

# FOUR BRONZE AGE CREMATION CEMETERIES FROM MIDDLESEX

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This paper is concerned with the pottery from four Deverel Rimbury cremation cemeteries in Middlesex, which forms the basis for a discussion of the related material in the Lower Thames region. The material can be seen as another regional ceramic group within the Deverel Rimbury culture. This pottery was once considered to be Late Bronze Age in date, but work in the late 1950's demonstrated that it belonged in a period running from c. 1400–1000 B.C. corresponding to the Middle Bronze Age. It has, however, often been assumed that this pottery continued through the Late Bronze Age, c. 1000–650 B.C., to form an underlying influence in our earliest Iron Age coarse wares. Two points now arise. Firstly, recent work has suggested that some aspects of Deverel Rimbury pottery may originate in a group of late Neolithic ceramics and this would therefore imply an Early Bronze Age date for some of the material. Secondly, it may now be possible to indicate certain forms of Later Bronze Age pottery which would seem unrelated to the Deverel Rimbury tradition and this would therefore call into question one aspect of a ceramic continuum for Deverel Rimbury forms into the Iron Age. These concepts are clearly of some importance and are discussed in a more detailed fashion below.

## INTRODUCTION

The sites under consideration are Ashford Common, Littleton Reservoir, Yiewsley and Acton, but details are scant and all that remain are four groups of pottery, none of which have ever been published. Most of the material is in the British Museum except for the Littleton urns and some sherds from Ashford Common which are in the London Museum.

The pottery in the region has been found under varying conditions but most commonly during gravel working which was, until the late 1920's, still largely undertaken by hand (Oakley, *et. al.*, 1939, 173 and pl. XXII, 2). This will bias the known distribution of the material in the region. The Lower Thames region does not have a long tradition of field work and the archaeological record has suffered from this lack of earlier attention. The inherent characteristics of the pottery also lend neither to preservation nor, perhaps, to much respect upon discovery.

## ASHFORD COMMON, SUNBURY TQ 09707045

### INTRODUCTION

Ashford Common is the largest and the best recorded of the Middlesex sites under discussion. Prior to its discovery in 1870, other urns had been found in the area (V.C.H., 1969, 45), and in 1725 two urns found at Sunbury and "said to be Celtic" were exhibited to the Society of Antiquaries, London (Anon., 1860, 140).

The site lay in a field "west of the by-road from Feltham Hill and north of the main road from Staines to Hampton" (Roberts, 1871, 450). This is an area of flat, well drained land, below the fifty foot contour, enclosed on three sides by the broad, meandering southern sweep of the Thames from Brentford to Windsor, and the River Colne, which enters the Thames at Chertsey. At its nearest point the Thames is now 2.7 km (1 $\frac{3}{4}$  miles) away. The nearest tributary of the Thames is the little River Ashe, to the south west (Fig. 6).

The geology consists of flood plain gravels of the River Terrace Series, and some patches of Brickearth may occur in the immediate vicinity.

Until recently, some of the area of Ashford Common was still open ground and is shown as such on maps of 1966; but it is now almost completely covered by modern housing.

#### DISCOVERY

The cremation cemetery was first discovered in 1870 after the area had been ploughed (Roberts, 1871, 449). Some fifty years previous to this the field had comprised part of the common land, but it is unclear how long pottery was being exposed by the plough, before the owner, Mr. T. Leonard, noticed it. On digging for sand and gravel Mr. Leonard then uncovered sixteen urns, and in the October of 1871 further investigation, headed by Mr. E. Roberts, was undertaken under the auspices of the British Archaeological Association. Of the pottery uncovered on this three-day excavation they found it 'difficult to preserve any one vase' (Roberts, 1871, 450).

On the first day an area 15 m east-west and 6 m north-south was opened along with unproductive trial trenches. The top soil varied in depth from 25 cm to 45 cm and upon removing 20 cm "many . . . urns" were uncovered. Of these, eight were lifted and "some twenty others" located. All these examples were inverted and plough-damaged, but on the subsequent days of excavation "one or two" upright examples were also found. In plan the cremations lay in straight rows east to west, except for two groups which formed curves, "the convex faces of which faced east". All the urns rested on the gravel and beneath the inverted examples the soil was stained black and "of a vermiculated nature". Also located were two hollows containing burnt material which the excavator, probably correctly, connected with the process of cremation. There was also no sign of any covering mound.

Other finds included a few calcined flints and a few animal bones.

No plan or drawings accompany the original report although one of the two "curved" groups of urns is described more fully. It consisted of four urns, the southernmost example of 25 cm diameter, the next, "an upright pipe", 19 cm in diameter, then a globular of 23 cm diameter and the last, an "upright urn" of 15 cm diameter (Roberts, 1871, 451). None of these urns can be identified with any certainty although it may be worth noting that one of the two globulars (Fig. 2. 15) has a maximum diameter of 23 cm.

Roberts considered the nature of the soil beneath the inverted vessels indicative of cremation actually taking place on that spot. It is however more likely the result of still hot ashes being tipped onto the ground and then covered by an urn. The fact that the cemetery presented an ordered rather than random layout would seem to suggest that each deposit was marked on the surface in some way (V.C.H., 1969, 44).

The actual size of the cemetery can never be determined. The report notes that Leonard "also later obtained numerous other specimens" (Roberts, 1871, 449), presumably after Roberts' excavation. The British Museum has records of the remains of thirty-four cremation urns purchased from Leonard in 1872 and the London Museum has a further two urns and the cremation from a third. An ambiguity in the report led Abercromby (1912, II, 51) to believe that Leonard recovered sixteen urns on two occasions prior to his later finds. Clearly, however, it is only the sixteen original finds referred to, of which one was saved "and that has since fallen to pieces" (Roberts, 1871, 450). As has been noted the first day of excavation produced "about" twenty-eight urns of which eight were lifted. If all the lifted urns found their way into museum collections along with the later discoveries the minimum number of urns exca-

vated lies at seventy-two. Due to a possible minimum of fifty years ploughing of the area this need only be a fraction of the total number. Recent building on what remained of the common, failed to produce any more reported finds.

POTTERY (B.M. Access, Nos. 1872. 12. 21. 1-34; L.M. Access, Nos. A. 10976-7)

Some photographs of the material have already been published (Abercromby, 1912, II, nos. 469-469d). The pottery is unevenly fired, the surface colours being various shades of reds, greys and browns. The surfaces are often marked by contraction cracks and where large cracks have occurred in the walls of some of the urns attempts would seem to have been made to bind them together, holes having been drilled on either side of the cracks. The fabric contains a filler of crushed calcined flint in all cases and this grit can sometimes be as large as 0.7 cm in diameter.

FIG. 1

1. Traces of a slip on both surfaces, with vertical smoothing on the interior. Ornamentation is formed by applied strips of clay and these carry irregular finger-tip impressions.
2. Traces of slip remain on the exterior surface.
3. Slip on exterior surface. The impressions on the raised cordon and the rim are more likely to be formed by a blunt stick than with the finger tip.
4. The raised cordon is formed by the addition of an extra coil of clay in the body of the pot.
5. The fabric contains some sand as well as crushed flint and the exterior surface carries a slip.
6. Four post-firing repair holes, one of which is not completely drilled out, have been formed, two on either side of a contraction crack.
7. Urn carrying two applied bosses and two post-firing repair holes on either side of a contraction crack.
8. Five slight projections on the body of the urn and four post-firing repair holes, one on each side of two large contraction cracks.
9. Rim flattened and decorated by finger nail impressions.
10. Four applied projections survive, the total may well have been more.
11. Hard fabric containing a fine filler of sand and very finely crushed flint. The exterior surface is burnished in places and the flattened rim is decorated by an irregular "stabbing" technique.
12. Sherds of upper part of urn with one probable repair hole. One slight projection on the body of the pot.
13. Fabric contains sand as well as flint grit. The cordon is built up with the body of the pot as in No. 4. The holes below the rim were formed prior to firing.
14. Four slight bosses occur below the rim.

FIG. 2

15. Sherds of a globular urn. The exterior surface bears traces of a slip. Three "ancient cracks" are recorded in the British Museum's accessions register with repair holes, but only two such cracks are now identifiable. The decoration has been executed using a blunt tool which has produced a groove of 0.2 cm width. The depth of the line varies.
16. Sherd of a globular urn of finer fabric than No. 15. There is one possible post-firing repair hole. The decoration was also executed with a blunt tool, the horizontal grooves being 0.35 cm wide and the diagonal confused strokes being, on average, 0.2 cm wide.
17. Rim sherd of an urn with one vertical "rib".
18. Small plain urn.
19. Urn carrying seven small projections probably pulled up from the body of the pot.
20. Slip on exterior surface and there is trace of smoothing on both surfaces. Two small applied projections.
21. Plain with flattened rim.
22. Holes below the rim have been formed by piercing from the outside prior to firing.
23. Base of urn.
24. Traces of vertical smoothing on both surfaces.
25. Sherds of bottom half of urn.
26. Cordon produced in a similar way to No. 4.

