

TABLE
Measurements

line	feet	metres	poles
A-B	1595	486.2	96 (+ 11 ft)
A-C	1585	483.1	96 (+ 1 ft)
C-D	1584	482.8	96 (notional length)
B-D	1585	483.1	96 (+ 1 ft)
B-E	1590	484.6	96 (+ 6 ft)
B-G	795	242.1	48 (+ 3 ft)
C-E	1712	521.8	104 (less 4 ft)
D-E	126	39	8 (less 6 ft)
F-K	860	262.1	52 (+ 2 ft)
F-L	460	140.2	28 (less 2 ft)
K-M	200	61	12 (+ 2 ft)
M-N	265	80.8	16 (+ 1 ft)
N-G	388	118.3	24 (less 1/2 pole)
J-P	200	61	12 (+ 2 ft)
C-Q	370	112.8	22 (+ 7 ft)
A-D	2240	682.8	(135.75)
B-C	2264	690.1	(137.2)

IRON SPEARHEAD AND JAVELIN FROM FOUR CROSSES, LLANDYSILIO, POWYS (Fig. 7)

An iron spearhead and javelin were found in 1984 during excavation by the Clwyd-Powys Archaeological Trust of a pair of probably prehistoric ring-ditches near the Welsh border at Four Crosses, Llandysilio, Powys.¹ The site lies near the confluence of the Vyrnwy and Severn, just 100 metres to the English side of Offa's Dyke. The weapons are now in the National Museum of Wales, Cardiff.²

The weapons were both still serviceable when deposited, probably complete with their wooden shafts. Although the precise nature of their deposition is uncertain, it is likely that it was deliberate and associated in some way with a series of poorly-dated inhumation graves on the opposite side of the ring-ditch (Graves 2–6). Some of these were aligned E. to W., like those in a small cemetery of possibly Early Christian date attached to the neighbouring upland Bronze-Age barrows at Trelystan.³ The spear and javelin lay side by side, about 0.1 m apart, in the upper filling on the N. side of the larger ring-ditch. They were at an angle of about 15° from the horizontal, sockets uppermost, and points towards the east. About half their length fell within the upper humic filling of the ditch (layer 2), and the lower half within a more gravelly secondary filling (layer 3), as though they had been thrust right into the ground. There were no indications of an accompanying burial or of other associated finds, but they could have been in an inhumation burial which eluded detection, as the graves were in acidic soil and little bone survived. Alternatively, they may have been hidden for some reason in the overgrown barrow ditch, and never retrieved. The upper humic layer of ditch fill produced numerous 2nd-/4th-century pottery sherds⁴ and these provide a reasonably secure *terminus ante quem* for the stabilized secondary filling of the ditch.

THE WEAPONS. BY P. M. BARFORD

Description

The weapons are heavily corroded, and both retained traces of mineralised wood in the sockets, suggesting that they had been buried with their shafts. The sockets of both weapons are continuously welded and each has two rivet-holes containing the remains of a rivet about 3 mm in diameter near the mouth of the socket.

Spearhead: 555 mm long with broad, elongated shouldered blade with concave edges and pronounced midrib. The blade has suffered some recent damage at the lower end and the original outline is uncertain, but it may have been shouldered or triangular. The socket is up to 18 mm in diameter internally and 80–90 mm deep. There is no obvious evidence of pattern welding. The rivet survives 9 mm from the mouth of the socket, the head on one side is about 5 mm in diameter. There are traces of mineralized bone-like substance half-way along the blade on one face.⁵

Javelin: 744 mm long with a short, broad, lanceolate blade on a long, slender shaft of round section, 11 mm in diameter. Part of the shaft 400 mm from the tip was heavily corroded, possibly resulting from stress where the shaft had been bent and straightened in antiquity. The socket is a maximum of 20 mm in diameter internally and about 66 mm deep. Traces of a rivet are visible inside the socket.

Discussion

The combination of weapons — a large general-purpose thrusting spear and a projectile spear — seem more appropriate to a warrior than to a huntsman, but are without close parallel in Britain, either individually or as a pair.

The main features of typological importance exhibited by the spearhead are the overall length and the closed socket. The blade shape is no help as it is uncertain. Before cleaning, the radiographs and general profile suggested an angular, shouldered blade. Upon cleaning, however, there was a hint that the base of the blade sprang from the socket as indicated on the figure, suggesting a more triangular blade. Spears of the latter form occur in Iron Age and occasionally Roman contexts.⁷ Mid-ribbed spearheads with leaf-shaped blades and closed sockets are known in late 4th- to mid 6th-century Anglo-Saxon contexts,⁸ with a restricted distribution in Britain centred on the Thames Valley, but these are shorter and invariably have small blades with rounded shoulders. The Four Crosses spear can only with difficulty be fitted into the known types of Anglo-Saxon spear. Large spears with mid-ribs, angular shoulders and concave blade edges are known, however, in the Germanic areas north of the Rhine, particularly in Scandinavia, where they date to the 5th to mid 6th century.⁹ These often had shorter mid-ribs and sometimes inlaid blades. A similar form is represented in Ireland,¹⁰ but is not yet closely dated.

