

AN IRON AGE SITE AT  
BLEDLOW, BUCKS

By J. F. HEAD and C. M. PIGGOTT

## I. THE SITE

Attention was first drawn to this site in 1938 by the writer's wife, who, noticing the superior vegetation growing on it, examined it and found several shards of pottery, a poorly worked flint scraper, and a saw-marked fragment of bone (Fig. 1, no. 4, on p. 196).<sup>1</sup> It was then decided to make a more thorough examination as soon as an opportunity occurred, and in July of the following year, the writer, assisted by Col. Serocold, an old friend and co-worker for many years in Bucks archaeology, undertook this work.

*The Site.* Bledlow parish touches the eastern boundary of Oxfordshire and the site is situated on the northern slopes of the Chilterns, between the 500' and 600' contour lines, 61 yards on the Bledlow side of the Parish boundary between that place and Saunderton. (See map A). Topographically the region is not typical of the Chilterns proper, and the use in an early Risborough charter of the description "by Chiltern eaves" is most appropriate to the site. Settlement of this area can hardly have come by other than the Icknield Way. The hills with their cappings of heavy clay-with-flints must have presented from the Thames to Bledlow an uninviting barrier to the interior; and it is significant that, apart from an isolated group of barrows on a chalk plateau above Chinnor, little evidence of prehistoric occupation is found along the ridge until the Bledlow-Saunderton valley is reached, where all periods are represented.

The contemporary settlement at Ellesborough<sup>2</sup> is similarly sited with relation to the Upper Icknield Way, and lies a few miles to the north of our site.

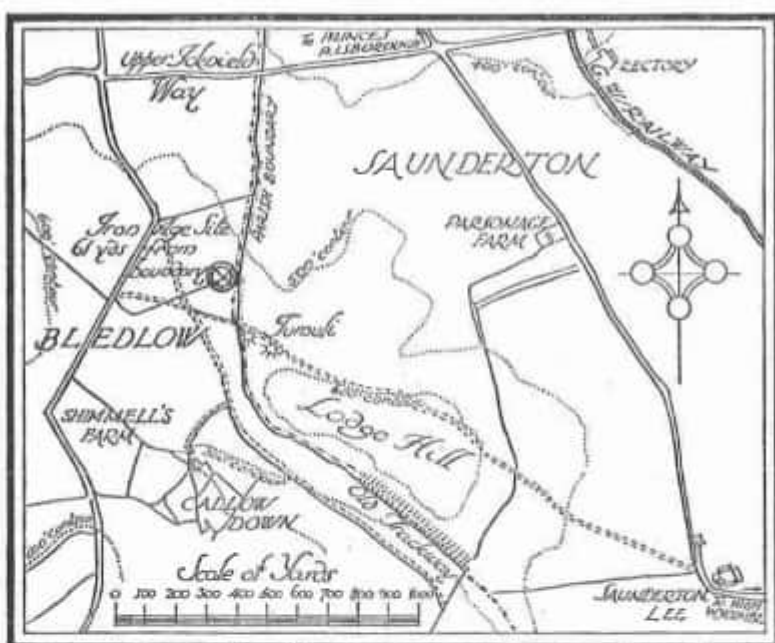
<sup>1</sup> The illustrations of the finds are by Mr. W. F. Grimes, to whom grateful thanks are also due for helpful information and advice.

<sup>2</sup> *Records of Bucks*, IX, 349.



PHOTOGRAPH BY G. W. BOWEN.

View from Lodge Hill, site marked with cross, looking north over Vale of Aylesbury. Upper Icknield Way marked with line of arrows.



MAP A.



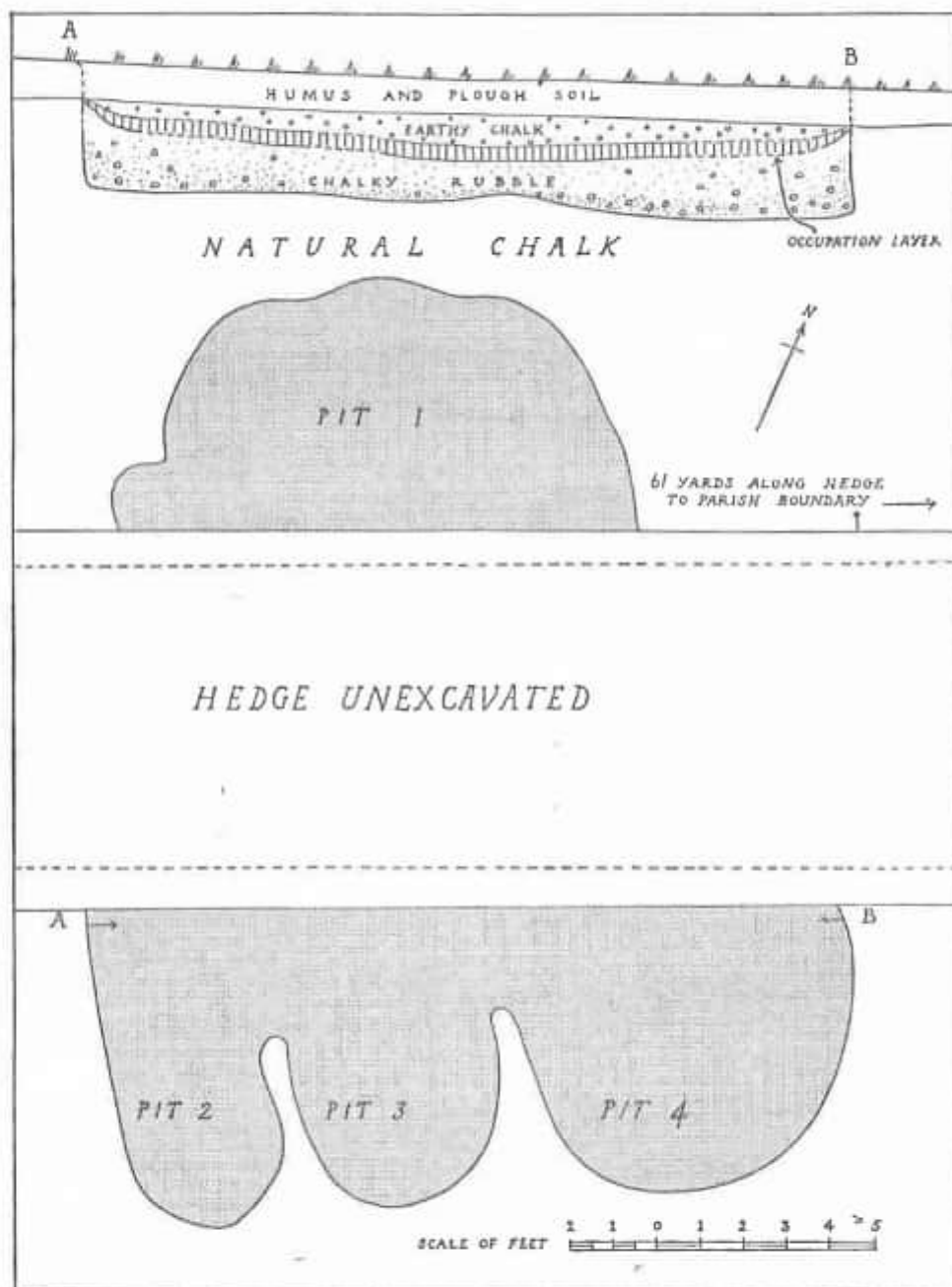
MAP B.

