

# Sussex Archaeological Society

## ANGMERING ROMAN VILLA

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THIS report summarizes the results of a number of separate small excavations carried out by various members of the Littlehampton Natural History and Archaeological Society during the years of war (1939-45). After Mr. Cutler and Mr. Mailey had joined H.M. Forces the Society invited me to try to co-ordinate the work that had been done since the main excavation carried out by Miss Leslie Scott and reported in vols. LXXIX and LXXX of the *S.A.C.* Miss Keef described her excavations of building G in vol. LXXXIV. For the convenience of the reader the excavations will not be described in the order in which they were carried out, but in their proper place on the site. The excavations carried on under my supervision aimed at linking up the separated cuttings in order to find out the general layout of the site.

### MAIN E.-W. DITCH (see Fig. 1)

A series of cuttings incorporating those already made by Mr. Cutler in 1939 and 1940 helped to trace the course of a main straight ditch running in a direction approximately from east to west across the middle of the field for some 400 ft. At this point it approached the line of the ditch running from north to south from the western side of the main bath building (Site A). A trial trench, near the place where the two ditches might have joined, exposed features which need more extensive examination.

The most easterly cutting (F. 14) showed that the ditch continued into the adjacent ploughed field. Here the filling of the ditch consisted mainly of rough soil with a number of broken flints and a few fragments of tile. In striking contrast to the ditches near Buildings

KEY TO SYMBOLS.

FLINTS 

CHALK 

TURF 

POST HOLE 

COBBLES 

# ANGMERING ROMAN VILLA.

FIG. I.

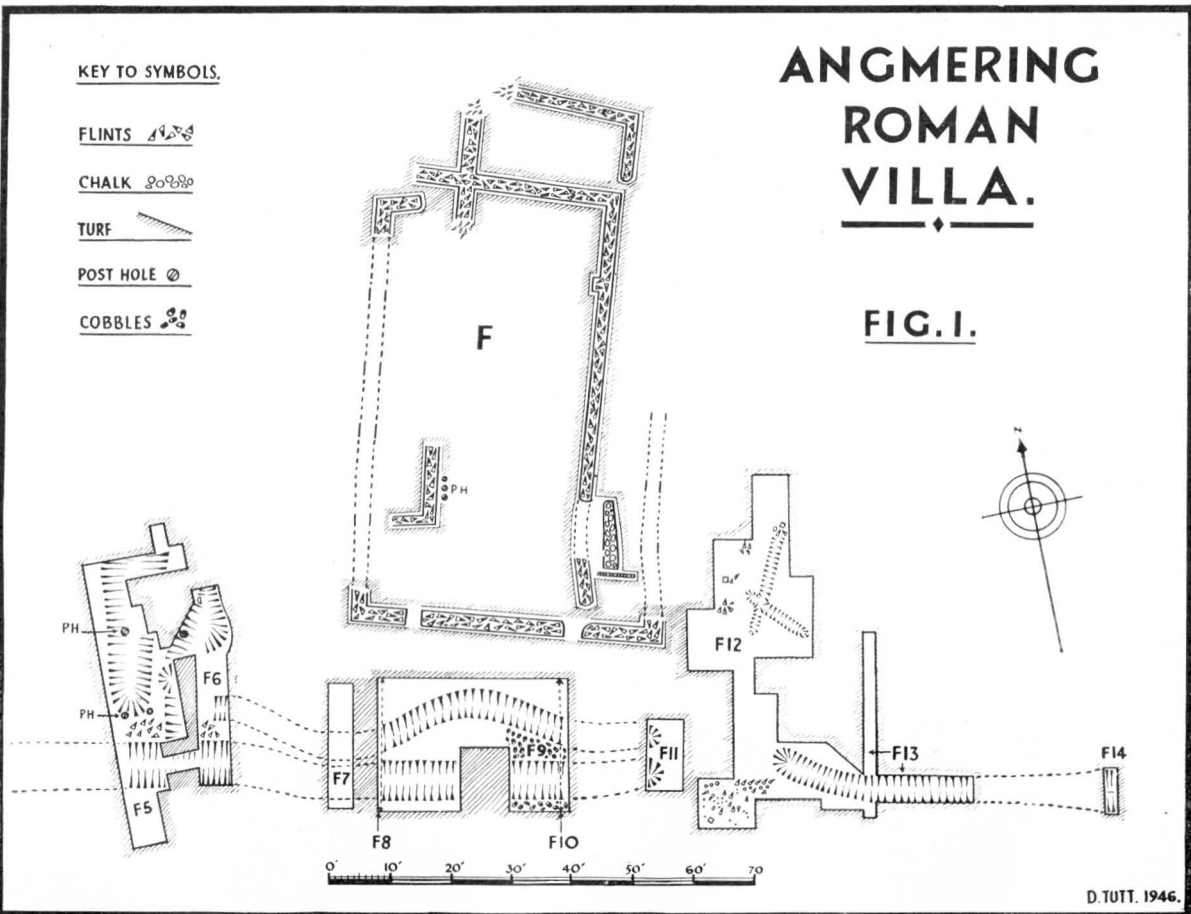


FIG. I. PLAN OF EASTERN PORTION OF SITE.

F and G it contained practically no pottery and very little building material.

From this ditch in Cutting F. 13 came many sherds of pottery including a good number of fair-sized pieces of Samian ware (two bases of Form 18/31, parts of a base and a rim of Form 33, a side of Form 38, and parts of rims of Forms 33 and 37).

