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DARENTH PARK ANGLO-SAXON CEMETERY, DARTFORD

D. BATCHELOR

INTRODUCTION

Part of the Anglo-Saxon cemetery at Darenth Park Hospital was excavated (Central Excavation Unit site code 47) in the early summer of 1981 by the then Department of the Environment's Central Excavation Unit. The excavation was caused by the construction of an oil pipeline across the western edge of the scheduled area (Scheduled Ancient Monument Kent 380). Investigations were undertaken both within the scheduled area and in the grounds of the hospital to the north.

LOCATION (Fig. 1)

The site (centred at N.G.R. TQ 565729) is on the south side of the broad chalk ridge that here forms the North Downs. The major part of the site lies just below the crest of the ridge on the steep south-facing slope, above a dry valley that joins the main Darent valley 1.5 km. to the west. The northern part of the site in the hospital grounds is on the flat top of the ridge, although the original contour of the ridge has been modified by later constructions. This has emphasised the flat nature of the top of the ridge and has had the effect of creating a large lynchet at the southern boundary of the hospital grounds.

* Published with the aid of a grant from English Heritage (Historic Buildings and Monuments Commission for England).

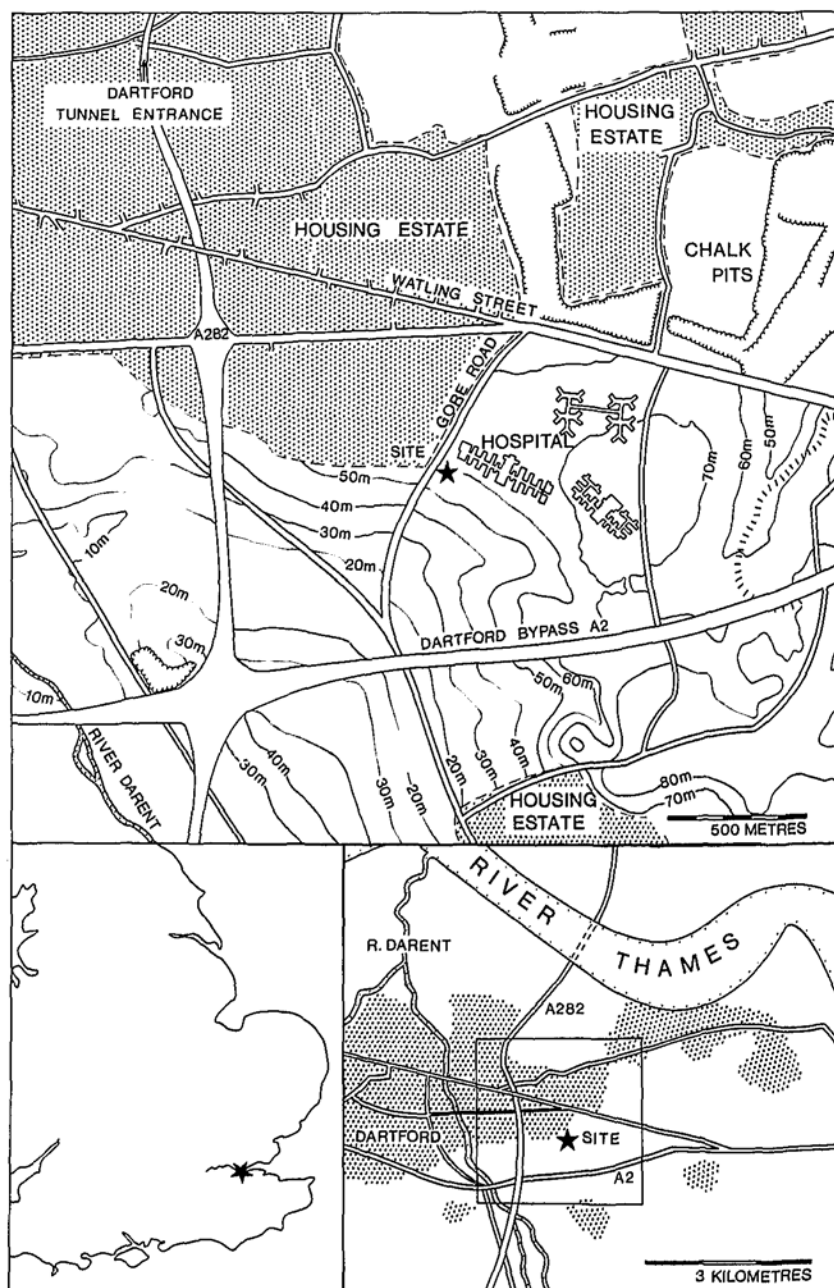


Fig. 1. Location of the site.

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PREVIOUS ARCHAEOLOGICAL WORK

There are several documented finds from the vicinity of the area under investigation. The earliest recorded find is in 1881 when during the construction of the Metropolitan District Asylum (now the Darenth Park Hospital) a grave was disturbed, which produced some human bones, a shield umbo and spear-head.¹ The map showing the position of the find-spot has not survived. In 1956, during the laying of a telephone cable, another grave was found. This produced some human bone, a silver gilt great square headed brooch and fragments of one or possibly two bronze bowls.² This find-spot was reported as being close to the gatehouse at the entrance to the hospital from Gore Road (see Fig. 2). Subsequent alterations to the access road to the hospital, involving the demolition of the gatehouse have made the

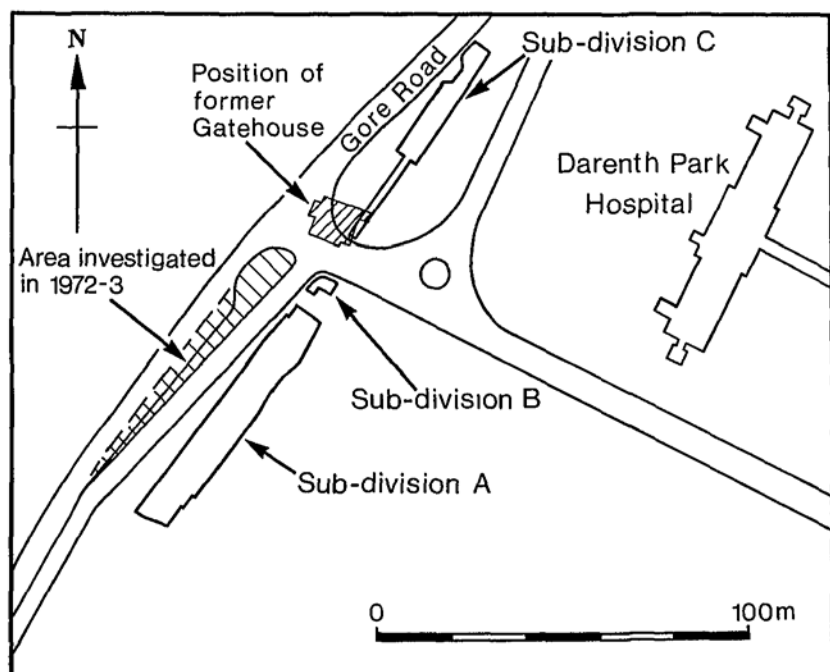


Fig. 2. Location of the 1981 trenches and the general location of other known find-spots associated with the cemetery.

¹ *Journal of the British Archaeological Association*, xi (1884), 120-1.

² D.M. Wilson, *Arch. Cant.*, lxx (1956), 187-91.

accurate location of this grave impossible. In 1972 and 1973, Lt.-Col. G.W. Meates excavated in advance of road widening in Gore Road. One grave of a male adolescent was found aligned north-south; no grave goods were recovered (finds in Dartford Museum no. 1973-71). There are also several unsubstantiated reports of human remains having been found this century in the vicinity of the known finds spots.³

In 1978 the local archaeological group, Dartford and District Archaeological Group (D.D.A.G.) obtained permission from the hospital administrator to carry out a trial excavation in the field owned by the Health Authority to the south of the grounds.⁴ This was in response to a then current planning proposal under consideration for the extraction of chalk from the area. As the field was under cultivation at the time the excavations were confined initially to two narrow trenches (2 m. wide) along the northern and western edges of the field. One Anglo-Saxon grave was located and excavated in the northern trench and a further one located and excavated in an extension of this trench northwards towards the field boundary. The western trench produced only modern features. The east-west orientated grave produced an extended inhumation with a shattered pottery bowl and a complete glass bowl. The second grave orientated north-south contained a double extended inhumation, the later burial placed on top of and disturbing the earlier burial. Both of these inhumations appear to be male and both had an iron knife as grave goods. Both of these graves fell within the easement of the pipeline and were re-excavated and given burial numbers 4 (107) and 5 (104) (see Fig. 3).

METHOD

Because of the method employed by the contractors laying the pipeline the archaeological stripping had to conform to their standard and requirements. The contractors' method was to use an easement 15 m. wide and dump topsoil to the right (east in this case), subsoil to be dumped on the left. For the archaeological excavations the ploughsoil was mechanically removed to the top of the natural chalk, leaving a cleaned strip 12 m. wide and 86 m. long for excavation. It had already been established by the earlier excavations and test pits

³ A.G. Parke, 'Historical considerations', in R.M. Walsh, *Arch. Cant.*, xcvi (1980), 318-20.

⁴ R.M. Walsh, *Arch. Cant.*, xcvi (1980), 305-20.