Thanks are due to the Rev. C. N. White, of Ellesborough, for bringing to notice the hitherto unrecorded shard from that site. (Fig. V. on p. 208).

Six hundred yards north of our site, the Upper Icknield Way runs east and west along the northern scarp of the Chilterns. The importance of this route, linking as it does the eastern fenlands with the Wessex downland, will be discussed more fully at the end of this report. But it was clear from the outset that to add to the few recognized Iron Age sites from this region was likely to be profitable, and so it proved to be.

It will be seen from the plan that an overgrown hedge crosses the site. We were unable to disturb this hedge, which averaged 7' in width, and it effectually denied us access to a substantial and important part of the area. Moreover, such parts as we were able to examine had been much disturbed. Our first impression was that we had to deal with four separate pits cut into the natural chalk and presumably of use for storage purposes. As the work progressed, however, it was found that in fact these pits were all units of a larger whole. For the sake of clearness these pits were numbered 1-4. The filling of the whole area had served for a long period as a warren for rabbits and other burrowing animals, and their activities, together with promiscuous digging by local sportsmen, had so turned over the site that any attempt at consistent stratification was impracticable. But small areas, protected to some extent by the roots of the hedge, made it possible for some general conclusions to be reached with a reasonable show of probability.

*The Pits.* Pit 1 on the N.W. side of the hedge, in a field known as Smith's Field, was half of what we assumed to be a large circular pit. Upon excavation (half being first completed in vertical section), it was seen that the walls, except a small bay on the south-west side, continued in a uniform curve towards the hedge which overlay what we assumed to be the remainder of the pit. These walls averaged 2' in depth, and the floor fell slightly but evenly in the direction of the hedge.



Section and Plan.

Pits 2, 3 and 4 on the south-east side of the hedge, averaged 1' 2", 2' 8" and 2' 2" in depth respectively, and again their floors declined slightly but uniformly towards the hedge. These three pits were separated one from another by narrow partitions of natural chalk rock, which however, terminated in half circles, leaving the pits open to what appeared to be a common central area, beneath the hedge. The semi-dividing walls between the pits had been sloped down to an average height of 1' at their terminations. Had they originally continued their course so as to form a complete circle, we should have expected to find, despite the disturbances, at least some fallen masses of clean chalk among the filling: such however was not the case. No indication of weathering or the use of metal tools was observed either on the walls or floors. Pit 3 was slightly undercut on its southern side, as may also have been Pit 1, but a burrow tunnelled along the angle of the wall and floor, made this uncertain. No post holes were observed.

An "occupation level."<sup>3</sup> Despite the later disturbances it was clear that an occupation level of dark soil had originally extended evenly and unbrokenly across the brim of the pits, their dividing walls, and in short over the whole of the site. From this layer in Pit 1 close against the hedge, came the bronze ring-headed shouldered pin (Fig. 1, no. 1), two flint hammerstones, a flint scraper, flint flakes both burnt and unburnt, together with the bulk of the animal remains. Some shards from this level had evidently been carried down by roots or rabbits, and shard No. 42 from Pit 1 was found in two pieces, one in the dark layer and one from the floor level.

*The Lower Levels.* Below this occupation layer, the fillings of the pits consisted of an admixture of chalk rubble and brown earth with fine grey chalk dust. Animal bones occurred throughout, together with fragments of silicious sandstone and 14 smooth water-worn flint and quartzite oval pebbles of the slingstone type. From this level, 5" above the floor of Pit 2, but

<sup>3</sup> For explanation of this feature see the section *Interpretation of the site.*

in disturbed soil, came the iron hook with twisted shaft (No. 2). This may have worked down from a higher level. The bone awl (No. 5) was found near the hook in the same disturbed material. The bone gouge (No. 3), and the hollow bone tube (No. 6), were recovered outside the habitation area in the modern arable surface soil 2' and 18" from the margins of the pits on the N. and S. sides of the hedge respectively.

We were definitely of the opinion that the filling of the pits consisted of material originally excavated from them, and which after a comparatively brief period of weathering on the surface had been thrown back again, if not in one operation, after but short intervals. Although all the pits may not have been dug simultaneously, it is unlikely that any considerable length of time separated one from another—and there is no reason to suppose that the site was in use for many years. In an effort to determine the extent of the inhabited area we used 'bosing' and probing instruments and, with Mr. O. G. S. Crawford, carefully examined the neighbouring ground. In addition air photographs were taken by the late Major Allen whose unfailing kindness and co-operation we gratefully acknowledge. None of these methods proved successful, and only excavation will give us the answer. Unfortunately the Chiltern chalk does not lend itself readily to detection of sites from the air.

*Interpretation of the Site.* Since the site was excavated, a report published by Dr. Bersu on the Iron Age settlement at Woodbury near Salisbury<sup>4</sup> has drawn attention to some newly recognised features of Iron Age farms. These are 'working places,' a series of pits and hollows of varying depth opening out one into another to cover a large area of ground. After comparing the hollows and working places of Woodbury with some in Upper Egypt, Dr. Bersu says: "At harvest time, the women sat in these depressions and prepared the fruits of the field for storage. The maize was husked, sugar cane was cut and made into bundles and

<sup>4</sup> *Proc. Prehist. Soc.* (1960), pp. 30-111, and more especially 64-78.

so on. I was told that the hollows were deserted except at harvest time. If one of the rare rains came the hollows got silted up with mud and were later dug out afresh. If they had lain deserted, they became full of all sorts of rubbish and refuse, which, when the hollows were established anew, were carefully removed, to maintain a clean working-place."

