

From the *Transactions* of the  
Bristol and Gloucestershire Archaeological Society

**The Oakley Cottage Romano-British Cemetery, Cirencester**

by R. Reece  
1962, Vol. 81, 51-72

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# The Oakley Cottage Romano-British Cemetery, Cirencester

By RICHARD REECE

**M**ANY burials, both inhumations and cremations, have been found immediately outside the walls of Corinium. Most have occurred in the area to South of the town, between the Fosse Way and Ermine Street. Reports are either scattered in newspapers and periodicals, or lost; but several finds are in the Corinium Museum and it is hoped to examine the skeletal material from these and to report upon them in a future volume of these *Transactions*. Meanwhile this report describes a series of finds made by the writer in September 1960, some 120 yards outside the West gate.

The site (Nat. Grid ref. SP 019017), formerly the Kitchen Garden of the Bathurst Estate, first produced remains on 14 September 1960, when levelling to build a filling station for the present owner Mr P. D. Fitzgerald. The original ground surface was 3 feet higher than the nearby Tetbury Road, so that a clearance of 3 feet of topsoil was necessary to provide a level approach. Early in these operations a complete cinerary urn was noted in one of the lorries removing soil and taken to the Corinium Museum, whose custodian, Mr J. Real, informed the writer, who then watched the site for the following ten days.

The conditions of work account for the discrepancy between the forty-five cremations found in pots and the total of twelve pots mentioned in this report. The mechanical excavator used in levelling took loads about 2 feet deep in a bucket over 4 feet wide. Each load was cut and scooped up fairly cleanly, though dribble was inevitable. The cremation urns were only discovered on being sectioned neatly by the teeth of the bucket, when they showed up clearly as a dark ring of pottery surrounding a lighter mass of bone and ash. Only two out of forty-five pots were found intact, and only four more had rims which could later be restored. The rest when found consisted of anything

from shorn off bases to pots complete except for rims. There is no doubt that careful excavation would have yielded at least forty-five complete pots, if mostly cracked by earth pressure. The teeth of the bucket and their scraping action were also responsible for the very poor condition of the inhumations. The first part of the skeleton to be damaged was the skull, but in several cases complete disarrangement occurred. No plan can be given as recording, except in a relative manner, was impossible. As soon as a cremation was removed the site was obliterated by the wheels of the mechanical excavator and its position completely lost. Some new system of surveying was obviously needed whereby a magnetic or radio-active marker could be buried in a narrow drill on the find spot, to be detected and plotted at leisure after work had finished for the day. This idea is at present receiving attention.

The finds consisted of the lower half of an inscribed tombstone, three 'bracelets', forty-six cremations of which forty-five were in pots, and parts of eight inhumations. Dr Calvin Wells has kindly reported on the skeletal material (see below, p. 60), and ten of the twelve pots which were more than half complete are illustrated and described below. One cremation (XG), contained in a lattice patterned cooking pot (see FIG. 3, no. 8) was associated with a jug (FIG. 3, no. 6), the only pot recovered which did not contain ashes.

Six complete inhumations were observed lying to north-east of the cremations, and in the area observed the two types of burial did not intermingle. The following cursory notes could be made.

- B.1. Extended burial; head north-east, arms at sides.
- B.2. Extended burial; head south-west, arms apparently crossed on chest.
- B.3. Extended burial; head north-east, arms at sides.
- B.K.3. Extended burial; head north-east, arms probably crossed on waist.
- B.4. This burial was gravely damaged by the excavator bucket, but the position of remains suggested a crouched burial laid on the left side, with head north-west. 'Outlying' limbs were noted but no suggestion of a second body presented itself during excavation (see B.4.a below).
- B.5. A skull, from which the facial regions had been sheared by the bucket teeth, found in loose spoil.
- B.6. A skull, but no further bones were observed.
- B.7. Extended burial; head north-east, arms at sides. The skeleton was mechanically dismembered while the skull and cervical vertebrae were being salvaged.

*General Observations*

Two interesting features were seen and partly cleaned during the levelling process. The first was a trench, roughly 8 feet long, 1 foot wide, and 8 inches deep, packed with charcoal and ash. The surrounding surface could not be cleared but the trench may well have served as the draught for a large fire of some kind. Other pits were found in the clay sub-soil ranging from about 9 inches to 15 inches square. They were neatly cut, with vertical sides, and were filled with ash, charcoal, and many fragments of cremated bone. Their significance will be discussed later.

## DETAILS OF FINDS

*Tombstone*

The lower half of an inscribed stone (FIG. 1.), was found in position. It consists of a central recessed panel with a bevelled border. The stone is well dressed except for the bottom six inches, and a band towards the right hand side. Of the inscription only the lower parts of the letters NC remain. The stone was found embedded vertically in clay, as if the top half had been broken off, leaving a stump at ground level. Its inscribed panel faced south-east, that is, away from the nearby Fosse Way. An instant decision was taken to concentrate on salvaging the stone, during which all trace of any grave was obliterated.