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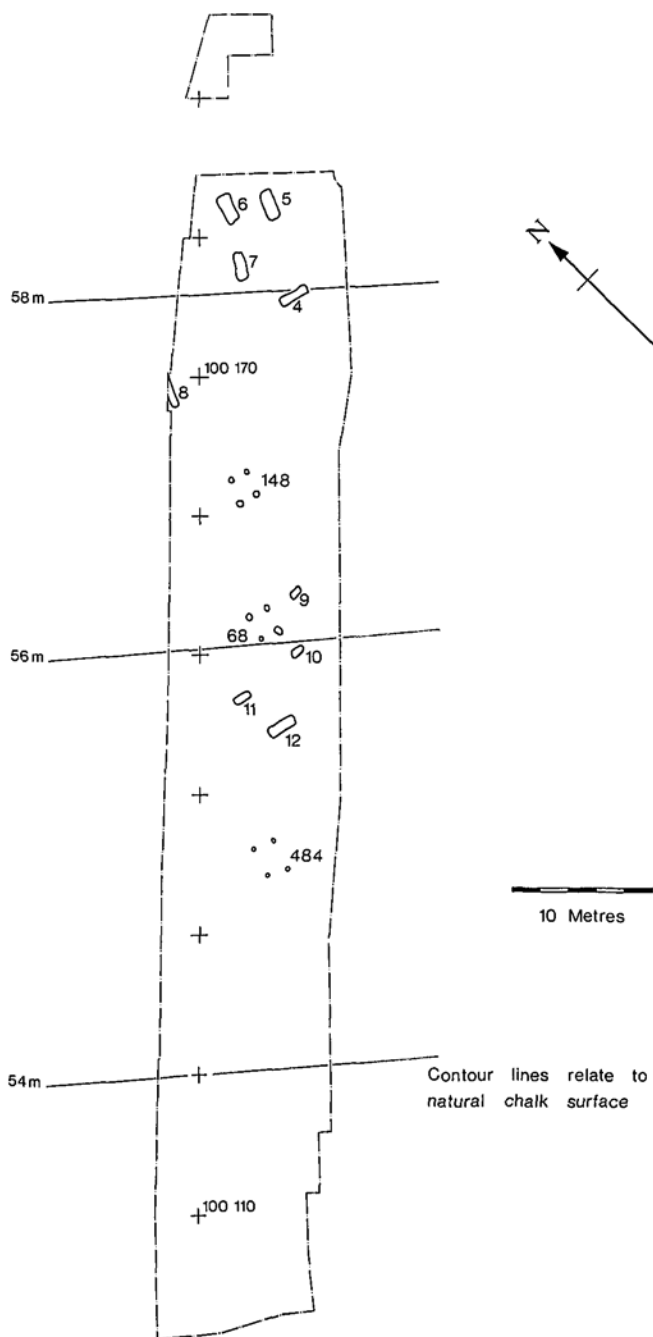


Fig. 3. Plan of sub-division A.

dug before stripping that the ploughing of the present cultivation regime had destroyed any stratigraphy above the chalk, except for the narrow strip of headland adjacent to the hospital boundary at the northern end of site. Here only the upper levels were removed by the machine the remainder being excavated by hand.

In the hospital grounds the contractors had to alter the easement width to avoid mature trees and extant services. This meant that a considerably narrower area was available for excavation. A watching brief was undertaken when the contractors dug the pipe trench through the grounds. This allowed areas that were not available at the time for excavation to be examined.

DESCRIPTION

The line of the easement was divided by obstacles into three site sub-divisions in the area under investigation (Fig. 2). Sub-division A was the largest in area and was within the scheduled area in the field to the south of the hospital grounds. Sub-divisions B and C were in the hospital grounds and were separated from each other by the hospital access road. Sub-divisions B and C proved to have been badly disturbed in recent times and no evidence was found for any features relating to occupation prior to the building of the hospital. This lack of survival of archaeological features was confirmed when the watching brief on the contractors' pipe trench was carried out.

SITE SUB-DIVISION A (Fig. 3, Plate I)

This was an area 12 m. wide and 86 m. long that ran southwards down the slope from the hospital boundary. The previous excavations by D.D.A.G. crossed the northern part of the area. The density of all the archaeological features decreased markedly the farther down the slope one progressed. Because of the differences in the nature of the fills, it was an easy matter to identify the modern features associated with the hospital.

Once the modern disturbances had been identified and excavated, including the two previously excavated graves, it became apparent that the features remaining were of three distinct types. These were graves, post-holes forming four-post structures and stake-holes. It was impossible to relate any of the different features with another. Each of the types will, therefore, be described individually. No dating evidence was found for any of the post-holes or stake-holes.

THE GRAVES

Nine graves were excavated in 1981, two being the re-excitation of those examined in 1978. As can be seen from the plan (Fig. 3) the graves appear to form two groups within the northern half of the excavated area. The graves have two distinct and consistent orientations, north-south and east-west which can be separated into two distinct groups. Within the north-south orientated graves the positioning of the burial varies between having the head to the north and head to the south. All of the east-west orientated graves had the head towards the west.

The following text represents a catalogue of the individual burials from the north to the south of the site. The physical description is by the author, this is followed by the identification and comments on the human bone by Janet Henderson and Alison Cameron, followed by identification of the artefacts by Alison Cook, who also provides a discussion of the grave goods at the end of this catalogue. Also included are comments by Elisabeth Crowfoot (Ancient Monuments Laboratory Reports 3616 and 4117) on the remains of textile fragments where these have been found preserved in the corrosion products on the metal artefacts. For a fuller identification and description of all of the aspects of the site reference should be made to the respective sections of the archive.

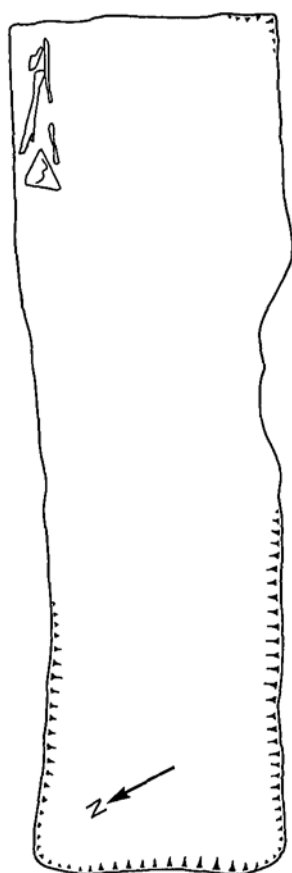
To correlate with the numbered sequence used in the publication of the 1978 excavations the numbering system used in this report continues using the same sequence.⁵ Grave numbers 4 (107) and 5 (104) relate to the two graves excavated by D.D.A.G. in 1978, grave numbers 6-12 relate to graves excavated in 1981 by C.E.U. The grave numbers (4-12) used in the catalogue are followed by the context number allocated during excavation, and these context numbers should be used for reference to the archive. Artefacts are individually numbered for each grave group, this number being followed by an Ancient Monuments Laboratory (A.M.L.) number and these A.M.L. numbers should be used for reference to the archive.

GRAVE 4 (107) (Fig. 4, Pl. II)

Partially excavated by D.D.A.G. in 1978. The very shallow grave cut, less than 0.08 m., was orientated east-west with an extended inhumation with the head to the west. When originally excavated the

⁵ *Ibid.*, 319-20.

Grave 4



Grave 6

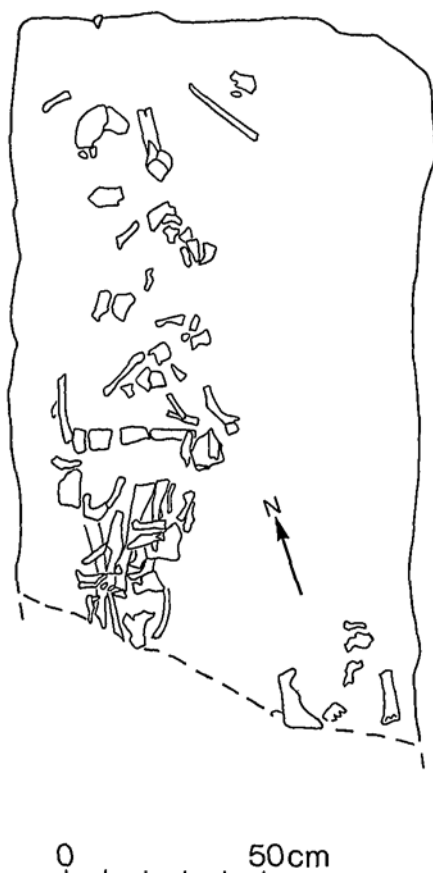


Fig. 4. Plan of graves 4 and 6.

grave was found to have been damaged by ploughing although the glass bowl had remained intact. The majority of the skeletal remains found in 1978 were left in the grave and reburied. When re-excavated only the bones of the lower part of the left leg were found, these having been moved by the ploughing to the north-east corner of the grave.

Human Bone

The bone preservation was very poor, the bones present being only the tibia and fibula. The size of the long bones indicates an adult.