From the plans and sections published by him, we can now see that our pits are in reality most probably not storage pits at all, but units of one of these working places. If this is the case, the dark occupation layer may represent the accumulated rubbish after the harvest was dealt with one year, and before the next was reaped. Why the site was allowed to fall into disuse we cannot tell, but after a short life of perhaps only a very few years, it was filled with rubbish and with the soil originally removed from it, and, perhaps because the farming family moved or died out, it was no longer necessary to keep it clean for the future.

This interpretation of the site is important, as it indicates the presence of a farm settlement nearby. And this means that there should be more pits and working places, possibly even remains of drying racks and granaries.

It is to be hoped that more will be done to this site.<sup>5</sup> In the meantime this small excavation is especially useful—for it has given us a clue to the true nature of the settlement we have discovered.

J.F.H.

<sup>5</sup> For the photograph at the beginning of this paper we are grateful to Mr. C. W. Roberts, of High Wycombe, who walked long distances and took great trouble to obtain it.



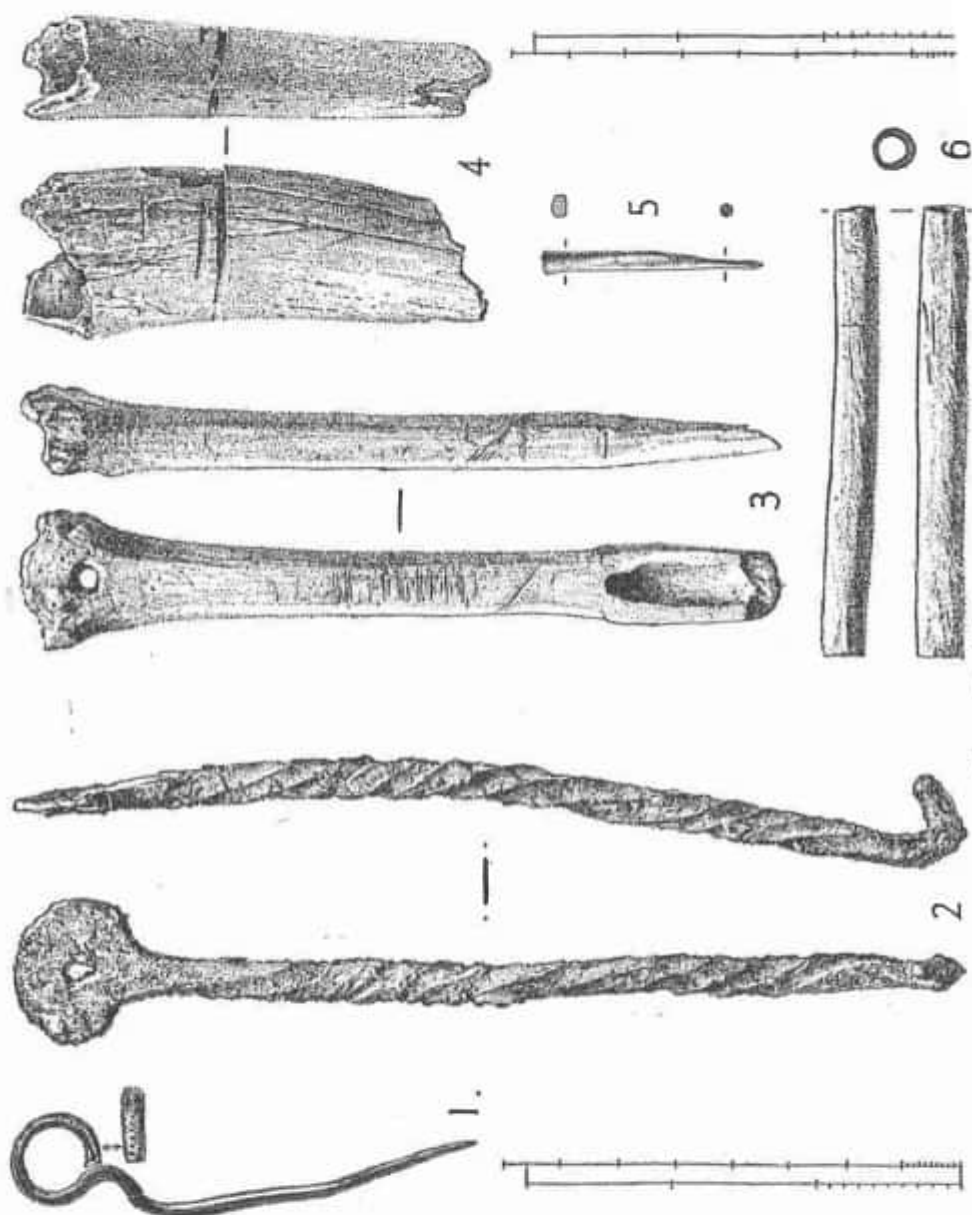


Figure I. Scale =  $\frac{1}{16}$  in.

## II. THE POTTERY AND FINDS AND THEIR SIGNIFICANCE.

1. *The Bone Implements* (Fig. 1, nos. 3 to 6).

These sawn and polished fragments represent types well known at All Cannings Cross (see specially Plates 12 and 13 of that publication). Our no. 3 is almost exactly paralleled from that site (Pl. 12, nos. 12 and 13), and is evidently made from the tibia of a sheep or goat, and ornamented with incised notches as shown. The bone has been hollowed out and the butt end pierced. The lower end is broken off, but the polish on it attests much use. No. 5 is part of an awl or pricker, or possibly part of a needle in process of manufacture. The hollow tube (no. 6) has been carefully tapered and shows polish through use.

2. *The Ring-Headed Pin of Bronze* (Fig. 1, no. 1).

This pin, which is in excellent condition, is one of a well-known class, and here at Bledlow is in the main area of the distribution in south-east England.<sup>6</sup> These pins are normally associated with the Iron Age 'A' culture. This example with notches on the front of the ring should belong to the fourth century B.C.

3. *The Iron Hook* (Fig. 1, no. 2).

This is presumably a flesh-hook and its use can best be understood from the photograph published as Plate XVII in Fox's *Archaeology of the Cambridge Region*, though in that instance belonging to a later example from Stanfordbury, Southill.<sup>7</sup> Examples of Halstatt date on the Continent appear to be plain, whereas, as Dechelette notes, the La Tene examples are ornamented with a twist. With our other evidence pointing to a date at the end of the fourth century to about 250 B.C. for this site, our example is probably also of that time.