About 60 ft. from the eastern edge of the site this ditch curled slightly to the north and finished to leave room for an entrance from the south to the northern part of the field where stood the main buildings. Even if no properly paved entrance had survived, the quantity of flint, broken tiles, and chalk blocks which lay scattered about the gap strongly suggested that farming activities had destroyed a trackway. Some 12 ft. westwards from the inturned end of the ditch another cutting (F. 11) had exposed the end of two ditches.

The section (Fig. 2, Sect. F. 10) drawn by Mr. Cutler when he made Cutting F. 10 a few feet farther to the west shows the relationship between the two ditches which he describes as follows: 'The inner (northern) and earlier ditch had been deliberately filled in with brick earth<sup>1</sup> . . . and this filling was almost indistinguishable from the natural. The ditch in this section had not silted up to a great extent.' Above the silt was a rubbish level with pottery sherds of three vessels including a Samian Cup (Form 27). On its side was scratched a graffiti M. 'Part of this cup was found on the lip of the ditch and part in the rubbish level near the bottom.' These sherds are important for dating purposes as they are the only Samian ware so far found in this inner ditch (see Pottery Report). The other pottery (Pl. I) belongs to a group derived from Belgic prototypes which predominated during the second half of the first century A.D. in western Sussex.

'South of this inner ditch was a cobbled area consisting of small rough flints with some beach pebble. . . . On its surface a coin of Vespasian was found. To the north of the inner ditch on the old

<sup>1</sup> On this site brick earth overlies pockets of the Coombe Rock which covers the natural chalk.

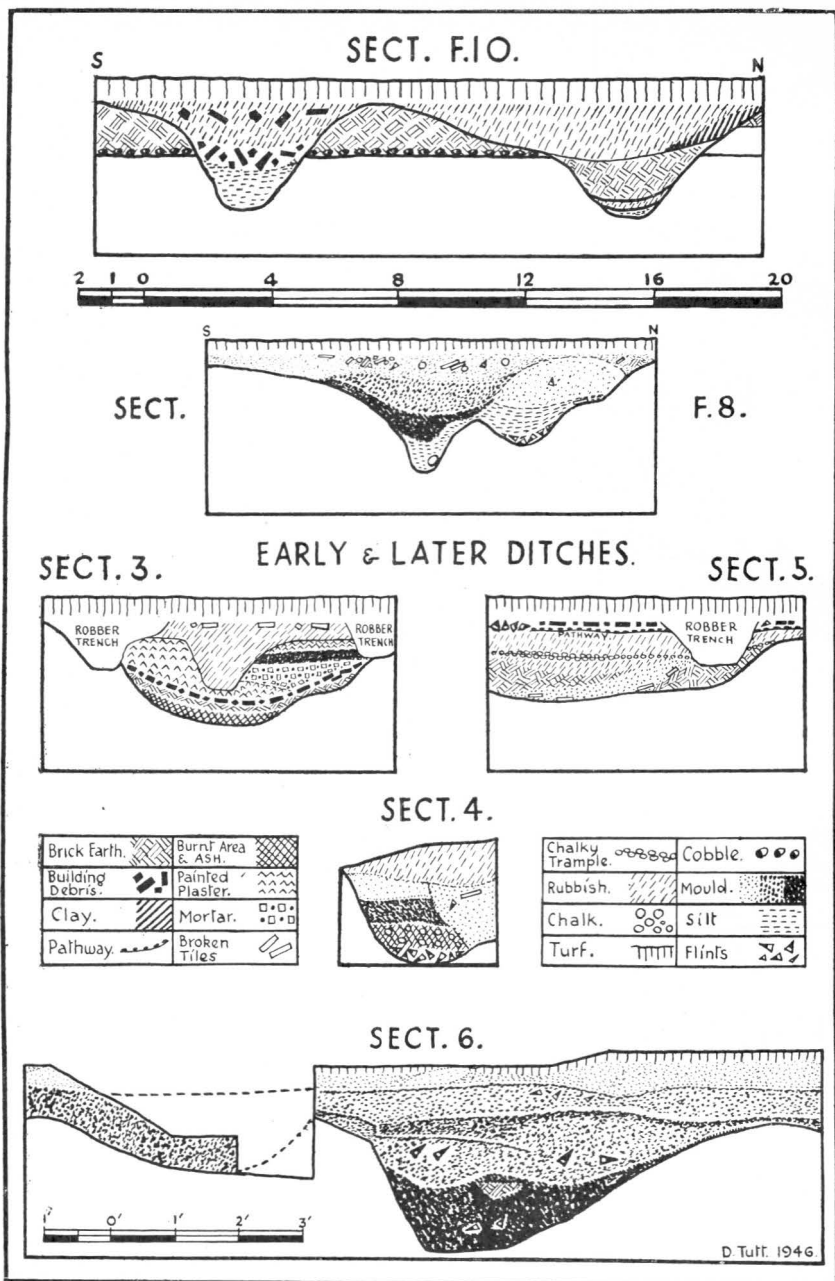


FIG. 2. VARIOUS SECTIONS. For position of each section see Figs. 1 and 3.

surface was a layer of yellow clay trodden down very tightly. After the earlier ditch had been filled in a second was dug. This cut through the cobbled area which was buried beneath the brick earth thrown out from the new ditch. Here, as elsewhere, this ditch had a rubbish layer containing second-century pottery above its early silt and above that a great quantity of builders' rubble. In and on top of this rubble were sherds of later pottery and two third-century coins.'



PLATE 1. TYPICAL JAR FROM INNER DITCH (F. 10).  
Cf. Fig. 7, No. 7; Fig. 8, No. 16.

Cuttings F. 9 and F. 8 showed that the inner ditch was irregular. In F. 8 (Fig. 2, Sect. F. 8) the new outer ditch actually cut into the older one.