Artefacts

These were all recovered in the 1978 excavations by D.D.A.G. A complete glass bowl and a badly damaged pottery bowl were found respectively above the left and right shoulders of the skeleton. The glass bowl is a decorated mould-blown bowl, which is identified as of Frankish manufacture and fitting with a series of bowls dated to the period A.D. 425–500. The decoration takes the form of a Chi-Rho symbol that is placed centrally on the base surrounded by a vine scroll design, all of this enclosed by a ring of Latin text. The fine decoration of the bowl probably enables this bowl to be assigned to the earlier part of the series, i.e. from the first half of the fifth century. The pottery bowl is less easily dated, but it appears to be of late fifth-century date.⁶

GRAVE 5 (104) (not illustrated)

Completely excavated by D.D.A.G. A wide grave cut was orientated north–south, containing double extended burials with heads to the north. The lower skeleton had been disturbed by the later upper skeleton.

Artefacts

Both skeletons had small iron knives as grave goods, the upper on the left hip and the lower on the right hip.

GRAVE 6 (103) (Fig. 4, Pl. III)

A large rectangular grave cut with a flat base, 2.05 m. long, 0.82 m. wide and 0.46 m. deep was orientated north–south. The grave had been disturbed during antiquity and the two burials have been totally disturbed and thoroughly mixed with the filling. The stepping of the sides may possibly indicate a recut and a double burial similar to that found in burial 5.

Human Bone

There were two individuals in this burial:

(a) Bone preservation was fragmentary and they were grossly

⁶ *Ibid.*, 315–16.

eroded. Sex was female based upon the pelvic and skull morphology. Age ?35–45 based on the molar attrition,⁷ with a medium degree of periodontal disease.

(b) Bone preservation was fragmentary and grossly eroded. Sex was male based on the pelvis morphology and the long bone size. The left tibia had a low raised lesion, elliptical in shape (32 × 11 mm.). It was on the lateral surface of the lower half of the tibia with its long axis in the long axis of the tibia.

Artefacts

No artefacts were found in the fill of this grave.

GRAVE 7 (387) (Fig. 5, Pl. IV)

A deep rectangular grave cut with sloping base, 2.04 m. long, 0.82 m. wide and 0.46 m. deep was orientated north–south with an extended inhumation with the head to the south (downslope). The side at the south (head) end is slightly overhanging with the remaining sides being vertical with a flat base. The head and upper part of the torso of the inhumation appear to have been pillowed up on crushed chalk.

Human Bone

The bone preservation was very poor in this skeleton. Sex is female based on the skull and pelvic morphology with an age of 25–35 based on the molar attrition. The mandible has slight periodontal disease.

Artefacts

A pair of bronze applied saucer brooches with five-point star decoration were found on opposite sides of the upper chest. The applied plates of both brooches are fragmentary, but a complete decorative scheme can be reconstructed (Fig. 5).

1. Brooch (A.M.L. no. 8112033) found on the right hand side. Diameter of the plate is 36 mm. The entire rim of the brooch is preserved but is detached from the main body of the brooch. The applied plate is decorated with a central boss surrounded by two

⁷ D.R. Brothwell, *Digging up Bones*: 3rd edition, British Museum (Natural History), London, 1981.

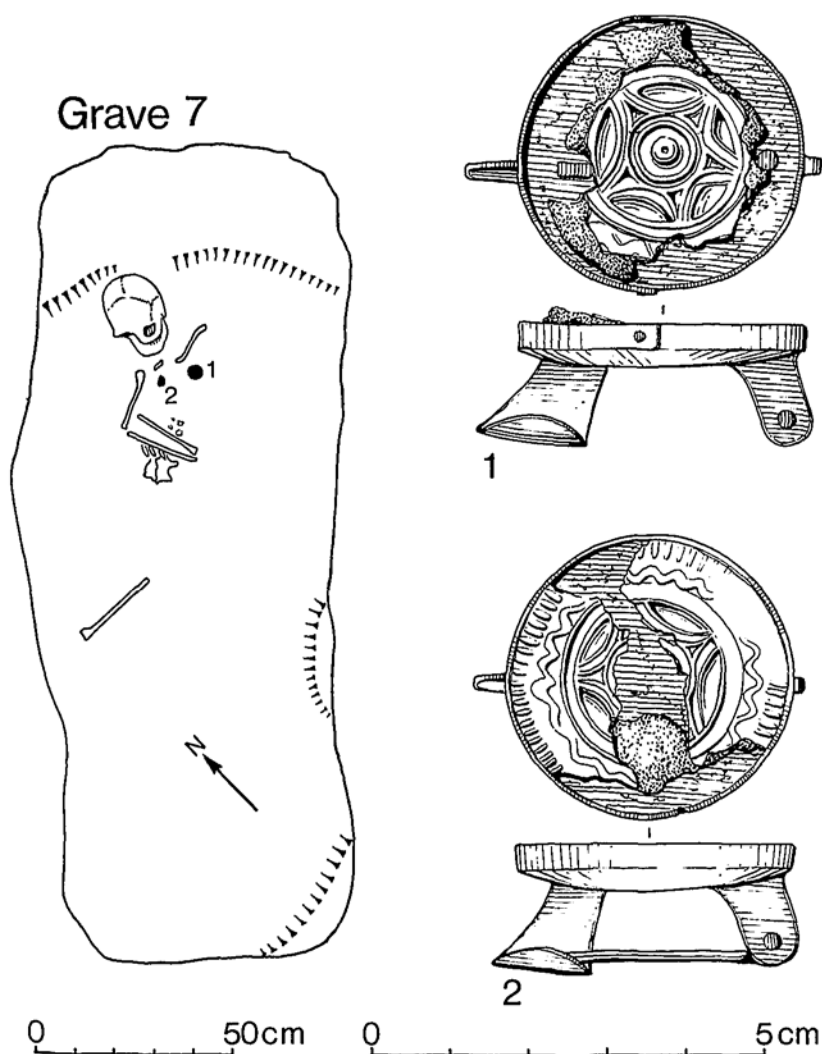


Fig. 5. Plan of grave 7 and drawings of brooches 1 and 2.

rings; outside, a five-point star made of double lines forming concave curves, surrounded by a pair of rings. Only a small section of border zone is visible on brooch 1. Remaining fragments of brooch 2 show that the border decoration consisted of a scalloped or zig-zag line and a row of small lines at right angles to the edge. The bronze catch-plate and attachment plates are intact, with remains of the iron pin. Textile

remains were found in the corrosion on the pin and attachment plate. These were Z threads probably from a fine tabby weave. Other threads, one Z, one S, suggest another coarser weave was present.

2. Brooch (A.M.L. nos. 8112032 and 8112034) found on the left-hand side. Two large fragments of the outer edge of the applied plate are preserved and three smaller fragments and two pieces of the rim are preserved. The iron pin is intact with replaced leather or skin and textile remains in the corrosion products. The deteriorated area of textile remains (25×8 mm. with Z spinning, probably from a fine tabby weave, as on other brooch (no. 8112033), has a flattened surface. Coarser Z threads by the pin-head could be bead string.

GRAVE 8 (Figs. 6 and 7, Pl. V)

The north-west part of the grave was not excavated as it lay outside the area of the easement and was cut off from the excavated area by a modern cable trench. The grave cut is orientated north-south with an extended inhumation with the head to the south (downslope). The excavated length of the grave cut was 1.48 m. with maximum width of 0.78 m.; the depth was 0.18 m. at its deepest point. The head of the inhumation appears to have been pillowed on some chalk, although the fragmentary nature of the skull makes it difficult to be certain.

Human bone

The bone preservation was poor, being both fragmentary and eroded. The skeleton was probably that of a female between the ages of 35-45; this was based upon the pelvic morphology and the molar attrition. There are two substantial carious caries, one on 1,4 and the other on a loose molar tooth. The individual also had considerable periodontal disease and mild enamel hypoplasia. One of the thoracic vertebrae had facet joint osteoarthritis on the superior and inferior facets.

Artefacts

This was the richest of the burials excavated, the inhumation was associated with eight distinct artefacts or groups of artefacts.

1. Brooch (A.M.L. no. 8112026). Bronze disc brooch found on the right shoulder partly above the clavicle. The diameter is 35 mm. with traces of tin plating on the surface. It is decorated with five

ring-and-dot motifs, one centrally placed and the others around it. The edge of the brooch is decorated with four groups of small indentations. The attachment plate is damaged, the catch-plate intact with remains of an iron pin. The pin attachment plate (A.M.L. no. 8112026) was detached from the brooch and was found to the left of the neck. The iron concretion adhered to the remains of the pin. Textile remains were recovered from both the brooch and the detached plate. In one detached replaced fragment (a) (8×6 mm.) the yarns appeared round and soft, fairly lightly spun, Z in both systems. The close tabby weave had an estimated count of 8/7 threads per 5 mm. Another replaced fragment of very similar tabby (b) (7×8 mm.) had threads mixed Z and S in one system, S in another, which suggests stripes or checks, perhaps part of same weave with fragment (a). Coarse Z threads replaced on the pin attachment were probably from bead string.

2. *Brooch* (A.M.L. 8112053). *Bronze disc brooch found on the left shoulder, above the scapula.* A pair to brooch 1, the iron pin is apparently intact. From the front (c) two small areas (6.5×6 ; 10×5 mm.) of flax tabby survived. This was fairly evenly Z spun in both systems, undyed, a slightly open weave with a count of 9/8 threads per 5 mm. From the back the rounded threads, some Z, some S, on a detached replaced fragment (10×5 mm.) suggested weave (b) on the other brooch (no. 8112026). Another replaced fragment (d) (15×9 mm.) lying on bone, appeared to be a coarser Z spun tabby.