The javelin provides a *terminus post quem* for the weapons as it is the more specific form, one which is unknown in pre-Roman contexts in Britain, and almost certainly derives from the Roman *pilum* or throwing spear, intended to bend upon impact. The Germanic '*angon*' probably developed from it during the 5th century, and became widespread on the Continent and in Anglo-Saxon contexts up to the 7th century. This weapon was elongated, usually barbed, but occasionally had a leaf-shaped blade; an early example was found with a mid-ribbed spearhead in a cremation burial at Prositz, E. Germany.¹¹ Other examples with leaf-shaped blades came from late 5th- or early 6th-century graves at Rittersdorf, Rheinland-Pfalz.¹² A socketed *pilum* head with a leaf-shaped blade was found at Caerleon in a 3rd-century context,¹³ and a possible fragment has been found in an undated context at Bradwell Shore Fort, Essex.¹⁴

The smooth lines of the blade and long shank of the Four Crosses javelin may relate it to Swanton's group D2 spearheads,¹⁵ although most of these are shorter and have blades of between a half and a third of their total length. This type is found in England as well as in Frankish and Alemannic areas on the Continent; it had apparently developed by the mid

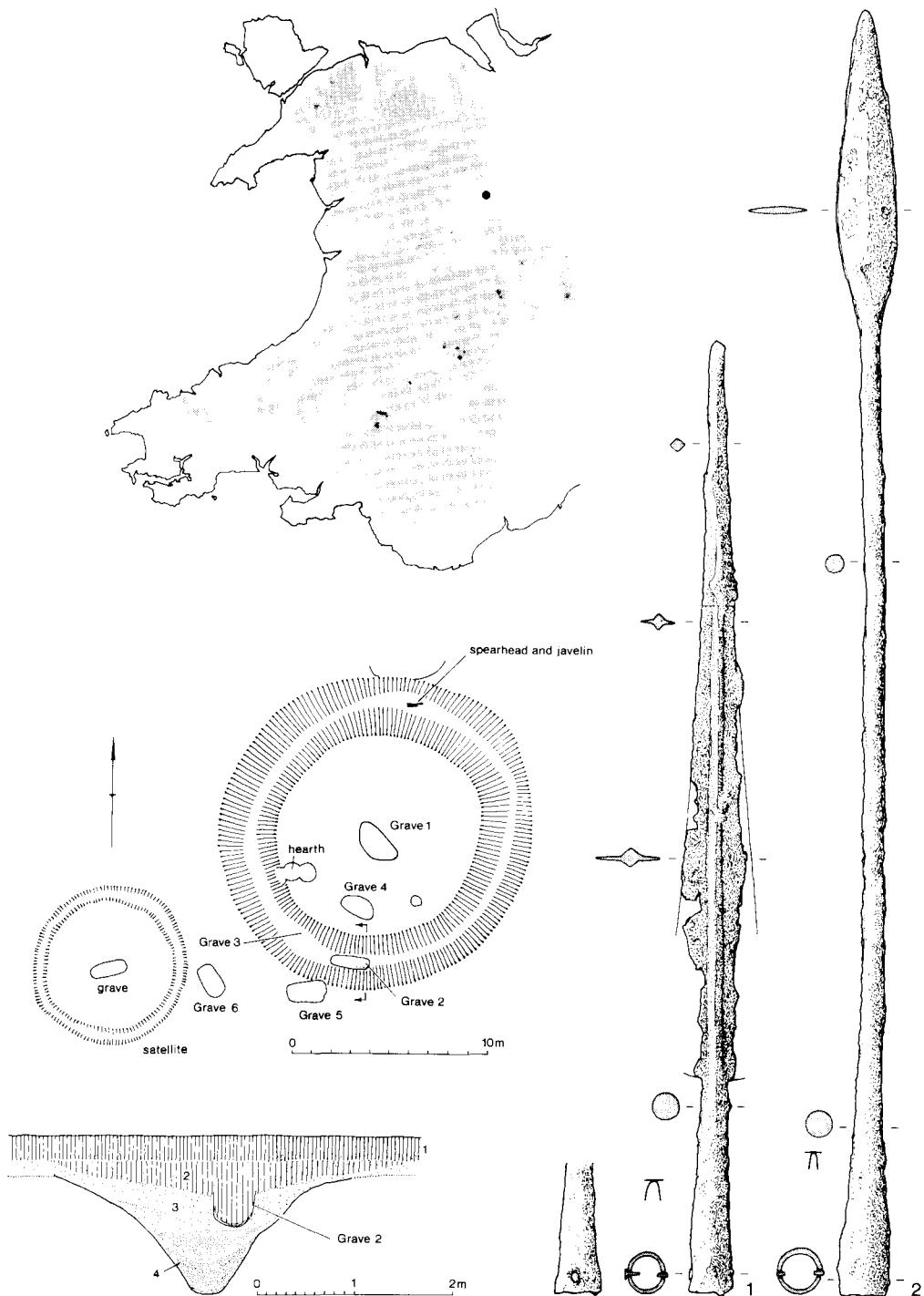


FIG. 7
FOUR CROSSES SITE 2, LLANDYSILIO, POWYS
Location plans, and spear and javelin at scale 1:4