<sup>6</sup> See G. C. Dunning: "The Swan's-neck and Ring-headed Pins of the Early Iron Age." *Arch. Journal*, XCI, 1936, pp. 269-295.

<sup>7</sup> Similar hooks are illustrated by Dechelette: *Manuel d'Archéologie*, vol. III, fig. 323, and pp. 293-295.

## THE POTTERY.

The pottery described below is consistent in showing a Wessex A2 character. It is not necessary to quote parallels to individual shards as there is a large amount of readily accessible material for comparison. I do not think we need suspect any influences from outside the 'A' culture. Haematite appears to be present on one or two shards, but without an analysis it is impossible to be certain.<sup>8</sup>

Description of the Pottery.<sup>9</sup>

(Figs. I, II and III.)

1. Dark grey, smoothed and leathery. Grain impression, probably wheat, on the outer surface. Level B.
2. Very hard close-grained paste with little flint backing. Finger impressions round inside of rim. Level B.
- 3-4. Hard grey, speckled with grits, some of which may be shell. At one place on the rim more clay has been added after firing to thicken the inside. Floor level.
5. Very fine and smooth paste. Floor level.
6. Smooth black. Level A.
7. Brownish black, containing much fine grit, some of which may be shell. Floor level.
8. Roughly made flat rim. Large grits. Level A.
9. Upright rounded rim. Surface.
10. Sandy red and grey ware with flint grits on inside. In-turned rim. Surface.
11. Dark grey. Level C.
12. Well made red ware, without polish. Surface.
13. Leathery red, smoothed. Grit backing. Floor level.
14. Grey, some grits. Roughly smoothed with fingers on both surfaces. Floor level.
15. Reddish clay, no grits, black inside. Roughly smoothed surfaces and very small finger tip impressions on shoulder. Level C.
16. Reddish sandy ware. Groove as shown. Level C.
17. Probably a lid, but could be upright. Outer surface smoothed. Level A.

<sup>8</sup> See Dr. K. P. Oakley: *Note on Haematite ware in Report on Maiden Castle*, Soc. of Antiq., Lond., 1943, pp. 379-80.

<sup>9</sup> Note that Level A refers to Humus and Earthy chalk; Level B, to the occupation layer; Level C, to chalky rubble down to 3 inches above Floor level. (See section on p. 192).

18. Dark grey, roughly smoothed. Angle uncertain and it may be a lid. Floor level.
19. Mud coloured corky ware. Level A.
20. Fine dark grey, carefully made, with remains of burnishing on the outside and on the inside. White filling in the incised pattern. Floor level.
21. Very large flints in well fired red-brown ware. Level C.
22. Shoulder angle with deep finger tip impression. Red-brown sandy ware. Surface.
23. Deep wedge shaped impressions on red sandy ware. Black inside. Level A.
24. Very roughly potted. Sandy ware with large flints. Both surfaces unsmoothed. Floor level.
25. Grey ware, reddish outer surface. Unsmoothed inside and roughly smoothed outside. Floor level.
26. Sandy black pottery, once burnished. Surface.
27. Light brown, roughly smoothed surface. Some grits and many grass impressions. Evidently a very large pot. Floor level.
28. Not illustrated. Another fragment of 42.
29. Well made dark grey ware, burnished outside. Floor level.
30. Fine black, slightly burnished. Floor level.
31. Sandy grey ware, orange surface unsmoothed. Floor level.
32. Well made buff paste. Surface worn. No remains of white filling. Level B.
33. Red surfaces on grey ware. Sandy. Floor level.
34. Very much abraded fragment. Fine grey ware with red surface and remains of what appears to be haematite slip. Surface.
35. Light grey and very sandy, with surfaces worn right away. Level B.
36. Highly burnished surface on dark grey-black sandy ware. Floor level.
37. Shoulder angle. Fine white-filled incisions. Polished leathery ware. Floor level.
38. Grey, evidently once polished. Level A.
39. Sandy grey ware with red (? haematite) burnished surface. Pattern suggests beginning of swags. Floor level.
40. Dark grey, leathery with smoothed surfaces. The punch marks retain remains of white filling. Surface.
41. Dull fine grey ware, much worn and surface gone. Grass marks on inside. Floor level.

42. Hard grey ware with polished surfaces. Level B.
43. Black, very sandy. Finger smoothing marks on outside. Diameter just under 5". Level A.
44. Fine leathery brown-grey with polished surface. Floor level.
45. Buff ware with burnished surface. Floor level.
46. Blackish grey with some flints. Surface.
47. Very fine brown ware unlike most of the clay used on this site. Floor level.
48. Well fired dark grey with small flint backing. Very roughly executed design. Level B.
49. Very fine sandy paste with white flecks. Black with red surfaces. Floor level.
50. Extremely roughly made. Covered with streaks and some grass marks. Reddish brown. Inside roughly smoothed. Surface.
51. Fine grey hard pottery. Orange surface originally burnished. The finger marks inside suggest that some sort of turn-table was used. Floor level.
52. Fragment of reddish brown ware with white flecks. Probably a shard which was in the process of being made into a spindle whorl. Level C.
53. Dark grey sandy ware with roughly made incisions. Floor level.
54. Grey sandy ware with carefully finished light red surface. The small area of design remaining suggests a curvilinear pattern. Surface.
55. Black, grooved fragment. Floor level.
56. Curvilinear decoration in shallow wide grooves. Fine grey ware with lighter core and turning marks on the inside. Floor level.
57. Possibly the same pot as 27. Ware identical. Floor level.
58. Black sandy pottery, finely flecked. Pink inside. Floor level.
59. Whitish grey paste with black burnished surface. Decoration extremely finely done with a pin point. Floor level.
60. Reddish brown, no grits. Part of a handle. Level A.
61. Fragment of a large pot. Fine ware, carefully made. Exterior smoothed and polished. Surface.
62. Part of a base. Surface.
63. Hard fine grey ware, no grits. Remains of white filling. Level B.
64. ? omphalos base. Light buff. Floor level.

