

PLATE I.



CINERARY URNS FROM OATLANDS.

Height, 12 inches.

Diameter of rim, 9 inches.

Greatest diameter, $11\frac{1}{2}$ inches.

SOME PREHISTORIC AND SAXON ANTIQUITIES FOUND IN THE NEIGHBOURHOOD OF WEYBRIDGE.

BY

ERIC GARDNER, M.B.Cantab.

BRONZE AGE.

MENTION has already been made in these *Collections*¹ of the Bronze Age cemetery at Oatlands. Recent inquiries have shown it to be of greater extent and importance than was at first realized. It lies on the north side of the London and South Western Railway, between the two bridges that cross the line between Walton and Weybridge Stations, and it extends back from the line for two or three hundred yards. It has never been systematically excavated, but at least 50 hand-made cinerary urns of the Bronze Age have been found there during the last 20 years, and have either been destroyed or have passed out of the district. One bucket-shaped urn has already been figured in these *Collections*,² and I have a large fragment of a similar one found in 1893 which has not been previously reported. It is made of coarse clay, a little more than half-an-inch thick in places, but the thickness varies, and a quantity of coarse flint grit has been added to assist the firing. It has been shaped entirely by hand, and has been well baked before an open fire.

A restored cinerary urn and part of another, both from Oatlands, are shown in Plate I. They were in small pieces when they came into my possession, but

¹ *S. A. C.*, Vol. XXIV, p. 48.

² *Ibid.*

they have been most skilfully repaired by Mr. Young, of the Ashmolean Museum, Oxford. They are more carefully made, and are of much better workmanship than those just described. The more perfect specimen is made of a fine-grained clay $\frac{2}{5}$ in. thick and contains very little added grit; it is apparently hand made, and has been well baked in an open fire, but hot ashes have been placed inside to assist the firing. The decoration, which is confined to the rim, consists of a pattern made by twisted grass stems pressed into the wet clay before baking. It contained a quantity of calcined chips of bone, many of which could be identified as human.

Other Bronze Age remains are shown in Plate II. The broken palstave (Fig. 1) was found in the River Wey near Weybridge, but I have been unable to ascertain the exact place. It bears a close resemblance to the other palstave (Fig. 2) found at Island Barn Farm, on the island which is formed by the diverging channels of the River Mole as it enters the Thames.