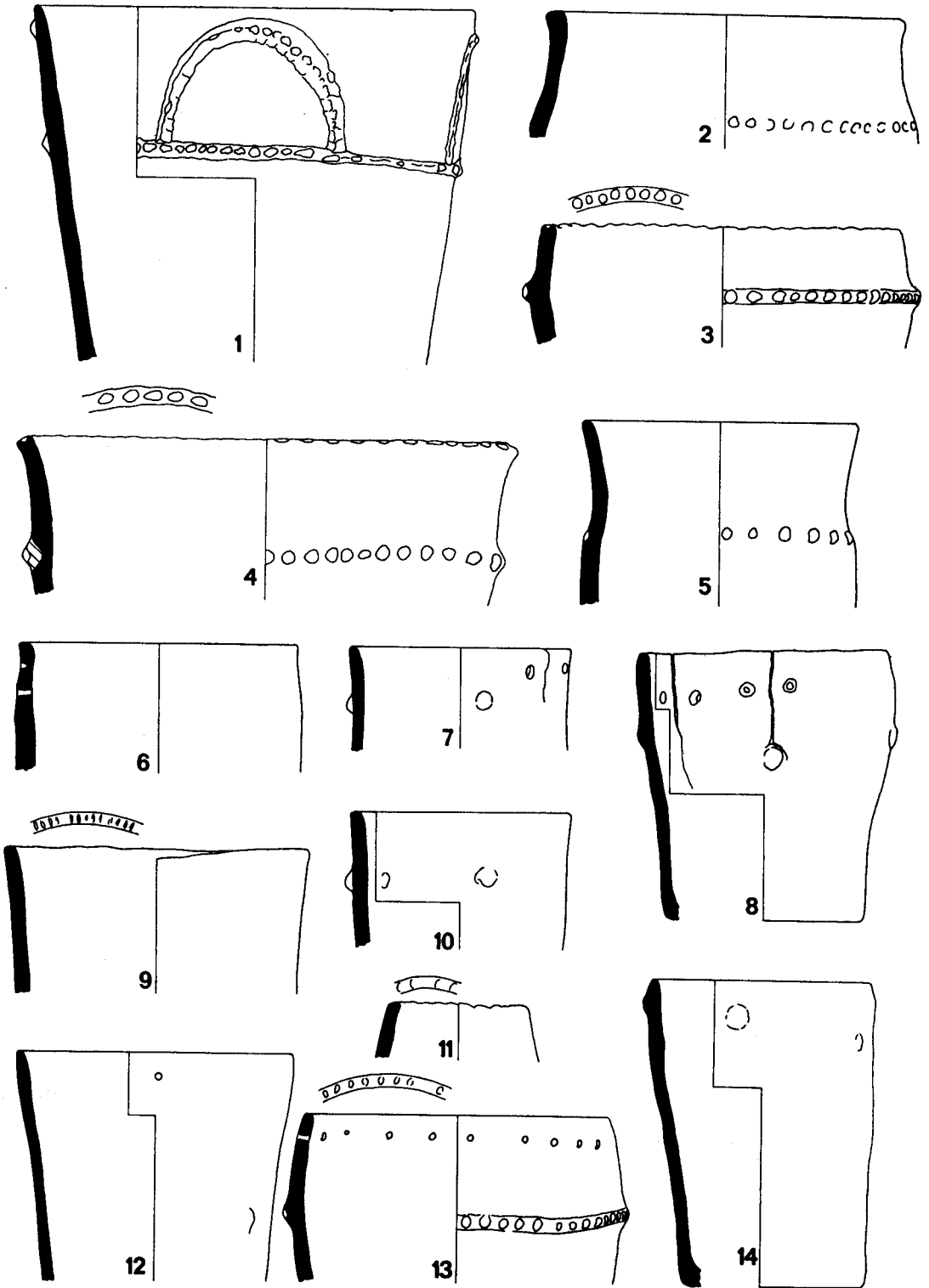


Fig. 1  
Pottery from Ashford Common, Sunbury (1/6th)

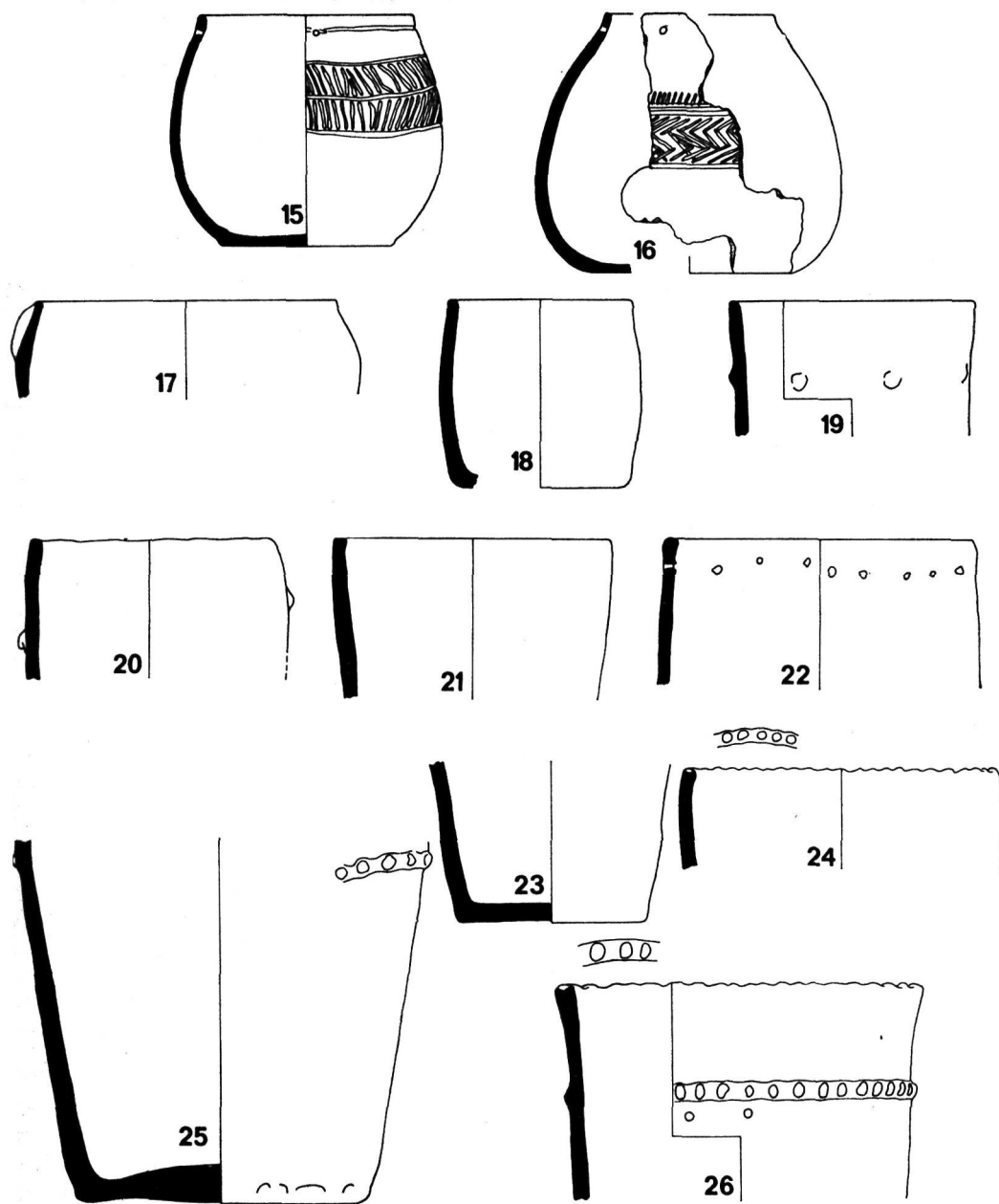


Fig. 2  
Pottery from Ashford Common, Sunbury (1/6th)

*Not illustrated.*

27. Body sherds of a straight-sided urn, c. 1.0 cm thick.
  28. Body sherds of a straight-sided urn, c. 1.0 cm thick.
  29. Sherds of the body and part of the flat base of a straight-sided urn. The rim is flat and the decoration is an applied cordon carrying finger-tip impressions.
- Urns now lost.*
30. Recorded as having a rim diameter of 23 cm and a "raised band notched and notching on the rim".
  31. Recorded as having a rim diameter of 28 cm and a "notched band and rim".

## LITTLETON RESERVOIR TQ 08037040

### INTRODUCTION AND DISCOVERY

The find spot lies nearly 1.6 km to the west of the Ashford Common site. The material came from near the outlet pipe of the Littleton Reservoir (Anon., 1951, 307). The finds consist of one complete urn containing a cremation and fragments of three other urns. No other information survives.

### POTTERY (L.M. Access, Nos. 37.221/1-3)

The fabric is, in general, similar to that found at Ashford Common, the pottery being unevenly fired and containing a filler of crushed calcined flint.

### FIG. 3

1. Slip on exterior surface, two post-firing repair holes occur on either side of a recently restored crack.
  2. Slip on exterior surface. The applied cordon has broken away from the wall of the urn in places.
- Not illustrated.*
3. Body sherds of a straight-sided urn, width of sherds c. 1.3 - 1.5 cm. Decoration is with an applied cordon carrying finger-tip impressions and there are two probable repair holes.
  4. Sherds of an urn with finger-tip impressions along the top of the rim and on a slightly raised cordon.

## ACTON TQ 198797

### INTRODUCTION

This site lies just above the fifty-foot contour on the gravels of the Taplow stage which are, in many places, covered by Brickearth. The ground falls away to the east, and to the south slopes down to the Thames, now 2 km away. The River Brent flows in a wide arc to the north and west of the site (Fig. 6).

### DISCOVERY

The cremation cemetery was uncovered in 1883 during excavations for house foundations. In the same year one urn, fragments of "two or three" others and a "quantity of earth and particles of calcined bone" were exhibited to the Royal Archaeological Institute (Anon., 1883, 106). This pottery was later deposited in the British Museum which has five urns accessed for that year.

In 1889 another urn (No. 3) was sent to the museum with an accompanying letter from the owner of the house, Samuel Cobb, who gives, unfortunately, little new information about the cemetery. He records that during the construction of Oakleigh House, Avenue Gardens, Acton, this urn was found "in an upright position . . . with numerous urns . . . of a similar character." These other urns fell to pieces upon removal. The contents of the urn, a cremation, were interred in the garden of Longford House, opposite Oakleigh, which Cobb was vacating to move across the road.

Oakleigh, now number 38, forms one of a group of mid-to-late Victorian houses from which Avenue Gardens and the adjoining streets developed. No further finds are recorded.

