

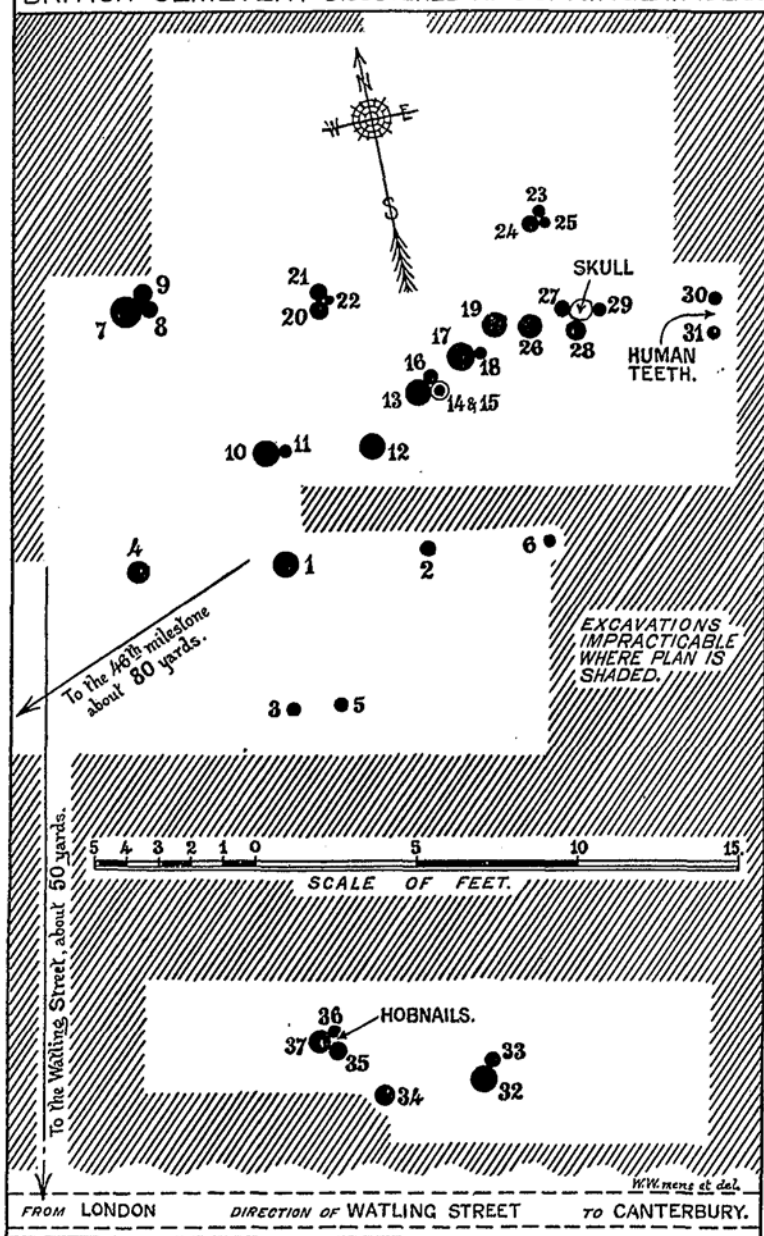


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# PLAN SHOWING DISPOSITION OF POTTERY &C. IN ROMANO-BRITISH CEMETERY DISCOVERED AT OSPRINGE IN 1920.



# Archæologia Cantiana.

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## A ROMAN CEMETERY DISCOVERED AT OSPRINGE IN 1920.

BY W. WHITING.

THE site of this burial ground is about 50 yards on the north side of the Watling Street at Ospringe, near Faversham, and about 80 yards in the direction E.N.E. from the 46th milestone from London and 9th from Canterbury.

It is interesting to note that the six Roman graves found in Newnham Valley in 1913 were the same distance from the road;\* and, measuring as the crow flies, both these sites are found to be between 750 and 800 yards from the *oppidum* in Syndale Park, which is marked on the 6 in. ordnance map as "Roman Camp, supposed to be Durolevum."†

In view of the proximity to the 46th milestone, another point of interest is Mr. G. Bedo's statement that near the 48th and 49th milestones cinerary urns and coins have been discovered.‡

No coins have been found during this work, and no signs of the spot where the bodies were cremated was seen; but pieces of calcined flint were numerous all over the site.

The soil in the excavation is a good stiff brick-earth. It was observed that where the urns contained only a few bones they were generally more badly broken than in those cases where they were filled with them. Old fractures were apparent in most of the pottery, and naturally more cracks

\* *Arch. Cant.*, XXXI., 284.

† See also article by Roach Smith in *Archæologia*, XXIX., and Geo. Bedo in *Arch. Cant.*, IX.

‡ *Arch. Cant.*, IX., lxxii.