A trial trench in 1939 about 190 ft. from the eastern edge of the field had shown that the outer ditch continued, but that there were complications on the line of the inner ditch. The war delayed further excavations here until 1946 (F. 5). The south end of Section A at T-T (*S.A.C.* LXXXIV. 86, Fig. 3) in Miss Keef's report shows the main ditch still continuing to the south of Building G. Farther to the west trenches 12, 13, 14, and 15 indicated its course across the field. Trench 12 exposed more paving and a considerable amount of chalk and flint work which merits more detailed investigation. [No plan in this report.]

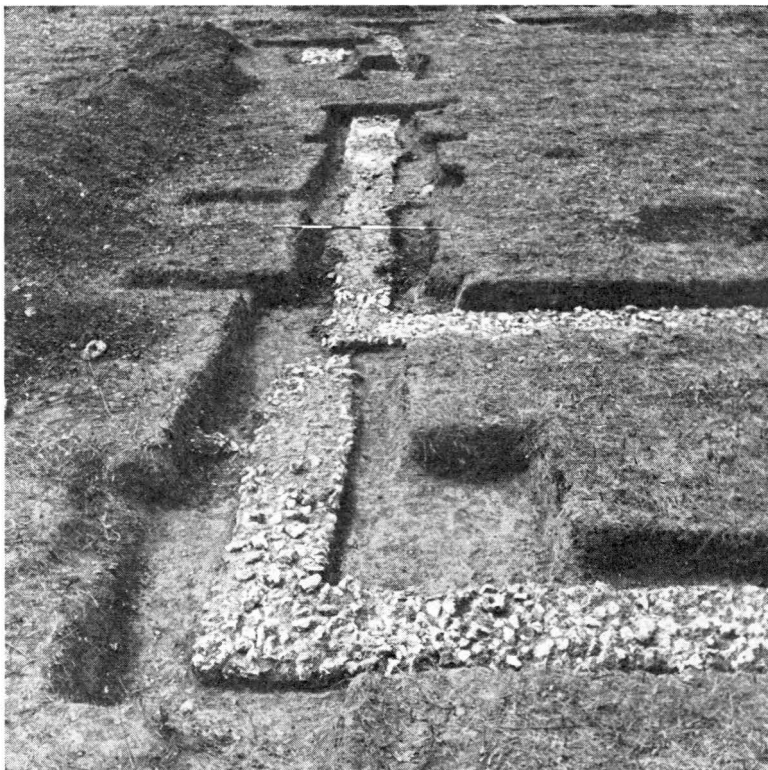


PLATE 2. FOUNDATIONS OF EASTERN WALL OF BUILDING F,  
taken from North.

## BUILDING 'F' AND THE IRREGULAR DITCH

A number of scattered trial trenches made at different times pointed to the existence of one or more buildings to the north of the ditches running between 80 ft. and 160 ft. from the eastern edge of the site. Further excavation exposed the foundations of the walls of two buildings of apparently different dates. Some of the wall foundations consisted entirely of larger-sized flints (Pl. 2) well packed but without any trace of mortar. Other foundations contained chalk blocks and broken tiles (Pl. 3). Only a careful stripping of the whole area will reveal the full extent of these buildings and the relationship between them. Signs of post-holes suggest that some of the buildings were of timber. Constant ploughing of the site has destroyed the foundations in parts and increased the difficulty of interpretation.

About 20 ft. to the north of the entrance through the outer ditch the removal of the top soil exposed an area of scattered flint, chalk, and tile (F. 12). When these had been removed two shallow cross trenches appeared. Near the point of intersection lay some of the remains of an amphora and of a mortarium. Four clusters of large flints (or flint and chalk blocks mixed) lay to the west and north in positions which suggested the possibility of a barn-like structure. So far other similar clusters have not been found, but the area has not been fully examined. The northerly arm of the cross trenches seemed to be opening into a pit.

Considerable stretches of both ditches to the south of building F were cleared to obtain representative collections of pottery for dating purposes.<sup>1</sup> The detailed report of the pottery shows a very strong Belgic influence in the pottery from the inner irregular ditch, though some of the pieces were made in a definitely Roman paste. Much of the pottery had a dull dark grey to black finished surface which contains five par-

<sup>1</sup> The pottery from the inner ditch is described by Mr. J. Holmes in Appendix A. I have to thank Mr. Holmes for the work he did on this, and Messrs. E. S. Dickinson and Hocking for drawing the pottery and preparing the plates for publication.



PLATE 3. FOUNDATIONS OF LATER WALL IN SE. CORNER OF BUILDING F.



PLATE 4. PACKING OF POST-HOLE 3, taken before removal to reveal earlier ditch (Ditch 3).



ticles of sparkling grit strongly suggesting a mica dust. This finish is common to both coarse and fine wares. Similar pottery comes from the sites at Ecclesden Manor, Hardham, and Alfoldean.

### CUTTING F. 5 (Fig. 3)

In 1939 and 1940 work in this area had revealed two 'pits' and a ring of chalk blocks at first thought to be a well head. A photograph was taken of this (Pl. 4) before removing it to open up what looked at first to be one of a series of pits. The excavations of 1946 showed that it was really a ditch running in a direction from south to north which had been filled in before large post-holes for a later building had been made. This area was so often disturbed in Roman times, and by trenches passing through it in the 1819 excavation, that it will probably be impossible to reconstruct the whole story. At present it is possible with the help of Mr. Cutler's drawings and notes to unravel the following stages. F. 6 and F. 5 together showed that the outer ditch continued across the field, but that the inner ditch finished somewhere between the two cuttings.

i. The inner ditch apparently ended 2 ft. westwards of Section 4.

ii. A northern extension had drained it into a pit (Pit 1) into the western side of which much wall plaster had been tipped. From the bottom of the northern extension of the ditch (Fig. 2, Sect. 6) came a Vespasian coin (Pl. 5) deposited in an almost unworn state.

