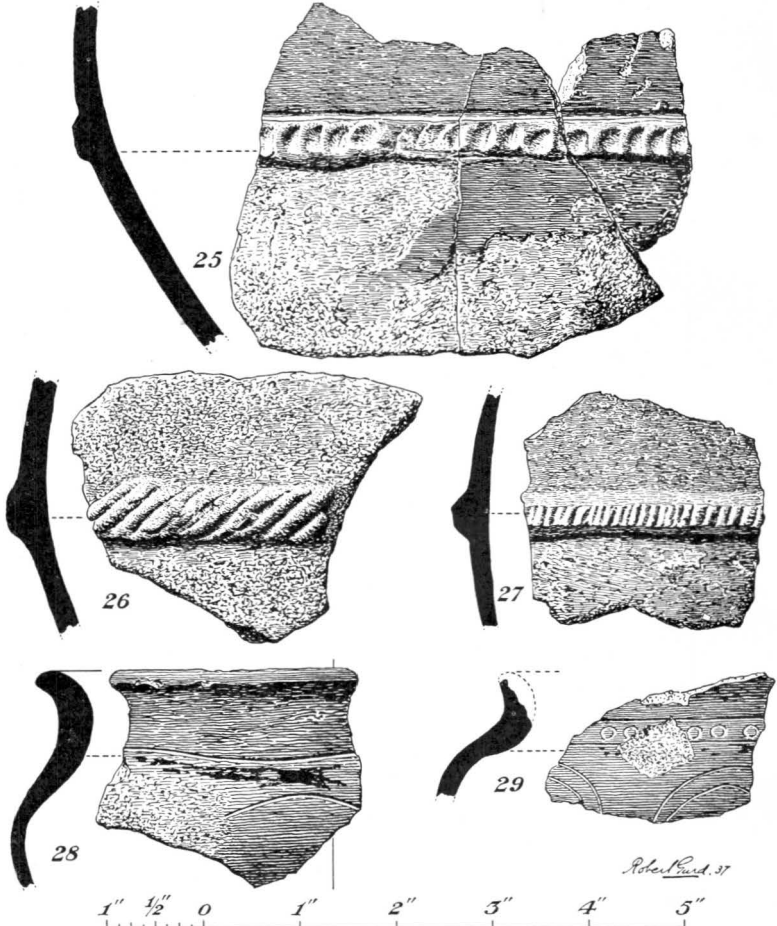
FIGS. 3-12. SWAG-DECORATION ON POTTERY.



FIGS. 13-24. POTTERY.

eastern Belgic pottery from Wheathampstead, Herts., but is stated to be uncommon there.¹

No. 26 shows a slashed cable-pattern on an applied



FIGS. 25-9. FINGER-TIP, CABLE AND PAINTED ORNAMENT.

cordons forming a girth-band (cf. Charleston Brow, *S.A.C.* LXXIV. 172, Fig. 20, and p. 173, Fig. 17).

No. 27 shows a raised horizontal cordon vertically hatched.

¹ Dr. R. E. M. Wheeler, *Verulamium* (Report of the Research Com. of the Soc. of Antiquaries, 1936), p. 150, and Plates LI, 17 and LIII.

No. 28 is part of a vessel of Little Horsted type, about 6 in. in diameter at the lip. It bears an incised single-line swag decoration, with traces of painting (black) in



FIGS. 30-2. RESTORED VESSELS ($\frac{1}{3}$)

the form of a swag surmounted by a horizontal black line, as in No. 2.

No. 29 is from a similar vessel, of about 5 in. diameter at the widest part. It shows an incised double-line swag surmounted by a row of impressed circles between two horizontal lines. There are also faint traces of black paint.

No crossed bases have been observed in the whole collection.

Date. The whole of this group of pottery falls within the Iron Age ABC class (La Tène III).¹ The 'Tarmac' surface of the earliest specimens carries on the traditions of the AB wares (La Tène II), but none of the Horsted Keynes types go back so early as that, since they are absent from the Trundle (Iron Age A1 to AB). As to the lowest dating of the site, we have the help of two shards which belong to fairly closely datable vessels, viz.

Fig. 21. Part of a *terra sigillata* cup of form 27; this is South Gaulish, and may be dated to between A.D. 50 and 75.

Fig. 22. Part of a British imitation of a Belgic butt-beaker, belonging to the early or middle part of the first century A.D.

For these identifications we are indebted to Mr. Hawkes. Nothing on the site need be later than No. 21.