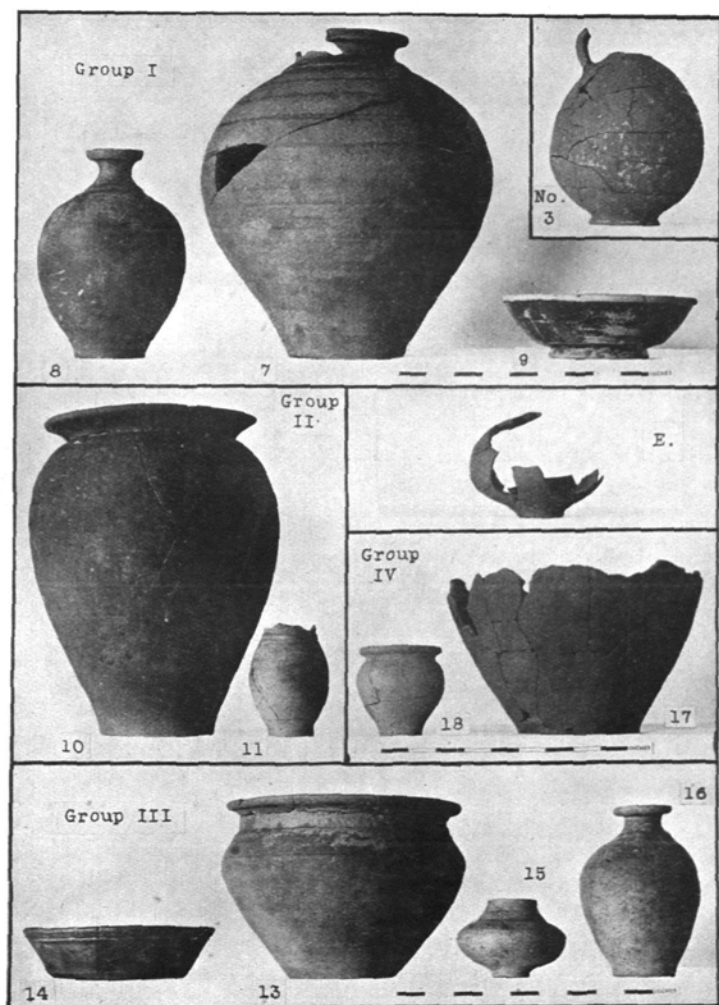
were found in the wide-mouthed urns than in most of the smaller vessels.

About twenty burials were encountered within a space of about 30 ft. by 20 ft.. The accompanying plan shews the complete area excavated, except that the trench 2 ft. wide on the north, and that 6 ft. wide on the west, extended 4 ft. further in each case, but without resulting in any finds. The plan shews also the relative situations of the burials, and, the whole of the vessels having been carefully measured and drawn (as far as the fragments permit in some cases), it will not be necessary in the following report to describe their form in full, since this is shewn by the illustrations; they need only be grouped, and special items of interest recorded.

The writer would here express his most sincere thanks to Mr. Thos. May, F.S.A., for practically all the particulars now recorded respecting this pottery. From potsherds and full-size drawings submitted to him, he has kindly given descriptions of the vessels and the clays of which they are made, furnished the references quoted to similar and dated pieces of pottery, adding to other interesting information: "The excellence in shape, ornamentation and technique of the cordoned vessels (Nos. 7, 8, 11, 12, 16, 22, 24, 32, and 33) indicates that, if the ware was not imported from Gallia Belgica, the potters of Kent preserved the late Celtic tradition and skill to a later date than did those in other parts of Britain."

The first discovery was made on the 15th April. Some workmen, engaged in digging a hole about 20 ft. long by 7 ft. wide and 4 ft. deep, came across the pieces of pottery numbered 1 to 6, all more or less broken. It was not until some months afterwards, when the fragments (mostly thought to belong to Nos. 1 and 3) were being cleaned and pieced together, that it became evident there must have been double this number of pots disturbed.

The position of the identified pots was noted, but, on recognizing more vessels among the fragments, it was considered preferable to letter, instead of number, those pieces



OSPRINGE  
Pottery from Romano-British Cemetery (1)

which had to be omitted on the plan, seeing that their exact position could not be fixed.

No. 1. URN, containing calcined bones,  $9\frac{3}{8}$  in. diameter,  $7\frac{1}{2}$  in. high; of hard reddish-brown clay, apparently black coated. On the outside the letters as traced are scored, but that portion of the pot which should precede the "M" being wanting, it is impossible to tell whether the inscription is complete. The form is a late development of an early imported cordoned bowl discovered in the British promontory fort at Hengistbury Head (*Soc. Antiq. Report*, p. 34, pl. xvii, 3—5), and has been found chiefly in the districts of S. and E. Britain occupied by the Belgic Tribes.

