

A Group of First Century Pottery from Tilford

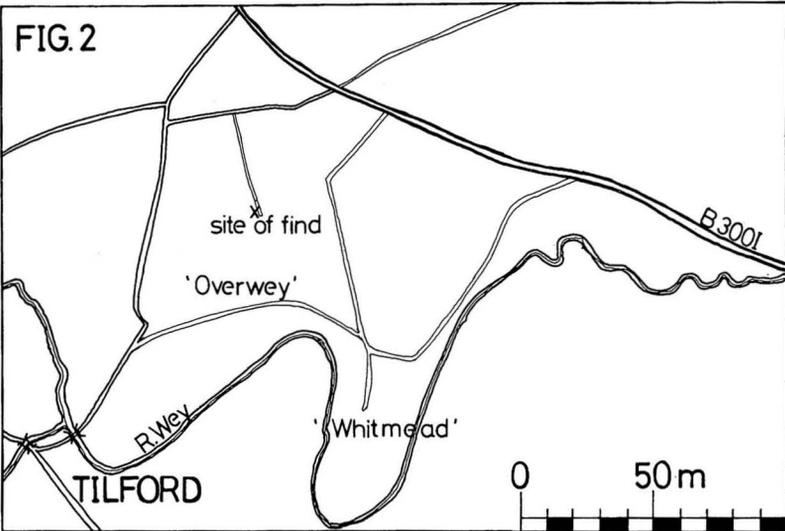
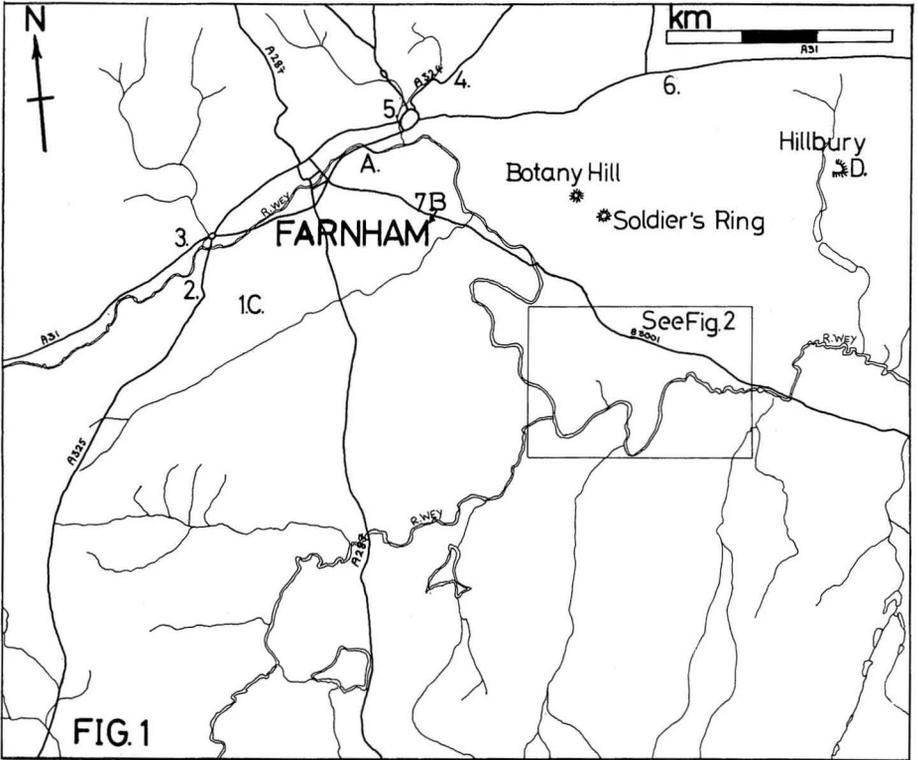
by MARTIN MILLETT

The recent acquisition by the Society of the late Mr A. W. G. Lowther's collection led to the cataloguing of the material by various members of the Society. In examining the material from the Farnham area I came across a group of pottery marked 'Tilford 1939'. Examination of the published sources revealed only one reference to this material (Lowther et al., 1939, 260) consisting of a short note stating that 'full publication will be made elsewhere'. The absence of this full publication is probably due to the outbreak of war shortly after the find was made. As this group of pottery is of some importance it was decided that it should be published even at this late date.¹

The only information about the find comes from the published source. This says that the find was made 'approximately 300 yards north of the 'Overway' kiln at Tilford. . . during the preliminary work for the making of a new estate road.' This location (SU 879442) is shown in figure 2. The pottery, which was found at a depth of 18 inches (460 mm), was considered by Lowther to have been part of a potter's stock as no calcined bone was recovered. This conclusion will be considered below.