*Bracelets*

Two objects of bronze and one of jet, the only grave goods recovered, were associated with inhumation B.K.3 . . . 'a powerfully built man', (FIG. 2, b, c, d).

- (b) A ring of three twisted bronze wires with the remains of a clasp. This would have been flexible and could well have served as a bracelet, cf. 1\*, pl. xxii, 60.
- (c) (Like b), this object was found near the waist of the body. It is of solid bronze, and if worn as a bracelet, must have been slipped on over the hand. It is very unlikely to have been so worn by B.K.3, but could possibly be a peculiar penannular brooch, outside, without terminals, and with the pin missing, cf. 2, fig. 38, 2.

\* For References, see p. 72.

- (d) Half of a bracelet in polished jet. This fits well on the writer's wrist (axes 6 centimetres  $\times$  4.5 centimetres), but, if it was originally a complete ring, the man B.K.3 could not have worn it. It could then be either the offering of a wife or daughter in the grave of a male relative, or a stray, of which

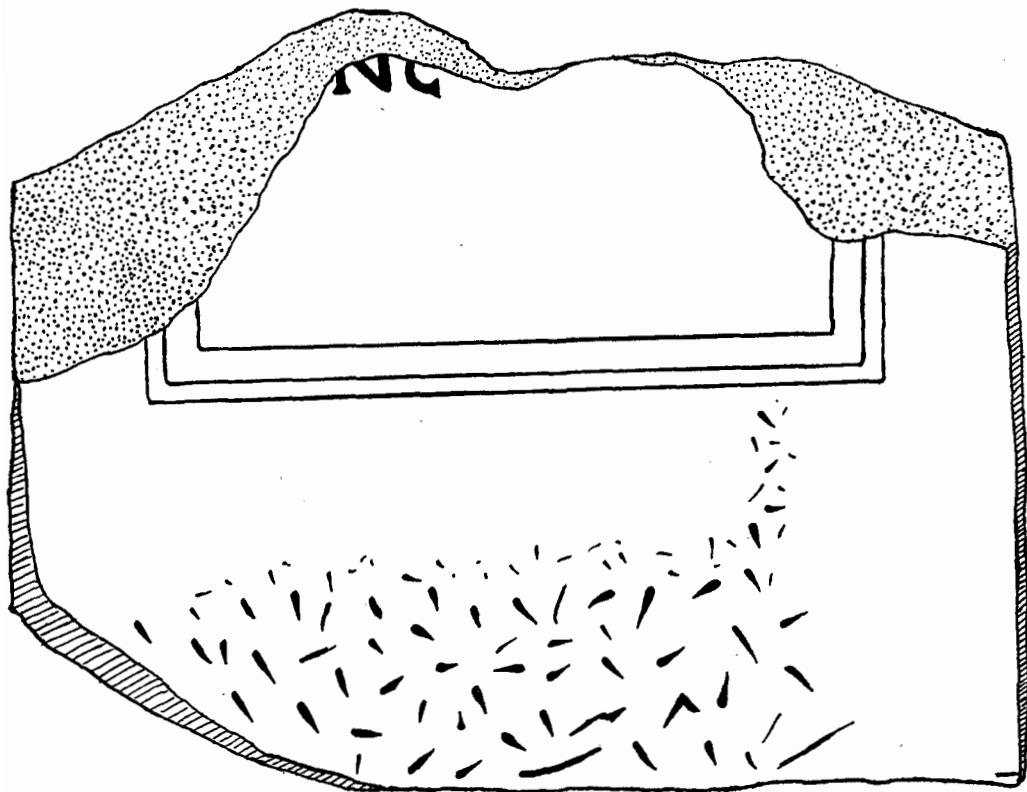


Fig. 1. (d)

the association with B.K.3 would be due to the conditions of heavy rain, liquid mud, and a mechanical excavator with tyre treads at least 3 inches deep, which rolled to and fro over the whole site. This second possibility seems less likely, since the bracelet was found among and beneath bones of the skeleton, but it must be borne in mind.

THE OAKLEY COTTAGE ROMANO-BRITISH CEMETERY

*Cremation Pottery* (FIG. 3)

1. The lower half of a tall jar of very soft fine sandy light brick-red ware. The paste is so soft that simply to handle it leaves marks on the fingers, this was corrected by a thin light slip