No. 2. ONE-HANDLED FLAGON, with neck and handle missing,  $5\frac{1}{4}$  in. diameter; of hard dark grey clay, coated black.

No. 3. ONE-HANDLED FLAGON, with neck and part of handle missing,  $5\frac{3}{8}$  in. diameter; of tile-red clay, not coated.

No. 4. WIDE BOWL or PATERA,  $8\frac{1}{2}$  in. diameter,  $1\frac{5}{8}$  in. high; of fine grey ware. An imitation of sigillata bowl, form 36 Dragendorff.

*Silchester Pottery*, p. 126, pl. liv., 96.\*

No. 5. BOWL or PORRINGER,  $5\frac{5}{8}$  in. diameter,  $1\frac{5}{8}$  in. high; black sandy clay.

Curle, *Newstead*, p. 259: fig. 32, 6, pl. l. (B), fig. 6; c. A.D. 180.†

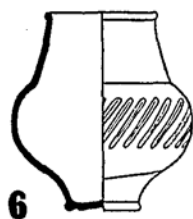
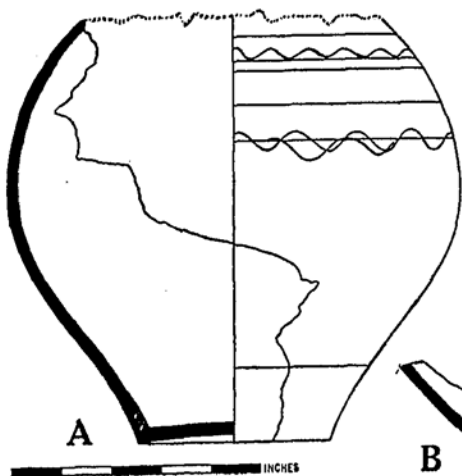
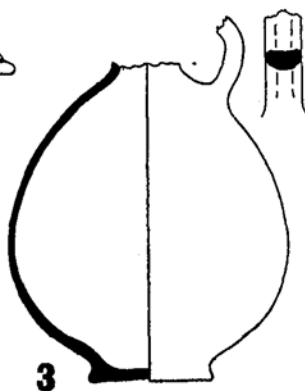
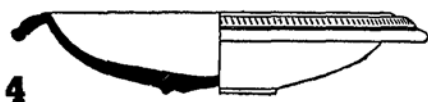
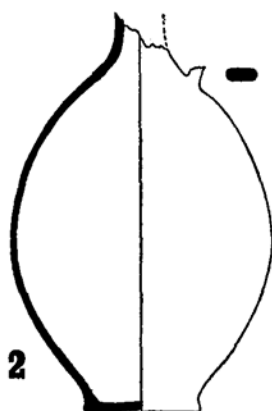
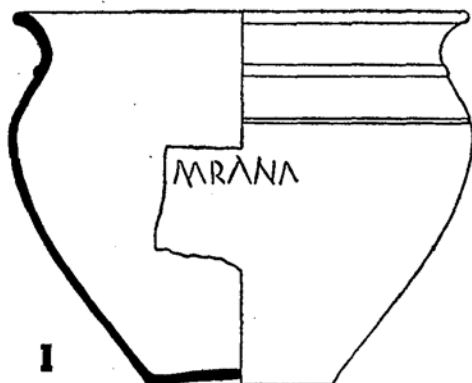
No. 6. BULBOUS BEAKER,  $3\frac{5}{8}$  in. diameter, 4 in. high; red clay, coated with black slip, chocolate colour to the height of about  $\frac{5}{8}$  in. from the base. Round the bulge thirty-one diagonal stripes painted in white slip. Probably Castor or Rhenish ware.

*Silchester Pottery*, p. 122, pl. lii., 83; about A.D. 200.

\* *The Pottery found at Silchester*. By Thomas May, F.S.A. (1916.)

† *A Roman Frontier Post and its People: The Fort of Newstead in the Parish of Melrose*. By J. Curle, F.S.A. (1911.)

PLATE I.



- A. Urn,  $9\frac{1}{4}$  in. diameter; soft brownish-red clay, with a good black coating, smoothed round the base, and in bands round the shoulder, with wavy lines scored on the latter.
- B. Base of grey ware vessel.
- C. Fragment of rim of large vessel; fine grey ware.
- D. Fragment of coarse grey ware (? rim of a large wide-mouthed pan with nearly upright side).
- E. Flask or bottle,  $5\frac{1}{8}$  in. diameter; grey clay with red slip coating. Too incomplete for comparison, but resembles *Silchester Pottery*, p. 149, pl. lxiv., type 123. The smallness of the neck indicates its purpose as a *gutturium*, or lamp filler. The angular joining of neck and body suggests an early second, or late first, century date.
- F. (Not illustrated.) Fragments of soft sandy clay vessel; no parts of rim or base recovered; apparently portions of an urn about 10 in. or 11 in. diameter.