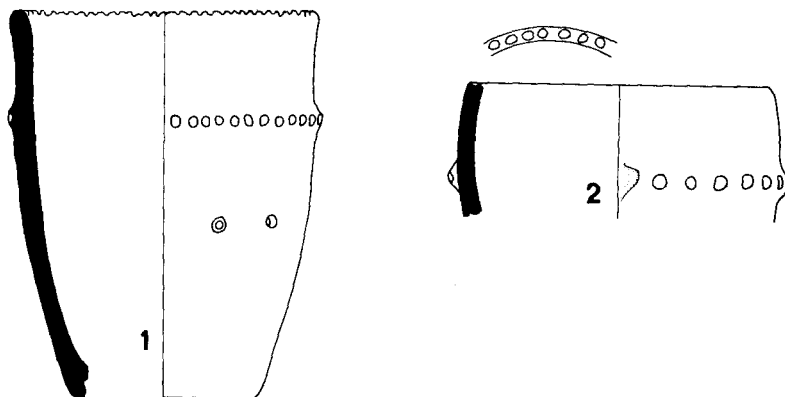


Fig. 3  
Pottery from Littleton Reservoir (1/6th)

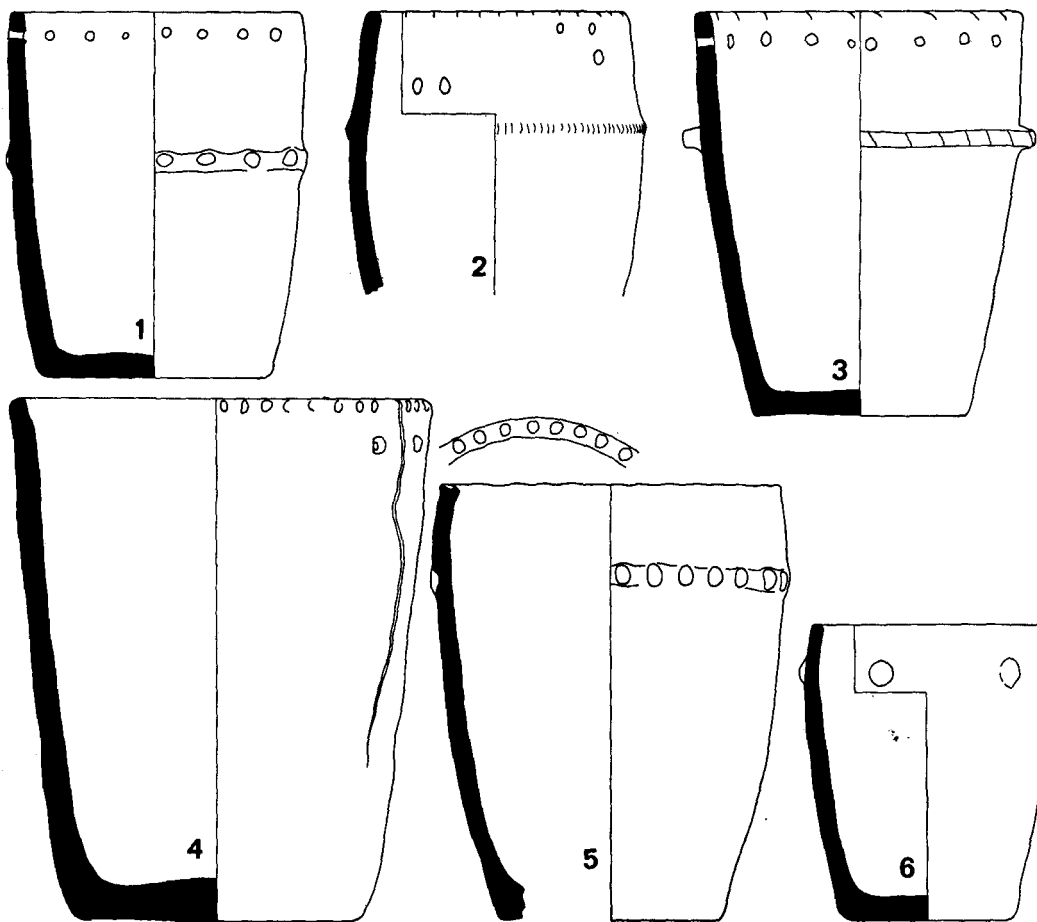


Fig. 4  
Pottery from Acton(1/6th)

## POTTERY (B.M. Access, Nos. 1883. 6. 12. 1-5, 1889. 2. 9. 1)

Photographs of some of this material have already been published (Abercromby, 1912, II, nos. 470-470c). The pottery is unevenly fired with varying surface colours. The fabric contains a filler of crushed calcined flint with an average diameter of 0.1-0.2 cm.

## FIG. 4

1. Holes below rim were made prior to firing by "puncturing" from the exterior.
2. Five repair holes drilled through the urn's wall after firing, around cracks which have been recently restored.
3. Exterior surface shows traces of vertical smoothing, the holes below the rim were made before firing.
4. The coil construction of this urn can be seen clearly. Two post-firing repair holes occur on either side of a large contraction crack.
5. Finger-tip impressions occur along a very slight raised cordon.
6. Vertical smoothing on exterior surface, six applied bosses.

YIEWSLEY TQ 07488033 or TQ 08168104

## INTRODUCTION

This is the most poorly documented of the Middlesex sites. It lies between the 100 ft and the 150 ft contours, on the gravel and the Brickearth of the Taplow stage and is situated between the River Colne, 2.8 km to the west, and the River Crane, 3.7 km to the east.

## DISCOVERY

The valley gravels of this area have been, and still are being, extensively quarried and it was during such work at Boyer's Gravel Pit in 1913 and 1914 that this material was recovered. No further information exists about the site. Other material obtained from the area includes possible Iron Age pottery (V.C.H., 1969, 45), but investigation in 1953 failed to yield any further information (*ibid*). The material arrived at the British Museum in the Garroway-Rice collection.

## POTTERY (B.M. Access, Nos. 1933. 4. 6. 136-7, 143, 152-61, 163)

The pottery is unevenly fired and all the urns contain a filler of crushed calcined grit varying between 0.1-0.8 cm in diameter. More sherds of urns are recorded than are reported here but these are no longer traceable.

## FIG. 5

1. Exterior surface carries a slip and traces of vertical smoothing. The band carries a number of small pinched-up bosses.
2. Vertical smoothing on the external surface, one surviving horizontally pierced lug with traces of two others. Two pairs of repair holes occur on either side of cracks recently restored.
3. Two post-firing repair holes on either side of a recently restored contraction crack.
4. Two small bosses are pinched up from the body of the pot and there are two post-firing repair holes on either side of a recently-restored contraction crack.
5. Two post-firing repair holes on either side of a recently restored contraction crack.
6. Six applied bosses and two repair holes on either side of a recently restored crack.
7. Smooth exterior surface with slight traces of slip.
8. Three applied projections on the interior of the urn.
9. Rounded uneven base.  
*Not illustrated.*
10. Body sherds of an urn decorated by a raised band carrying finger-nail impressions.
11. Body sherds of average thickness 1.0 cm.
- 12-17. Sherds similar to No. 11, three decorated with cordon and finger-tip impressions.  
*Lost.*
18. Recorded as "smooth dark-red globular with comb decoration". The sketch shows decoration formed by horizontal grooves with a swag pattern above.



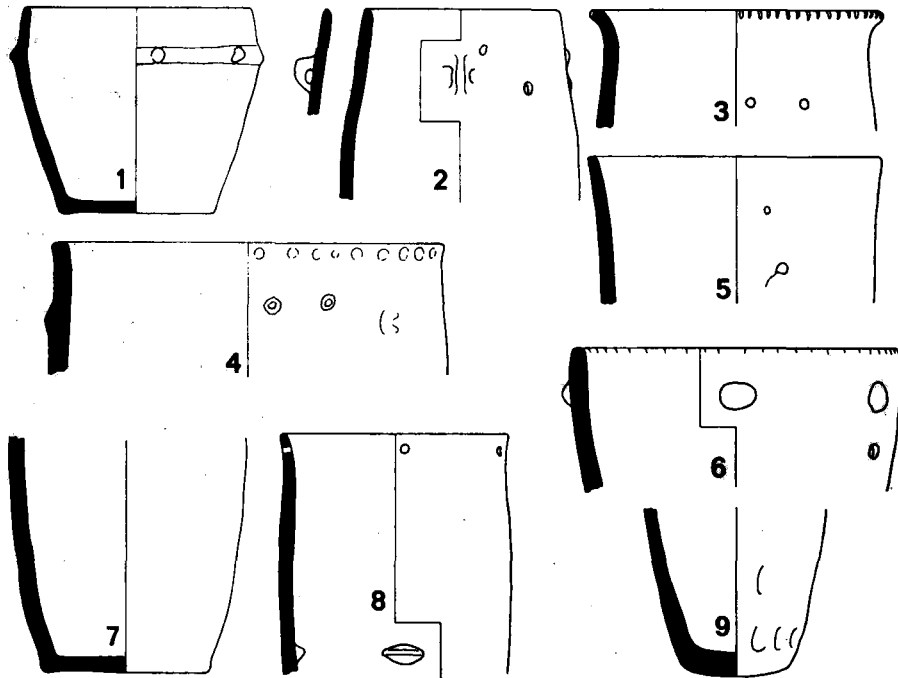


Fig. 5  
Pottery from Yiewsley (1/6th)

### THE LOWER THAMES REGION AND THE RELATED MATERIAL

The Lower Thames Region is taken as the area bounding the Thames as it flows east from the Goring Gap. To the north west lie the Chilterns, composed of the Cretaceous sands, clays and chalk, and on the north by the northern heights of Harrow and Highgate. To the south lie the North Downs, again the Cretaceous deposits and the London Basin, lying between the two chalk scarps, has a geological base of the Blackheath, Reading and Thanet Beds, London Clay and the sands of the Bagshot, Bracklesham and Barton Beds. Over this base geology lie the Quaternary deposits. These are the glacial Plateau Gravels and the Clay with Flints and the river deposits of the Thames and its tributaries; the river terrace gravels and, in the Reading region, alluvium. Uncleared the region would have been heavily forested, but in the Chilterns at least, there is evidence of clearance during the Bronze Age (Evans, 1967). A large area of south west Middlesex and the scarp slopes of the chalk are covered by soils which have been defined as of an "intermediate series" (Wooldridge and Linton, 1933), which upon clearance would have provided optimum conditions for agriculture, whereas the purely siliceous sands found in the Bagshot series and the Lower Greensand would only have supported heathland, as would some of the gravels (*ibid.*).