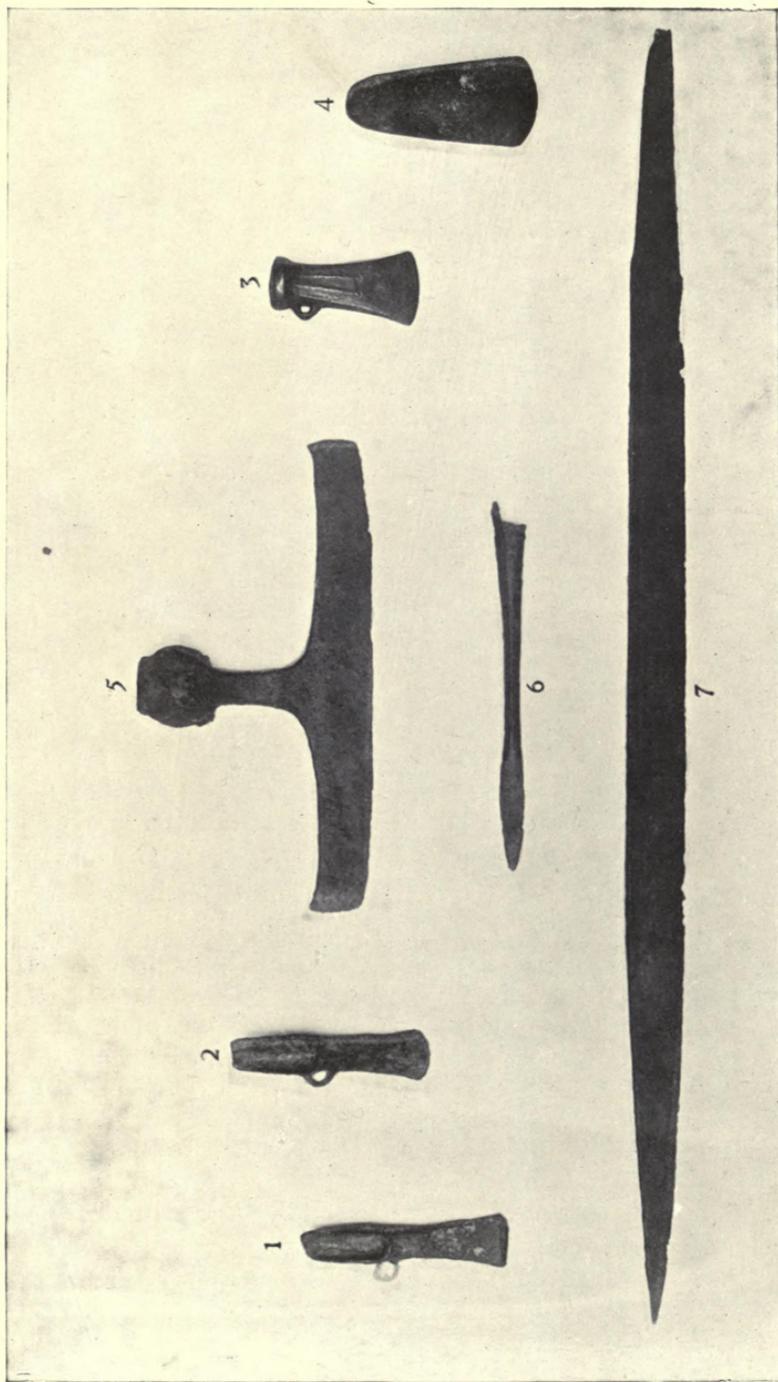
The socketed celt (Fig. 3) came from the bed of the River Wey, immediately below the Wey Bridge, where so many other implements have been found.¹ It is ornamented on each face by two straight lines which terminate in a small dot surrounded by a circle: socketed celts decorated with a similar pattern have been found at Kingston-on-Thames.²

It is probably correct to include in the list of Bronze Age implements, the large greenstone celt (Fig. 4) found in the bed of the Thames below Walton Bridge. Implements made of this stone (*Ophitic diabase*), which is quarried in Cornwall and South Wales, must have been imported into Surrey, and probably formed an important article of commerce at one time. It would be interesting to collect information as to the distribution of other greenstone implements in the county, and to try and

¹ This is the site of an ancient ford over the River Wey. *S. A. C.*, Vol. XXIV, p. 49.

² Evans' "*Ancient Bronze Implements of Great Britain*," pp. 124, *et seq.*

PLATE II.



1.—Bronze Palstave (Length, 6 inches).

2.—" (" " 5 $\frac{3}{4}$ ").

3.—Iron Battle-Axe (Length, 4 $\frac{1}{2}$ inches).

4.—Celt of green stone (Length, 5 $\frac{1}{2}$ inches).

5.—Iron Battle-Axe (Blade, 13 $\frac{1}{2}$ inches).

6.—Iron Spear (10 $\frac{1}{2}$ inches).

7.—Iron Spear (10 $\frac{1}{2}$ inches).

ascertain the route by which they entered it. One would rather expect—if they came from Cornwall—to find them along the North Downs, and in the valleys of the Wey and the Mole; but at present this is only a matter of surmise.

ROMANO-BRITISH REMAINS.