The pottery consists of a group of twenty-two vessels.² These can be divided conveniently into nine types, illustrated in figure 3. They are:

1. Carinated bowl with everted rim and rudimentary footring in grey-buff ware with sand tempering. Two incised lines on the exterior delineate a cordon. Wheel-made. One example.
2. Shallow bowl in buff sand-tempered ware, with two concentric circles and a cross incised on the underside of the base. The surface varies from buff to dark grey in colour and has light burnishing externally. Probably wheel-made. One example.
3. Small cup, wheel-made in brownish buff to grey sand-tempered ware with a lightly burnished exterior. Two incised lines on the exterior delineate a cordon. Fragments of four examples, none complete. The only variation in form is in the angle of the rim above the carination.
4. Small dish in fine sand-tempered ware with orange-buff core and a surface varying from dark grey to orange-buff in colour. Incised circle on the underside of base and a rudimentary footring. External and internal surfaces lightly burnished. Eight complete or virtually complete examples.
5. Single-handled flagon, wheel-thrown body with coil-made neck.



Figs. 1 and 2. Location maps. Fig. 1 shows Iron Age and early Romano-British finds in the area. (For list of sites see Appendix.) Based on the OS map. Crown copyright reserved.

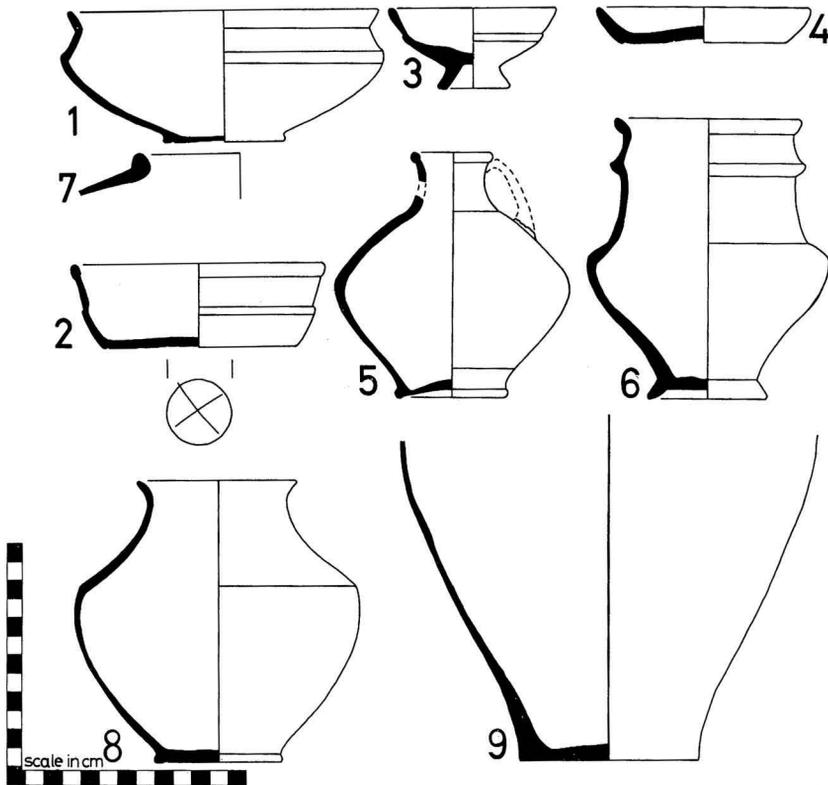


Fig. 3. Pottery types

Brownish-grey sand-tempered ware with lightly burnished surface. Four examples the best of which has parts of the rim surviving whilst the worst example consists only of a base.

6. Tall, wheel-made, pedestal-based beaker in orange-buff sand-tempered ware with lightly burnished exterior. One semi-complete example.

7. Rim fragments of a bead-rim jar in rather coarse sand-tempered buff ware. This does not appear to be part of type 9.

8. Jar, with rudimentary footring, in orange-buff sand-tempered ware, lightly burnished brownish grey exterior. One example.

9. Fragments of a large wheel-made jar in brownish grey to buff sand-tempered ware with a burnished exterior. The upper part of the vessel is missing.