### THE POTTERY

The pottery from the four Middlesex sites belongs to the Deverel Rimbury family of ceramics well known from southern England. The material from the Middlesex cemeteries will be discussed together, the wide distribution of similar pottery would make the laborious paralleling of each urn tedious and unrewarding.

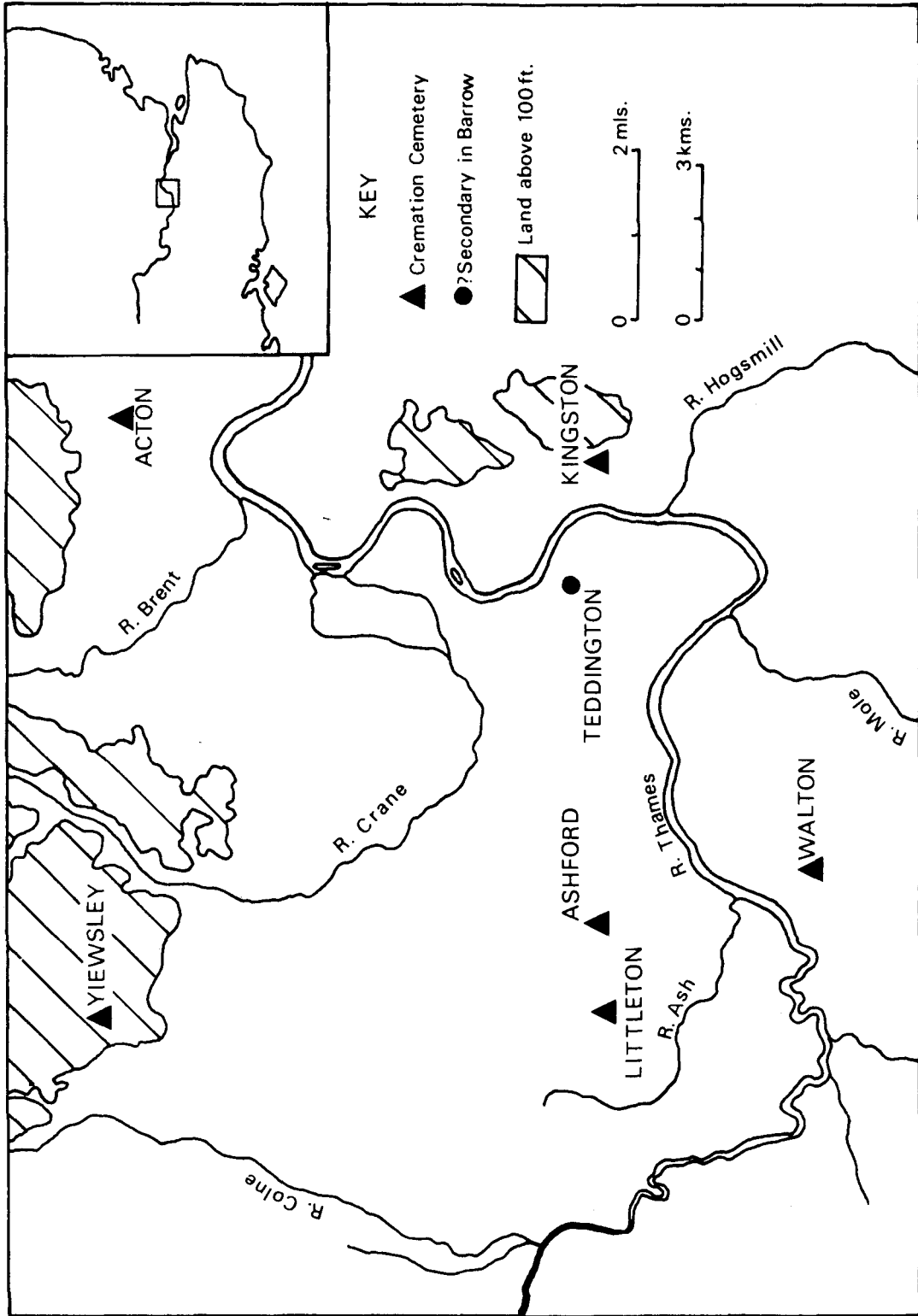


Fig. 6  
Plan of the Middlesex area

## I. BICONICAL URNS

The biconically shaped urn from Yiewsley (fig. 5. 1) is paralleled by an urn from Taplow, now in Reading Museum. This urn, recorded as "sepulchral", has a slightly developed rim and the carination carries two opposed bosses. Another example of a biconical urn comes from Wonersh in Surrey (Gardner, 1924, 15, pl. IVb). This urn was found, containing a cremation, in an ironstone cist and nearby, under a "barely perceptible mound", a similar cist was found containing a bucket urn and cremation (Cooper, 1900). These urns may all be related to the Wessex Biconical Urns defined by Isobel Smith (1961) and indeed she included the Wonersh example in this series (Smith, 1961, n. 12). The Wonersh biconical lacks any ornament between the carination and rim (cf. Abercromby, 1912, II, nos. 438, 439) but this lack of ornament carries no chronological implications (Smith, 1961, 99). Another plain biconical urn from Radley 14, Oxfordshire was associated with a Class IB razor (Leeds, 1936, pl. IIa). This association points to an early Bronze Age date (Butler and Smith, 1956, 31-33). Other biconically shaped Bronze Age urns come from the west of the Goring Gap in the Oxfordshire region (Case, 1953, 84 and 1966, figs. 27, 29 and 31) (V.C.H., 1939, pl. VIId). Three examples of these (Case, 1953, 84 and 1966, fig. 27) (V.C.H., 1939) carry "horse-shoe handles". These biconical urns will be discussed later.

## II GLOBULAR URNS

Globular urns in the Lower Thames region are fairly rare, for only ten or eleven can be traced. Two come from Ashford Common and two from Yiewsley (figs. 2. 15, 16; 5. 2). Those from Ashford have a similar decorative technique which involves the use of strongly incised lines with an average width of 0.2 cm. Both contain a filler of crushed flint. From Yiewsley is the sherd (no. 18) decorated with horizontal grooves above which runs a "swag" pattern. The other Yiewsley globular (fig. 5. 2) probably carried three horizontally pierced lugs and is undecorated. It is a vessel difficult to parallel although similar profiles may be seen in Calkin's "late" globulars from Hillbrow (Calkin, 1962, fig. 11. 3). Another plain globular, also with only one surviving horizontally pierced lug, comes, closer to hand, from the Walton-on-Thames cremation cemetery. A second globular urn also occurs from the same cemetery (both in Weybridge Museum), and this urn is decorated by a single shallow line which runs round the vessel. Both these urns are quite finely made, the wall thickness of both varying from between 0.3-0.5 cm, and they contain no added flint grit filler. The Sunningdale barrow on the Surrey-Berkshire border (Shrubsole, 1927, 303) produced a single globular urn (Abercromby, 1912, II, no. 416b). This is a plain vessel except for four applied bosses; the fabric contains a filler of crushed calcined flint. Calkin (1962, 58) refers to a globular urn from the cremation cemetery at Yateley, on the Hampshire-Berkshire border, and Reading Museum contains a sherd of a globular. It is not, however, clear if they are one and the same vessel. The sherd, containing a filler of crushed flint, is decorated by two groups of five lines, each 0.2 cm wide. The exterior surface is black and burnished. At Thorpe, in Surrey, an occupation site currently under excavation has produced two sherds of globulars with strongly incised decoration.

This number of globulars is hardly enough to support any generalisations. Calkin does not place any of the material known to him in either of his two groups (Calkin, 1962, 58). It is sufficient to note that although Type 1 globulars occur in west Berkshire, for example on Lambourn Down (Thurnam, 1870, pl. XXX, fig. 1), Blewbury and Sutton Courtenay (Calkin, 1962, 56) and from Standlake in Oxfordshire (Bradford, 1942, fig. 3. 1), none are as yet recorded from the Lower Thames region.

There is no need to doubt the unified tradition of the Cranbourne Chase ceramic group. The distributions of the Type I globular and barrel urns closely overlap (Calkin, 1962, fig. 9) and they occur together on many sites, for example, the enclosures of North Wiltshire (Piggott, C.M., 1942) and in a closed association from Pit A at Winnal, Hampshire (Hawkes, S.C., 1969, 8). That the bucket urn was also in production at the same time as these other types would also seem clear (*ibid.*) and at Knighton Hill, Broad Chalke, Wiltshire the primary deposit in a round barrow consisted of fragments of a bucket urn and a cremation contained in a barrel urn (Rahtz, 1970).

A similar occurrence of Dorset material in the Early Bronze Age may be postulated, supported by the apparent relationship between this pottery and Cornish ceramics (ApSimon in Rahtz and ApSimon, 1962) (Hawkes, S.C., 1969, 16), this being of particular relevance to the Type II globular. It is therefore suggested that Wainwright's rejection of the radio carbon date of 1740 b.c.  $\pm$  90 (N.P.L. - 199) for the Arne barrow (Wainwright, 1970) may be premature.