There is an interesting sequel to the discovery of the three Romano-British urns, made by our member Mr. Howard at Wisley, and reported in these *Collections*.¹ If the lane which runs from Wisley Church to the Portsmouth Road be followed, it will be noticed that, after crossing the bridge which spans the River Wey, it winds to the left and then turns sharply to the right. Just at this turn, on the right-hand side of the lane, is a high bank, through which a carriage drive has been cut to a new house. The urns were found on the left of the drive a little distance from the gate. In September 1911 Mr. Howard found the sites of four fires, which had evidently been funeral pyres: three were on the right of the drive and one on the left, and those on the right were the better preserved. The fires had evidently been lighted in trenches 8 ft. long and 4 ft. wide placed side by side with their long axes parallel. They contained several barrowloads of charcoal, mixed with numerous fragments of burnt human bone, similar to what was found in the largest urn. The only implement discovered was a flint flake, which was lying on the charcoal, but as it was not discoloured by fire it had either been thrown there when the ashes were cold, or, more probably, had fallen there by chance. The sides of the trenches were burnt hard and red, and in one there was another layer of charcoal beneath the burnt floor.

In a field north-east of Wisley Church, close to the River Wey, a quantity of soil has recently been removed in connection with sewage disposal works. A very complete kiln containing some broken pottery was found—partly destroyed. Mr. Howard only arrived on the scene

¹ *S. A. C.*, Vol. XXIV, p. 53, where they are, in error, assigned to the 1st century B.C. instead of the 1st century A.D.

in time to secure some lumps of burnt clay, which appear to be part of the perforated base of the kiln. None of the pottery that was in the kiln could be recovered, as it had all been buried under a bank of earth, but some fragments that were picked up close by, proved to be Romano-British ware, and like many of the specimens found at Leigh Hill, Cobham,¹ they may probably be assigned to the 1st century of the present era. Near the kiln were several sites not quite so definite, but probably of the same nature as those just described. They had once been shallow trenches in which fires had been lighted, as was shown by the burnt soil and fragments of charcoal, and in one I found some burnt bones, but it was not possible to identify them as human. Some flint flakes were found scattered over the field and some were mixed with the charcoal, but I think this association was fortuitous.

The dug-out canoe, which has already been reported,² was found in the bed of the Wey about 200 yards below this field: an illustration of it is given in Plate III. Owing to the absence of any associated objects it is not possible to date this boat with any accuracy; but its position near so many Romano-British remains is certainly significant.

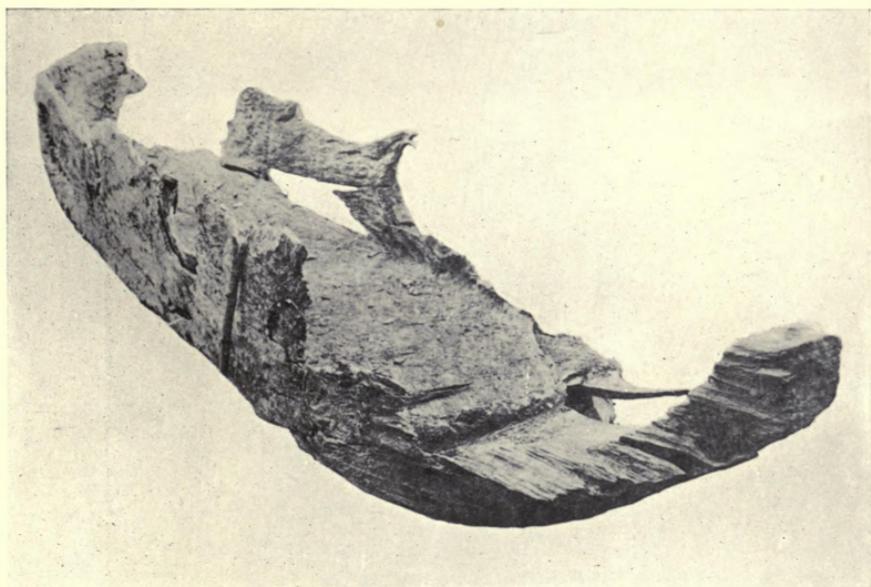
Major Travers, a former resident of Weybridge, reminds me that some twenty years ago a dug-out canoe was found in the roadway opposite Dorney House, at the bottom of Thames Street, Weybridge, just where the old stream of the Wey enters the Thames. In this case some pottery, roughly made and imperfectly fired, was found with it; but up to the present I have been unable to trace it. Yet another canoe of this class was found in the Thames at Kingston, and was exhibited for some time in the garden of a cottage, but all trace of it has now disappeared.