This pottery can be paralleled on a number of sites in the area. The most common is type 4 which can be paralleled with examples from the burials

at Haslemere and Charterhouse (Holmes, 1950), Neatham, Hampshire (excavations directed by D. Graham, reports in preparation) and Fairfield, Farnham (Lowther et al., 1939, 228, fig. 95). The form, which is possibly a copy of a Terra Nigra vessel (Rigby, 1973, 14, fig. 4, nos. 31-2), indicates that it is of Belgic origin. As such a mid-first-century A.D. date is indicated. Type 1 can be paralleled with a mid-first-century type at Colchester (Hawkes and Hull, 1947, plate LXXVI, type 224) whilst type 8 is almost identical with one from a group at Silchester (May, 1916, plate LXXXVIII, type 1) which is attributed to the Claudian period. Type 3 also occurs in two of the Neatham burials which date to the third quarter of the first century A.D. Type 6 cannot be paralleled exactly but compares well with examples from Colchester (Hawkes and Hull, 1947, plate LV, types 84-5) where a date in the first half of the first century A.D. is given, and Charterhouse, where the form is dated to 40 to 70 A.D. (Holmes, 1950, fig. 5, burial II, no. 3). A date in the third quarter of the first century seems indicated by the above types and the mixture of Belgic types (1, 2, 6, and 8) with Roman types (5).

In the original publication of the find (Lowther et al., 1939, 260) it was suggested that the pottery formed part of a potter's stock from a nearby kiln. This interpretation is based on the fact that no cremated bone was found. It seems unlikely that this interpretation is correct as no other such stock is known and the only similar groups of complete first century pots come from cremation burials. The fact that no cremated bone was found does not necessarily mean that none was originally deposited. Firstly the Lower Greensand tends to have an acid soil on it and free circulation of ground-water makes it unlikely that cremated bone would have survived.³ Secondly the pottery was found during the preliminary work for the construction of a new estate road and although there is no record of the exact circumstances of the find the damage evident on some of the vessels and the number of fragments missing may indicate that it was found by workmen. In this case it is quite likely that the cremation, if it survived, would have been missed, especially if it was originally in a wooden box, as at Neatham and Fairfield (Lowther et al., 1939, 228-9) or in the severely damaged large jar, type 9, which is of the appropriate size.

The conclusion to be drawn is that the group of pottery dates to the third quarter of the first century A.D. and represents the grave goods associated with a cremation burial of a type not uncommon in the area. Comparable examples have been found at Haslemere, Charterhouse (Holmes, 1950) and Neatham. Other burials of similar date but with fewer pots come from Fairfield, Stoneyfield and Green Lane, all in Farnham (Lowther et al., 1939, 227-231). This distribution seems to indicate a continuation of the Pre-Roman Iron Age settlement pattern through the first century and it is interesting that a number of the kilns of the later period, third and fourth century, also reflect this distribution (cf. list in Millett, 1974). The Tilford find itself provides a good example of this as the Hillforts at Botany Hill, Soldier's Ring and Hillbury (Appendix) probably show the Iron Age occupation whilst the kilns nearby at Whitmead (Lasham, 1895, 151) and Overwey

(Clark, 1950) seem indicative of activity in the late fourth century. Further intensive fieldwork should produce further sites and thus demonstrate the point more clearly.

Appendix

The sites shown on figure 1 are:

Iron Age

1. Green Lane, Farnham, occupation site (SU 833450)
2. Gardner's Pit, Farnham, occupation site (SU82644529)
3. Cox Bridge, Farnham, pottery (SU825458)
4. Badshot Lea, Farnham, pottery (SU86064792)
5. Bourne Mill Spring, Farnham, pottery (SU85284792)
6. Seale, pottery (SU889483)
7. Stoneyfield, Farnham, cremation burial (SU853462) (Lowther et al., 1939, 207).

With the exception of no. 7 these sites together with the three hillforts at Botany Hill, Solider's Ring and Hillbury are discussed by Bishop (1971, 1-30).

Early Romano-British

- A. Fairfield, Farnham, cremation burial (SU852469)
- B. Stoneyfield, Farnham, five cremation burials (SU853462)
- C. Green Lane, Farnham, cremation burial and occupation site (SU835451)
- D. Hillbury, a scatter of first and second century pottery (SU915469)

A to C are discussed by Lowther (et al., 1939, 227-231) and D by Clark and Nichols (1960, 42-72)

Acknowledgements

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Notes

1. The pottery is now in Guildford Museum, accession number R.B. 2570.
2. A fragment of third-century flanged bowl with the group is probably a stray from another site as it does not bear the mark 'Tilford 1939'.

3. I am grateful to Dr K. Thomas, of the University of London Institute of Archaeology for confirming this point.

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