

## Bedfordshire Archaeology, 1970 - 71

Compiled by DAVID KENNETT

The summaries below are intended to serve as a guide to current fieldwork and excavations being conducted in Bedfordshire. Important isolated finds and museum acquisitions are also included. The compiler wishes to thank all those who have contributed summaries for this section and hopes that future work and finds will be brought to his notice for subsequent issues of the *Bedfordshire Archaeological Journal*.

### ANGLO-SAXON SILVER PENNIES

Luton Museum have been fortunate in acquiring seven late Saxon silver pennies from the Elmore-Jones Collection which was sold in London recently. The coins are of special interest as they were minted at the Bedford Mint, and coins from this source are considered to be uncommon.

The coins are of the reigns of Aethelred II (March 979-April 1016) and Edward the Confessor (June 1042-January 1066) and include rare types by the moneyers Oswig, Aelfwi (Aethelred) and Swota, Godwine, Wulfwi and Wulfwine (Edward).

With these additions, the Museum now possesses a small but impressive collection of Saxon pennies and it is hoped that these can be exhibited in the near future.

### GREAT BARFORD

Bedford Museum were asked to identify a palaeolithic hand axe of white flint found in the river gravels at Great Barford. The white flint is unusual for the Ouse, where it is more usual to find brown flint hand axes.

### BEDFORD Castle TL 053597

Rescue excavations by David Baker for the Bedford Archaeological Society, Bedford Corporation and the Department of the Environment concentrated on areas to the east of High Street. Trenches south of 17 Castle Lane produced post-holes and slots with postholes containing possibly Middle Saxon pottery: these may represent two large hall-like buildings; that the Norman occupation layers were stratified directly over these feat-

ures may point to a levelling of the existing ground surface when the post-Conquest Castle was constructed. A substantial narrow masonry structure of Castle period was found, with a maximum width of 12.5m; its eastern end was seen and 39.0m of its length. Its north-east corner had a small apsidal projection, falling north perhaps for a newel staircase. Two lateral partition walls were seen. Although the footings had been heavily robbed, mainly in the post-medieval period, sufficient survived to show modifications to the original Norman structure. Trenches north of the sites of 22-32 Castle Lane revealed pits of varied size and distribution and two timber buildings contemporary with the life of the Castle. These were sealed by stone debris under a thick gravel and earth build-up possibly connected with the destruction of the Castle after 1224 and the subsequent changes of use for the site. Nothing was found to place either site in relation to inner or outer baileys.

A 1m wide trench was excavated through the east side of the small mound by the Cecil Higgins Museum, at the traditional north-east corner of the Castle. The tail of the mound was made up of post-medieval accumulations and disturbances overlying some evidence for a watercourse or ditch east of a smaller and steeper mound under the main earthwork. Dating evidence for this was scarce, but a medieval context may be appropriate.

### BEDFORD St Mary's Church TL 052494

In examining this church T.P. Smith has found further traces of Saxo-Norman work in the fabric. H.M. and Joan Taylor (*Anglo-Saxon Architecture*, 1965, 58) date the south transept as possibly Saxo-Norman. Additional features observed are in the west face of the central tower, within the nave and above the later, Norman crossing-arch. At the north and south ends of this wall, starting about 20ft above floor-level, are the remains of the quoins of an earlier tower of slightly smaller width than the present one. The quoins are of large stones apparently laid in side-alternate manner. Midway between these quoins is a small window, single-splayed and unrebutted. The window, which is made from the



same random rubble as the rest of the fabric, has a semi-circular arch-head cut from the underside of a single-semi-circular stone.

These features are best interpreted as belonging to an earlier tower, dateable to the period between c 1075 and 1115, when the Saxon vernacular tradition was still strong enough to exert influence. These features therefore belong to the same time as the south transept.

It now seems clear that the irregularity of plan, which is a conspicuous feature of the church, is due to a reorientation of the church at the end of the Saxo-Norman period, when the Norman additions were made to the fabric (T.P. Smith, *Anglo-Saxon Architecture in Bedfordshire Churches*, forthcoming).