6th-century and did not outlast the 7th century. Like its companion, however, the Four Crosses javelin cannot be fitted directly into one of Swanton's groups, being longer than all other post-Roman English examples, which also invariably had cleft unwelded sockets. On the Continent both welded and unwelded sockets occur on spearheads like Swanton's group D2, as for example those from late 6th- and early 7th-century graves at Hailfingen, Württemberg, W. Germany.¹⁶ These continental examples are rarely longer than any of the group D2 spears, which are up to about 400 mm long.¹⁷

In conclusion it may be said that the weapons are probably neither of Anglo-Saxon nor of Irish derivation, and it seems unlikely that they were imports from the Continent. Little is known of weapon types in use in contemporary British territories in western Britain, however, and although it is possible that they derive from this cultural background, little more can be said until further examples are found.

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NOTES

¹ Site 2. Full report in W. Warrilow, W. G. Owen and W. J. Britnell, 'Eight ring-ditches at Four Crosses', *Proc. Prehist. Soc.*, forthcoming.

² The authors are grateful for comments by J. M. Lewis and I. R. Scott. Conservation has been carried out by Kate Hunter, Conservation Laboratory, University College, Cardiff, who also kindly made radiographs available for study.

³ W. J. Britnell, 'The Excavation of Two Round Barrows at Trelystan, Powys', *Proc. Prehist. Soc.*, 48 (1982), 161–63.

⁴ The pottery has been studied and reported on by P. V. Webster, Department of Extramural Studies, University College, Cardiff, in the main site report.

⁵ Identified by Sonia O'Connor as possibly being antler.

⁶ E.g. R. A. Smith, *British Museum, A Guide to the Early Iron Age* (London, 1925), fig. 121, 9; C. Fox, *A Find of the Early Iron Age from Llyn Cerrig Bach, Anglesey* (National Museum of Wales, 1946), 74, pl. xxxv, 14 (the latter also being unusual in its extreme length).

⁷ E.g. J. P. Bushe Fox, *Fourth Report on the Excavations of the Roman Fort at Richborough, Kent* (Society of Antiquaries, 1949), pl. LVIII, 279.

⁸ M. J. Swanton, *The Spearheads of the Anglo-Saxon settlements* (Royal Archaeological Institute, 1973), 41–43, group B2.

⁹ Ibid., 75–77.

¹⁰ E.g. at Lagore, H. O'N. Hencken, 'Lagore, a Royal Residence of the seventh to tenth centuries A.D.', *Proc. Royal Irish Academy*, LIII (1950), 95–98, figs. 29–31.

¹¹ W. Coblenz, *Das Gräberfeld von Prostitz* (Dresden, 1959), pl. 22.3, cremation 69.

¹² K. Bohner, *Die Fränkischen Altertumer des Trierer Landes* (Berlin, 1958), 128, 148–5; taf 28.2 and taf 28.9.

¹³ G. C. Boon, *Isca, The Roman Legionary fortress at Caerleon Monmouthshire* (National Museum of Wales, 1972), 54, fig. 30.10.

¹⁴ Publication forthcoming.

¹⁵ Swanton, op. cit. in note 8, 67–71.

¹⁶ H. Stoll, *Die Alamannengräber von Hailfingen in Württemberg* (Berlin, 1939), taf 8.2, 9.2, 10.14, 32.13.

¹⁷ The longest Hailfingen spears, while not as attenuated, approach more closely the proportions of the Four Crosses javelin, with very long slender necks and short blades. Similarly, the long spear from Rittersdorf grave 142 (Bohner *op. cit.* taf 28.9) has some similarities with the Four Crosses javelin, but has an unwelded socket.

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A LATE 13TH-CENTURY GRISAILLE WINDOW PANEL FROM BRADWELL ABBEY, MILTON KEYNES, BUCKS. (Figs. 8 and 9; Pl. x)

Excavations in 1982 at Bradwell Abbey, Milton Keynes, Bucks. (SP827 396), a small Benedictine house founded c. 1154, resulted in the discovery of a leaded panel of late 13th-century window glass measuring 1050 mm by 830 mm.¹ Individual glass quarries, fragments of lead came and melted lead are frequently found on monastic sites, but the recovery of an almost complete panel is a rare and unusual find.²