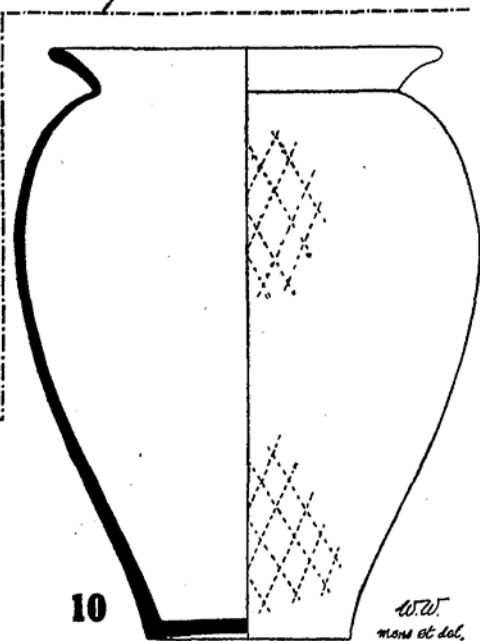
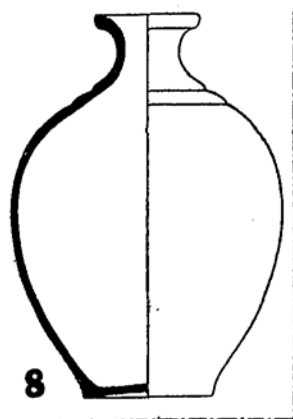
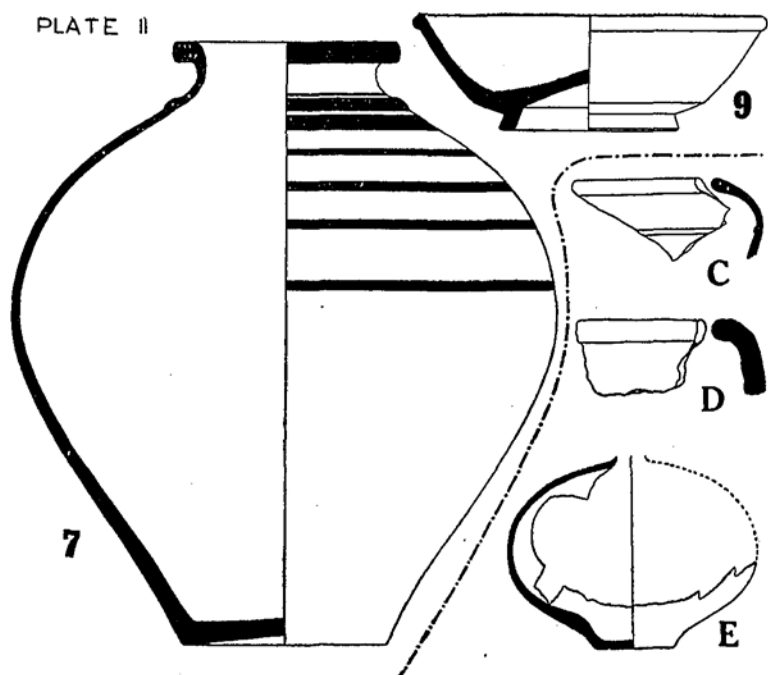
Among these were also found some pieces of rusty iron, unfortunately so corroded that it is impossible to say with certainty what they were. One piece shewed traces of wood, to which it appeared to have been nailed, so they may be remains of the handles and bands of a wooden cist.

In August an extension of the original excavation northwards, about 8 ft. by 8 ft., was made, and the vessels numbered 7 to 11 were brought to light. The groups of pottery were now kept distinct and more satisfactorily recorded; at this time also arrangements were made that no further finds should be disturbed until their recovery could be watched.

#### GROUP I.

- No. 7. URN, containing calcined bones, 11 in. diameter,  $12\frac{1}{4}$  in. high; sandy grey clay with bands coated black round shoulder and lip.

PLATE II



- No. 8. BOTTLE,  $5\frac{1}{2}$  in. diameter,  $7\frac{3}{4}$  in. high; earthy grey clay, coated black.

Colchester Museum, Joslin Collection, group 68, 396-7; A.D. 40—70.\*

- No. 9. BOWL OR PATERA,  $7\frac{1}{4}$  in. diameter,  $2\frac{3}{8}$  in. high; hard Terra Sigillata, or pseudo-Samian ware, retaining illegible impression of potter's stamp. Form 31 Drag.

*Silchester Pottery*, p. 92, pl. xxxii., 32; about A.D. 200.

## GROUP II.

- No. 10. URN OR OLLA, containing calcined bones,  $9\frac{1}{2}$  in. diameter, 12 in. high; earth-grey sandy clay, apparently coated, with traces of faintly scored latticed lines just perceptible.