#### BEDFORD Mint

Bedford Museum have acquired three Anglo-Saxon coins minted at Bedford mint. One is by the moneyer Aelmon on the mint mark 'Bedefo', a penny of Edward the Confessor (1042-1066); the second by Gunni, with the mint mark 'mo Beda' a penny of Aethelred II (976-1016); and the third a cut penny of Edgar (959-975) by the moneyer Grim with the mint mark 'Bdafo'. These join the collection of Anglo-Saxon pennies assembled by the late Alderman G H Barford and presented to the museum in 1924.

#### BIGGLESWADE

Mr H. Millard has placed on permanent loan to Bedford Museum a series of chance finds from Biggleswade, whose exact find spot is not recorded. The material comprises:

- a. Palaeolithic hand axe (70/B/49).
- b. Neolithic axe (70/B/49), see above, p. 67
- c. Flint flake, worked on one side (70/B/51).
- d. Late medieval bronze tool, damaged in casting, with a short narrow cutting edge and a transverse hole at right angles to the cutting edge. The function of this object which is damaged at the hole is uncertain, but it is suggested that it was a metalworker's tool, possibly to cut metal, but equally possibly used as a means of tracing decoration. As it was damaged in casting it is unused (70/B/52).
- e. Fragment of a broad rimmed, ? late medieval bronze bowl (70/B/53).
- f. Ornate bronze whorl, with central hole and worn at one point on the rim. The whorl is decorated with raised lines and dots and is possibly

a spindle whorl but the richness of the decoration makes this unlikely (70/B/54).

- g. Fragment of a bronze chape with a piece of wood still remaining (not accessioned by Bedford Museum).

#### BLETSOE TL 018586

Excavations by Christina Collyer for the Department of the Environment continued on the cemetery located by the North Bedfordshire Archaeological Society to establish its date and to determine its relationship to finds made of Romano-British material during housebuilding. Forty graves were excavated of both sexes and including infants and children. Extended inhumations with arms crossed or placed along the body were buried in stone cists, with only head and foot stones or in wooden coffins indicated by surviving iron nails. All graves were aligned with the skulls to the north-west. Two skeletons had finger rings of bronze but otherwise grave goods were absent. Pits and gullies of Roman date were found on the site, including one with fourth century pottery and coins on the same alignment as the graves but cut through by graves. There was a filled and levelled ditch in the north-western part of the site which produced pottery probably of the first century.

#### BLUNHAM

Bedford Museum have acquired a late fourteenth century stoneware jug found at Blunham Ford in 1964.

#### BRONZE VESSELS

Bedford Museum have a number of Romano-British bronze vessels, not all local finds. The local finds are a handle of a first century military type skillet from Kempston, a jug handle from Sandy and a group of three imported late Roman Gallo-Roman bowls (*Jb R G Zm Mainz* 16, 1969, 123-148, esp 124, 138-145). Non-local material includes an early swan's neck skillet from London (unpublished) and a skillet from Swaffham, Norfolk (*Norfolk Arch* 34, 1969, 435-6). Recently the museum were asked to comment on the small skillet of Eggers type 146 found in the group at Hallaton, Leics, and part of a larger group of finds, including a ram's head patera handle and glass vessels found in 1862 (*T Leics Arch Soc* forthcoming).



## CADDINGTON

During the last quarter of the nineteenth century the celebrated Dunstable historian and antiquary Worthington G. Smith identified and systematically recorded an old land surface of Pleistocene date, in the clays and brickearths which cap the chalk hills of South Bedfordshire.

Worthington Smith published the results of his work in *Man The Primeval Savage* (1894), and one subsequent paper. In his book, he describes the discovery of the land surface and the working places of Palaeolithic man found there.

The working places or floors were revealed in the claypits which were extensively worked in the area at the end of the last century, for brickmaking. The land surface lay between 3 and 40 feet below the modern surface, although it was usually between 10 and 20 feet down. A layer of fine 'Brick-earth' lay above and below the Palaeolithic 'floor', and this in turn was covered by a surface deposit, called by Smith 'Contorted Drift' which he considered to be the remains of a sludge of clay and gravel of glacial origin, or a solifluxion deposit related to 'Permafrost' conditions during the later part of the Ice Age. The Brickearth he considered as a water laid clay, and he envisaged Palaeolithic man living and working on the edge of a shallow lake or swamp, subject to periodic flooding, which covered the artifacts with a layer of clay without disturbing their relative positions.