3. *Perforated Roman bronze coin* (A.M.L. no. 8112043) on the centre of the chest, the detail on obverse of the coin had been rubbed off the majority of the surface. The coin has been identified as an *antoninianus* of the emperor Allectus (A.D. 293–96).

4. *Iron pin* (A.M.L. nos. 8112035 upper and 8112036 lower) found in two pieces lying across the upper part of the left side of the chest. The total reconstructed length is 80 mm. with an 'S'-shaped head with a round sectioned shaft ending in a rounded point. Replaced textile remains (e) were found on both of the fragments. On the upper part deteriorated replaced textile was found on one surface, on the other side tabby weave, Z spun, the count estimated c. 16/16 threads per 10 mm., replaced over an area of c. 25×10 mm., (e) including part of a 4-hole tablet-woven border, with coarse edge twists lying one Z, one S and remains of the centre in diagonal pattern. On the lower fragment of the pin the same weave was replaced for a length of 40×12 mm., with the edge of the

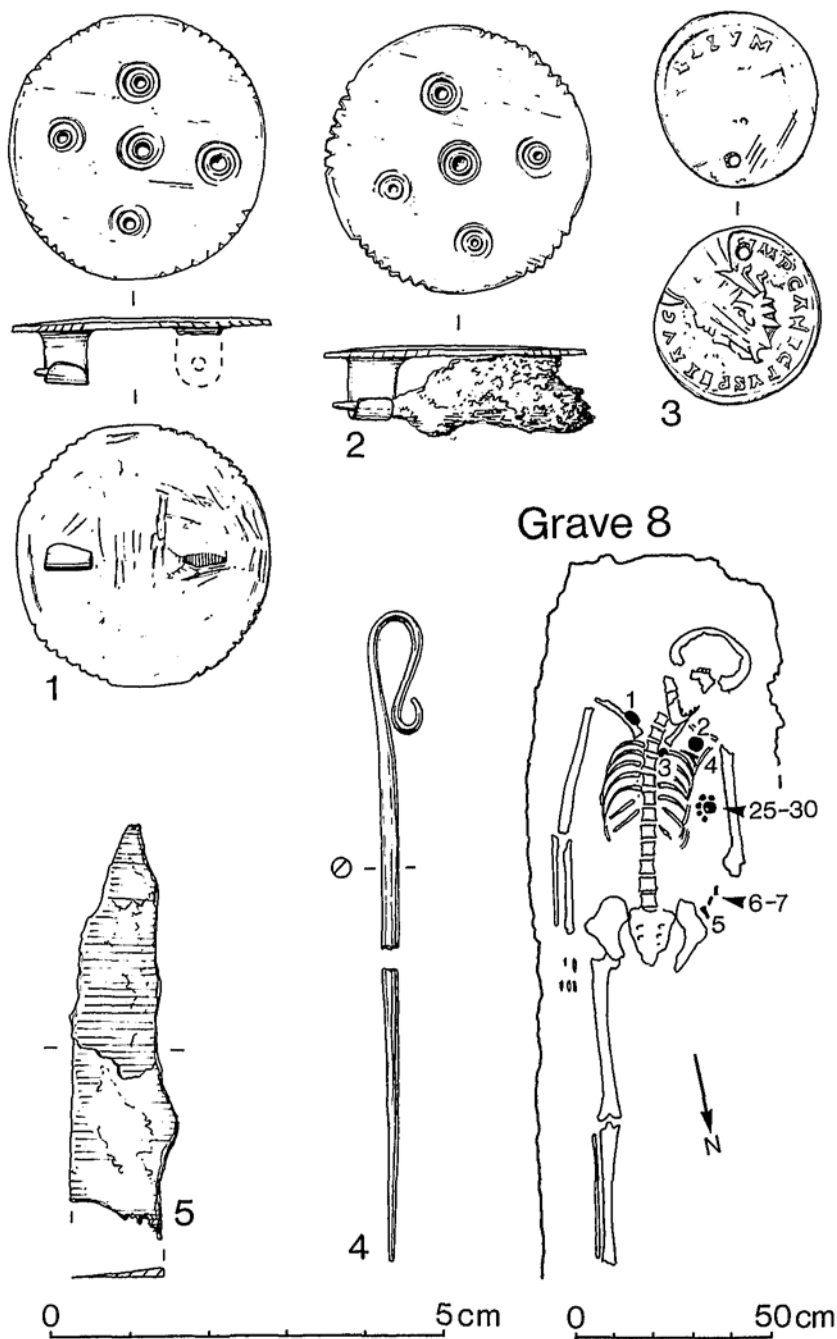


Fig. 6. Plan of grave 8 and drawings of nos. 1-5.

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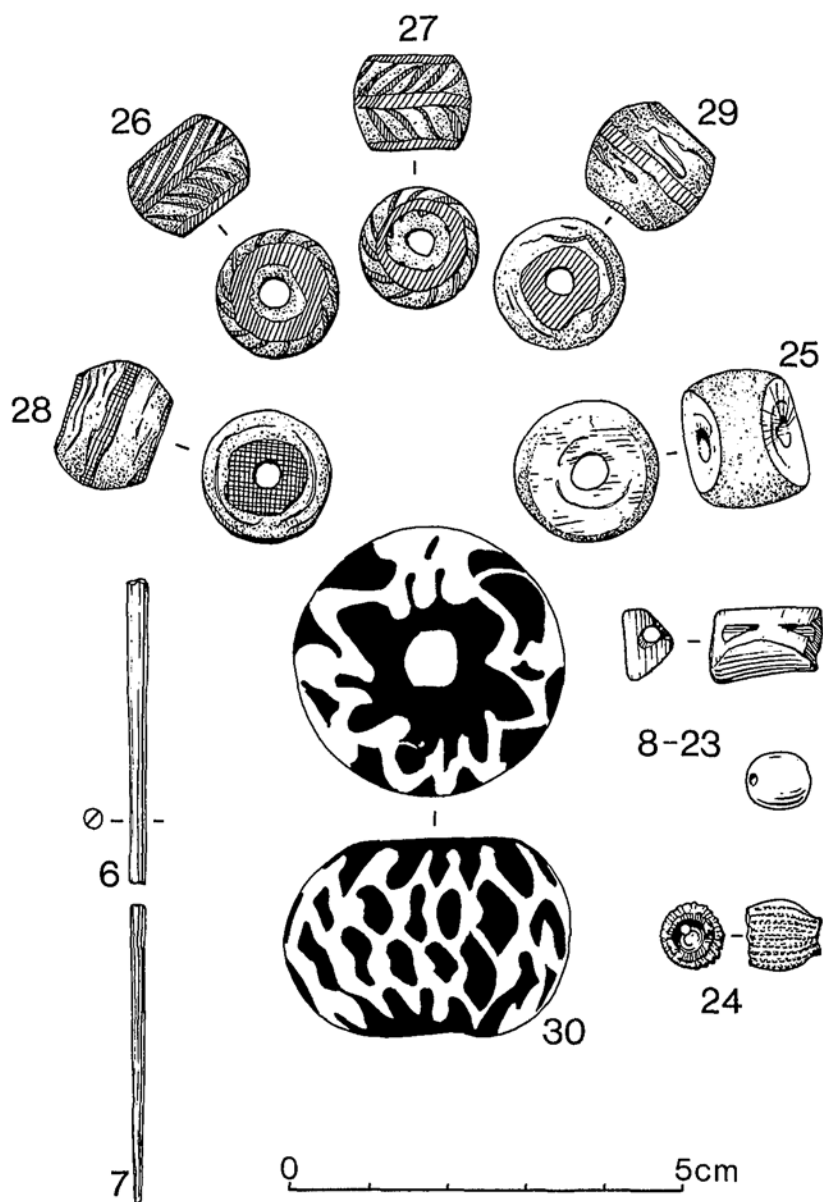


Fig. 7. Grave 8 drawings of nos. 6-30.

border hidden by a fold of the weave, part of the diagonal pattern was clearer, giving a count of 8 twists on 5 mm. This weave was of hard spun worsted yarn, a slightly open but even weave, similar to but probably not the same as fragments (a) and (b) found associated with the brooches. Underneath one end of the pin, fragments of coarser Z or Z ply tabby were visible (10 × 5 mm.) which are very similar to (d) on brooch (8112053) found on the left shoulder.

5. Iron knife blade (A.M.L. no. 8112050) found at the left-hand side of the waist in association with the two parts of the bone pin or shaft (6 and 7). The blade has a straight back and a curved blade; (Bohner's type B).⁸ It is possible that this object was damaged by the cut for the cable trench dug recently.

6-7. Bone pin or shaft (A.M.L. nos. 8112052, 8112054) found in two pieces on the left-hand side of the waist with the iron knife blade 5. Length 38 mm. with a tapering shaft. The upper end of the pin or shaft appears to be missing.

8-23. (Not shown on plan of burial) Sixteen irregularly shaped amber beads (A.M.L. no. 8112054) presumably from a necklace found around pierced coin 4 on the left side of the upper part of the chest; one bead lay above brooch 2. Two beads are fragmentary; one is cylindrical with a sub-triangular transverse section, 13 × 9 mm. in size. The remainder are either barrel-shaped with sub-rectangular or sub-triangular sections, or irregular with an average size of 7 × 6 mm.