Mr. Cutler drew a section across this pit from west to east (Fig. 2, Sect. 3). It seems as if this pit was originally connected with the inner ditch. After this had ceased to be used there collected a layer of rubbish at the bottom of this pit which yielded some interesting finds—first-century bronze brooch similar to the one shown in *S.A.C.* LXXIX, Fig. 20, a bronze needle with flattened end, several sherds of Samian dishes (Form 27), and some very badly fired and roughly moulded sherds of Samian Form 39. The grey clay has fired buff and the slip is uneven purple colour.

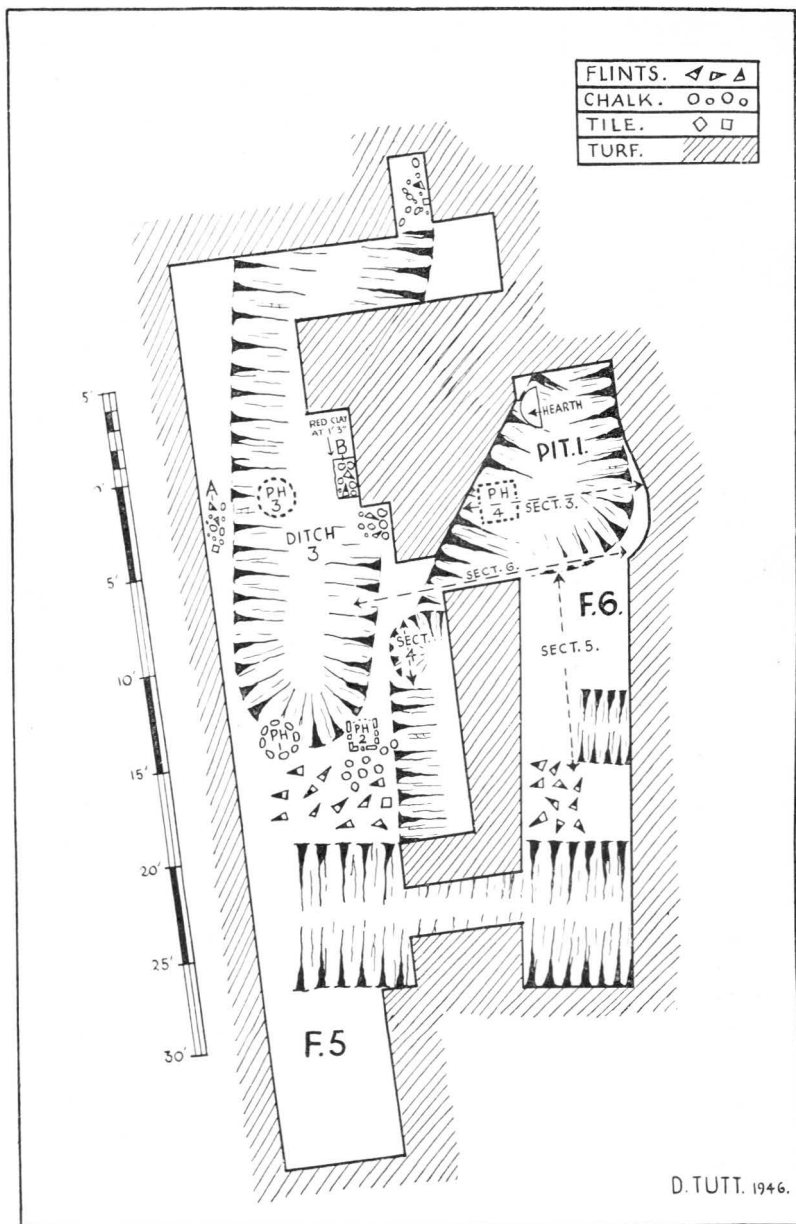


FIG. 3. PLAN OF CUTTINGS F. 5 AND F. 6, showing outer ditch to the South; end of inner ditch flanging out; part of a separate N.-S. ditch; Post-holes of later building.

iii. Above this rubbish layer came a layer of sandy silt similar to brick earth. Then came a layer of builders' rubbish, mostly tile fragments and mortar. Some of the flue tiles in this had patterns identical to those used in the main bath building. Into the western side of the pit there had been dumped a great quantity of broken plaster. The eastern half of the pit seems to have been levelled with mortar or a roughish kind of *opus signinum*. In parts of this pit loose small tesserae were lying about after it had been rather badly 'raided' by unauthorized diggers.

iv. Into this layer of plaster and mortar a post-hole (P.H. 4) had been cut. This seems to fit in with others found later in Cutting F. 5. As it had no signs of packing it is possible that it is contemporary with the mortar and plaster, which would then act as its packing. From the bottom of this almost square post-hole came a Roman spade iron. Mr. Cutler comments that the typical common hard grey gritty ware was frequent in the higher levels in the pit but was entirely absent from the bottom layer.

v. In F. 5 to the north of the outer ditch were exposed two very well-packed large post-holes (P.H.s 1 and 2). Though the northern edge of both had been cut away by previous excavation, the photograph (Pl. 6) shows how similar P.H. 1 was to the one originally thought to be a well-head (Pl. 4).

vi. In the area bounded by P.H.s 1, 2, 3, 4 were repeated signs of a rough floor which seems to have belonged to a building previous to the post-holes. Remains of chalk and flint walling seen in F. 5 appear to mark its limit. Sect. 5 in Cutting F. 6 (Fig. 2, Sect. 5) shows signs of something similar in a layer, called 'Pathway', to the north of a layer of flints which is in line with the tumbled flints in Cutting F. 5.

vii. Beneath this floor ran a ditch (Ditch 3) northwards. Its extent has not yet been determined. It had been practically cleared up to the site of P.H. 3. From the bottom came several sherds of a Samian cup Form 27 (see Fig. 4). What appears to be a pit cut into the



PLATE 5. COIN OF VESPASIAN from bottom of 'ditch' in Section 6, Fig. 2.