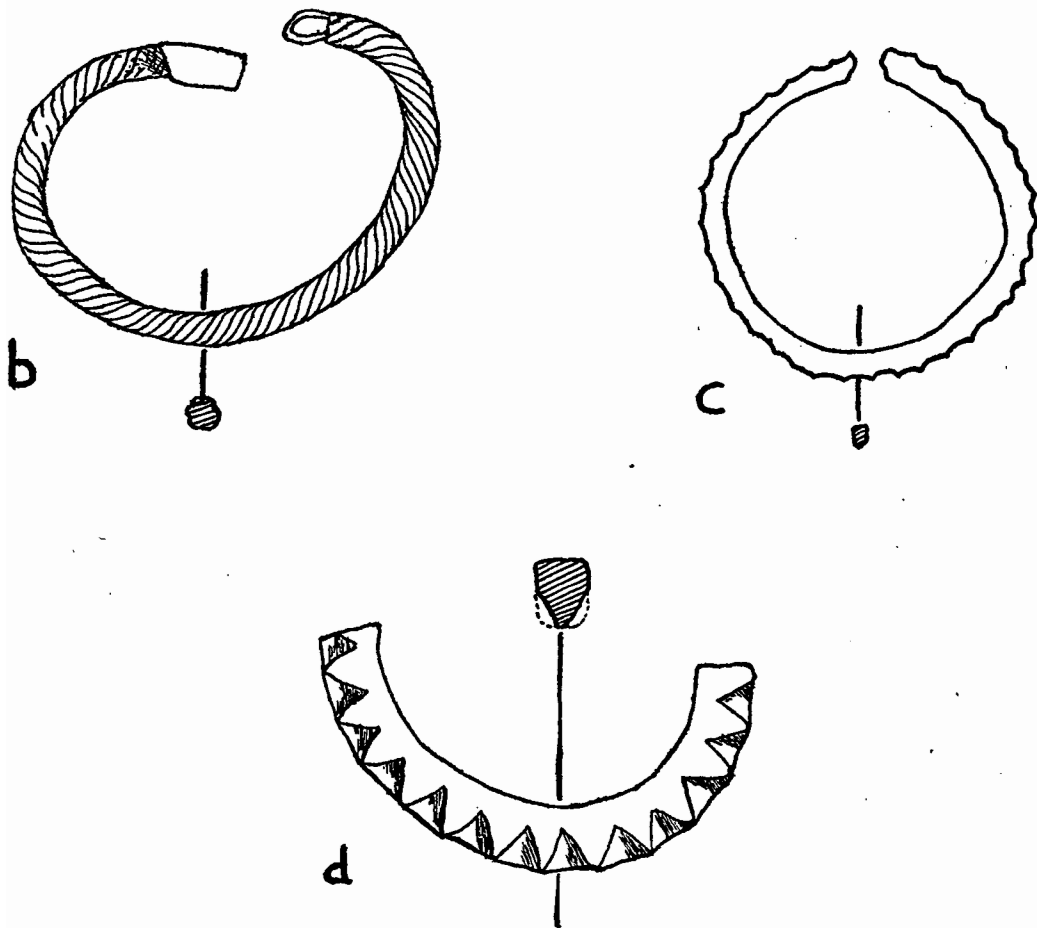


Fig. 2. (1)

which has now almost disappeared. The interior has a number of smooth ridges, also present in nos. 2 and 3, and the base is worthy of special mention. In form this is a weak pedestal base in the last phase of that series. This with