On the old land surface, Worthington Smith found the places where Palaeolithic men had made handaxes and other implements. By carefully collecting every flake and chip of flint from a given area, he was able to reconstruct the original blocks of flint, as flaked by Palaeolithic man. In a very few cases he was able, by pouring liquid plaster into the middle of the jointed block, to obtain an impression of the hand axe which had been made from it. Obviously, unless broken during manufacture, the hand axes would not be found with the flakes, as the finished tools would have been taken away for use, and probably lost elsewhere. A few complete hand axes were, however, found on the site at Caddington.

Most of Worthington Smith's material and some of his manuscript notebooks are preserved in the T.W. Bagshawe Collection at Luton Museum, where they will be examined as part of the Caddington Research Project. The Project is a joint venture between the University of Oregon, U S A, and the Pitt-Rivers Museum, Oxford University.

Work on the Caddington material already done by Dr Derek Roe (*PPS* 34, 1968, 1-82) has shown that there is a strong Levallois element in the Achaeulian industry at Caddington – typical ovate hand axes were being produced alongside flake tools made by the tortoise core technique. This is considered unusual in Britain, and as the site is one of a very few in the world where material of such antiquity survives in an apparently undisturbed context, a precise dating for the floor and the deposits in which it occurs is desired: This is to be sought in the laboratory rather than in the field, using the latest techniques in pollen analysis, for which purpose the Luton Museum laboratory is being used by the Project.

The notes and observations made by Worthington Smith have been shown to be extremely accurate, and there is no reason to suppose that his conclusions as to the method of deposition of the various deposits are incorrect; however, there is still a great deal to be learnt using up to date methods, and it is hoped that by the end of the research programme, which is expected to last three years, the Palaeolithic working places at Caddington will have been assigned to their correct niche in the British Palaeolithic sequence.

## CHALGRAVE TL 008275

During September 1970 a rescue excavation was carried out for the Department of the Environment by Brian K. Davison on the site of the earthwork castle which lies to south-east of Chalgrave Church. The earthworks were threatened with destruction in the course of farm improvements, and since the excavation have been completely levelled.

Excavation was confined to the low motte, which proved to have been thrown-up in the mid-twelfth century over the remains of the eleventh century manor. Unfortunately, time did not allow for the detailed examination of these earlier features.

The motte itself achieved its final form as the result of two separate phases of construction. First, the site of the early buildings was ditched round, and the spoil thrown inwards to form a low platform 22m in diameter and 1m high, surrounded by a ditch 6m wide and 2m deep. This platform was apparently constructed in order to give stability to a central structure 10m square, possibly a tower.

This square building was dismantled late in the twelfth century, and the platform was extended to



form a more oval area on which a new single-storied building was erected. At the same time, the motte ditch was re-cut.

The site was finally abandoned, in favour of a more convenient site adjacent to the north, early in the thirteenth century.

#### CLAPHAM TL 017523

Rescue excavations by Peter Tilson, partly financed by the Bedford Archaeological Society, continue at Clapham. Work has been in progress since 1968, when a large number of ditches were exposed by gravel digging on a site on the south bank of the River Ouse. Over half the site, owned by Bedford Rural District Council, who readily gave permission to excavate, is now destroyed. To date three main occupation periods have been located.

##### Period 1 Pre-Roman

Belgic occupation, ditches, gullies and traces of three kilns. The gullies, running in all directions across the site, contain pottery wasters, kiln bars and bricks, parts of pedestals, charcoal and lumps of unfired clay, and probably served as drainage ditches to the kilns. A shallow grave had been scooped out of the newly-cut bottom of one of the main ditches and contained a burial without grave goods. It was covered by a thin layer of gravel, on which later rubbish had accumulated.