Our member Mr. Tarrant is to be congratulated on finding the remarkably fine paddle (Plate IV, Fig. 1) a

¹ *S. A. C.*, Vol. XXI, p. 192; Vol. XXII, p. 137.

² *S. A. C.*, Vol. XXIV, p. 53.

PLATE III.



"DUG OUT" CANOE. River Wey at Wisley.

Length, 12 feet.

little higher up the Wey Valley in a meadow at Send. It is in excellent preservation and is undoubtedly a paddle of one of the ancient canoes of this part of Surrey.

The other specimens on Plate IV were all found by Mr. Tarrant. Figure 4 is a fragment of a large urn (16 inches high and 11 inches across the rim) which unfortunately fell to pieces as it was being removed. It was found on the Hockering Estate, near Old Woking, and is one of the large Romano-British vessels used in the 1st century A.D. for storing grain. A similar urn was found at Leigh Hill, Cobham,¹ and I have just received part of another that was discovered at Coldharbour near Pyrford. The quern (Fig. 2) was found with Mr. Tarrant's urn, but the upper part is missing, and the fragment of the small vessel (Fig. 3) was in close association.

DANISH AND SAXON WEAPONS.

The Danish battle axe (Plate II, Fig. 5) may have belonged to a member of one of the marauding bands of Danes which sacked Chertsey Abbey at the end of the 9th century. It was dredged up from the River Wey in the reach below the Wey Bridge, and the small iron spear head (Fig. 6) was found close by. When it was hafted it must have been a most formidable weapon, for the top edge has been ground, so that an effective thrust could be delivered as well as the usual cutting stroke. It will be noticed that the upper half of the blade (to the left in the illustration) has been ground away so that it is half-an-inch shorter than the lower. There are two similar but much smaller axes in the Reading Museum, and Mr. T. W. Colyer writes that one was found near the site of the battle of Ashdown, and the other at Ashworth, near Ashdown; a third specimen, with a Saxon spear head, came from the Kennet. This type of axe must have been in general use for

¹ *S. A. C.*, Vol. XXII, p. 139, and Plate II, Fig. 24.

other than warlike purposes, for a modification of it, with a short handle, is to be seen in the hands of a shipwright in the Bayeux Tapestry, under the heading "Hic Willelm Dux Jussit naves edificare."

The Saxon scramasax, 37 in. long (Plate II, Fig. 7), was dredged from the bed of the Thames near Halliford. Its general shape can be seen from the illustration, but the wide groove which runs parallel to the thick back of the blade, from the guard to the angle where it begins to taper to a point is not very distinct. On one face a pattern of wavy lines, once filled with brass or silver wire hammered into the metal, can still be traced running the whole length of the blade. Mr. Reginald Smith¹ says that these swords were common in London before the Norman Conquest but scarce elsewhere; one was found with coins of Æthelred II (978–1016), and another, 28½ in. long, has on one face the Runic alphabet.