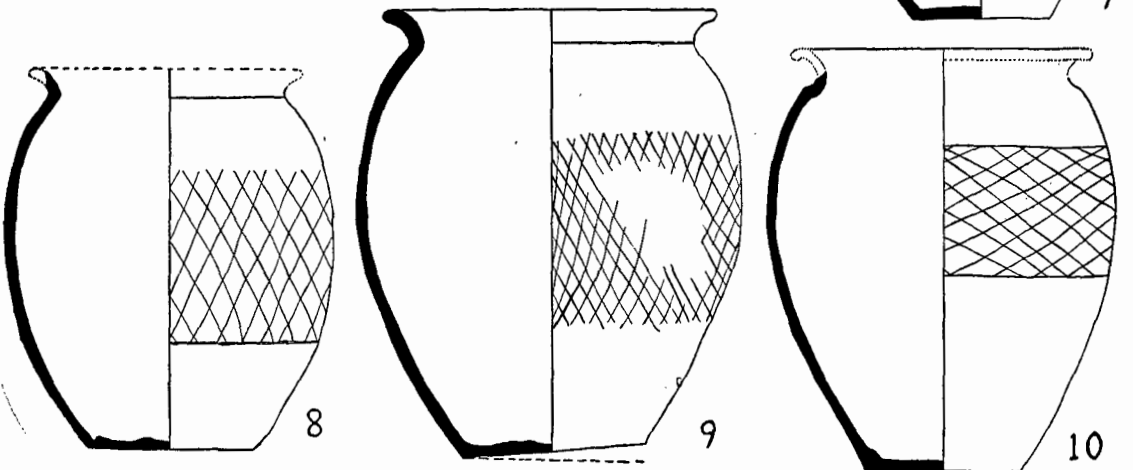
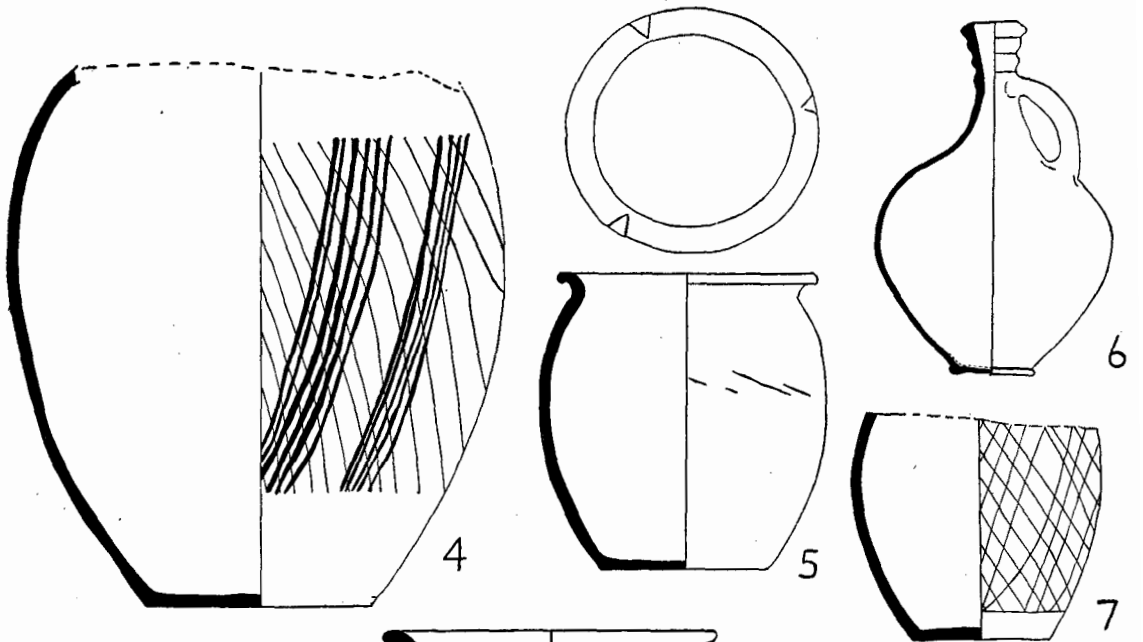
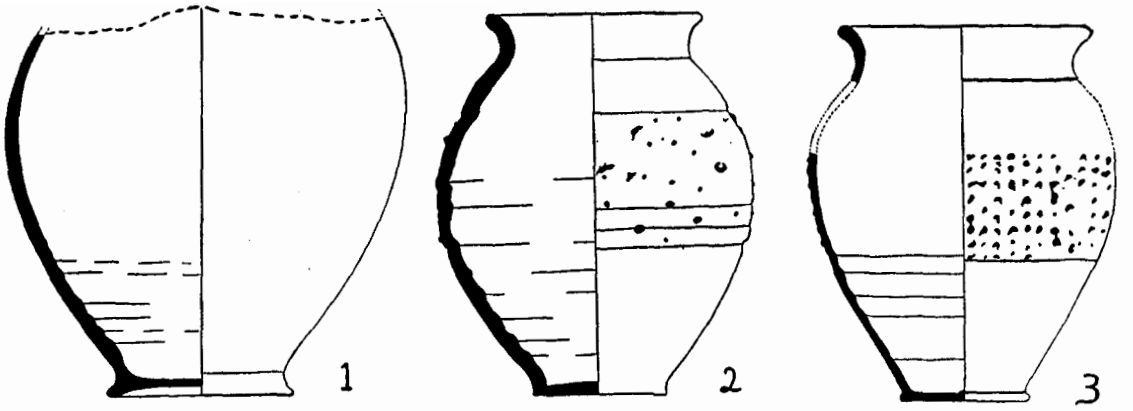


Fig. 3. (t)

- no. 4 looks back to the Belgic tradition of nearby Bagendon, and almost certainly belongs to the period soon after the Conquest, A.D. 50-70, cf. 3, fig. 16, 47-50.
2. Rustic pot in light grey ware; well made but overfiring has left a dip in one side of the rim. This is hardly a waster but the defect may have reduced its price. The general shape is rather unusual and vaguely reminiscent of a butt-beaker. The division of the pot roughly into three zones with a decoration on the centre band may come from such a source. Two very good parallels come from Caerwent cf. 4, pl. vii, c, and Gloucester, 4, pl. vii, f. The nodular decoration falls somewhere in between these two pots as does the detailed shape, and no doubt is possible on their close relation. The two examples from the south-west in Mr Thompson's list are now reinforced by this vessel, by pot no. 3, and by several other sherds in the writer's possession also from Cirencester, and suit the idea suggested by Mr Thompson's distribution map of a local group of Rustic ware in the Monmouth-Severn-Cotswold region. In type this pot would fit a transitional phase between Thompson's globular profile (A.D. 50-80), 4, fig. 5, 1, and the pear shaped profile (A.D. 70-120), 4, fig. 5, 4, with a round date of A.D. 70-80.
  3. Rustic pot in grey sandy ware. The lower part has been fully restored but the relationship of the rim to the body is conjectural. It is difficult to find parallels for a recurved rim on a rustic pot, but a very close match from the North Hykeham kiln is shown in Thompson's paper, 4, fig. 3, 1. His detailed search has found few good parallels so that further support for his reconstruction may be useful. The decoration of the two pots is, however, different being linear on that from North Hykeham, but nodular on no. 3. This need not preclude the possibility of a link via the Fosse Way between Corinium and the North Midlands, but far more material is needed to prove the point. The North Hykeham example is dated to *c.* A.D. 80-100, and a similar date for no. 3 seems not unlikely.
  4. A substantial portion of a large pot, in black paste with small white 'shell-grits'. It is very discoloured on the outside, presumably from use over a fire. The decoration consists of reasonably spaced single diagonal lines from the left,

crossed by broad bands of four to seven lines curving downwards from the right. The simple regular lines have several parallels below, but for the bands of scoring it is tempting to look to native tradition, cf. 3, fig. 18, 60a. If this is justified a date in the mid 1st century seems likely, *c.* A.D. 50-70.