PLATE 6. POST-HOLES 2 AND 1 IN THE END OF DITCH 3; taken from the North-west. [P.H. 2, like P.H. 4, is 'square'.]

side may be the end of the inner ditch (Fig. 2, Sect. 4). Some of the pottery from it is almost identical to pottery found in other parts of the inner ditch (see Fig. 5).

viii. To the north of the line A-B (in Cutting F. 5) where the plaster floor finishes the foundation of a trackway begins. Trial cuttings have traced it for more than 20 ft., but have not yet revealed its other end.

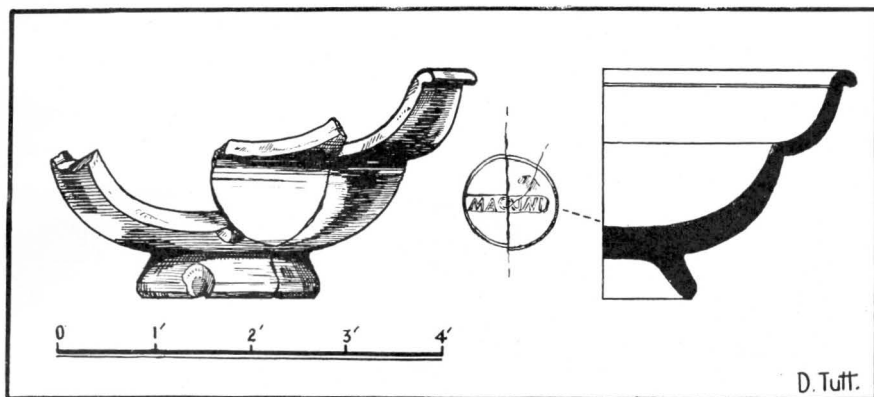


FIG. 4. SAMIAN FORM 27 FROM DITCH 3. Potter's mark MACRINI found also at Silchester.

This summary of war-time excavations has aimed at linking up a number of interrupted excavations by various sets of people. It seems to indicate three periods of occupation in this part of the field. A first-century occupation within Roman times when a very strong Belgic influence prevailed. To this period belonged the irregular inner ditch and first flint building. Then came the construction of the straight outer ditch which contained predominantly second-century pottery. This was the time when the inhabitants carried out considerable reconstruction, using chalk blocks and tiles as part of their foundations. After the outer ditch had been filled in with much builders' debris there were signs of a third-century occupation. The timber buildings may have belonged to either of these periods, but there is some evidence to suggest that they belonged to the

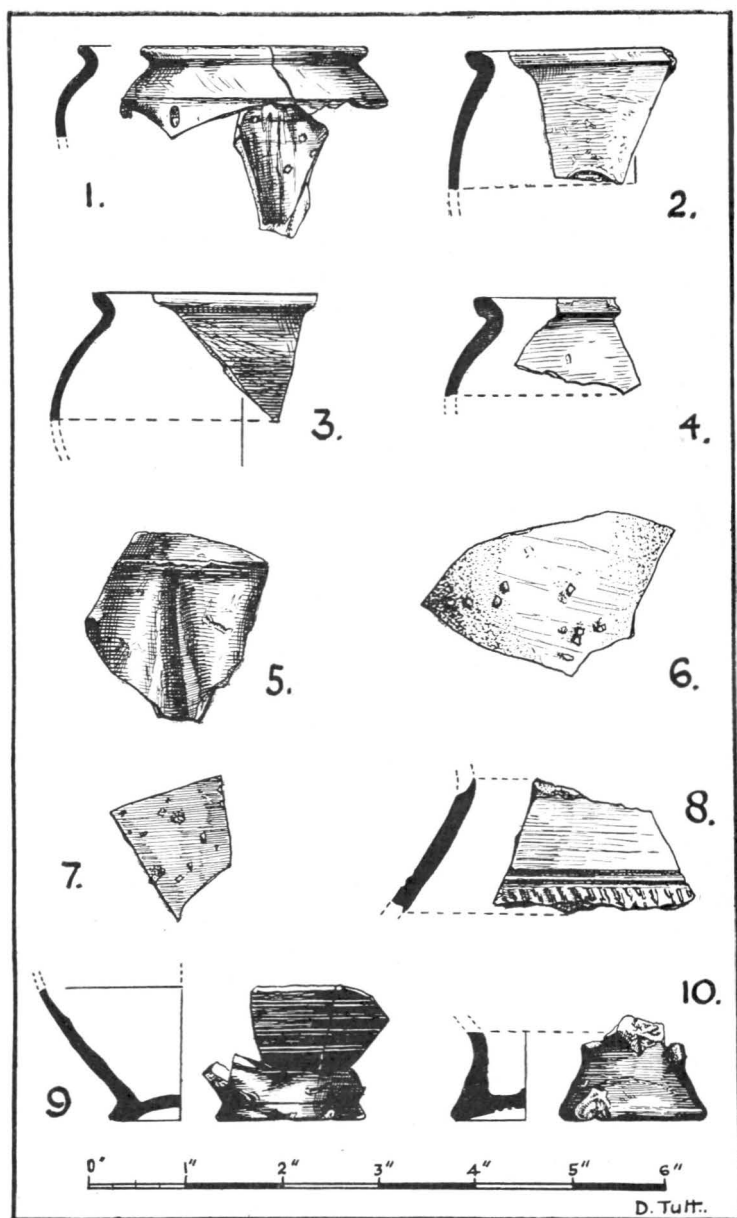


FIG. 5. FINE WARES FROM CUTTING F. 5, mainly from end of Inner Ditch. Nos. 1 and 5. Fine Belgic gritten and indented beaker, late first century.

third phase. It is quite evident that a stripping of much of Site F would yield much more information about this most interesting site. A short report on pottery is appended mainly for the purpose of dating the first phase of the occupation. There will have to be a much more comprehensive report at a future date when it should be possible to compare the pottery from Sites A and B with that from Site F.