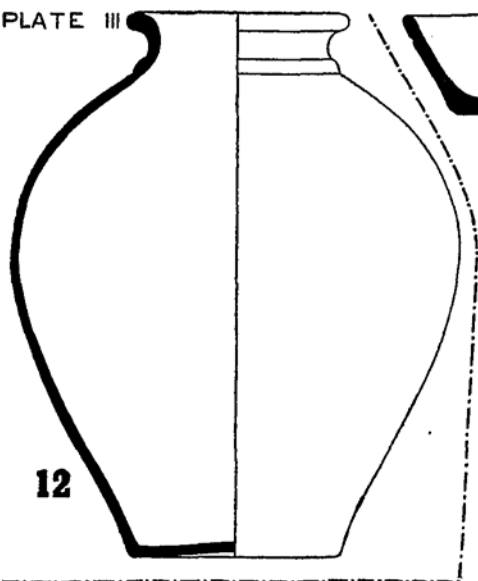
Colchester Mus., Joslin Coll., group 56, 312; A.D. 133—200.

- No. 11. BEAKER, minus upper portion of rim, 3 in. diameter, about  $4\frac{1}{2}$  in. high; red clay, with grey-black coating.

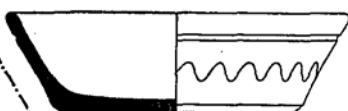
In September the pieces numbered 12 to 19 were found in a further small excavation, and the depth and arrangement of the various groups were even better observed and noted. All the foregoing pieces (except No. 6, to which reference will be made again later) were between  $2\frac{1}{2}$  ft. and 3 ft. below the surface; Nos. 17, 18 and 19 were less than 2 ft. down, with the result that the rims and upper portions of the urns had apparently been disturbed and dispersed in the cultivation of the soil.

- No. 12. URN, OLLA OR STORE VESSEL, containing calcined bones, 9 in. diameter, 11 in. high; sandy grey clay.

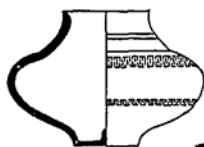
\* *Catalogue of the Joslin Collection, Colchester.* By J. E. Price. (1888.)



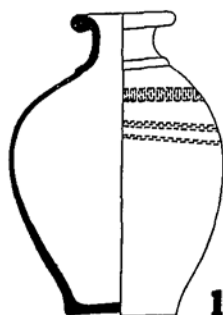
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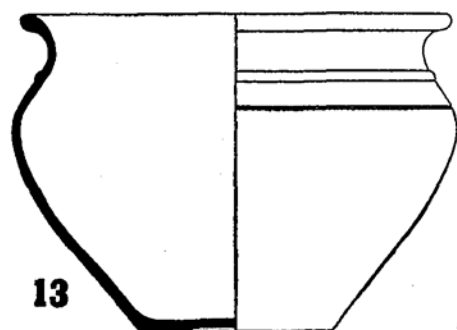
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## GROUP III.

- No. 13. URN, full of calcined bones, 9 in. diameter,  $6\frac{3}{8}$  in. high; of gritty, earthy grey clay, coated.
- No. 14. FLAT BOWL or PLATTER, 7 in. diameter, 2 in. high; gritty coated black ware, with wavy line scored round it.  
Curle, *Newstead*, p. 259, fig. 32, 7; about A.D. 130.
- No. 15. STUNTED BULBOUS BEAKER, 4 in. diameter,  $2\frac{3}{4}$  in. high; earthy grey clay, with black lines and two engine-turned bands. Abnormally outbulged and without parallel for its type. End of second, or beginning of third, century.  
*Niederbieber*, type 33; c. A.D. 190—260.
- No. 16. FLASK or BOTTLE, considerably misshapen,  $4\frac{3}{4}$  in. diameter,  $6\frac{1}{8}$  in. high; of earthy grey clay, with black lines and one engine-turned band.

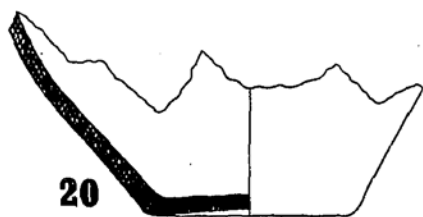
The positions of the vessels in this group were particularly noted. The patera was standing on the beaker, the latter being empty; they were touching the east side of the urn, and the bottle was touching both the urn and the patera on the north side of the latter.

## GROUP IV.

- No. 17. Lower portion of large URN, about 10 in. diameter; clay, soft, sandy, reddish-grey.
- No. 18. OLLA-SHAPED BEAKER,  $3\frac{1}{4}$  in. diameter,  $3\frac{1}{4}$  in. high; fine grey sandy clay. Late second century type.
- 
- No. 19. Base of an URN, fine grey clay, soft.