##### Period 2 Mid-first to mid-second century

During the middle years of the first century a large rectangular enclosure was constructed between the river and the Belgic occupation, with ditches, cut on military lines 2.44m deep and 4.58m wide. Most of the enclosure was destroyed by gravel extraction but the ditch remaining had pottery of the late first to mid-second century. A small cobbled surface of the same date was also found with sleeper beam slots cut into the surface and was probably the base of a granary. More work is contemplated in this area.

##### Period 3 Third century

Work in 1970 has revealed a later Roman occupation to the west of the site, consisting of a small ditch and a stone built oven. The oven was well-constructed, cut into natural gravel giving good drainage, and rebuilt at least twice, with a paved area round the stokehole in the final phase. Both oven and ditch went out of use by the middle of the third century. A coin of Gallienus (259-268) was found in the destruction layer.

Excavation in autumn 1971 will concentrate on

tracing other buildings connected with the oven and on determining the type and extent of occupation in the enclosed area.

#### CRANFIELD

A packet of chance finds of the sixteenth century from Cranfield have been brought into Bedford Museum. They are two tinned bronze buttons, a buckle and a belt-hook with a classical head above the terminal ring.

#### DUNSTABLE TL 00322355

The Manshead Archaeological Society of Dunstable report evidence of neolithic occupation on the chalk ridge one mile north of Dunstable. After ploughing the area is littered with flint flakes and artefacts. A pipe-line trench revealed three pits containing grooved wares and two more have recently been recorded beneath the Iron Age rampart at Maiden Bower, making a total of 14 pits so far recorded by the society. During the same pipe-lying operation two sunken-floor Saxon huts were discovered akin to that published from Puddlehill (*Beds Arch J* 1, 1962, 51-53). Ten huts are now known along the mile and a half of the crest of the ridge overlooking the Cuzel valley and suggest a concentration of sixth to seventh century occupation which would well repay excavation in the future in an area scheduled for chalk quarrying.

#### DUNSTABLE TL 018216

The Manshead Archaeological Society of Dunstable are continuing excavation of a timber building, length 61m, width 30m, of post-Roman date. The 1970 excavations concentrated on the problem of length of the building but progress was slowed by the discovery of a series of human skeletons found in wall footings, apparently massacred and included in the building as foundation burials. A second building, apparently identical, only 3.66m away from the first was discovered at the close of the 1970 season. In 1971 it is hoped to examine further areas of the buildings to throw light on structural details.

#### EASTCOTTS TL 064475

On the rough grass pasture, popularly referred to as the Elstow Moors and through which a small tributary of the River Ouse flows, two features were observed by G J Dring in summer 1966 as positive vegetation marks. When first discovered the features appeared as circular enclosures, the



southerly one of which was the more obvious. These enclosures were forty feet in diameter (internal) and the enhanced ring of grasses was some two to three feet wide. The features are of considerable antiquity since an almost fully-silted ox-bow of an earlier stream course has encroached on one side of the more southerly enclosure and the ring of enhanced grass growth was not continued across the area. It is concluded that these vegetation marks indicate the ditches of totally eroded barrows. Annual visits to the site show that the marks do not appear every season. They have not been examined by excavation.

#### EASTCOTTS TL 066476

G. J. Dring reports that during excavation for field drainage a series of pits and associated occupation layers containing pre-Conquest Belgic pottery were sectioned. The pottery was identical to the pre-Conquest fabrics at the Romano-British kiln site, Mile Road, Bedford which lies less than half a mile to the east of this site. Similar pottery, now in Bedford Museum, was found during building operations in Willow Road, off London Road, a little over half a mile to the North West. These finds illustrate the intensive occupation of these gravel terraces over a wide area South of Bedford during the late Iron Age.

#### EASTCOTTS TL 073457

Aerial photographs taken over the late Iron Age and Romano-British site discovered on the ground as a wide scatter of pottery sherds in September 1965 by G. J. Dring (see also *Beds Arch J* 4, 1969, 84) have been examined at the Committee for Aerial Photography Department, West Road, Cambridge. The two available plates are catalogued B.B.Y.18 and B.B.Y.19 and show the typical complex soil marks of a site occupied over a long period. A silver coin of Septimius Severus (193-211 A D) discovered in surface scatter at the site by Mr D. King of Arlesey, has been presented to Bedford Museum.