An Early Bronze Age occurrence for elements of the Deverel Rimbury ceramics in Southern England would make it easier to understand the relationship of the Wessex Biconical to the bucket urn. In 1961 it was to the Wessex Biconical Urns that Isobel Smith turned in reconsidering the origins of the bucket urn and this concept was developed by Calkin (1962). It is clear from the examples of biconicals quoted from the Thames Valley (above) and from other studies of the material (Smith, 1961; Calkin, 1962) that the biconical urn incorporates many elements of Early Bronze Age pottery. ApSimon's (1972) recent paper dealing with biconical urns outside Wessex has shown that disparate sources may well produce superficially similar biconical urns (ApSimon, 1972, 152). This would be true also of the southern series; ApSimon sees a Trevisker influence, among others, in the Dorset biconicals. The similarity noted between the bucket and biconical urns (Calkin, 1962) could well indicate contemporary development and influence rather than stages in a typological "evolution", and would make comparison such as that between the bucket urns from Long Whittenham and the biconical urn from Radley 14 (Case, 1966, 20) more easily acceptable. Such development would also allow for the occurrence of bucket urn sherds and a sherd of biconical material in deposit J at Radley 16 (Case, 1966, fig. 27. 3, 4,) and for the possible link between the bucket urn and biconical urn at Womersley in Surrey.

The argument put forward here is essentially the same as that of Butler and Smith in 1956. The Early Bronze Age saw the development of the main Bronze Age ceramics from different Late Neolithic backgrounds. The only material which can at the moment be dated as continuing into the Middle Bronze Age is that of the Deverel Rimbury culture (Burgess, 1969). Settlement sites such as Shearplace Hill and Itford Hill (radio carbon date of 1000 b.c.  $\pm$  35 GrN 6167) illustrate the culture in a mature phase.

This model does no violence to the contacts with Holland witnessed by the Dutch Hilversum and Drakenstein urn series (Glasbergen, 1954b) nor the radio carbon dates obtained for those urns, but it does question the typological development put forward by Glasbergen and adapted by Smith (1961) and Calkin (1962).

In dating the main body of the Lower Thames material we are not much nearer a solution. If this pottery is related to the Cranbourne Chase group then it is clearly devoid of the barrel urn and Type I globular, elements whose lives in the ceramic repertoire may have ended by the time the Lower Thames Group emerged. This would, however, imply a population shift into the Lower Thames region from Wessex sometime late in the series and such arguments

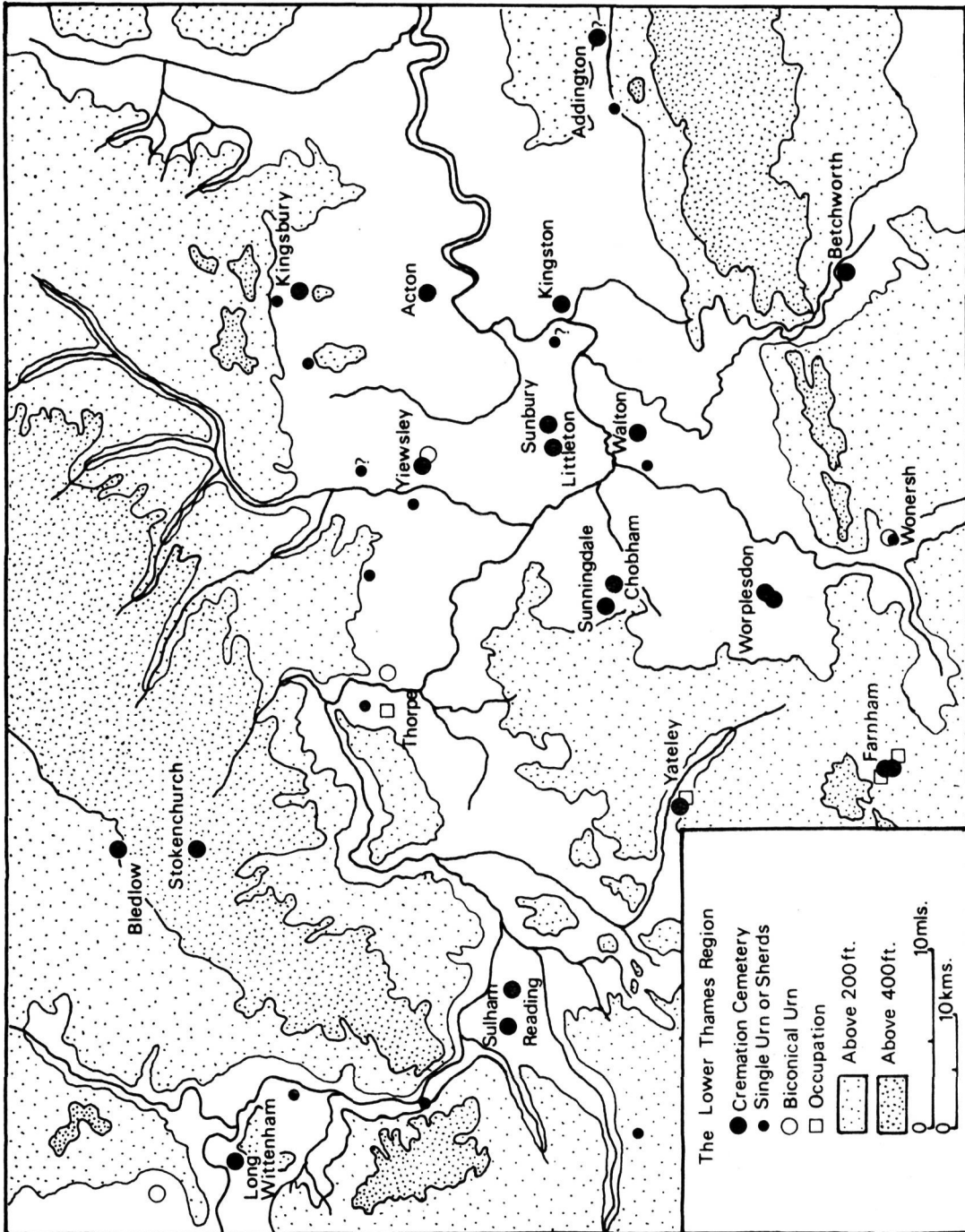


Fig. 7  
Plan of the Lower Thames Region

## III BUCKET URNS

The rest of the material is comprised of bucket urns, which in this region are all flint gritted. The main decorative techniques found on the Middlesex sites may be listed as follows:

- (a) Finger-tip (or in some cases, blunt stick) impressions;
- (b) Finger-nail, small slashes, tooled depressions;
- (c) Drilled holes;
- (d) Bosses.

The areas of application of these techniques are:

- (i) On the top of the rim;
- (ii) On the exterior of the rim;
- (iii) On a raised cordon round the pot;
- (iv) On the body of the pot;
- (v) Just below the rim.

Techniques (c) and (d) are probably functional rather than decorative, being a means by which some form of cover may be attached to the urn.

Certain combinations may tend to occur with higher frequency in one cemetery than another but not enough material survives from the related cemeteries to make close comparison on these lines very meaningful. However the Ashford material is generally coarser than that of Acton and Yiewsley.

Decoration using finger-tip impressions and the addition of bosses are the most common techniques found in the Lower Thames region. At Ashford finger-tip impressions occur along the top of the rim, on raised cordons and also, in two cases, on slight carinations on the body of the urn (figs. 1. 2, 3, 4, 5, 13; 2. 24, 25, 26). The technique also occurs at Acton (figs. 4. 1, 4, 5), Littleton (fig. 3) and at Yiewsley (fig. 5. 4), the Yiewsley example and one from Acton (fig. 4. 4) showing finger-tip decoration on the outside edge of the rim. Finger-tip decoration upon a raised cordon and upon the rim occurs widely in southern England on bucket urns, but in general it is the top of the rim, rather than the outside edge, which is decorated in the Lower Thames area. Finger-tip impression around the rim, and on a raised cordon, occur on some of the surviving material from the Kingston-upon-Thames cemetery (Gardner, 1924, 117), and on the sole surviving urn from the Walton-on-Thames cemetery (Gardner, 1924, pl. IX). The technique is also seen at the Stoneyfield site, Farnham (Oakley, *et. al.*, 1939, Dr. 2), on urns from the two barrows at Worplesdon, Surrey (Gardner, 1924, pl. VIII) and the Sulham cemetery, where an applied band also has a row of finger-tip impressions above and below it, on the body of the pot (Shrubsole, 1907, 311).

The finger-nail or small slash technique, confined to the raised cordon around the pot, although represented at Ashford (fig. 1. 9, 11), Acton (fig. 4. 2, 3) and Yiewsley (fig. 5. 3, 6) and Littleton (fig. 3. 1) is less common in the Lower Thames, occurring again only at Yateley (Piggott, 1938).

The use of holes drilled round the rim is seen at Ashford (figs. 1. 13; 2. 22), Acton (figs. 4. 1, 3), Yiewsley (fig. 5. 8) and once at Sunningdale (Gardner, 1924, pl. VII) and is noted as occurring in Dorset (Calkin, 1962, 33).

The use of applied bosses, or bosses merely "pulled up" from the body of the pot, is very common, occurring at the three main Middlesex sites (figs. 1. 7, 8, 10, 12, 14; 2. 19, 20; 4. 6; 5. 4, 6). This is also seen at the cremation cemetery at Stoneyfield (Oakley, *et. al.*, 1939, Dr. 1), Sulham (Shrubsole, 1907, 311), Chobham Park (Gardner, 1924, pl. V) and Yateley (material

in Reading Museum). The technique, however, predominates at Ashford, Stoneyfield and Sulham. The Snailslynch cemetery, Farnham, has produced a small embossed vessel which was associated with a bronze disc of 6.5 cm diameter, with a loop cast in one on the back (Oakley, *et. al.*, 1939, pl. XVIII). The disc was decorated by an openwork strip around the edge and is almost exactly paralleled by the, now lost, example from Saint Catherines Hill, Guildford (Lowther, 1950, 143). A similar urn, but with a "notched" rim came to light from the Farnham area recently and can probably be assigned to the same cemetery (Frere, 1961, 121). Similar small urns come from Long Wittenham, Berkshire (Case, 1966, fig. 28) and one from the Thames at London (V.C.H., 1969, 46). The small applied vertical rib from Ashford (fig. 2. 17) is unparalleled, as is the occurrence of applied bosses inside an urn from Yiewsley (fig. 5. 8).