5. Cooking pot in grey brown gritty ware. The rim and shoulder are partly burnished and occasional diagonal scratches are seen where a band of lattice decoration might have been expected. The pot is regular and well fired; its shape is so simple that little can be said of it. An almost exact replica occurs at Richborough, 5, pl. xl, 319, A.D. 80-120, and the type is also common at Leicester, 2. On its rim the letter V has been scratched three times (FIG. 3, no. 5). It should be placed early in the cooking pot series, perhaps *c.* A.D. 80.
6. Ring-necked jug of hard thin buff ware. As restored and drawn the neck has a pronounced 'list', and there is the strong possibility that the jug was badly made or even a waster. The four equally rounded rings of the neck and globular body suggest a date towards the end of the 1st century, 2, fig. 39, 1, Trajanic, and 6, fig. 17, 76, Flavian pit. It has the surprising capacity of 750 c.c., or nearly 1½ pints, and it is difficult to find a parallel in size: both examples cited are about twice as large.
7. Lower half of a cooking pot in black paste similar to no. 4. In shape it was probably near no. 5, but has an acute angled lattice pattern reaching to within 1.4 centimetres of the base. The lattice is impressed with a blunt tool, and no signs of coating or burnishing are to be seen. Obvious signs of burning suggest that the pot has stood in or over a fire for some time. The lattice decoration would place it later than no. 5 and a date within twenty years of A.D. 100 seems likely.
8. Cooking pot in grey-buff sandy ware. No traces remain of burnishing, and an acute-angled lattice remains only as a series of dark lines. Two other similar pots are not illustrated (cremations T and XG). These are all closely linked in style and are probably of the early 2nd century, A.D. 90-120, cf. 2, fig. 26, 1.
9. Large cooking pot, in brown-black coarse ware, probably burnished externally on the rim and shoulder. It is not well made with an uneven base and a rim far from circular.

There is an acute-angled lattice on the shoulder, so weakly impressed with a blunt instrument that in some parts wear has left no traces of the pattern. The simple shape, lack of 'kick' at the junction of rim and neck and black paste suggest a date early rather than late in the series, cf. **5**, pl. xl, 320, c. A.D. 125.

10. Cooking pot, in light grey gritty ware, with light brown burnishing down to the top of the lattice. This lattice is well marked by lines scratched after firing, and is often irregular. The obtuse vertical angles of the pattern make it rather difficult to parallel. On 4th-century pots with overhanging rims the obtuse lattice seems to be general as in **7**, fig. 27, 39; **8**, fig. 19, 67; **2**, fig. 52, 28. Similarly in earlier pots, of which the rim is narrower than the girth, an acute lattice often occurs, **6**, fig. 15, 43; **8**, fig. 19, 66; **2**, fig. 26, 16. But if the shape corresponds well to an earlier date the lattice decoration presents some anomalies. At Leicester an overhanging rim with acute lattice occurs on what seems to be a cross between a true cooking pot and a necked jar, **2**, fig. 54, 22, but the treatment may have been prompted by the peculiar shape of the pot. However the other possible cross, that of obtuse lattice and 'early' shape is also found at Sutton Walls, in Herefordshire, **9**, fig. 15, 8, in a 2nd-century context, and the present pot, containing a cremation, is unlikely to be later than the early 3rd century. A further example is a larger cooking pot, about 14 inches high and of similar shape to no. 10, which was found in Cirencester in a rubbish layer ante-dating an early 4th-century occupation, **10** (not illustrated). A 2nd-century date seems probable for this type of pot.

### *Inhumation pottery*

No grave groups were found with any of the skeletons. In association, with B.K.3 was part of the base and wall of an indented beaker, in an extremely hard, thin fabric with purple-black glaze. No closer date than the 3rd century can be suggested. As a whole, this group of pottery ranges from soon after the Conquest (nos. 1 and 4) to somewhere after A.D. 150. The only 3rd-century pottery occurs with an inhumation. Only four (nos. 1, 2, 3, 6) out of the twelve pots are not cooking-pots, while two of these (nos. 2, 6) are imperfect, and the other two are incomplete. In the lattice cooking-pot series the following steps are suggested as a working hypothesis:—

## TRANSACTIONS FOR THE YEAR 1962

1. A plain pot (no. 5) with base and neck of equal dimensions and a maximum girth at about half the height.  
A.D.  $90 \pm 10$ .
2. The proportions stay reasonably constant and a lattice pattern appears (no. 8).  
A.D.  $100 \pm 10$ .
3. The base decreases in relation to the neck, and the maximum girth moves up, to become a shoulder at about two-thirds the height (no. 9).  
A.D.  $125 \pm 15$ .
4. Several changes have taken place (no. 10) and, failing intermediate material, their order is uncertain. The shape has been refined to an almost regular ovoid: the lattice pattern has become obtuse: the rim shows a pronounced kick on joining the shoulder.  
A.D.  $175 \pm 25$ .