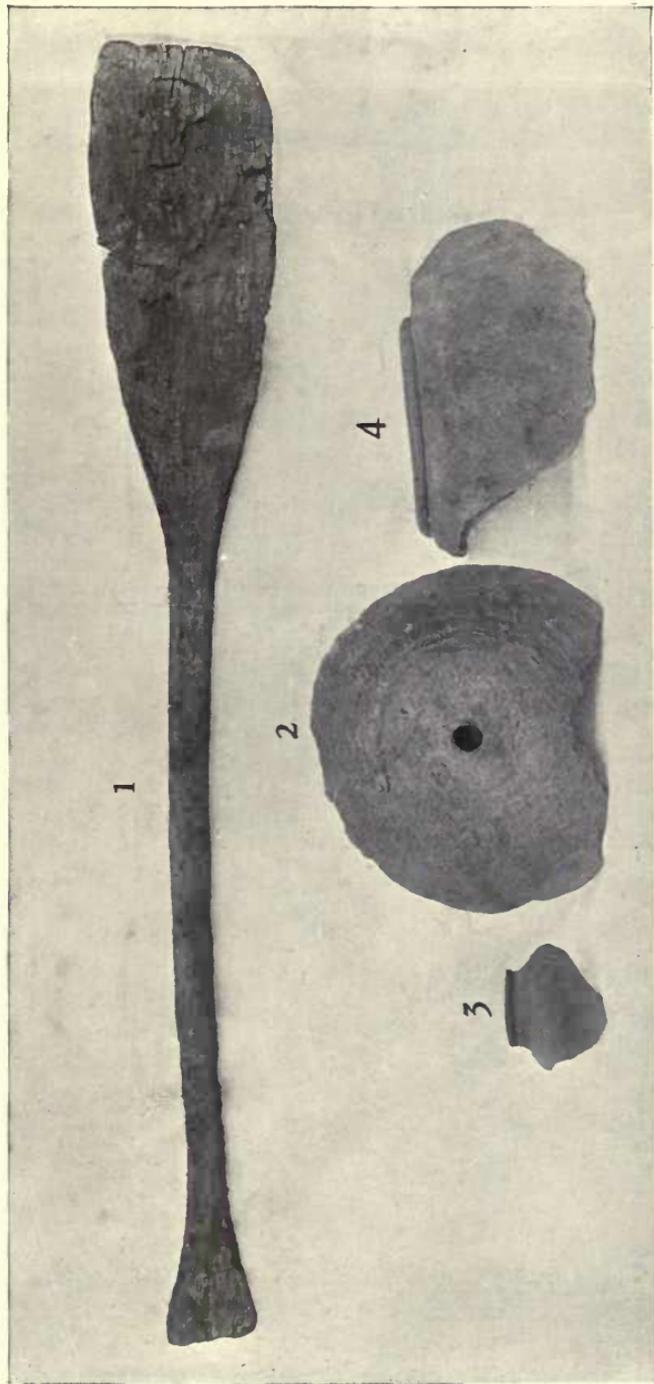
Saxon remains have often been discovered at Sheperton, and a series of Saxon tumuli formerly stood on the left-hand side of the approach to Walton Bridge, on the Surrey side of the Thames.²

In the last volume of these *Collections* and in the present article, a description has been given of most of the prehistoric antiquities that have come to my notice from the neighbourhood of Weybridge. It will be seen that in Weybridge itself many of the remains belong to the Bronze Age, while the numerous relics of the Romano-British period that have been found in the lower Wey Valley afford some ground for assuming that a considerable community must have been living along the banks of the Wey nineteen centuries ago. I think it is a true observation that most of the relics of early man found in Surrey have been discovered on sites easily accessible from its natural highways—the great ridge of the North Downs with its outlying spurs, and the Thames with its three tributaries, the Wandle, the Mole, and the Wey.

¹ V. C. H., *London*, Vol. I, p. 152.

² *Nenia Britannica*, by James Douglas, p 94.

PLATE IV.



- 1.—Paddle of Ancient Canoe (Length, 53 inches).
- 2.—Lower Stone of a Quern (Diameter, 13 $\frac{3}{4}$ inches).
- 3.—Small Vessel of Grey Ware.
- 4.—Large Vessel of Grey Ware (Diameter of rim, 11 inches).

The Surrey Archæological Society has decided to make a complete catalogue of the prehistoric remains found in the county, and I shall be glad to receive from members and others descriptions of any prehistoric "finds" which have not been reported in the various archæological publications, together with a description of the exact place where they were discovered. When this work has been done, we shall have a clearer idea not only of the nature of the prehistoric remains of our county, but also of their distribution, and possibly we shall then be in a position to discuss the difficult problem, "Who were the various peoples who lived in Surrey in ancient times?" and "Whence did they come?"