Applied plastic ornament occurs only at Ashford (fig. 1. 1) in the form of four applied "horse-shoe handles". Such decoration upon bucket urns occurs in Dorset and Wiltshire (Abercromby, 1912, II, nos. 316b and 373) as well as being represented in East Anglia (Erith and Longworth, 1960, fig. 2). This ornament, commonly found on Wessex Biconical Urns (Smith, 1961, 99), does not occur again in the Thames Valley on a bucket urn but is seen on the biconical urns from Radley 16 (Case, 1966, fig. 27), Stanton Harcourt (Case, 1953, fig. 20) and Iffley (V.C.H., 1939, pl. VIIId). It is also found on the somewhat anomalous urn from Junction Pit Farnham (Oakley, *et. al.*, 1939, 165 and fig. 68). This urn was found inverted over a cremation, in a cist probably forming the primary deposit in what would seem to be a ring ditch. The urn, containing a filler of crushed calcined flint, does not fit into any classification although it is probably related to the Biconical Urns. Calkin discusses this decoration on Wessex Biconical Urns and sees it as a feature inherited by the makers of bucket urns (Calkin, 1962, 33).

ApSimon (Rahtz and ApSimon, 1962, 320) derives the device from "Enlarged Food Vessel Urns" and cites Calkin's "hybrid" urn from South Afflington (Calkin, 1959, pl. III). The possibility, however, of this horse-shoe decoration representing a skeuomorph of rope work on wooden vessels must not be forgotten and, if this is the case, there would be no need to construct a long ceramic heritage for such ornamentation.

It is only left to note a form of decoration limited to the urns from the cremation cemeteries of Sulham and Sunningdale (Shrubsole, 1907), namely, the use of a plain cordon and plain expanded rim (Gardner, 1924, pl. VII).

#### CREMATION CEMETERIES

Detail of these sites, other than the pottery, rarely survives. Even where some excavation has taken place the arrangement of the urns and cremations is often dismissed in a few lines and at Sulham and Sunningdale it was not considered necessary to publish the plans made (Shrubsole, 1907). The general distribution of the Lower Thames sites is given in fig. 7. Geologically they tend to lie on the gravels, either those of the River Terrace series, as in the case of the Middlesex sites, or on the Plateau Gravels, as in the case of the Sulham and Tilehurst Road, Reading cemeteries. The Kingston-on-Thames site occurred on glacial gravels. Stokenchurch and Bledlow lie on the Clay with Flints.

It has been suggested that at Ashford Common the urns were arranged in a specific order, indicating some form of surface marking for each deposit. Whimster records a flat cremation cemetery from Coombe Wood, Kingston-on-Thames (1931, 85) and some fragments of bucket urns existed in the 1920's (Gardner, 1924, 17). Material was being recovered from the quarry for some time at the end of the last century, and this included at least two collared urns

(Gardner, 1924, 9 and pls. IIb and IIIa). In 1845 "several urns had been found, and destroyed, ranged in rows under the gravel" (*ibid.*). However, the validity of the original nineteenth century account may be doubted and also, therefore, the apparent ordered arrangement of the cemetery. In all probability this was a cremation cemetery of some size as "pot holes" were "well known" to the workers at the quarry (Anon., 1863, 372). The relationship between the collared urns and the bucket urns in unknown. At Oaklands Park, Walton-on-Thames, another large cremation cemetery came to light over a period of years (Gardner, 1924, 23). Estimates at the time would put the number of urns at least as high as fifty. At the south-eastern extreme of the site two collared urns were recovered (Gardner, 1924, pl. IIIb and fig. 2) and in the centre of the area two beaker sherds were found (Clarke, 1970, fig. 111). The spread of the finds, for just under 1 km, may indicate a group of barrows rather than a single cemetery. The two globulars occurred in the northeast corner of the area.

A bucket urn from Weybridge (Whimster, 1931, 239) may be from the Silvermere barrow, Weybridge which, when opened in 1830 produced three urns, one of which is a collared urn (Gardner, 1924, pl. IVa). Some of these collared urns may represent earlier deposits, as at Latch Farm (Piggott C.M., 1938), around which a later cremation cemetery developed. It is worth noting at this stage that the fabrics of the Lower Thames collared urns and bucket urns indicate a totally different ceramic technique, the collared urns being gritless and well fired.

It is possible that the "rudely formed, half baked urn" found during the opening of the Teddington barrow in 1854 (V.C.H., 1969, 44) was a secondary bucket urn and pieces of calcined bone are also recorded.

At Ashford most of the urns were inverted over the cremations and no unaccompanied cremations are recorded. In Berkshire, at Sulham, gravel quarrying revealed a somewhat similar urnfield. Here again, where ascertained, all the urns were inverted. A plan was made and is reproduced here (Fig. 8). Urns number 14 and 15 were inverted on stone platforms and the two unaccompanied cremations were contained in cists. As at Ashford there were traces of funeral pyres nearby (Shrubsole, 1907, 308). Traces of a funeral pyre were also found beneath the second of the barrows dug by Pitt Rivers on Whitmore Common, Worplesdon, Surrey (Pitt Rivers, 1877, 116). Another flat cemetery was discovered in the valley of the Blackwater at Yateley. Between 1926 and 1927 two groups of urns were uncovered during quarrying; several were said to have occurred in a "domed chamber" (Piggott, S., 1928, 69). It would seem that this cremation cemetery had long been known as the area was called "Ash Hole Field" in 1875 (*ibid.*). Similar pottery has continued to find its way into Reading Museum from the same general area ever since 1927 and the site has produced evidence of occupation in the area which will be dealt with in the next section.

The development of the cremation cemetery as clusters of deposits, rather than a lateral spread, would seem to be indicated here and such an arrangement is well attested in East Anglia (Erith and Longworth, 1960). It is possible that these groups lay under now denuded mounds as has already been suggested for the Oaklands cemetery. The plan of the Sulham cemetery (Fig. 8) would seem to indicate the same grouping effect, and this may also explain the distribution of the finds from the gravel pits at Stoneyfield and Snailslynch, Farnham (Oakley, *et al.*, 1939). The sites were discovered in the two quarries 0.8 km apart.

Cremation cemeteries also occur in round barrows as primary deposits. The Sunningdale barrow, Surrey, which before excavation stood 1.8 m high (Shrubsole, 1907, 303), yielded twenty-five cremations, two of which were without urns in cists made with sandstone and capped with conglomerate slabs. Eleven upright and twelve inverted urns were found,



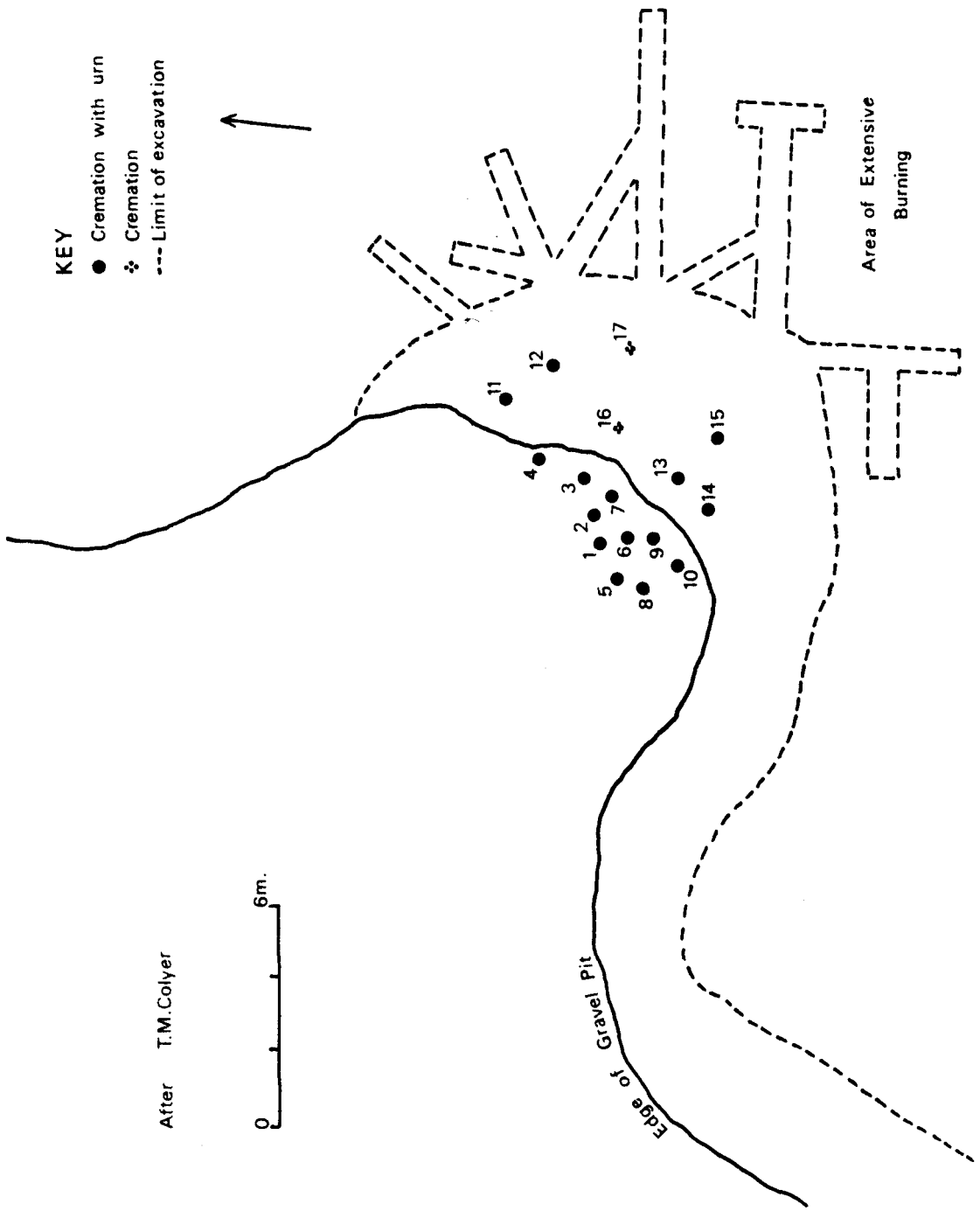


Fig. 8  
Plan of Sulham, Berks.

urns numbers 12 and 17 stood upon slabs of sandstone and one of the inverted urns, number 14, was placed on a similar slab with pieces of sandstone packed round it (Fig. 9).