### DESCRIPTION OF HUMAN REMAINS

By CALVIN WELLS

This is a brief description of a group of cremations and inhumations found at the Oakley Cottage Romano-British cemetery, Cirencester.

The method of examination, measurement and coding follows exactly that of Morant, 11, 12, for the cranial remains and Trevor, 13, for the long bones.

Coding for teeth is as follows:—

Right	—	upper	jaw	—	Left
		lower	jaw		

A numeral 1-8 indicates that the appropriate tooth is present in the jaw:

o = lost post-mortem

- = unerupted

• = lost ante-mortem

? = unascertainable

C, P = tooth carious or associated with a paradontal abscess respectively.

### DESCRIPTION OF CREMATIONS

*Cremation A* ?♀ Young Adult  
Several dozen very small fragments, mostly of long-bones and vertebrae.  
Well fired.

*Cremation B*  
Nothing identifiable.

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- Cremation C* Child Age 4-7 years  
 Many dozen tiny fragments. Cranial vault, petrous temporal and long bones identifiable. Well fired.
- Cremation D* (FIG. 3, no. 10) ♀ Young Adult  
 Several dozen fragments, some substantial. A few vertebral fragments have a trace of osteophytosis on them.  
 In general not very well fired, especially some of the occipital and vertebral pieces.
- Cremation E* ?Adult  
 About a dozen very tiny fragments of bone. Well fired.
- Cremation F* (FIG. 3, no. 2) ?♀ Young Adult  
 Many hundreds of very small fragments of bone. Cranial vault, vertebral bodies and long bones identifiable.  
 Firing only moderately efficient and uneven.
- Cremation G* (FIG. 3, no. 3) ?♂ Adult  
 Many hundreds of fragments; mostly of long bones. Orbital rim, scapular and vertebral pieces also present.  
 Firing poor, especially on the femora.
- Interment H*  
 A few doubtfully fired fragments of animal long bones.  
 One unfired right carpal hamate from an adult; probably male.
- Cremation J* ♂ Adult  
 A few dozen small fragments mostly of long bone. A distal articular surface of a tibia is present and shows that no squatting facet was present.  
 Firing light.  
 An unfired right carpal lunate from an adult is also present.
- Cremation K* Adult  
 Many dozen tiny fragments, which include two tooth roots (premolars), vertebral and long-bone pieces.  
 Moderate firing.
- Cremation L* ?Adult  
 A few dozen minute splinters of bone.
- Cremation M* ♀ Young Adult  
 Several dozen fragments mostly of cranial vault and long bones. The sutures show early endocranial fusion. Identifiable elements include parts of sphenoid, temporals, roots of molars, head of radius, etc.  
 Well fired.
- Cremation N*  
 One small fragment of long bone; not precisely identifiable but apparently human.

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- Interment O* ?♀ Adult  
 One unfired fragment—the distal half of a left radius.
- Cremation P* Young child  
 Many dozens of minute fragments. Almost all unidentifiable but a few pieces of cranial vault, maxilla, vertebrae, scapula, and long bones are recognizable.  
 Moderate firing.  
 A few fragments of animal limb bones—apparently of bird.
- Cremation Q* ?♂ Adult  
 Many hundreds of fragments, all small, from most parts of the body but chiefly long bones.  
 Well fired.
- Cremation R* ?♂ Adult  
 Some hundreds of fragments, mostly long bones, all small.  
 Fairly well fired.
- Cremation S* Young adult  
 A few dozen tiny fragments of long bone: most unidentifiable.
- Cremation T* (see FIG. 3, no. 8) ♂ Adult  
 Many hundreds of small fragments including large numbers of cranial vault, vertebrae and ribs, but mostly long bones.
- Cremation U* ♂ Adult  
 Several hundred fragments, almost all tiny except for substantial parts of the bodies of about twelve vertebrae. Signs of osteophytosis on vertebral margins.  
 Firing not very good.
- Cremation V* ?♀ No Container Young adult  
 Some hundreds of fragments, mostly very small. Included are a mandibular condyle, a petrous temporal, premolar tooth roots; numerous fragments of vertebrae, ribs and long bones.  
 Poorly fired.
- Cremation W* ?♀ Adult  
 Some hundreds of fragments, especially numerous are pieces of vertebrae, but parts of an orbital margin, ribs and long bones are present.  
 Firing not very efficient.
- Cremation X* ♂ Adult  
 A few dozen poorly fired fragments. Mostly small but some quite large lengths of a very powerful femur with strongly developed attachments for muscles. Substantial development of scapulae and pelvis is discernible.