#### ELSTOW Abbey TL 049474

Excavations by David Baker for the Bedford Archaeological Society at the site of the Benedictine nunnery continue. (See above, 55-64).

#### FARNDISH

Extensive fieldwork by D. N. Hall and others on

this and other parishes has revealed several new sites of pre-medieval date. Farndish was included in a survey of the Higham Ferrers Hundred of Northamptonshire for medieval sites, which produced three new deserted medieval villages: Mallows Cotton (SP 976733), Mills Cotton (SP 971745), West Cotton (SP 976725). Also in this survey was Grendon where a deserted settlement was found (at SP 875610). The occurrence of these, and the fact that most surviving settlements in the area have the characteristic earthworks of shrunken villages, suggests that more deserted settlements may well be found by fieldwork.

#### HARROLD SP 933553

A. E. Brown for the Department of Adult Education, University of Leicester, and the Department of the Environment continued excavations on this Romano-British pottery manufacturing site (cf. *Beds Arch J* 5, 1970, 123; *Bull Northants Fed Arch Soc* 3, 1969, 10; 4, 1970, 9). The stripping of 250 sq m revealed twelve large clay pits, containing large quantities of pottery dateable to the fourth century AD. One, however, yielded pottery similar to that associated with the kilns excavated in 1969 and belonged to the middle years of the first century AD and two produced a few sherds assignable to the second and third centuries. Cut into one of the late pits were two kilns, one a well preserved masonry updraught example and the other a horizontal draught kiln. Both had been filled up on abandonment with large quantities of tiles, including wasters. The manufacture of a wide range of tiles in the pink shelly fabric typical of the site seems proved.

#### HARROLD SP 948569

D. N. Hall and other members of the Higham Ferrers Archaeological Society excavated a thirteenth century pottery kiln in a garden adjacent to Brook Lane. It was a simple horizontal-draught type, in a channel 8ft 6in long by 2ft 6in wide and 3ft 6in deep at its mid-point. No kiln furniture was found in situ, but there was much kiln wall debris, pieces of large kiln jars and discarded pottery. The kiln produced jugs with stabbed handles, cooking pots and large bowls in a rather coarse shelly fabric varying in colour from pink and buff to grey. The pottery may be dated from local stratified deposits to the first half of the thirteenth century. (*Wolverton Hist J* forthcoming).



## HEXTON Ravensburgh Castle TL 098295

Ravensburgh Castle, a large, rectangular contour fort, occupying 22 acres, on the Bedfordshire-Hertfordshire county boundary, has received renewed attention in 1970. Excavations by John Moss-Eccardt and James Dyer for Letchworth Museum in 1964 have been followed by a two week season by James Dyer in 1970 and will be continued in 1972. Interim conclusions suggest the following history for the fort.

- I An early farming settlement over the whole hilltop. Traces of buried plough-soil with wheat and barley grains have been found under the east, west and southern ramparts at the places sectioned.
- II Hollingbury-type timber-laced rampart constructed with wide berm on south from steep-sided chalk ditch, but without the berm on the east and west. Front and back of this rampart marked by vertical timbers linked transversely and laterally by horizontal tie beams and with vertical facing timbers on the front and turves behind a chalk-packed rampart.
  - IIa Fort was in use long enough for rampart timbers to be replaced at least twice.
- III Phase II ditch became silted and ramparts overgrown. After which western rampart was cleaned-up and brush-wood burnt in piles on inside of defences, which charred a surviving squared upright and burnt a lateral horizontal timber. A new V-shaped ditch, width 20ft (6m), depth 8ft (2.4m), was dug, partially into the silting of the earlier ditch. Material from the ditch was most probably used to build the outer bank (shown on Stukeley's 1724 drawing), rather than transported up to form an enlarged rampart above. This was made from clean chalk, possibly obtained from quarry-scoops inside the fort (clearly visible in the 1940's). A second, outer ditch, flat-bottomed, only 5ft (1.5m) maximum width, was probably dug at this time. (This phase formed the subject of a pre-excavation note *Beds Arch J* 1 (1962) 77-78).
- IV On the western side the rampart appears slighted and deliberately pushed into the ditch where the filling is rapid and uneven. A wheel-turned pedestal base was found low in this filling, close to the south-east entrance.