The deposits at Sunningdale tend to cluster in the south-west quadrant of the barrow and were recorded as occurring at varying depths within the mound. This clustering within barrows has often been noticed, for example with the secondary cemetery at Latch Farm, Hampshire (Piggott, C.M., 1938) and the primary cemetery at Hadden's Hill Plantation, Bournemouth (Clay, 1928). The Sunningdale barrow was presumably constructed over the first cremation and the cemetery continued to develop with later deposits being inserted into the mound.

A similar barrow cemetery may also have occurred at Addington, Surrey (Grinsell, 1934, 39) where a group of barrows were excavated in the early eighteenth century and some "broken pieces of urns" were recorded as being recovered from one. On Whitmore Common, Worplesdon, Surrey, two smaller bowl barrows produced cremations in bucket urns (Pitt Rivers, 1877). The first barrow contained three urns (Gardner, 1924, pl. X) and two fragments as primary deposits and the second, with a causewayed ditch, covered two urns (Gardner, 1924, pl. XI) and an unaccompanied cremation as well as a small pit containing burnt material. A similar arrangement has been found at Arne, in east Dorset where a barrow contained two cremations in bucket urns and a pit containing burnt material. Burial number II gave a radio-carbon date of 1740 b.c.  $\pm$  90 (N.P.L. - 199) (Wainwright, 1966). The Worplesdon primary bucket urn has already been referred to in this paper.

We are left with a group of cremation cemeteries of uncertain character. They include the material from Tilchurst Road, Reading (Shrubsole, 1907, 312) and Betchworth, Surrey (Oakley, *et al.*, 1939, 180). To the north there would seem to have been a cremation cemetery of this date at Kingsbury, the urns being described as "of the Ashford type". (Vulliamy, 1930, 91). In the early eighteenth century, at Stokenchurch in the Chilterns, "fourteen or fifteen urns . . . of coarse, gritty ware" were found (Head, 1955, 61).

Associations occurring with these cremations and urns are almost non-existent. The bronze disc from Snailslynch has already been mentioned. At most any other finds amount to a few doubtfully worked flints.

Most of these cemeteries exhibit a history of steady development, either forming as clusters of cremations or as a lateral spread. In some cases the cemetery may occur around an area of earlier burials and only Ashford definitely displays an ordered arrangement. Some barrows, however, contain only a few primary deposits and were not used again.

#### OCCUPATION

Evidence indicating settlement in the Lower Thames region, other than the cemeteries themselves, is scarce and direct association of domestic material in the cemeteries is, as would be expected, rare. At Yateley the area of the cemetery has produced a number of cylindrical clay weights similar to ones found on such occupation sites as Shearplace Hill, Dorset (Rahtz and ApSimon, 1962, 321) and Itford Hill, Sussex (Burstow and Holleyman, 1957, 200). A hearth and fragments of a sandstone saddle quern and a clay spindle whorl have also been recovered from Yateley (material in Reading Museum). The Snailslynch cemetery produced a possible domestic pit, containing saddle quern fragments and sherds of pottery (Oakley, *et al.*, 1939, 175), and storage in urns may be indicated here and at Wrecclesham (Oakley, *et al.*, 1939, 182). The occupation site at Thorpe (unpublished) has produced fragments of saddle querns. The plan of any of these settlement sites is unknown although at Thorpe an extent of curvilinear ditch was exposed by gravel working and this may be part of an enclosure ditch.

After T.M. Colyer

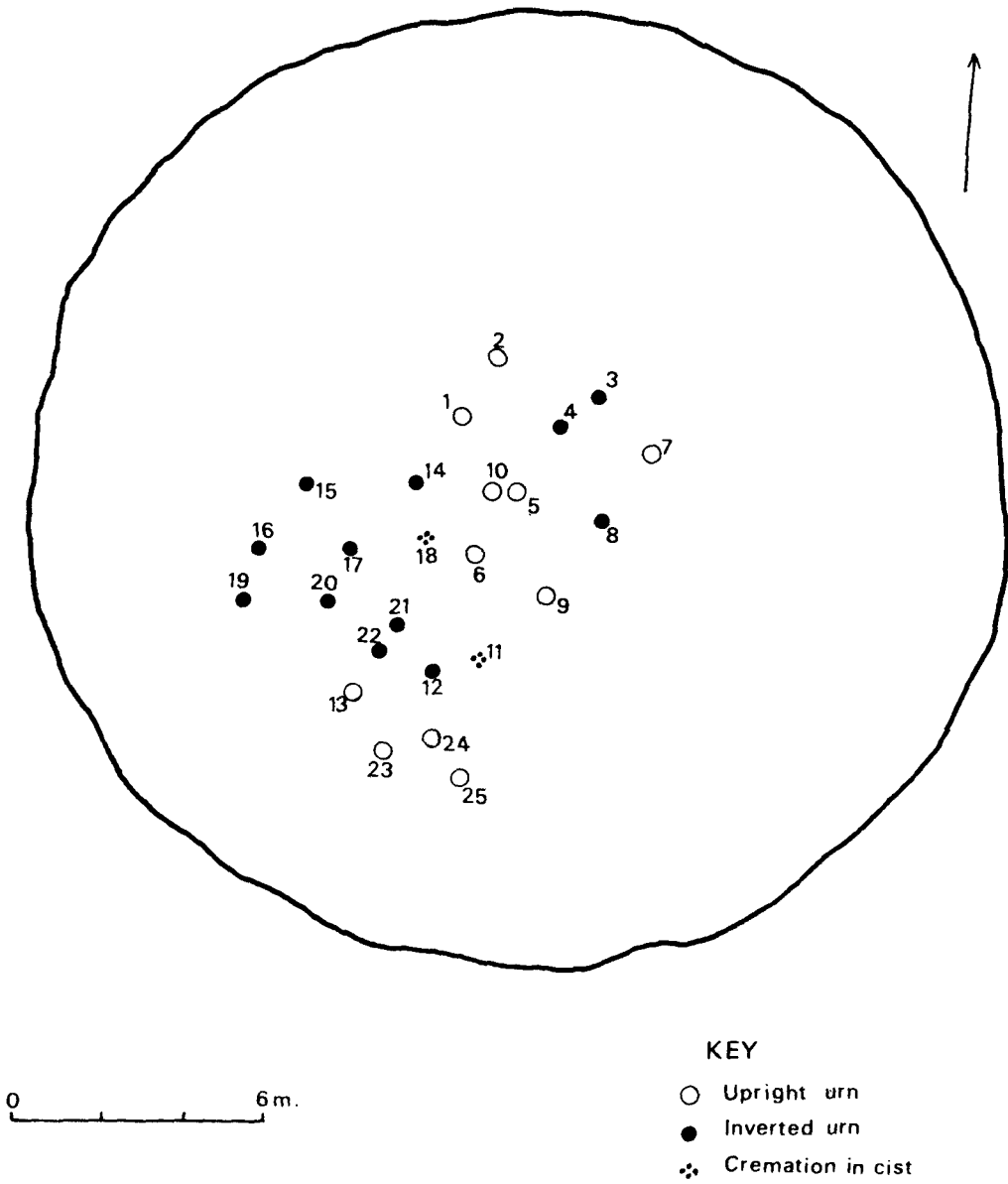


Fig. 9  
Plan of Sunningdale, Surrey

## DISCUSSION

The evidence that has been presented here is almost entirely dependent upon pottery recovered from cremation cemeteries in the region. Piggott has stressed that burial deposits are not random assemblages but socially selected and, therefore, we may not be dealing with a cross section of the ceramics in use at this particular time but a group of ceramics which have been selected for use in the cemetery (Piggott, 1969, 558). This may account for the scarcity of globular urns in the cemeteries both here and in Wessex (Hawkes, S.C., 1969, 17), rather than such scarcity indicating a relatively shorter life for the globular (*ibid.*). Within the cemeteries themselves it is clear that a variety of form exists; primary burials under round barrows, sometimes with a cist; secondaries in barrows; flat cremation cemeteries, some containing cists; inverted urns (some on slabs of stone) and unaccompanied cremations. It is clearly unwise to draw any cultural distinctions between cemetery types (Hawkes, S.C., 1969, 14) and it is also important to realise that all these forms can be contemporary (Glasbergen, 1954a, 141) (Ucko, 1969, 274).

Calkin (1962) in his work on the Bronze Age pottery of the Bournemouth area identified two ceramic traditions within the local Deverel Rimbury material. To the west of the River Stour occurs his South Dorset Group, including Type II globulars and bucket urns both in a well fired, gritless fabric. East of this, in Wessex, lies the Cranbourne Chase Group containing coarse-gritted bucket urns and Type I globulars in a flint-gritted vesicular fabric, decorated by very light tooling. The barrel urn also occurs in this group identified by Calkin on the basis of its fabric which contains large quantities of finely crushed flint grit but is also vesicular in appearance. Both the Type I globular and the barrel urn, although occurring to the west of the Lower Thames region have yet to be identified within the region itself, and for this reason the Lower Thames Group of pottery must stand apart from the Wessex material for the moment.