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- Cremation Y* ?♀ Adult  
 A few dozen very small fragments. Mostly of long bones.
- Cremation Z* (FIG. 3, no. 8) ♂ Young adult  
 Some hundreds of mixed fragments. The majority are vertebral, but vault and long bones are also plentiful.  
 Poorly fired.
- Cremation XA* (FIG. 3, no. 9) ♂ Young adult  
 Many hundreds of fragments from a strongly built male.  
 The emphasis seems to have been on retrieving vertebrae but cranial vault and base, scapula, and long bones are plentiful.  
 Well fired.
- Cremation XB* ♀ Adult  
 Some hundreds of small fragments; mostly long bones but cranial vault also.  
 Well fired.
- Cremation XC* Young child  
 Some hundreds of tiny fragments. Mostly cranial vault and long bones among which pieces of femur, humerus and tibia are conspicuous.  
 Also a few very small fragments of ?bird bone: not identifiable.
- Cremation XD* ♂ Young adult  
 Several dozen fragments, some of substantial size, of a well built male. Identifiable are a petrous temporal, cranial vault, sphenoid pieces, long bones and many fragments of vertebral bodies.  
 Moderately well fired.
- Cremation XE*  
 Half a dozen tiny unidentifiable fragments.
- Cremation XF* ♀ Adult  
 A few dozen fragments; almost all of vertebrae and long bones.  
 Well fired.
- Cremation XG* (in pot. See FIG. 3, no. 8; with jug no. 6) ♂ Young adult  
 Many hundreds of fragments. Mostly long bones but also numerous pieces of cranial vault and base, vertebrae, pelvis and phalanges.
- Cremation XH* (FIG. 3, no. 4) ♂ Young adult  
 Many hundreds of fragments from all parts of the body. Identifiable are pieces of cranial vault and base, including a mastoid process; parts of a maxilla, a mandibular condyle and a coronoid process. Numerous vertebral bodies and pedicles; substantial fragments of pelvis (ilium, acetabulum, ischium); many long bones and a fragment of a talus which shows quite clearly a squatting facet on its neck. Small bones of the hands and feet are also present. Osteophytosis of the vertebrae.  
 Firing is fairly good.  
 A sheep's astragalus is also present.

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- Cremation XJ* Adult  
Two small fragments of vault, one of ?radius, one of femur and one of tibia.
- Cremation XK* ♀ Adult  
Some hundreds of fragments mostly of vertebrae and long bones.  
Firing fairly efficient.
- Cremation XL* ?Adult  
A few tiny unidentifiable fragments of long bone.
- Cremation XM*  
A few fragments of bone the size of a large pin-head.
- Cremation XN* (FIG. 3, no. 5) Child—Age 4-6 years  
Some hundreds of small fragments, mostly of vault and long bones. Also identifiable are fragments of an atlas and other vertebrae, and parts of a pelvis.  
A fragment of rib of ?ox and a fragment of shell, ?cockle, are also present, but identification cannot be made with certainty.
- Cremation XO*  
A few dozen minute unidentifiable fragments.
- Cremation XP*  
Two small unidentifiable fragments.
- Cremation XQ* Child  
About one dozen very small fragments of a child's long bones.  
A few fragments of (?cockle) shell.
- Cremation XR* Adult  
One small cranial fragment.
- Cremation XS* ♀ Young adult  
A few dozen fragments of cranial vault, vertebrae and long bones.  
Moderately well fired.
- Cremation XT* (FIG. 3, no. 7) ♀ Young adult  
Some hundreds of small fragments. Mostly of vertebrae and long bones, but cranial vault and small bones of hands and feet also present.
- Cremation XU* Adult  
Eight small fragments of long bone.
- Cremation XW* Young adult  
A few dozen fragments of cranial vault, vertebrae, scapulae and long bones.

DISCUSSION OF THE CREMATIONS

The following points may be briefly noted.

1. *Condition*

As cremation material goes this series is of distinctly poor quality. The surviving material from most of the urns is extremely fragmented and incomplete and this greatly limits the inferences obtainable from it.

2. *Sex*

Three cremations have been tentatively and nine firmly diagnosed as male; six tentatively and seven firmly as female. In nineteen cases no diagnosis of sex seemed justifiable, but of these five were also of uncertain age.

3. *Age*

It was felt that only three categories of age could be safely adopted. These were: Child (five cases), Young Adult (fourteen) and Adult (twenty). In five cases age determination was not possible.

4. *Firing*

It is not always possible to assess the exact competence of firing but in nine cases it was diagnosed as good, in nine fair to moderate and in seven poor.

5. *Multiple cremations*

These were not found in any urn, though the state of the fragments did not permit of their exclusion with complete certainty. It seems highly probable, however, that only single cremations are present.

6. *Animal bones*

These were scanty, very small and mostly unidentifiable.

Only one of the 34 certain adults had any, but they were present with four of the five children.