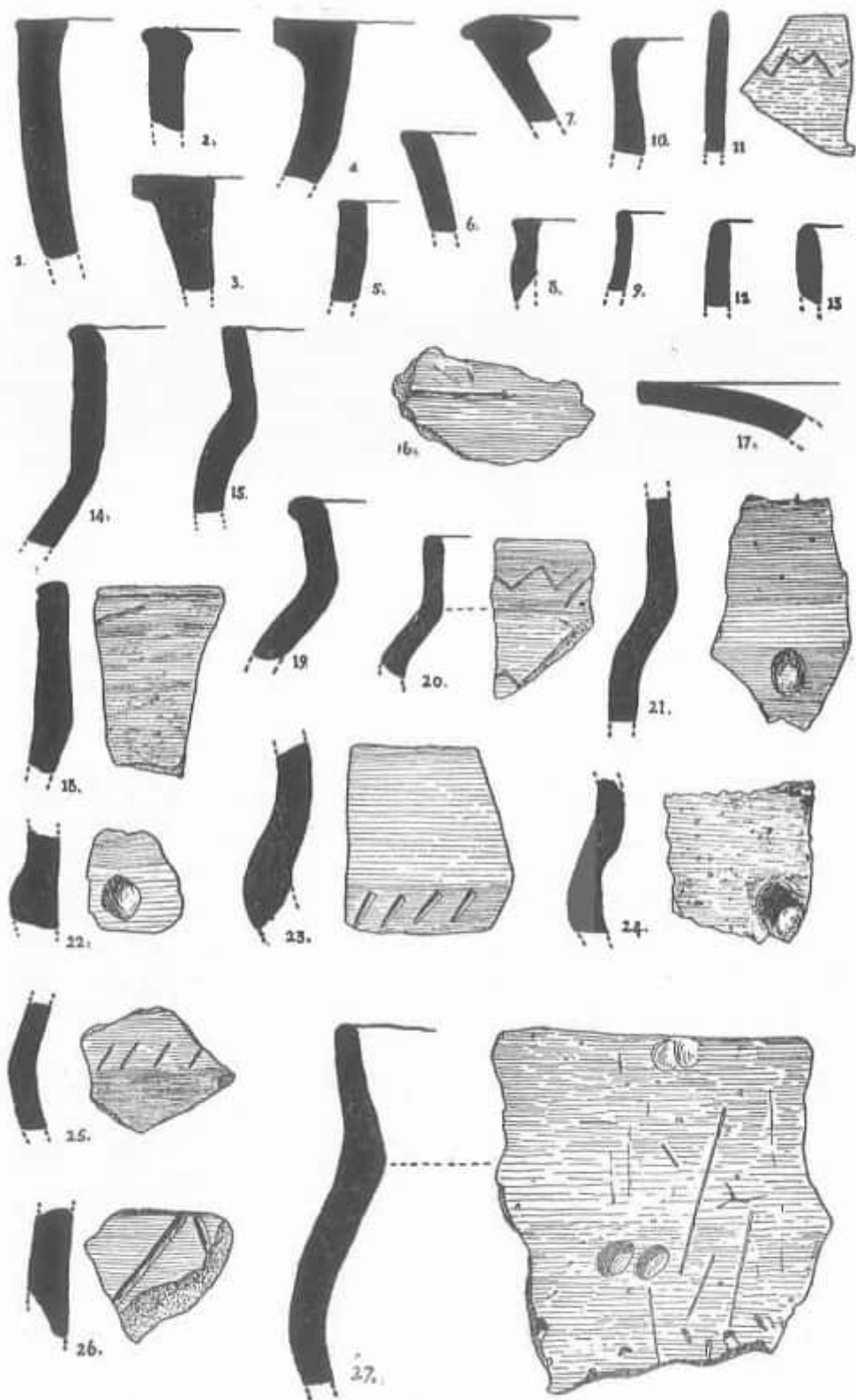


Fig. II. Iron Age Pottery from Bledlow, Scale =  $\frac{3}{8}$ ths

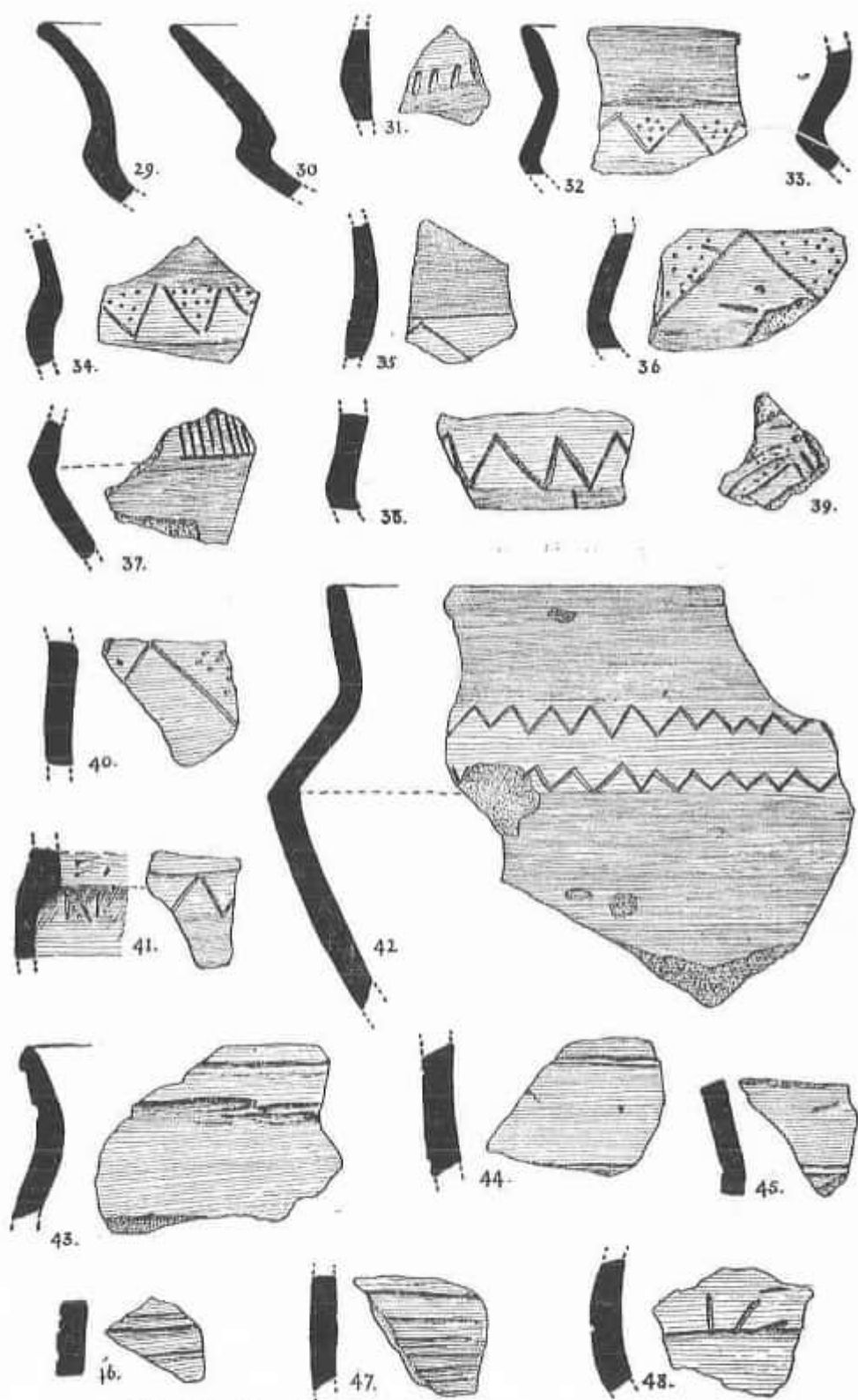


Fig. III. Iron Age Pottery from Bledlow. Scale =  $\frac{1}{4}$  inch

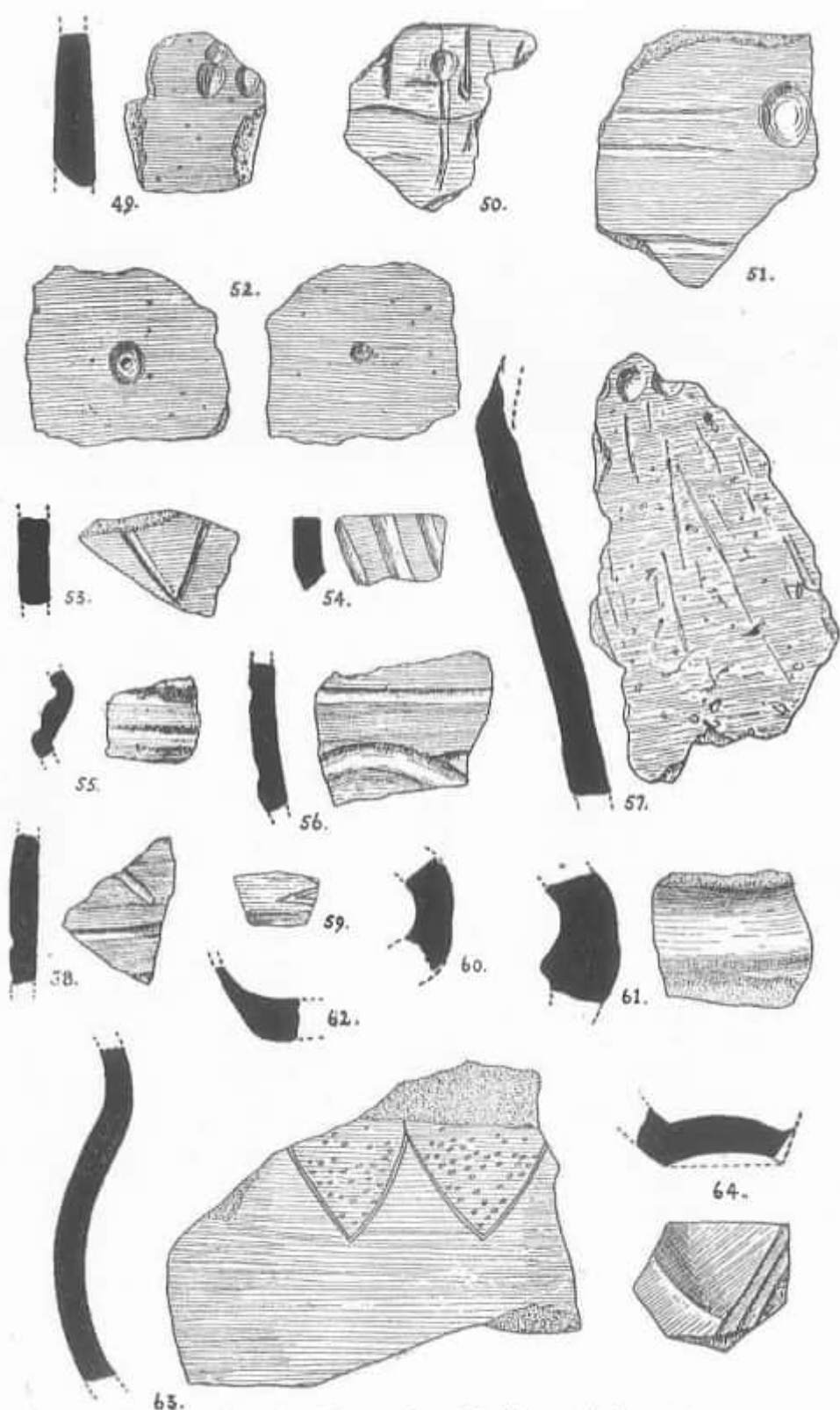


Fig. IV. Iron Age Pottery from Bledlow. Scale =  $\frac{1}{4}$ th



This pottery from Bledlow is especially interesting as its publication follows soon after two important publications in *Oxoniensia* VII (1942), with J. S. P. Bradford's discussion of the pottery from Dorchester in the Thames Valley, and also the group of Iron Age 'A' pottery from Chinnor, close to our present site—published by Peter Crossley-Holland.

Bradford stresses the difference between the 'unadulterated [Thames Valley] A1 culture, fresh from the Continent, at Long Wittenham'<sup>10</sup> which evidently arrived by way of the Goring Gap, and Blewburton Hill<sup>11</sup> only a short distance to the south and on the fringe of Wessex. Here was found 'well preserved and unmixed Wessex 'A' characteristics including the practice of haematite slipcoating.' While the Oxford Basin was in no way unreceptive of Wessex contacts, Bradford emphasises how that area 'lacks the natural topographical unity of Wessex.'

But the Chilterns are geologically an extension of the Wessex chalk, and it is hardly surprising to find that archaeologically they are associated as well at all events in those times when the Iron Age 'A' culture was predominant. It is erroneous to suppose that the contrast in appearance we notice to-day between the wooded Chilterns on one side of the Thames and the bare Berkshire Downs on the other was anything like as apparent in the Iron Age. For one must assume that there were large patches of downland still fairly thickly forested.<sup>12</sup> And this natural topographical affinity between the two chalk ridges was perhaps not the most important factor in linking them culturally. For the lines of communication from Wessex, both along the escarpment and the ridge of the Berkshire Downs have their continuation across the Thames on to the Chilterns, and we can assume that it was mainly by way of these routes that Wessex fashions spread north-eastwards (see Map B). The most important of these routes were the Ridgeway and the Icknield Way. Probably the whole length of the Icknield Way

<sup>10</sup> *Oxoniensia*, II (1937), 1–11.