The group as a whole, therefore, is important as presenting a 'pure culture' of Iron Age ABC (La Tène III) wares from central Sussex, and may be used as a standard by which to judge other pottery with similar features.

III. COMMENTS ON THE POTTERY

By CHRISTOPHER HAWKES, F.S.A.

Horsted Keynes lies at the foot of the Hastings Sand Ridge, and is not buried in the clay Weald; it is thus a site where prehistoric occupation might be expected. The pottery is by fabric certainly Iron Age ABC (La Tène III), and its most remarkable feature, the painting, has not produced any design that would be out of the ordinary if done by normal methods of tooling.

Being only a few miles from Lewes the site fits well into the 'Late La Tène' culture which forms Phase III of the Iron Age in East Sussex. These 'Late La Tène'

¹ See *Arch. of Sussex*, pp. 274-82.

sites all have one or more of a range of distinctive and non-Belgic pottery features (though there is of course Belgic influence)—viz. the Caburn, Charleston Brow, Telscombe, and now Horsted Keynes. That is, it is a culture of older La Tène tradition (originally Iron Age A, and proximately B or La Tène II) lasting into La Tène III and (a) developing individually, (b) receiving Belgic, or C, influence.

Taking the main features separately:

(1) The incised-line ornament is, as at the Caburn, just a modified continuation of B (La Tène II) ornament (Park Brow, Findon Park, the Caburn), mainly curvilinear.

(2) The painted patterns are only used to reinforce the patterns made in the incised-line technique; the painting is not a new device, giving rise to its own forms of pattern, but just a black accent, so to speak, to the incised-line ornament. It can therefore be taken as an odd, perhaps local, but archæologically not highly significant, addition to the culture's decorative repertory, and there is no need to trace it abroad.

(3) Incised-line patterns in zones (No. 18). This may be a reflection from the contemporary Belgic (C) pots ornamented in zones with hatched or rouletted patterns, but it is itself essentially a native adaptation.

(4) Patterns executed entirely in rouletted lines (e.g. Nos. 11, 12) are known already in the Hengistbury Head Class F (Bushe-Fox, *Hengistbury*, Pls. xii, xxi, p. 42). That class and this are doubtless parallel reactions. Native designers familiar with, and fond of, curvilinear patterns have taken to rendering them by means of the Belgic-introduced device of the roulette, and so have turned that device to a decorative purpose of their own, instead of keeping it to what in Belgic work it was meant for, viz. the mechanical business of just filling in uniform zones. By 'taking to' the roulette device I mean of course adopting the idea—the actual toothed wheel (see No. 12, enlargement) was their own version, cruder and not identical with the real, exotic, Belgic kind.

(5) Plastic or raised clay bands, or applied fillets, with either slanting 'cable' impressions, or vertical ones: these definitely characterize the East Sussex La Tène III (25, 26, 27).

(6) Wheel technique, fabric, rim, neck, and body form, are all characteristic of this culture, showing compromise between Belgic influence and native tradition.

Since these comments were first drafted, Dr. Curwen's *Archæology of Sussex* has appeared, and provides a full summary of the features both of this 'Late La Tène' or Iron Age Phase III Culture in general (pp. 253 ff.), and of its 'ABC' pottery in particular (pp. 274 ff.). The Horsted Keynes material accords very well with the general lines there drawn, and in matters of detail the comments on it here essayed are best read in the light of the close description by Dr. Curwen.

IV. CONCLUSIONS

By E. CECIL CURWEN

The length of ditch that has so far been traced by Mr. Hardy does not give a clue as to its complete plan, nor does it yield certain evidence as to its purpose or the nature of the settlement which caused so much pottery to be thrown into it.

If the site was a domestic one, its relatively numerous inhabitants—to judge by the large quantity of pottery found—must have been occupied in making a living, presumably by working iron; the iron-slag that was found might support this view. On the other hand, the site is actually on clay, and therefore an unsuitable location for iron-working, but very suitable for pottery-making. This hypothesis would explain the large amount of broken pottery found, without presupposing a large population, and it might account for the charcoal, burnt sandstone and vitrified clay that were found. Further exploration may, on this assumption, reveal actual kilns. Meanwhile a comparative chemical

examination of the local clay and that of the pottery might confirm or disprove this view.

Archæology is fortunate in that so important a prehistoric site has been discovered on the land of one who has the interest to investigate it carefully and thoroughly and in a truly scientific spirit, and Mr. Hardy is to be congratulated on his discovery and on all he has done to follow it up.