In addition to Messrs. Cutler and Mailey I have to express my indebtedness to the late Mr. Frazer Hearne; to Messrs. C. Butt and E. W. Hulme of the Littlehampton Natural History and Archaeological Society; to Mr. and Miss Saunders; to Mr. G. P. Burstow and his helpers from Brighton College, F. H. Fellows and P. J. Myerscough; to members of the Brighton and Hove High School, Brighton Grammar School, and Varndean School for Boys. In the detailed work necessary for preparing the report I am much indebted to my daughter, and to Messrs. Burstow, Dickinson, Hockings, Holmes, and Tutt. I have to thank Messrs. Tripp and Waite for photographs.

## APPENDIX

### *Pottery from the Inner Ditch*

*(Summarized from the forthcoming report by Mr. J. Holmes)*

The five plates (Figs. 6–10) illustrate the main types of pottery found in the section of the inner ditch opposite Building F in Cuttings F. 8 and 9. With these may be compared the pottery from the inner ditch in F. 10 and from the areas in F. 5 and F. 6 which seem to mark its western end.

The only Samian ware yet found from this ditch is a cup of Drag. Form 27 which compares well with those dated at Silchester to the Nero–Vespasian period (*Silchester*, Pl. xxxi. 18). Similar examples of this cup occur at Newstead I in association with Belgic thumb-pots which are comparable to the two found in F. 5 near or in the end of this ditch. These are of fine buff ware well finished, gritted. They have a 'smoky' appearance which may be the remains of a dark slip (Fig. 5, Nos. 1 and 5). At Newstead and Richborough they are given a date about A.D. 80. This again fits well with the Vespasian coin (Pl. 5) found at the bottom of the off-shoot ditch leading into Pit I. A somewhat similar pot came from Pit 24 at

Hambleden Valley where it was associated with beakers described as Late Celtic survivals. The Angmering ditch has yielded a very crude copy of this type of beaker (Fig. 8, No. 21).

Fig. 6, No. 1, illustrates a bowl of fine, hard, grey ware with a putty-grey finish quite unlike the coarse grey wares normal on this and other Romano-British sites. It is well made and high-shouldered with a carefully moulded rim. It has a slight pedestal and foot-ring with a domed base. Its decoration consists of two grooves on the shoulder and a broad groove encircling the widest part of the bulge with a roulette pattern in each groove. This is definitely Belgic in style and seems closely related to the carinated shouldered Belgic wares from Alfoldean (*S.A.C.* LXV. 141, Pl. IV, Figs. 13, 74). Sherds of a carinated bowl of the Alfoldean type were associated with the Belgic indented beaker in F. 5. This vessel (Fig. 6, No. 1) acted as a prototype for much of the pottery from this site (Pl. 1 from F. 10, Fig. 7, Nos. 6 and 7, and Fig. 8, No. 16).

Another uncommon vessel from the ditch is illustrated in Fig. 6, No. 2. It is of fine hard grey paste, fired red, with a black slip, decorated with a plant motive in incised line arranged in panels. The shape is a close imitation of Samian, Drag. Form 30. A bowl similar in shape but in 'enamel glaze ware', decorated with wavy lines, comes from pit 20 at Hambleden Valley (*Arch.* LXXI, Fig. 25, No. 20).

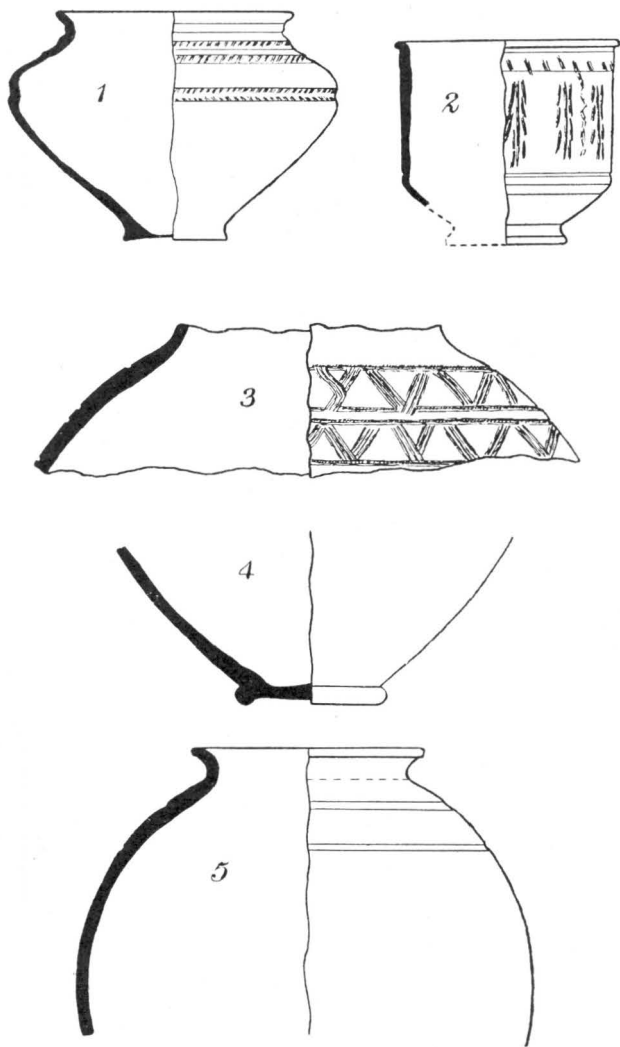
The dishes from the inner ditch (Fig. 10, No. 42) are of rough sandy grey ware with a blackened 'micaceous' surface. The type was common on Belgic sites and survived into the Roman period. Grooves on the under side of the dish mark the survival of a foot-ring. Hardham, Alfoldean, and Shepherd's Garden all produced similar dishes.