The late Mr. George Payne had been notified of all the above finds as they were discovered, and it was hoped that he would visit the site. His unfortunate decease preventing this, the matter was mentioned to a Fellow of the Society of Antiquaries, with the result that funds were forthcoming for further excavations to be undertaken; otherwise no more

PLATE IV.



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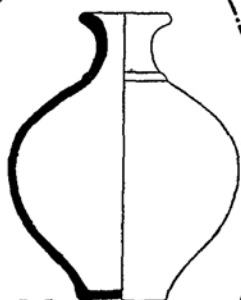
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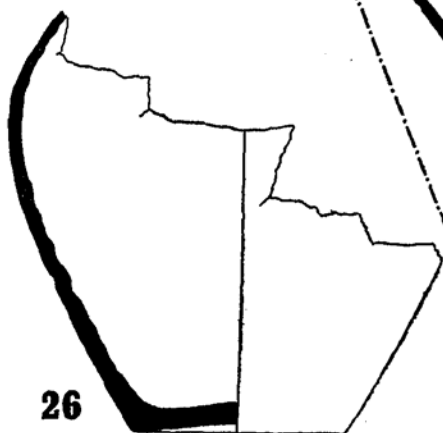
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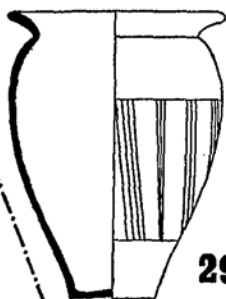
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would have been carried out, the purpose for which they were first begun having been effected. The Research Fund of the Society of Antiquaries later repaid this expense, and the result must be considered satisfactory; during November six more groups in all were unearthed, pieces numbered 20 to 37 being recovered, as well as evidence of burials by inhumation among the later finds.

## GROUP V.

- No. 20. Base of an URN; clay similar to fragment A.  
 No. 21. Base of (?) UR . grey clay.  
 No. 22. BEAKER,  $2\frac{3}{4}$  in. diameter,  $4\frac{1}{4}$  in. high; fine grey clay.  
           Colchester Mus., Joslin Coll., group 59, 322;  
           pomegranate form; second century.

## GROUP VI.

- No. 23. CUP,  $3\frac{5}{8}$  in. diameter, 2 in. high; terra sigillata ware with a good glaze.  
           Conforms to late second century type. Atilianus in Pudding Pan Rock Series, *Proc. Soc. Antiq.*, xxi., xxii.; dated in Antonine Period, A.D. 160—190.  
 No. 24. FLASK or BOTTLE,  $4\frac{5}{8}$  in. diameter,  $5\frac{3}{4}$  in. high; good clay with black core, reddish near surface, and black coated.  
           Colchester Mus., Joslin Coll., group 49, 284; A.D. 50—100; moulded foot.  
 No. 25. OLLA-SHAPED BEAKER, 3 in. diameter,  $3\frac{1}{4}$  in. high; similar clay to last, but with blacker coating.  
           Second century type.  
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 No. 26. Lower portion of URN, about  $9\frac{1}{2}$  in. diameter; similar clay to the two foregoing.

These last were all from 2 ft. to  $2\frac{1}{4}$  ft. below the surface, but the next group, No. VII., was about 3 ft. down. The three pieces of pottery were all touching a skull, No. 27

being west, No. 28 south, and No. 29 east of it. The way the skull itself was lying could not be seen; in fact No. 27 was so soft and fragile that its form could not be ascertained in the hole, and as much earth round it as possible was taken up so that it could be examined in the light. It was then that its nature was discovered, and on sorting out the fragments three or four rusty nails were picked out of the earth, but no other bones nor remains of any kind could be traced. The clay adhering so firmly, and the condition of the bone being unfortunately extremely decayed and rotten, it is doubtful whether it will be possible to clean it or to gather any particulars from it. If this interment was subsequent to the one by cremation in urn No. 26, it only missed by about 6 inches disturbing that pot.

#### GROUP VII.

No. 27. ONE-HANDLED FLAGON, soft red clay; part not drawn is in about 80 to 100 fragments.

Too incomplete for comparison, but apparently early second century type.

No. 28. DISH or PLATTER, 7 in. diameter,  $1\frac{3}{4}$  in. high; gritty clay, coated black.

No. 29. OLLA,  $4\frac{1}{2}$  in. diameter,  $5\frac{3}{4}$  in. high; clay similar to No. 24, well coated black, the upper and lower portions well smoothed, the centre belt having eight sets of three parallel, slightly oblique lines scored, one set of four, and one set of three not parallel.

Colchester Mus., Joslin Coll., group 56, 312; dated A.D. 133—200.