24. Fossil bead (A.M.L. no. 8112068) found in the same area as the amber beads. Presumably part of the same necklace as the amber beads 8-23. Identified as a crinoid with a hole pierced just off centre.

25-29. Six glass beads (A.M.L. no. 8112068) found to the left side of the body between the chest and the upper part of the left arm. The arrangement of the beads is shown in Fig. 6.

25. Bead (A.M.L. no. 8112049): translucent olive green short barrel with slightly wedge shaped profile; 14 x 18 mm.

26, 27. Beads (A.M.L. nos. 8112046 and 8112047): two opaque yellow barrel-shaped beads decorated with translucent green lines overlain by three brownish red opaque rings at right angles to the axis,

⁸ K. Bohner, *Die Frankischen Altertümer der Trierer Landes*, Germanische Denkmäler der Völkerwanderungszeit, Serie B, Band 1, Berlin, 1958.

one centrally placed and one at either end. No. 26: 10×16 mm.; no. 27: 12×15 mm.

28, 29. Beads (A.M.L. nos. 8112045 and 812048): two opaque brownish red barrel-shaped beads with zone decoration consisting of two opaque bands with random streaks of translucent green glass; the beads are not as carefully manufactured as beads 26 and 27. No. 28: 12×17 mm.; no. 29: 13×12 mm.

30. Bead (A.M.L. no. 8112044): one large opaque black oblate bead decorated with an uneven lattice pattern opaque of greyish white glass; 22×34 mm.

NOTE ON THE TEXTILE REMAINS

Elisabeth Crowfoot

The textile remains from this burial form an interesting group. On the front of the disc brooch (A.M.L. no. 8112053) small areas of flax tabby weave have survived (c), the sort of fine fabric that could have been used for a woman's head-veil, falling forward onto the chest to lie on the brooch. Two other tabby weaves, with replaced fibres, differ from each other in style but would both have been of wool. In one (a, b) on both brooches, with rounded lightly spun thread and a close weave, the spin direction varies, mostly Z, but in the (b) fragments some S-spun threads in both systems, which perhaps indicate a checked pattern, as shown by groups of S and Z threads in warp and weft in tabby weaves from other southern cemeteries, Finglesham, Updown, Worthy Park, from Alveston Manor (Warwickshire) and Mucking and Orsett (Essex).

Remains of another replaced tabby (e) on pin fragments suggest a hardspun worsted thread and slightly open weave, with a tablet-woven braid border. Where these braids are patterned, as here, they seem to have been woven separately and sewn where needed to decorate a garment, on the side-sleeve edges and starting and ending borders of cloaks, or the cuff, neck-line and hem of tunics and gowns; the stitching holding the braid to the main fabric can be seen even in replaced examples (Finglesham, Grave 203; Mucking, Grave 814), and on many contemporary Scandinavian garment fragments.⁹⁻¹⁰ The

⁹ B. Hougen, *Snartemofunnane. Norske Old Funn vii* (1935), Pl. X.6 (Setrang), XII.2 (Blindheim), XVI>2, 3 (Snartemo), XVIII (Ovre Berge i Lyngdal).

¹⁰ H Dedekam, 'To tesktilfund fra folkevandringstiden', *Bergens Museums Aarbok* (1924-25), Fig. 23 (Thorsberg), Pls. I-III (Evebo).

fabric on the Darenth pin is not so clear; on the best piece a fold of the main weave lies diagonally across its junction with the braid. Unfortunately, the pattern is too damaged to be worked out, but it is of the 4-hole diagonal patterned type of the Scandinavian braids, found later in the St. Cuthbert relics at Durham,¹¹ weaves where colour is important as well as texture.

The number of different fabrics in the grave indicates that the woman was buried fully clothed, her gown or overdress of soft woollen, possibly checked cloth, fastened by brooches at the shoulders (a,b); her fine linen head-veil lying across the front of the brooch on the left-hand shoulder (c); and her cloak, with a coloured patterned border, wrapped around her (e). The small coarse fragments (d) caught under the end of the pin and nearby brooch may suggest an extra coarse wrapping or shroud.

GRAVE 9 (83) (Fig. 8, Pl. VI)

This was a small rectangular grave 0.81 m. long, 0.44 m. wide with a depth of 0.06 m. at the west end, deepening to 0.18 m. at the east end. The grave was orientated east-west. Apparently, a grave for a child burial, it appears that the head was at the west end of the grave.

Human bone

The only bones present in this grave were two well-preserved erupted deciduous molars (shown on plan). This inhumation was that of a young child (aged, on the teeth, at more than 15–21 months but less than 6 years).

Artefacts

1–11. Eleven beads (A.M.L. no. 8112025) These eleven blue translucent annular glass beads were found in a cluster at the west end of the grave on the north side. Sizes vary from 4 × 9 mm. to 4 × 11 mm.

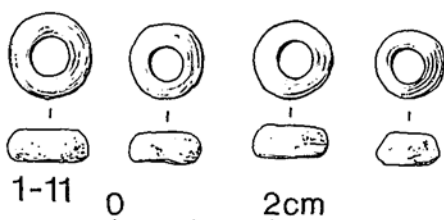
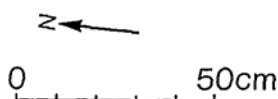
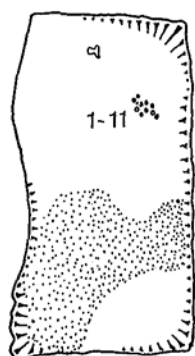
GRAVE 10 (213) (Fig. 8, Pl. VII)

This was a small rectangular grave 1.00 m. long, 0.43 m. wide with a depth that varies between 0.10–0.13 m. The grave cut was orientated

¹¹ G.M. Crowfoot, 'The tablet-woven braids', in *Relics of Saint Cuthbert*, (1956), 436, Pl. XLI.

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Grave 9



Grave 10

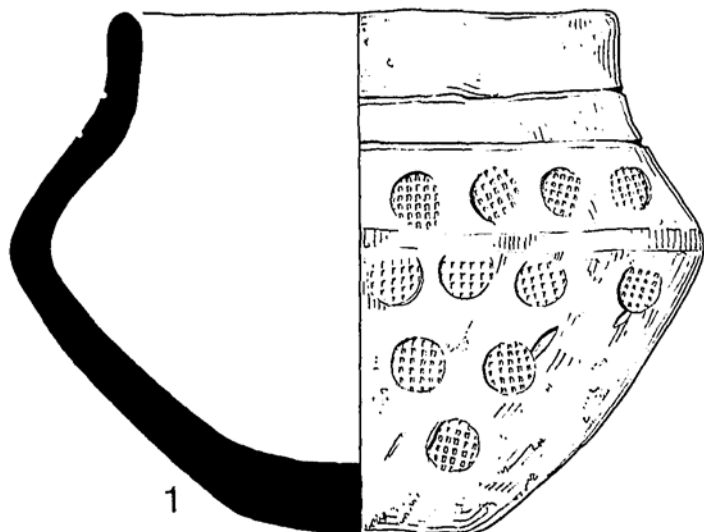
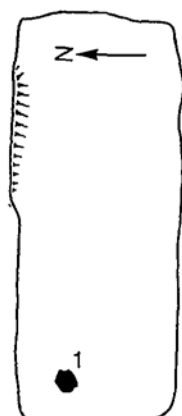
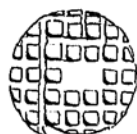


Fig. 8. Plan of grave 9 and drawings of beads 1-11; plan of grave 10 and drawing of pot 1.

east-west. It is probable that the inhumation was orientated with the head to the west from the position of the pottery accessory in the grave. This would place the vessel above the shoulder adjacent to the head.

Human bone

No bone survived, though the size of the grave makes it likely that this was an infant similar to that in burial 9.

Artefacts

1. Pottery accessory vessel (A.M.L. no. 8112031): this is a vessel of biconical form with part of the rim missing, otherwise virtually complete. Height 61 mm.; rim diameter 65 mm.; maximum diameter of the body 90 mm. with a basal diameter of 33 mm. Rounded almost upright rim, markedly carinated profile, with carination over half way up the body. Decorated with two roughly executed grooved lines around the neck and upper part of shoulder; below, a row of closely spaced stamps above the carination, unenclosed stamped pendant triangle decoration comprised of three stamps, two stamps and one stamp; the arrangement of the triangles around the vessel is uneven and at one point an additional stamp has been introduced as a space filler. Only one type of stamp is used throughout, a roughly circular grid patterned stamp (Briscoe type A3a).¹² The stamp diameter is 7 mm.; the central part of the stamp is either blocked or broken. Moderately hard, fine sandy fabric with a little grass tempering; brownish black interior and exterior surfaces, with lighter patches towards the base. Core variable in colour from brownish black to reddish brown.

GRAVE 11 (69) (Fig. 9, Pl. VIII)

This was a rectangular medium-sized grave, 1.30 m. long and 0.45 m. wide with an average depth of 0.20 m. The inhumation was extended with the head slightly pillowed up at the west end of the grave. The two artefacts found in this grave are an iron knife blade and a bronze pin-head. This pin-head probably was not part of the original grave goods; it is more likely that it found its way into the fill on back-filling the grave after burial.

¹² B.A.R., *British Series*, no. 92, Oxford, 1981, 1-35.