Jars (Fig. 7, No. 9, and Fig. 9, No. 26) belong to a type well distributed in the 'Belgic' area during the early Roman period. It is well represented at Silchester (Pl. LXXVIII. 5). Fig. 10, No. 38, is part of a carinated bowl of hard grey ware roughly furrowed above the shoulder. From Aylesford comes a bowl of similar form and decoration (*Aylesford*, Pl. VIII. 2); but the local example has a romanized rim. The whole group of carinated bowls have developed from Belgic prototypes.

Enough has been said of the pottery from the inner ditch to illustrate Mr. Holmes's conclusion from his detailed study that there 'is not one piece which can be dated later than A.D. 100. For the majority of the pieces a date about 50 A.D. would be more suitable. The group clearly represents a strong native tradition, all the forms being typical of Belgic wares; but the presence of the Roman grey wares, often imitating Belgic forms, argues a date immediately following the Roman Conquest of about A.D. 43-70.'

(Mr. Holmes hopes to publish soon a study of the first-century pottery of Surrey, Sussex, and parts of Hampshire. The above summary deals with the Angmering section of his study.)





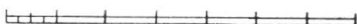
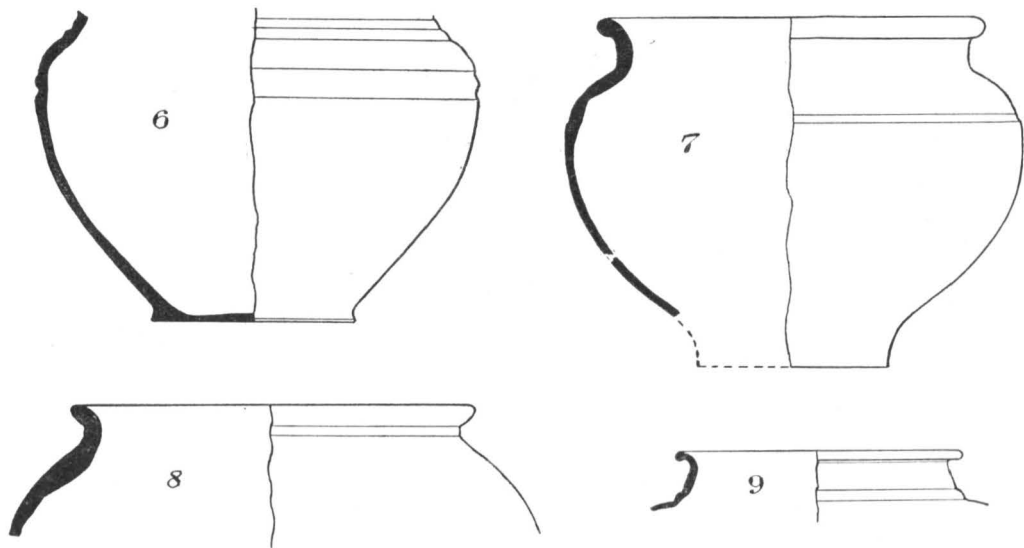
Scale  inches.

FIG. 6. Nos. 1 and 2. See pottery report.  
 No. 3. Pedestal jar derived from Belgic type—sandy grey.  
 No. 4. Flagon—sandy, white clay. Cf. Silchester.  
 No. 5. Roman grey, 'olla'.