The two small vessels comprising Group VIII. were  $3\frac{1}{2}$  ft. below the surface. The root of a large tree had thrust itself down between them, so after recognizing the human remains in the previous group as much earth as was practicable around the root was carefully removed, sifted, and washed through a  $\frac{1}{8}$  in. mesh sieve, to insure recovering anything that might be there. Some human teeth and iron nails were

found by this means, confirming our suspicions, and it was then regretted that the absence of an urn was not observed in Group VI. and similar precautions taken in that instance.

### GROUP VIII.

- No. 30. BEAKER,  $3\frac{1}{4}$  in. diameter,  $3\frac{3}{4}$  in. high; fine clay, light grey at base merging to purple-grey at rim, uncoated, with four indentations made by the potter's thumb; and interesting as being the only indented Beaker found on this site.

Walters, *Cat.*, M 171, pl. xix.; second century.\*

- No. 31. OLLA-SHAPED BEAKER OR DRINKING MUG,  $3\frac{1}{4}$  in. diameter,  $3\frac{1}{2}$  in. high; fine grey clay, uncoated.  
Late second century type.

Beaker No. 6 was noted as being 3 ft. 4 in. below the surface; in view of this later experience it seems probable, from its position and depth, that it may also have been part of a burial by inhumation.

Further excavations not being practicable immediately adjoining the explored part, it was decided to try a fresh hole about 7 ft. south of the previous diggings, in what was at the time the only convenient adjacent spot. Groups IX. and X. were found here: the rim of No. 32 was 2 ft. below the surface. It was so filled with burnt bones that they had overflowed, and some were found between the two vessels.

### GROUP IX.

- No. 32. URN, full of calcined bones,  $9\frac{3}{4}$  in. diameter, 11 in. high; fine grey clay, uncoated.

The hollow-turned under surface of the stand-plate and false cordons suggest that this is a late development of the cordoned Aylesford types described by Sir Arthur Evans, *Archæologia*, vol. lii.

\* *Catalogue of Roman Pottery in the British Museum.* By H. B. Walters. (1908.)

- No. 33. BOTTLE, 5 in. diameter,  $6\frac{1}{2}$  in. high; brownish grey clay; between the cordons on neck and a black band on shoulder are faint traces of a whitish coating.
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- No. 34. Apparently the stand-plate only of an urn; sandy grey clay. This was 2 ft. down and all the upper part of this pot had disappeared.

In the midst of the last group, No. X., a mass of the brick earth was observed to be stained a yellowish colour. On examining this, hobnails were identified, so, although the shape could not be defined, it had doubtless originally been a sandal. The stained appearance of the earth may possibly have been caused by the decayed leather, or by iron rust. A nail was also found in or close to this group; the earth for some distance around was removed in small quantities with a trowel, but although it was believed to have been moved before and the edge of the pot-hole was traced, no traces of a cist, bones or other remains could be seen.

#### GROUP X.

- No. 35. ONE-HANDLED FLAGON,  $6\frac{1}{2}$  in. diameter,  $7\frac{3}{4}$  in. high; gritty, hard, light brown-red or buff clay; air-hole at base of neck, which is very constricted internally; this vent would facilitate filling, and also drinking from the vessel if held by its handle in the right hand.

*Silchester Pottery*, p. 149, pl. lxiv., 124.

*Coll. Antiq.*, i., pl. ix., fig. 9.\*

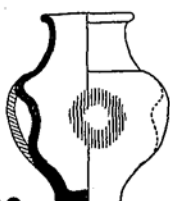
- No. 36. OLLA-SHAPED BEAKER,  $3\frac{1}{2}$  in. diameter,  $3\frac{1}{2}$  in. high; gritty dark grey clay.

Colchester Mus., Joslin Coll., group 72, 411.

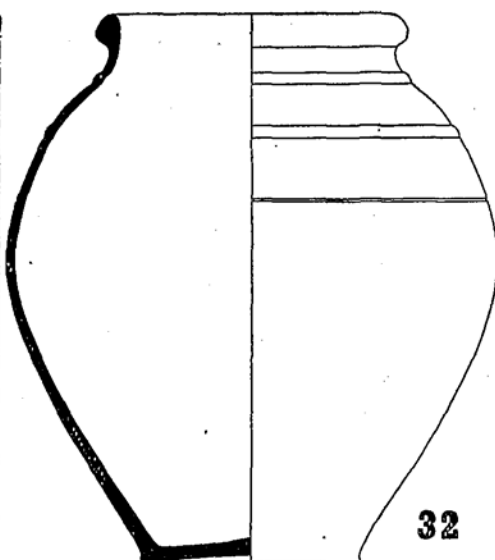
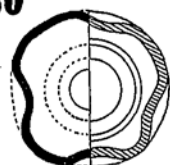
\* *Collectanea Antiqua*. By C. Roach Smith. (1848—58.)

PLATE V.