These conclusions are based on six rampart sections, one on each of the east, west and south sides in 1964, and three further on the east, all near the south-east entrance, in 1970. Preliminary work on the entrance has revealed two post-holes and an area of charcoal suggesting the gate may have been burnt, and this area will be examined in detail in 1972. Just inside the south-east entrance an area of a quarter of an acre was stripped in 1964, revealing a large series of post-holes, that may have been cattle stockades or pens, but no traces of human settlement. No further work has been possible on this afforested hillfort's interior. The bulk of the pottery is of phase II, for which a date in the fourth and third centuries BC is suggested, and includes angular bowls with internal and external decoration and several typical southern 'A' pottery types. Phase III is dated by a second group of pottery, including the wheel-turned base, to a period of early Belgic occupation.

## KEMPSTON Foulke's Gravel Pit TL 031478

Bedford Museum have acquired four Palaeolithic hand axes from MacDonald's 1924-25 excavations at Foulke's Gravel Pit. Three are stained brown and one is a white flint.

## KEMPSTON Anglo-Saxon Cemetery TL 031474

During house building on the site of the Anglo-Saxon cemetery at Kempston, William Annan watched operations in anticipation of possible finds and reports that the ground was extremely disturbed from nineteenth century gravel digging. The gravel diggings were the cause of the discovery of the Anglo-Saxon cemetery and it appears that they totally destroyed the western part of the central triangle of Kempston. No new Anglo-Saxon or other archaeological discoveries were made.

## LUTON Roman Coins

During the past year, two Roman coins have been donated to Luton Museum, both of which were found on local sites.

The first is a bronze *Follis* of the House of Constantine (310-337) found on the site of a new block of flats in Downs Road, Luton. The coin, which is very worn, was donated by Dr D.H. Shaw,

The second coin is a bronze *Follis* of Constantius I (305-306).

*obv* DIVO CONSTANTIO PIO  
*rev* MEMORIA FELIX (large altar between two eagles).



This is a commemorative coin struck not long after the death of Constantius.

Although not particularly scarce, this is the first specimen of this type to have been recorded from the Luton area. The coin is in first class condition and has a fine green patina. The finder of this coin, master Russell Harris, dug up the coin in the garden of his home in Wodecroft Road, Luton, on a site where much Roman material has been found in the past.

#### LUTON Parish Church

During reconstruction of the organ of Luton Parish Church a seventeenth century brass plate commemorating Lady Penelope, wife of Sir Robert Napier was discovered:

QUOD INTUS SITUM TERRIS RELIQUIT  
HONORATISSIMA D<sup>na</sup> PENELOPE IOANNIS  
COMITIS DE BRIDGEWATER FILIA EX  
FRANCISA COMITIS DERPIENSIS COHAERE-  
DUM UNA ROBERTI NAPIER DE LUTON HOOE  
IN COM: BEDF: EQUITIS ET BARONETTI CONJUX  
DELECTISSIMA CAETERA IN CAELIS QUAERE  
ILLUC ENIM ABIT QUINTIUS SECUNDO  
MDCLVIII

This plate was the only archaeological find during the rebuilding of the organ.

#### MAULDEN Ruxox Farm TL 051363

The Ampthill Archaeological Society continued their excavations on the Romano-British settlement site at Ruxox and discovered two child burial cists made from roofing tiles set in the form of a cube. The cover tile in each case had evidently been knocked off by ploughing and no sign of the burials were found.

A considerable amount of third and fourth century pottery was found in association with the cists. One cist was set in plaster of paris before lifting and is now in Bedford Museum.

Parallels for this type of burial have been found at Verulamium.

#### PERTENHALL

A small pottery fragment was brought into Bedford Museum for identification in March 1971. It was a light orange-buff ware knob, with a hollow centre, double-waisted with a ridged middle, around which the fingers naturally fall. Most probably this was from a lid, but this is not certain as the fragment ends at the base of the knob. The ware is most probably Romano-British, though whether the thin edges to the lower part of the knob indicate a waster from a kiln is not clear.