<sup>11</sup> *Berks Arch. Journ.* (1942).

<sup>12</sup> See Fox: *Personality of Britain*, 4th ed. (1943), p. 55.

was in use by Iron Age times. Before that, some stretches of it are no doubt earlier than others as its extension became necessary to link the increasing number of settlements along its course. It has been said:—<sup>13</sup>

"The greater part of the Chiltern plateau and the North Downs must have been wooded. In both areas, scarp-crest trackways are absent or discontinuous, and it is probable that in early times the only naturally open ground was on the scarp face. . . . At the foot of both the scarp-and-dip-slopes of the Chalk escarpments, conditions of soil and water supply were much more favourable to settlement . . . . The marly Lower Chalk provided good arable soils where slopes were moderate; even where steep chalk slopes rise above clay land, the clay below the scarp face is lightened by chalky wash, which assists in flocculating the clay aggregates and rendering the soil crumbly and granular. Where present, the Upper Greensand also provided a bench of easily worked soils, and water was generally available from one or more lines of springs."

A section through the Chalk Escarpment a mile or two to the east of Ellesborough, at Coombe Hill<sup>14</sup> shows the Upper Icknield Way running along the junction of the Middle and Lower Chalk with a narrow stratum of Melbourn Rock between. The Middle Chalk, which underlies the Upper Chalk covered with clay-with-flints is there only about 250 yards in width. On the other side of the Icknield Way the Lower Chalk extends for  $\frac{5}{8}$  mile before grading into the underlying Upper Greensand and Gault, which would have carried heavy woodland in prehistoric times.<sup>15</sup>

It is not proposed to discuss the significance of the Icknield Way to Iron Age 'A' settlers, for we are here only concerned with that part of it to the west of Hitchin and east of the Goring Gap. But it is worth noticing in passing that it is archaeologically divisible into three main divisions.

<sup>13</sup> Woodbridge in *An Historical Geography of England before 1800*, edited by H. C. Darby. Cambridge, 1936. (p. 93).

<sup>14</sup> British Regional Geology, *London and the Thames Valley*, by R. L. Sherlock. H.M. Stationery Office, 1935, fig. 10.

<sup>15</sup> See *The Woodlands and Marshlands of England*, by H. A. Wilcox, University Press of Liverpool, 1933.

I. *Norfolk, Suffolk and Cambridgeshire.*

On the question now concerning us Clarke says:—<sup>16</sup>

"The finer wares of Iron Age 'A' in southern England with haematite surface and geometric incisions with white inlay are wholly absent from our region . . . In general, the pottery of Iron Age 'A' in Norfolk and Suffolk has close affinities in form and decoration with the coarse ill-fired and hand-made wares, widely distributed over south-east England as part of a common inheritance of the Late Bronze Age urnfield culture, or derived direct from the continental evolution of the culture. The markedly Rhenish character of the pottery in the Fenland basin has been emphasised by several writers. Similar ware occurs in Northamptonshire, Huntingdonshire, Cambridgeshire, north-west Suffolk, west Norfolk and Hertfordshire (references) where Applebaum suggests that it met a central European strain penetrating by way of the Thames". (References to Great Wymondley, Wilbury and Holwell, see below).

II. *The Hitchin Gap.* This valley through the Chilterns is especially interesting archaeologically since it is open to influences from three directions: (a) from Norfolk and Suffolk and Cambridgeshire from the east and north-east, (b) from the south (Thames Valley) via the rivers Lea and Beane and (c) ultimately from Wessex from the west via the Icknield Way running along the Chiltern escarpment and ridge. This area seems to have been a cultural pool where were stopped and absorbed both influences from the east and west, so that few East Anglian Iron Age fashions reached the western ridge of the Chilterns and likewise few Wessex influences were felt east of the Hitchin Gap.

*Holwell, Herts.* Site a mile to the north of the Icknield Way. Pits cut into sand. Affinities with Wessex, Thames Valley, and Cambridge region.<sup>17</sup>

*Great Wymondley, Herts.* Incised decoration with white inlay. Chevrons and lattice.<sup>18</sup>

<sup>16</sup> Rainbird Clarke in *Arch. Journal.*, XCVI, 1939, p. 28; the whole article covers pp. 1-113. See also Fox: *Archaeology of Cambridge Region.*

<sup>17</sup> *Ant. Journ.*, XIV, 385.

<sup>18</sup> *Proc. Prehist. Soc. East Anglia*, VI, 373, pl. XXXVI c, and XXXVII h and i.

*Wilbury near Letchworth.* Pottery includes rim with applied moulding below rim as at Scarborough. Fragment with chevrons incised after baking.<sup>19</sup>

III. *The main Chiltern Ridge.* Very little pottery has so far turned up from this ridge, probably largely due to its wooded character. The new site is therefore of the greatest importance. All three known 'A' sites reflect the Wessex culture as exemplified at All Cannings Cross and along the Berkshire Ridgeway at Liddington,<sup>20</sup> Rams Hill,<sup>21</sup> and other sites.

*Ellesborough, Bucks.* (*Records of Bucks.*, IX, 349, and fig. V on next page). Iron Age 'A 2' of Wessex derivation. White filled ornament.

*Chinnor, Oxon.* (*Oxoniensia*, VII, 1942, p. 108-9). This site is close to Bledlow and Ellesborough. The pottery included carinated bowls and situliform jars of 'A 2' types. Incised chevrons, etc.

*Bledlow, Bucks.* (*Records of Bucks.*, XIV, 149, and present paper).

We have no evidence for any influence of a 'B' character, which might be expected as Mr. Hawkes points out<sup>22</sup> in the later third century and afterwards, and as there is no reason to suppose the Chilterns were a cultural backwater (for at Cholesbury<sup>23</sup> and Adwell Cop<sup>24</sup> 'B' influence can be distinguished) we may infer that the settlement at Bledlow, beginning sometime in the late fourth century on the evidence of the ring-headed pin (see p. 197 and fig. 1, no. 1) came to an end within the next fifty years or so. I do not think we can be far wrong if we suggest 300—250 B.C. as the approximate date of the occupation.

C.M.P.

<sup>19</sup> *Journ. Brit. Arch. Ass.*, n.s., XXXVIII, 270 ff.