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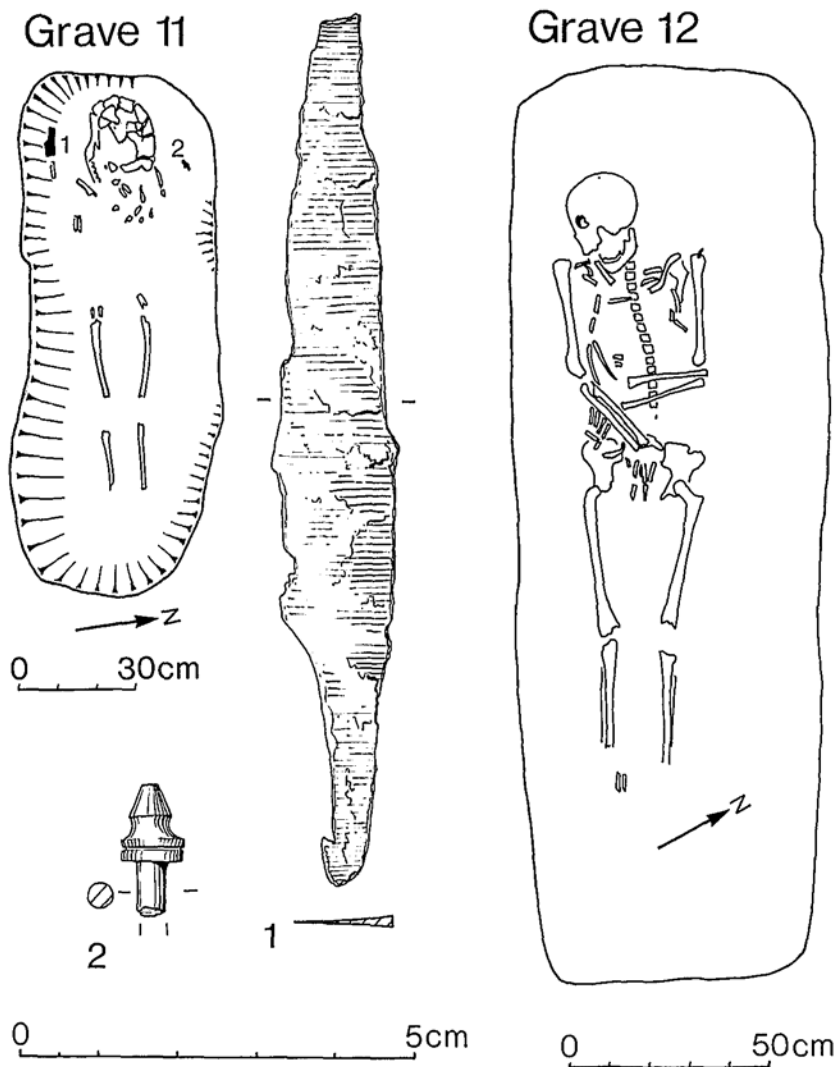


Fig. 9. Plan of grave 11 and nos. 1 and 2; plan of grave 12.

Human bone

The preservation of the bone was extremely poor. The remains were of a child of about six years, based upon the eruption of the teeth.

Artefacts

1. Iron knife (A.M.L. no. 8112028) found against the side of the grave cut on the right-hand side of the skull, apparently with the tang towards the head end of the grave. Present length 110 mm.; point of blade missing. Original profile of blade unclear, but apparently a Böhner type B knife.
2. Bronze pin-head (A.M.L. no. 8112027) This pin-head and a short length of shaft were found above and to the left-hand side of the skull. It is possible that this artefact was not part of the grave goods and is a chance find that was in the fill of the grave. Conical terminal with double collar below; round sectioned shaft.

GRAVE 12 (431) (Fig. 9, Pl. IX)

This was a rectangular, sloping-sided grave 2.17 m. long and 0.90 m. wide at the west end with a slight taper towards the east. The grave depth averaged 0.25 m. throughout the length of the grave cut. It was orientated east-west and contained an extended inhumation with the head towards the west.

Human bone

The preservation of the bone was quite good. The skeleton was that of a female and about 25–35 years of age. This is based upon the skull and pelvic morphology and the molar attrition.

Artefacts

There were none present.

OTHER ARCHAEOLOGICAL FEATURES

There were three square-shaped four-post structures found in the excavated area (nos. 68, 148 and 484, Fig. 3). The structures were of very similar size with a side length about 1.60 m. Two of the structures (68, 148) had the eastern pair of post-holes replaced. All of

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the post-voids, where apparent, were of a similar small diameter about 0.25 m. and were less than 0.20 m. deep. It is possible that these four-post structures were associated with the large number of stake-holes found on the excavated area. Some 250 stake-holes were excavated. They were more numerous towards the top of the slope. Despite the large number of individual features, it is impossible to pick out any pattern in the distribution with relation to either the grave cuts or to the four-post structures. The stake-holes were not identified in the fillings of the graves, despite careful examination though they were plentiful in the surrounding chalk.

DISCUSSION OF THE GRAVE GOODS

Alison Cook

A total of nine Anglo-Saxon graves (numbers 4–12) were investigated during 1981. Out of this total, two graves (nos. 4 and 5) had previously been excavated in 1978, and are described elsewhere.¹³ Of the remaining seven, five burials were furnished and two (nos. 6 and 7) were without associated finds.

In comparison with the previous finds from the Darenth cemetery, i.e. a silver gilt great square headed brooch¹⁴ and bossed-rim bowl of Frankish type found in 1954¹⁵ and a fine glass bowl discovered in 1978,¹⁶ the finds from the 1981 excavations are much less spectacular. They exhibit no Frankish influence and are generally typical of finds made in areas of Saxon settlement.

Two of the graves excavated in 1981 contained brooches: a pair of bronze applied saucer brooches was found in grave 7 (Fig. 5) and a pair of disc brooches in grave 8 (Fig. 6). The type of decoration found on the grave 7 brooches was discussed by Dr M. Welch in his report on an applied brooch with star decoration found at Portchester Castle, Hampshire.¹⁷ Dr Welch dates the majority of applied broo-

¹³ Walsh, *op. cit.*

¹⁴ The importance of this brooch as a model for other great square headed brooches found in areas of 'Saxon' settlement has been discussed by Dr M.G. Welch. Dr Welch cites the Darenth brooch as a close parallel to a brooch from Alfriston, Sussex, grave 28. M.G. Welch, *Early Anglo-Saxon Sussex*, B.A.R., British series, no. 112, Oxford, 1983, 69–72.

¹⁵ *Arch. Cant.*, lxx (1956), 187–91.

¹⁶ *Arch. Cant.*, xcvi (1980), 305–20.

¹⁷ M.G. Welch, in B.W. Cunliffe, *Excavations at Portchester Castle, Volume II: Saxon*, Reports of the Research Committee of the Society of Antiquaries of London, no. XXXIII, London, 1976, 206–11.

ches of the star series to the first half of the sixth century A.D., although there are fifth-century examples. The five-point star (such as that found on the Darenth brooches) is the most common design, but there are variants with four-, six- and seven-point designs. The Darenth brooches closely resemble applied brooches found at Guildown, Guildford, Surrey,¹⁸ and Lyminge, Kent.¹⁹ These brooches have a similar form of border decoration consisting of a wavy line and a ring of miniature bosses around the perimeter of the brooch. A date in the first half of the sixth century seems likely for Darenth grave 7, but a fifth-century date should not be ruled out.

Disc brooches represent one of the most common brooch types in areas of Saxon settlement. Although their general simplicity in both form and decoration suggests that it will probably never be possible to produce a detailed classification of the disc brooches, their date of manufacture has recently been securely placed in the period c. A.D. 450–500.²⁰

Large pins, such as the iron example from grave 8 (Fig. 6, no. 4) are normally found singly on the chest, and it seems likely that they served to fasten a cloak or outer garment. The grave 8 pin belongs to a well-known type of iron pin: the type is characterised by having one end of the shaft bent into an 'S'-shaped head. The cemetery of Portway, Andover, Hampshire, produced two similar pins, one in a general sixth-century context, and the other in a grave dated to the second half of the sixth century.²¹

The position of the bone shaft in grave 8 (Fig. 7, no. 6/7), i.e. with the knife at waist level, indicates that it may have served a domestic function, rather than being an adjunct of the costume. Unfortunately, the top part of the shaft appears to be missing and the original form of the implement unknown.

Two graves at Darenth contained collections of beads: graves 8 and 9 (Figs. 7 and 8). Grave 8 had a total of twenty-three beads found in two groups; a collection of glass beads (nos. 25–30) and one amber bead and a fossil (nos. 8–23). Although a few amber beads have been found in demonstrably fifth-century contexts, the majority of finds derive from sixth-century burials.²² The place of origin of the amber

¹⁸ Graves 75 and 116: *Surrey Arch. Coll.*, xxxix (1931), Pl. XII, nos. 1 and 3.

¹⁹ Grave 10: *Arch. Cant.*, lxi (1955), Fig. 6, no. 5. The brooch was associated with a bronze penannular brooch decorated in Q**** brooch style.

²⁰ B.A.R., British Series, no. 72, Oxford, 1979, 39–80.

²¹ A.M. Cook and M.W. Dacre, *Excavations at Portway, Andover 1973–1975*, Oxford University Committee for Archaeology Monograph no. 4, Oxford, 1985.