#### PODINGTON SP 913642

W.R.G. Moore reports the discovery of two areas of dark soil with glacial pebbles and limestone pieces, apparently foundations, at Podington. Finds of third and fourth century pottery are now in Northampton Museum (*Bull Northants Fed Arch Soc* 4 (1970) 12). From the same field, Bellams in Hinwick, came the ploughed up discovery of a small bronze figure of a soldier in armour, complete with helmet, supposed to be Roman, with the man's legs apart, as if the figure of a horse had been between them, height about 3in (75mm)' (*VCH Beds* 3, 1912, 82). The description suggests a votive object similar to the horseman from Brigstock, Northants (*Ant J* 43 (1963) 264-268).

#### ROMAN BURIALS

D. H. Kennett is making a gazetteer of Roman burial sites on the Ouse Valley (for *Beds Arch J*). He would be grateful for information on Romano-British burials in Bedfordshire, Buckinghamshire, Cambridgeshire and Huntingdonshire.

#### ROXTON

Bedford Museum have been given a tanged flint arrowhead, length 47mm (Bedford Museum, B655/64). The museum also have a large example from Mill Street, Bedford, found in 1868.

#### STANFORDBURY BURIALS

Mansel Spratling is preparing a detailed study of the two rich late pre-Roman Iron Age burials found at Stanfordsbury in 1832 (*Beds Arch J* forthcoming). In the course of his investigations, the bronze jug from burial A has been radiographed. The shape has been found to be a nineteenth century reconstruction and it seems that the shape is much more akin to that of jugs of Eggers type 125 as found in the Santon Downham, Suffolk, hoard, the burials at Thornborough barrow, Bucks, and Shefford, and in the Hauxton, Cambs, find.

#### STREATLEY Dray's Ditches TL 080266 to TL 085265

Rescue excavations by James Dyer for the Department of the Environment on a quarter mile length of this Early Iron Age triple dyke, of which an eastern section was examined in 1959 (*Ant J* 41, 1961, 32-43) took place in 1970 and are possibly going to continue in 1971. Excavation showed a dyke extending east of the A6 trunk road a quarter mile from Great Bramingham and forming an effect-

ive barrier across the Icknield Way. The sequence of ditches, three each *c* 16ft wide and 8ft deep, separated by a double pallisade was shown to be repeated with minor differences. When 180ft of the double pallisade between the south and central ditches was stripped down to chalk, it was seen that both rows followed an irregular course, though maintaining a distance of 4 to 5ft between them. Posts in each row were between 2 and 4ft apart in post holes varying from 6in to 2ft in diameter and of an average depth of 3ft. Such irregularities recall the rampart posts of Ivinghoe Beacon hillfort, 10 miles south-west, dated by Frere to perhaps as early as the eighth century BC on the evidence of associated bronzes. The only find from Dray's Ditches was a coarse rim sherd of probable Bronze Age pottery. By the Roman period the ditches had silted up and the traffic ruts of the Icknield Way crossed them. There pieces of iron horseshoes and a very worn barbarous radiate of Tetricus I were embedded.

#### TOTTERNHOE Castle SP 979221

This fine early Norman motte and bailey earthwork castle had after the disappearance of sheep grazing become covered with unpenetrable scrub.

The Manshead Archaeological Society of Dunstable have begun a programme of clearance by cutting and burning to enable the defences to be clearly seen.

#### TURVEY SP 959511

A. Kirk reports a scatter of Romano-British pottery covering about half an acre, mostly coarse wares but including samian and colour-coated fabrics. Other objects were a possible kiln bar, roofing tiles and a lead object, pulley shaped, possibly a weight.

#### TURVEY

Bedford Museum have acquired a handle sherd of Roman amphora in a buff ware. The handle has the stamp CILC and was found in Turvey in 1961.

#### YILDEN

D. N. Hall and other members of the Higham Ferrers Hundred Archaeological Society have carried out intensive fieldwork in Yilden parish. One feature has been the discovery of a quantity of hand-made pottery of middle Saxon date and type found on the western edge of the parish near the boundary with Newton Bromshold.