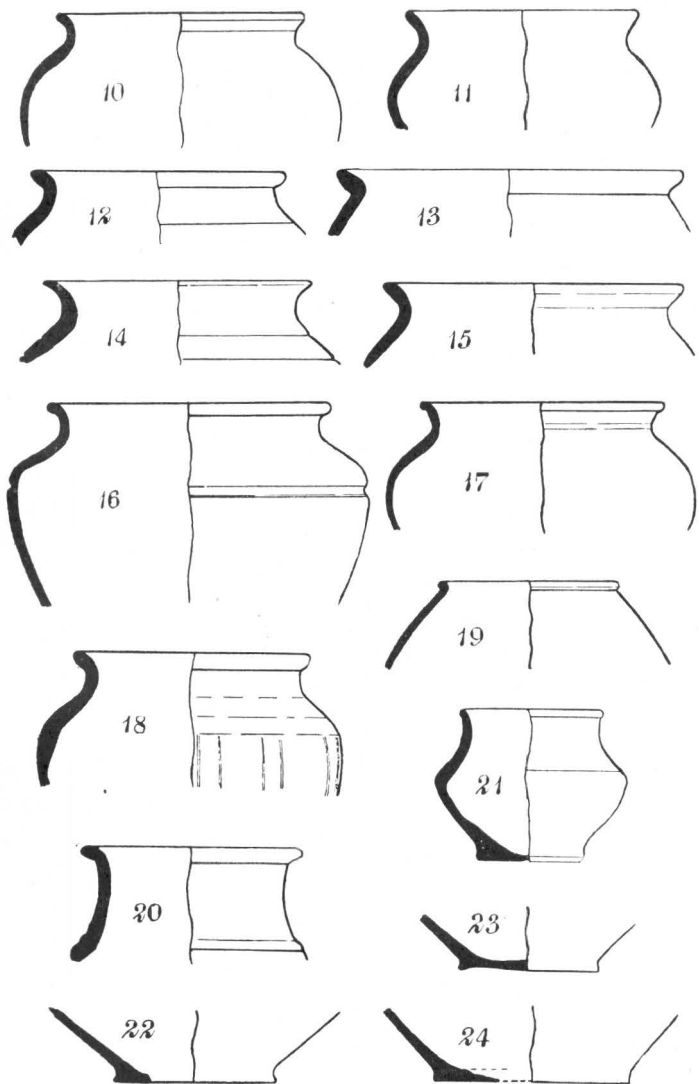


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FIG. 7. Nos. 6 and 7. Local imitations of Fig. 6, No. 1.

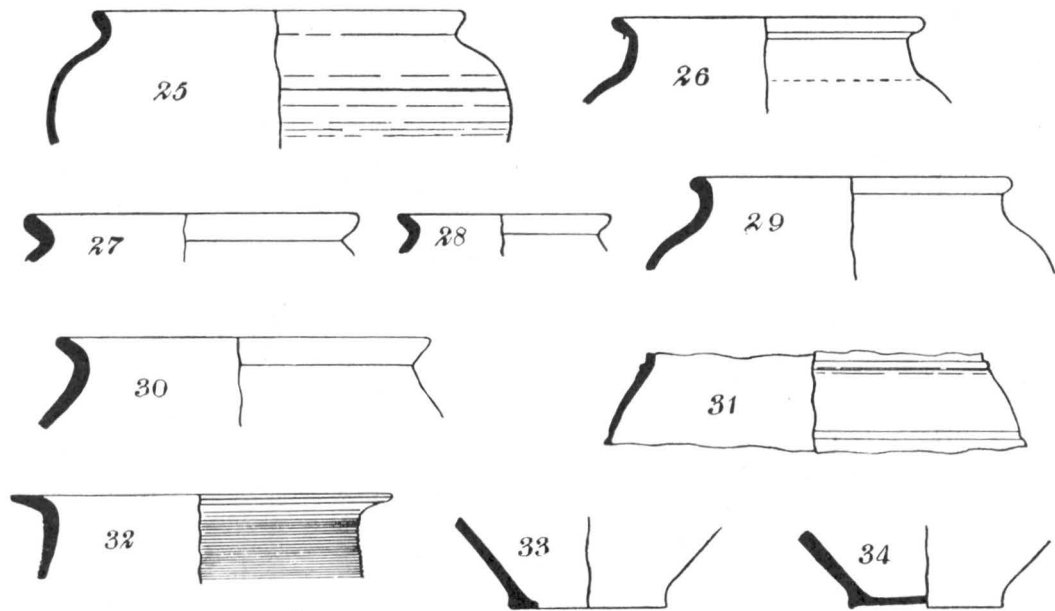
No. 8. Coarse grey jar.

No. 9. A well-made jar, grey, Belgic type.



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FIG. 8. POTTERY, ALL FIRED DARK AND SHOWING 'MICACEOUS' FINISH.




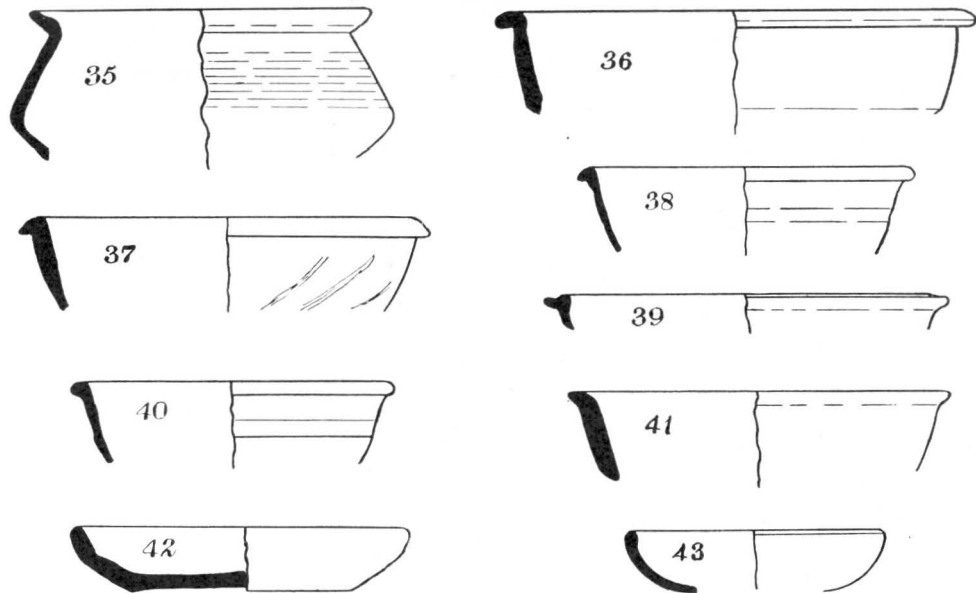
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FIG. 9. POTTERY IN LIGHTER ROMAN GREY WARE. N.B. the combed or finely grooved ornamentation of N. 32.



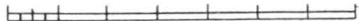
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FIG. 10. A SELECTION OF BOWLS AND DISHES. See pottery report.