²² T.M. Dickinson, *The Anglo-Saxon Burial sites of the Upper Thames region, and their bearing on the History of Wessex, c. A.D. 400–700*, Unpublished D.Phil. thesis, University of Oxford.

found in Anglo-Saxon burials has never been established with certainty.

In her recent work on Anglo-Saxon amulets, Mrs. A.L. Meaney discusses the occurrence of various types of fossil beads in burials. She was able to cite only two cemeteries where crinoid beads have been found; Broadstairs and Folkestone.²³

In view of the fact that, on the Continent, beads have received more detailed study, it has become customary to look to publications of Frankish and Alammanic material²⁴ for indications of bead groups and dating. Unfortunately, the types of polychrome beads found in Darenth grave 8 cannot be exactly paralleled in the cemeteries, such as Schretzheim, which have received the most detailed consideration. Beads 26 and 27 in Darenth grave 8 correspond most clearly to examples of Ursula Koch's bead group 48 for the Schretzheim material,²⁵ i.e. beads with reticular decoration. However, like beads 28 and 29, they have the addition of bands at right angles to the axis forming a type of zone decoration. Koch's group 48 beads at Schretzheim is generally dated to the second half of the sixth century. Within England, examples of beads of the Darenth grave, numbers 26 and 27 type are found over a wide area.

The translucent dark blue glass annular beads from grave 9 (Fig. 8) are of a well known type which occurs ubiquitously throughout cemeteries of the early Anglo-Saxon period. The type appeared in the British Isles about the sixth century B.C. and continued until the eighth century A.D.²⁶ The beads, therefore, provide no useful evidence for the dating of grave 9.

As the Anglo-Saxons were great collectors and hoarders of unusual items, the widespread custom of including Roman coins with burials need cause no surprise. Usually, the coins were perforated and formed part of the neck assemblage. Although the coin in grave 8 (Fig. 6, no. 3) could have been worn as a pendant, it was not found in

²³ A.L. Meaney, *Anglo-Saxon Amulets and Curing Stones*, B.A.R., British series, no. 96, Oxford, 1981, 117.

²⁴ See especially Bohner, *op. cit.* for finds of beads in Frankish cemeteries and U. Koch, *Das Reihengraberfeld bei Schretzheim*, Germanische Denkmäler der Völkerwanderungszeit, serie A, 13, Berlin, 1977, for a typology of beads from the Alamannic cemetery of Schretzheim.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, Farbtafel 4, 211.

²⁶ M. Guido, *The Glass beads of the Prehistoric and Roman Period in Britain and Ireland*, Reports of the Research Committee of the Society of Antiquaries of London, no. XXXV, London, 1978, 66-8.

direct association with the beads, and may perhaps have been sewn onto the clothing.²⁷

It is generally accepted that Anglo-Saxon knives can be classified according to the system proposed by K. Böhner for knives from the Trier region.²⁸ Both knives from the 1981 excavations at Darenth (from grave 8; Fig. 6, no. 5, and grave 11; Fig. 9, no. 1) appear to belong to Böhner's type B, i.e. knives with straight backs. This was the most popular knife form in the fifth and sixth centuries A.D., but went out of use in the seventh century.

The small pottery vessel in grave 10 (Fig. 8, no. 1) was the only object associated with this burial. The markedly carinated form suggests an early date for the piece, i.e. possibly fifth century. However, pots with stamped decoration are more likely to be sixth- than fifth-century in date.²⁹ The decorative scheme is of little assistance in dating the pot more closely: a number of vessels with pendant triangle ornament comprised of stamps without enclosing lines are illustrated by Dr J.N.L. Myres.³⁰

Finally, it remains to consider the dating of the Darenth burials excavated in 1981. The saucer brooches from grave 7 are likely to date the burial to the first half of the sixth century A.D. A date at the beginning of the second half of the sixth century would seem appropriate for grave 8: this is based upon the argument that the manufacture of disc brooches finished c. A.D. 550 and that the elaborate polychrome beads are likely to date to the second half of the sixth century. It has already been stated that grave 9 cannot be closely dated; grave 10 is likely to be late fifth/early sixth century; and a general late fifth/sixth century date would be appropriate for grave 11.

It is conceivable that the difference in orientation of the burials (see p. 41) might be explained on a chronological basis. Out of burials 4–12, burial 4 is demonstrably the earliest. However, there is nothing in the graves which share a similar east–west alignment to grave 4 (nos. 9, 10, 11, and 12) to suggest that these burials differed substantially in date from grave 4. On the other hand, grave 8 is at least half a century later in date; all the burials with a similar

²⁷ A burial from Orpington, Kent (grave 32) produced two coins, which its excavator suggested may have been attached to clothing. *Arch. Cant.*, lxxxiii (1960), 125–50.

²⁸ Böhner, *op. cit.*

²⁹ J.N.L. Myres, *Anglo-Saxon Pottery and the Settlement of England*, Oxford, 1969, 34–5.

³⁰ J.N.L. Myres, *A Corpus of Anglo-Saxon Pottery of the Pagan Period*, Cambridge, 1977, Figs. 328–330. The decorative type is discussed on p. 54.

alignment to grave 8 could be of similar date. However, it must be stressed that the suggestion that there are at least two recognisable phases of use of the cemetery is based on only two well-dated burials and only nine excavated graves. It would be unwise to treat the argument as anything other than a hypothesis.

The 1981 excavations at Darenth have, therefore, increased our knowledge of this Anglo-Saxon cemetery and have substantially modified the impression of the site produced by the previous discoveries. Graves 6–12 contained nothing spectacular and all material can be paralleled in Saxon cemeteries elsewhere.

CONCLUSIONS

Any conclusions that are put forward must be tempered with the knowledge that only nine graves were excavated in 1981, two having been originally excavated in 1978. Out of this total of nine only two can be dated with any certainty, graves 4 and 8, the remainder either lack precisely datable grave goods or are without any grave goods. From the artefacts that have been recovered from the Darenth Park cemetery it is apparent that the cemetery belongs to the earlier part of the Anglo-Saxon period.

It is likely that the changes in orientation of the graves indicate changes of burial practice throughout the life of the cemetery. It has been suggested elsewhere in this report that those orientated east–west and those orientated north–south represent two separate phases of use in the cemetery. Unfortunately, even with the small sample of graves recovered from Darenth, it is apparent that considerable variations in burial practice exist. Whilst the east–west orientated graves seem to form a coherent group, the north–south graves split into two groups. Firstly, there are two double burials (nos. 5 and 6) and, secondly, two single burials (nos. 7 and 8). These differences are apparent again when the orientation of the skeleton within the grave cut is considered. The undisturbed double burial 5, and possibly the disturbed one, have the skeletons with the heads to the north compared to the two single burials where the heads are to the south.

It has been suggested that burial 4 and its glass bowl with the Chi-Rho symbol is evidence of a Christian burial.³¹ None of the other east–west orientated graves have provided any further evidence to substantiate this theory. It would appear that it is more likely that the

³¹ Walsh, *op. cit.*

glass bowl with the Christian Chi-Rho symbol is an artefact that would be kept and appreciated for its style and uniqueness and not necessarily for the Christian associations. This type of behaviour is paralleled by the use of a Roman coin as a pendant or part of a necklace in burial 8.

The absence of further graves to the south of grave 92 seems to indicate that the southern edge of the cemetery has been located. To the south of grave 92, some 40 m. of the easement were examined and no further graves were located. The increased density of graves towards the upper part of the slope and the earlier finds in the entrance to the hospital grounds from Gore Road indicate that the main focus of the cemetery is on the south side of the flatter top of the ridge.

When considering the other archaeological features found during the excavation, the lack of dating evidence for the four-post structures makes it impossible to indicate whether they are associated with the Anglo-Saxon cemetery. They most closely resemble the four-post 'granary' structures found on many Iron Age sites. The lack of stake-holes from grave fills suggests that the majority, if not all, of these stake-holes pre-date the cemetery. It does seem likely that the position of the site on a south facing slope would make this a prime site for use from a prehistoric date. It is probable that the three types of archaeological feature found during the excavation represent separate periods of activity.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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The artefacts were conserved by G. Ford and the Ancient Monuments Laboratory, and drawn by J. Thorn from the Ancient Monuments Drawing Office. The report was typed by S. Keyte and the published plans and the archival drawing were undertaken by J. Fry. The computing of the records was undertaken by B. Attewell

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and the archive was prepared by the author. Alison Cooke would like to thank Dr M.G. Welch for reading and commenting on an earlier draft of the discussion of the Darenth finds. The amendments suggested have been incorporated into the text.

The archive and all the material is held by the Kent County Museum Service, a micro-fiche copy is held by the National Monuments Record, Savile Row, London.



(Photo.: English Heritage).

General view southwards of main area of cemetery (sub-division A).



(Photo.: English Heritage).

Surviving human bone in grave 4 looking west.



Disturbed burials in grave 6.