<sup>20</sup> *W.A.M.*, XXXVIII (1914), p. 576 ff.

<sup>21</sup> *Ant. Journ.*, XX (1940), 465-80.

<sup>22</sup> *ibid.*, p. 238.

<sup>23</sup> *Journ. Brit. Arch. Ass.*, n.s., XXXIX, 206.

<sup>24</sup> *Oxoniensia*, VII (1942), p. 59, and fig. 13.

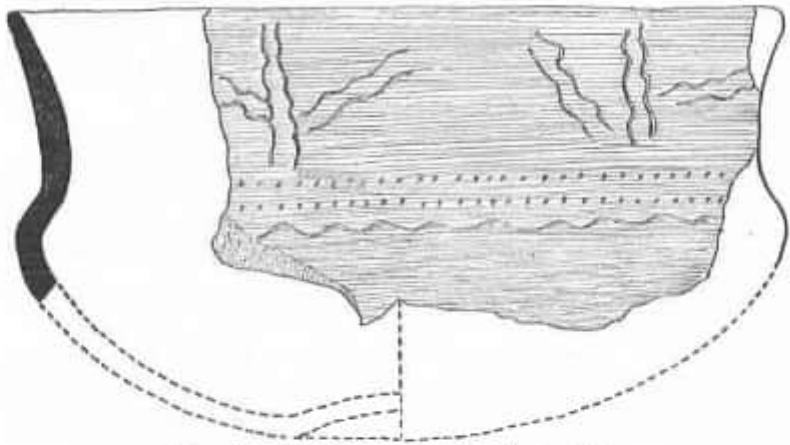


Fig. V. Ellesborough. Scale =  $\frac{1}{8}$ th

## APPENDIX A.

### Bones from Iron Age Site at Bledlow, Bucks.

By F. C. FRASER, British Museum, Natural History Dept.

The animals represented in the collection are all commonly domesticated ones—horse, ox, sheep, pig and dog.

**Horse.**—The metatarsal of a small horse, the distal end of another and two cheek teeth comprise the identified bones of this species. The metatarsal is comparable in size with that of an animal about twelve hands high. The dimensions of the bone, 256 mm. long and 46 mm. in width distally are similar, within a millimetre or two, to those of a specimen from a Romano-British site.

**Ox.**—The *Bos* bones and teeth are, with one exception, from very small animals. Measurable specimens have been compared with the same bones in a Chillingham ox, not with the implication that there is affinity so far as breed is concerned, but merely on account of similarity in size. It is more likely that the breed actually involved is *Bos longifrons*, the Celtic Ox, and an incomplete horn core in the collection, by its size and shape, supports this opinion.

The following records of measurable specimens may be useful for future reference. In brackets after each measurement the comparable dimension in the Chillingham is stated.

Jawbone (distal tip wanting) .....	length	332 mm.	(356 mm.)
Tibia (juv. with distinct epiphyses) ..	"	286 mm.	(309 mm.)
Metacarpal .....	"	177 mm.	(171 mm.)
Cuboid .....	width	53 mm.	( 56 mm.)
Humerus, distal end .....	"	78 mm.	( 79 mm.)

Other portions of ox skeleton include teeth, two fragmentary lower jaws, a scapula, an ulna, a radius, carpal and tarsal bones, metapodials and phalanges, the distal end of a femur. A pelvis fragment has a probable tool mark on it. All these, in so far as their fragmentary condition would permit comparison to be made, were from animals similar in size to the breed already suggested.

The specimen of exceptional size is the last lower molar of a very large ox. It was compared with the same tooth in a specimen of *Bos primigenius* in the Geological Department, British Museum, and was found to be of almost identical dimensions. The crown length of the Bledlow specimen was 47 mm. The tooth was in the topmost layer of four recognised by the excavator of the pit, and in the absence of any other evidence its association with the other bones and teeth is considered to be fortuitous.

**Sheep.**—The recognisable sheep bones are few in number and small in size. They comprise the following:—jaw bones, the left humerus of an adult comparable in size with that of a Sea Ram in the osteological collection, a small tibia, and the shaft of a long bone less certainly identifiable. Seven cheek teeth from sheep are included.

**Pig.**—Pig bones and teeth are only slightly more abundant than sheep. A portion of mandible with last molar in situ and measuring 30 mm. was compared with dimensions of European *Sus scrofa* in which the range is 29-35 mm. In another left lower jaw, small in size, the third molar had not erupted. There is a right jaw fragment, probably from the same animal, and a premaxillary fragment with teeth. Portions of humerus, scapula and a few teeth complete the identifiable material.

**Dog.**—The right ramus of the lower jaw belonging to an old animal compares in size with that of a spaniel in the osteological Collection. A fragmentary canine is also believed to be from a dog.

Besides the specimens referred to there were numerous fragments of long bones, ribs, vertebrae, etc., none of which had the appearance of belonging to species other than those mentioned.

In the 'B' level material a small fragment of burnt bone was noted.

## APPENDIX B.

### "Charcoals" from an Iron Age Site at Bledlow, Bucks.

By H. A. HYDE, Department of Botany, National Museum of Wales.

The specimens, which all appeared to have been completely carbonised by fire, after having been fractured transversely, radially and tangentially, were examined first under a Baker low power binocular microscope (objectives No. 3 and eyepieces  $\times 3.5$ ; joint magnification  $\times 7$ ) and then under a higher powered microscope (magnification  $\times 60$ ). The following identifications were made:—

#### I. Materials from the fillings of the pits.

*Acer campestre* L. (Field Maple): 4 pieces, the largest about 1 cm. radially  $\times$  1 cm. tangentially  $\times$  0.7 cm. long.

*Crataegus* sp. probably *C. monogyna* Jacq.: 1 piece, 1.3  $\times$  1.3  $\times$  1.7 cm. and showing 17 annual rings.

The remaining fragments were too small or too irregular for identification.

#### II. From an occupation level.

*Corylus Avellana* L. (Hazel): irregular portion of a young stem 1.8 cm. in diameter and 1.9 cm. long showing 8 annual rings.

*Quercus Robur* L. sens. lat. (Oak): three fragments (probably all derived from the same piece) the largest 1.5  $\times$  0.4  $\times$  1.2 cm., with 3 annual rings.

*Prunus* sp. (Cherry, sloe or plum): part of a very young branch, 0.9  $\times$  0.4  $\times$  3.2 cm. with 8 annual rings.

All the trees referred to are common in Buckinghamshire to-day and their occurrence at an Iron Age site seems to call for no comment.