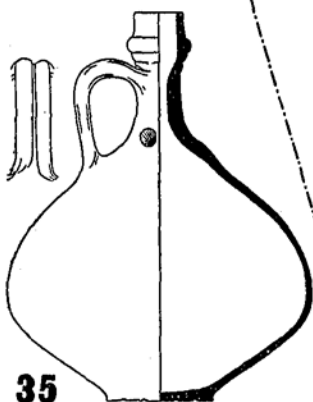
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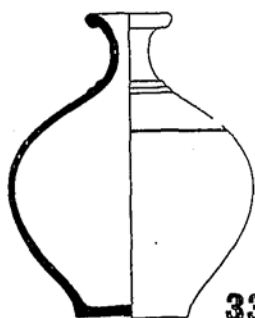
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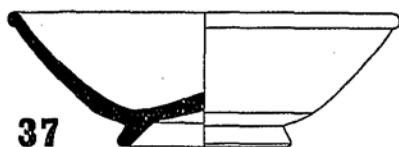
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INCHES

No. 37. BOWL,  $7\frac{7}{8}$  in. diameter,  $2\frac{3}{4}$  in. high; terra sigillata ware; clay poor, soft, light pinkish-red; the glaze in darker red and almost decayed away. Impression of potter's stamp quite illegible.

Resembles the Rheinzabern Bowl of Florentinus in having a continuous curve from the top to base inside. Oelmann, *Niederbieber*, type I, pl. i., 1b, A.D. 190—260, and may be dated about A.D. 200.\*

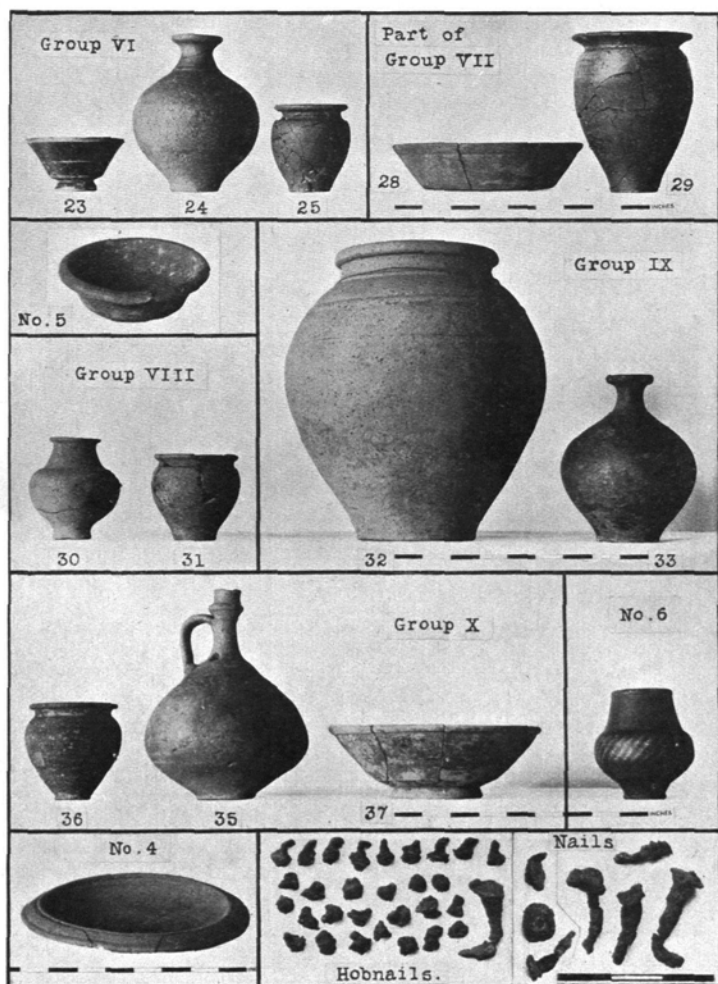
The pottery can at present be seen at the offices of Messrs. Whiting Bros., Builders, Ospringe, adjoining the site where it was found; it is hoped that it may in the near future be placed for permanent exhibition in the public reading room at the Institute, East Street, Faversham.

Thanks must be expressed to Mr. Mill Stephenson, F.S.A., and to Mr. Reginald Smith, F.S.A., of the British Museum, not only for editing these notes, but also for twice visiting the site, identifying the hobnails, giving innumerable suggestions and being of the greatest possible assistance in many other ways; to Mr. Thos. May as before mentioned; to Mr. H. Elgar of Maidstone, and to the Curators of several other museums for information and assistance in various directions.

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Since the above report was concluded further discoveries have been made in this cemetery, but as it is possible still more excavating may yet be done, details of later finds must await our next volume.

\* *Die Keramik des Kastells Niederbieber*. By F. Oelmann. (1914.)



# OSPRINGE

Pottery and nails from Romano-British Cemetery (2)