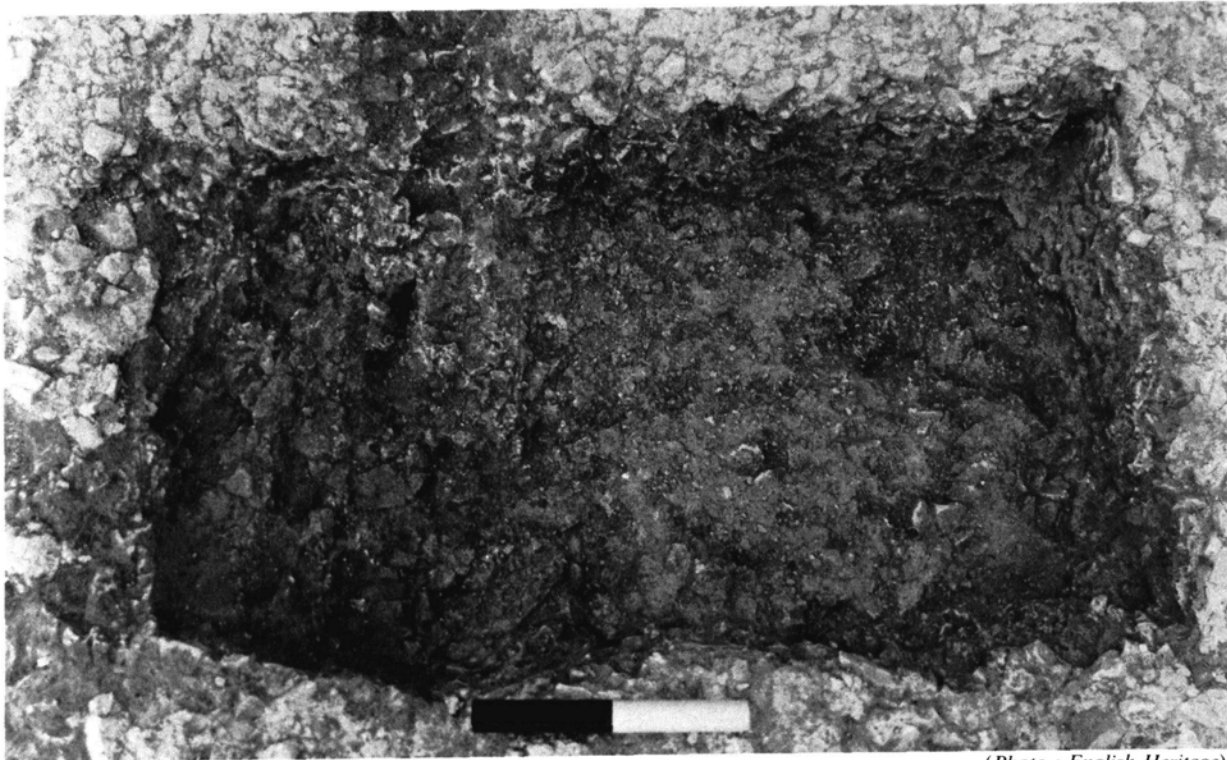
(Photo.: English Heritage).



(Photo.: English Heritage).
Burial in grave 7 looking south.



Burial in grave 8, skull is at the south. The remains have been cut by a telephone cable trench. (Photo.: English Heritage).



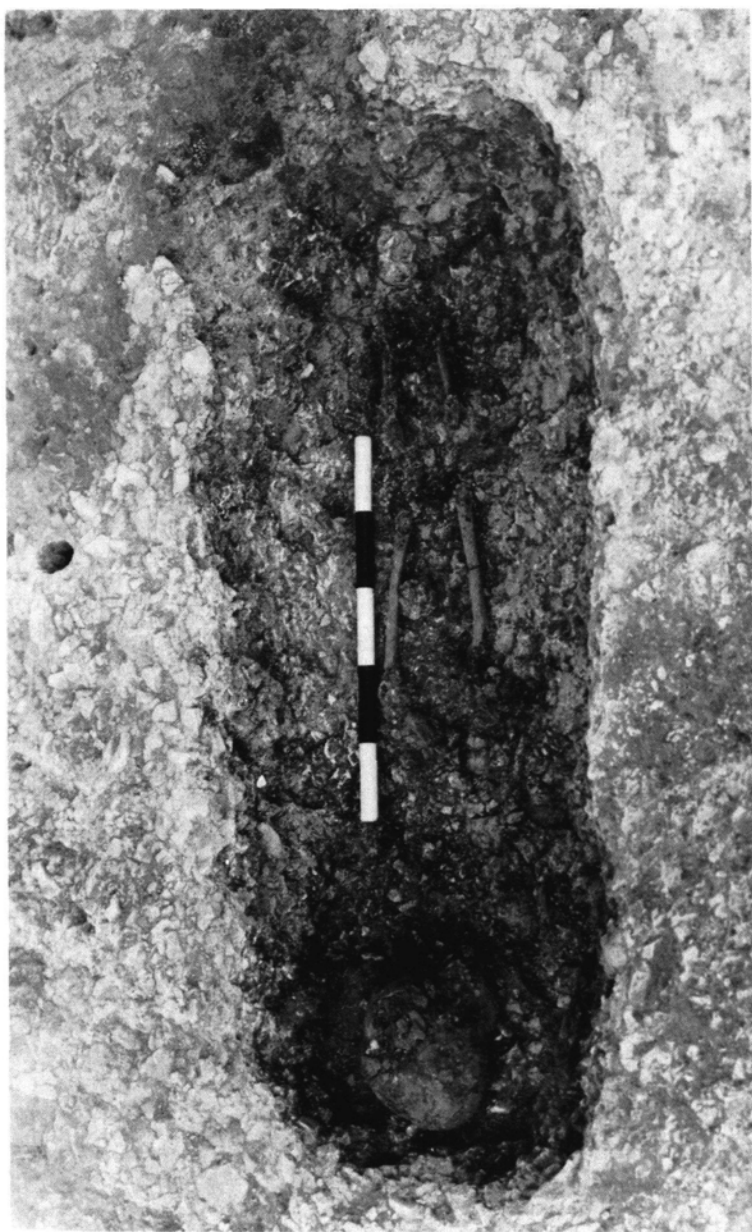
(Photo.: English Heritage).
Child's grave 9, blue glass beads and molar visible towards the upper left hand corner.



(Photo.: English Heritage).
Child's grave 10, the surviving pot *in situ*.

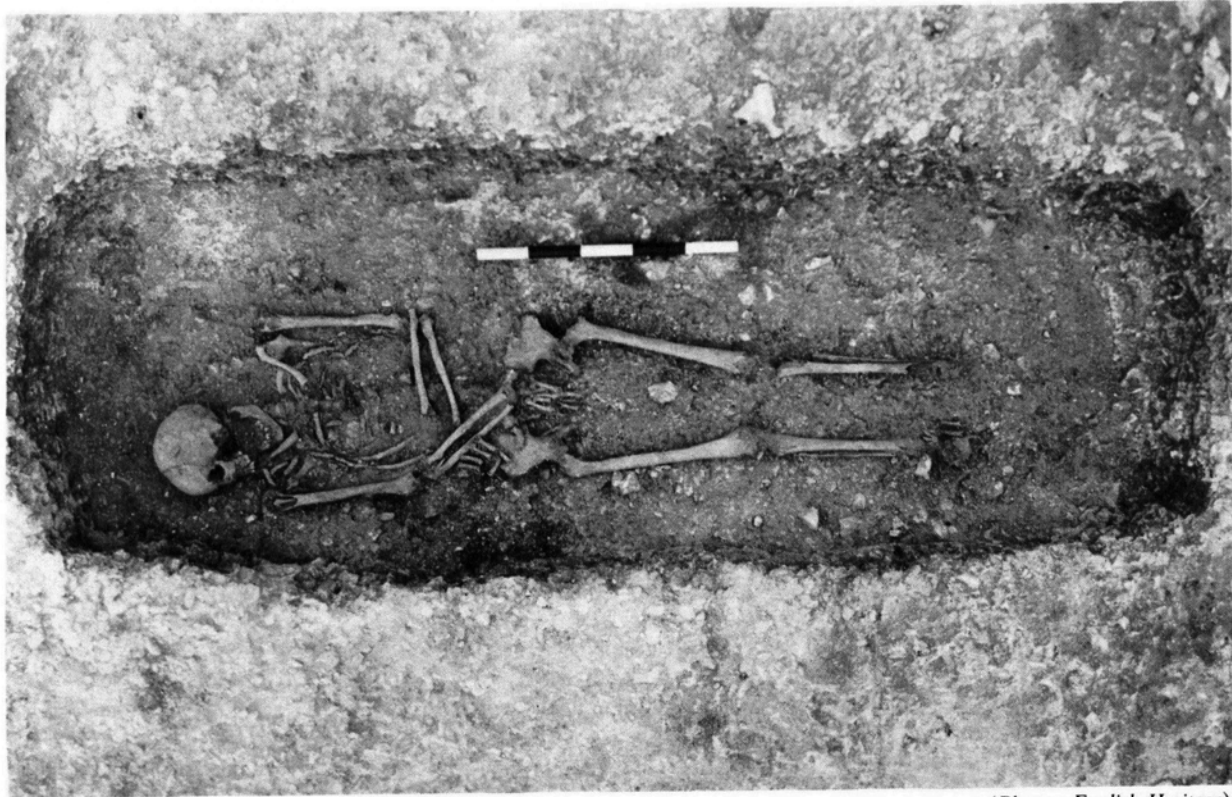
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PLATE VIII



(Photo.: English Heritage).

Burial in grave 11.



Burial in grave 12.

(Photo.: English Heritage).