Discussion of the chronology of the Deverel Rimbury culture must start with Butler and Smith's published paper of 1956 where the first serious doubt was cast on the then current Late Bronze Age chronology for the material, and a Middle Bronze Age date suggested. In 1959, M. A. Smith noted that all possible metalwork associations with Deverel Rimbury pottery belonged to her "Ornament Horizon" dated on northern chronology to Montelius III, c. 1200–1000 B.C. and in Dorset a radio carbon date from Shearplace Hill of 1180 b.c.  $\pm$  180 (N.P.L. – 19) was obtained (Rahtz and ApSimon, 1962). In their original paper, Isobel Smith suggested that the Deverel Rimbury ceramic, with the exception of the globular urn, could be derived from the "southern facies of the Rinyo Clacton Culture" (Butler and Smith, 1956, 43), a view tentatively supported by Wainwright and Longworth (1971, 248) after their discussion of the "Grooved Ware" tradition of the British Neolithic. If, like other bipartite cordoned urns (Wainwright, 1972, 202), the Deverel Rimbury ceramics do derive from a pottery tradition current at Durrington Walls and Marden at c. 2000 b.c., then early elements of this tradition should be current throughout our Early Bronze Age.

Calkin (1962) recognised that his "South Lodge Type" of barrel urn was "early" and this may be confirmed from the South Lodge site itself, where a barrel urn occurred in the primary ditch silts which also contained a Class I razor (Pitt Rivers, 1898, pl. 237). The Class II razor and "Ornament Horizon" bracelet from this site occurred high in the secondary ditch silts. An earlier Bronze Age date for the barrel urn and globular is confirmed by the radio carbon date from Wilsford Shaft (Ashbee, 1966) of 1380 b.c.  $\pm$  90 (N.P.L. – 74) which contained fragments of a barrel urn and globulars.

are fraught with danger, especially in an area where so little excavation has taken place. Until radio carbon dates which suggest otherwise are obtained from the region, this material must remain in the Middle Bronze Age.

The length of life of the Deverel Rimbury Culture poses another problem but one upon which some light may be thrown in the Lower Thames region by the recognition of a possible seventh century Late Bronze Age pottery which owes little or nothing to Deverel Rimbury traditions. Such pottery is best represented at Farnham Green Lane (Oakley *et al.*, 1939, 183 - 192) and the first phase at Puddlehill, Berkshire (Saunders, 1972, fig. 2. 15-20). It is also found associated with Initial Iron Age ceramic groups at, for example, Weston Wood, Surrey (Bishop, 1972, 14) and perhaps at Wisley (Lowther, 1945). If this material does belong to a Late Bronze Age phase in the seventh century and continues with the development of Initial Iron Age pottery then, in our area at least the survival of Deverel Rimbury pottery into the Late Bronze Age remains questionable and a Late Bronze Age continuum unproven.

#### APPENDIX

This is intended to be a list of Deverel Rimbury material from the Lower Thames Region in the counties of Berkshire, Buckinghamshire, Middlesex and Surrey known to the author.

#### BERKSHIRE

**BLEWBURY:** Sherds including Type I globular. (Ashmolean Museum).

**BRIMPTON:** "Pottery cup" in a "pocket" in the gravel. (Anon, 1937a, 34).

**LAMBOURN:** Secondaries in long barrow, 122 cremations, 58 with urns. (Abercromby, 1912, II, 41 and No. 392; Case, 1966, 17; Clay, 1926, 323; Hawkes, 1933, 442; Peake, 1931, 58-9; Thurman, 1870, pl. XXX Fig. 9; Smith, 1921, 47-54; Wymer, 1966, 1-16).

**LONG WITTENHAM:** Pits containing charcoal. Three urns, sherds of a fourth. (Case, 1966, 73, Figs. 28 and 29; Hawkes, 1933, 42; Leeds, 1929, 153).

**MAIDENHEAD:** Sherds of bucket urns. (Reading Museum).

**NEWBURY:** Barrel urn of "South Lodge Type". (Calkin, 1962, 54; Hardy, 1936, 180).

**RADLEY:** Sherds from ring ditch. (Case, 1966, 19, Fig. 27).

**STREATLEY:** Bucket urn, possibly one of two dredged from the Thames. (Case, 1966, 75; Peake, 1931, 55).

**SULHAM:** Cremation Cemetery. (Abercromby, 1912, II, Nos. 445-455f; Clay, 1926, 323; Hawkes, 1933, 442; Shrubsole, 1907, 308).

**SUTTON COURTENAY:** Sherds of Type I globular (Ashmolean Museum).

**TILBHURST RD., READING:** Fragments of several urns. (Shrubsole, 1907, 312).

**WALBURY CAMP, INKPEN:** Globular urn. (Clay, 1926, 323; Hawkes, 1933, 442; Peake, 1931, 56 and 205).

**WALLINGFORD:** A number of "barrel urns", now lost. (Case, 1966, 75; Calkin, 1962, 54; Clay, 1926, 323; Hawkes, 1933, 442; Peake, 1931, 238; Shrubsole, 1907, 313).

**WASING:** Bucket urn and charcoal found at Blake's Gravel Pit. (Anon., 1966, 72).

**WYTHAM:** Bucket urn. (Manning, 1898, 45-6).

*Unprovenanced:* Globular urn. (Abercromby, 1912, II, No. 408).

Bucket urn. (Abercromby, 1912, II, No. 388).

#### BUCKINGHAMSHIRE

**BIERTON:** Sherds of bucket urn with finger-tip impressions. (Aylesbury Museum).

**BLEDLOW:** Secondary cremation and sherd of bucket urn in round barrow. (Head, 1946, 313).

**HITCHAM:** Small bucket urn. (Abercromby, 1912, II, No. 474; Head, 1955, 61).

**IVER:** Sherds of bucket urns. (Aylesbury Museum).

**PRINCES RISBOROUGH:** Secondary urn in Whiteleaf barrow. (Scott, 1954).

**STOKENCHURCH:** Urns found in 1783. (Head, 1955, 61).

**STOKE POGES:** Cremation in bucket urn. (Anon., 1937b, 105; Head, 1955, 61).

## MIDDLESEX

- ACTON: Cremation cemetery. (Anon., 1883, 106; Abercromby, 1912, II, Nos. 470-470c; Clay, 1926, 323; Hawkes, 1933, 450; V.C.H., 1969, 45; Vulliamy, 1930, 90).
- ASHFORD COMMON, SUNBURY: Cremation cemetery. (Abercromby, 1912, II, Nos. 469-469d; Clay, 1926, 323; Hawkes, 1933, 450; Roberts, 1871; V.C.H., 1969, 45; Vulliamy, 1930, 90).  
Urns found in the area in the eighteenth century. (Anon., 1860; V.C.H., 1969, 45).
- BROCKLEY HILL: Bucket urn sherd. (V.C.H., 1969, 45).
- KINGSBURY: Cinerary urns of the "Ashford type". (Hawkes, 1933, 450; V.C.H., 1969, 45; Vulliamy, 1930, 91).
- LITTLETON RESERVOIR: Bucket urn sherds. (Anon., 1951; V.C.H., 1969, 45).
- TEDDINGTON: Possible secondary urn in barrow. (V.C.H., 1969, 44; Vulliamy, 1930, 204).
- YIEWSLEY: Cremation cemetery. (Hawkes 1933, 450; V.C.H., 1969, 45; Vulliamy, 1930, 204).
- THAMES, HAMMERSMITH: Possible bucket urn sherd. (V.C.H., 1969, 46).
- THAMES, LONDON: Small urn. (V.C.H., 1969, 46).

## SURREY

- BETCHWORTH: Fragments of several urns. (Oakley, *et al.*, 1939, 180).
- CARSHALTON: Possible indication of occupation. (Oakley, *et al.*, 1939, 180).
- CHOBHAM: Cremation cemetery. (Clay, 1926, 323; Gardner, 1924, 16-17; Hawkes, 1933, 452; Whimster, 1931, 82).
- FARNHAM: Cremation cemeteries and occupation in the region. (Oakley, *et al.*, 1939, 172-179; Frere, 1961, 112).
- HASLEMERE: Fragments of "a large urn". (Hawkes, 1933, 452; Swanton, 1925, 124).
- KINGSTON-ON-THAMES: Fragments of bucket urns. (Anon., 1863, 372; Clay, 1926, 323; Gardner, 1924, 17; Hawkes, 1933, 452; Whimster, 1931, 82-8).
- SUNNINGDALE: Cremation cemetery. (Abercromby, 1912, II, Nos. 416-416b; Clay, 1926, 323; Gardner, 1924, 17; Hawkes, 1933, 452; Whimster, 1931, 236; Shrubsole, 1907, 303-308).
- WADDON: Large amount of pottery and some flint, bronze awl and saddle quern fragments. (Clinch, 1902, 181; Oakley, *et al.*, 1939, 180).
- WALLINGTON: Urn found in Wallington Camp. (Whimster, 1931, 83).
- WALTON-ON-THAMES: Cremation cemetery. (Calkin, 1962, 58; Clay, 1926, 323; Gardner, 1924, 23-26; Hawkes, 1933, 452; Whimster, 1931, 237).
- WEST HUMBLE: Part of a bucket urn. (Oakley, *et al.*, 1939, 180).
- WEYBRIDGE: One bucket urn. (Whimster, 1931, 239).
- WONERSH: Bucket urn in barrow. (Clay, 1926, 323; Cooper, 1900, 156; Gardner, 1924, 26-27; Hawkes, 1933, 452; Smith, 1900, 251-3; Whimster, 1931, 240).
- WORPLESDON: Five bucket urns from two barrows. (Clay, 1926, 323; Gardner, 1924, 27; Hawkes, 1933, 452; Pitt-Rivers, 1877, 116; Whimster, 1931, 240).

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The basis of this paper was an undergraduate dissertation completed at the Department of Archaeology, University College, Cardiff. I would like to thank the staff and Trustees of the British Museum for making the collections available to me, Miss J. Macdonald and Mr. R. Canham of the London Museum, Mr. R. A. Rutland of Reading Museum, Mr. B. Johnson, Mr. J. Shenton, and Prof. L. Alcock for help and encouragement. I have also benefited from the comments of Mrs. Ann Ellison.

*This paper has been published with the aid of a generous grant from the Council for British Archaeology.*

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