7. *Pathology*

Osteophytosis was noted on the vertebrae of two adult males, and one adult woman. A squatting facet was found on the only talus that survived in moderately good condition.

8. *Urn Goods*

These are totally absent.

## GENERAL OBSERVATIONS

Some interesting facts and suggestions emerge from the examination of these cremations.

Firstly the general standard of the process was poor. Despite a few well-fired examples the majority had been dealt with in an indifferent manner. Whether this reflects an attitude towards the ritual or merely the need to economize on fuel or labour it is, of course, impossible to say.

Secondly, the recovery of the bones has almost invariably been most inefficient. No body is anything like completely retrieved and few are more than 20 per cent complete. This may be due to a perfunctory and indifferent attitude to the ritual; a ritual need which was satisfied with a token recovery of the ashes, or perhaps an actual difficulty in collecting tiny dispersed fragments as a result of the technique of the cremation process being such as to scatter them extensively. Whatever the explanation may be there is a sharp contrast between the low standard of efficiency here and the relatively high one of such a series as the Illington, Norfolk Anglo-Saxon remains, 14.

It may also be noted that there seems to be a disproportionately high recovery of vertebral fragments in many instances. In view of the large size of many of the vertebral fragments from Cremation U we must surely believe that substantial pieces of many other bones must have been recoverable. Yet nothing else but a mass of splinters is present. In several, perhaps the majority of cases, some deliberate smashing of the bones may have been practised but it is not easy to find absolutely conclusive proof of this.

The distribution of animal fragments is interesting and reverses the pattern found for the Anglo-Saxons where adults often and children seldom have animal bones in their urns. It is, however, unsafe to place too much reliance on the present series in view of its very small numbers.

It is, perhaps, unwise to speculate in any way about the social standing of this group in view of the paucity of evidence. The few available hints, however, combined with a subjective impression derived from comparing these people with other groups give a suggestion of a rather poverty-stricken community who skimmed the funeral pyres, usually died young, and were humble in habits as they were probably poor in health and physique.



*Inhumation B3*

♂

Age 33 ± 5

Poor condition. Surviving are:

A few small fragments of cranial vault; some pieces of vertebrae and ribs; a sacral fragment showing sacralization of the 5th lumbar vertebra. Fragments of the L. innominate and a few much damaged pieces of limb bones.

The L. femur and tibia were almost intact and gave the following measurements:

Left Femur		Left Tibia	
Fe L <sub>1</sub>	417.8	Ti L <sub>1</sub>	340.0
Fe L <sub>2</sub>	415.0	Ti L <sub>2</sub>	339.6
Fe L <sub>3</sub>	398.2	Ti L <sub>3</sub>	321.3
Fe D <sub>1</sub>	27.4	Ti D <sub>1</sub>	35.4
Fe D <sub>2</sub>	32.8	Ti D <sub>2</sub>	24.3
Meric Index	83.5	Cnemic Index	68.6
	( <i>Eurymeria</i> )		( <i>Mesocnemia</i> )

Stature was estimated to be 1626 millimetres (5 feet 4 inches). A small squatting facet is present on the tibia.

*Inhumation BK3*

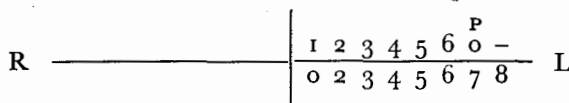
♂

Age 35 ± 5

Much damaged remains of a powerfully built man. Surviving are:

Twenty-two fragments of cranial vault showing strong development of the areas of attachment of the neck muscles; a fragment of the L. maxilla and part of the left half of the mandible; four cervical, nine dorsal and three lumbar vertebrae (all damaged); many rib fragments; most of the L. humerus; pieces of scapulae and pelvis, and the proximal two-thirds of the L. femur.

The mandible had a strongly protruding chin. The following teeth survived in the jaw fragments:



No caries is present but attrition of the occlusal surface is marked.

The L. meric index was obtainable:

$$\text{Fe D}_1 \ 24.8 / \text{Fe D}_2 \ 37.4 = 66.3 \ (\textit{Platymeria})$$

*Pathology*

A paradontal abscess has eroded the upper jaw in the position of the 2nd molar.

Osteophytic lipping is present throughout the vertebral column. The crest of the L. iliac bone survives and shows strong outgrowths of bone into the region of the attached muscles, somewhat similar to a myositis ossificans.

*Inhumation B4*

♂

Age 35 ± 10

This was a powerfully built man. Surviving are:

Fragments of five vertebrae, pelvis, scapulae, sternum and all long bones (mostly very small). Numerous pieces of ribs and some damaged small bones of hands and feet. It is possible to obtain the meric index of the L. femur of which the proximal three-quarters survives:

$$\text{Fe D}_1 \ 24.6 / \text{Fe D}_2 \ 38.8 = 70.6 \ (\textit{Platymeria})$$

No pathology was noted.

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*Inhumation B4a* ♀ Adult

This is only identifiable from a few fragments which duplicate those already present in B4.

These include: the head of a L. femur, a distal end of a R. radius, and some lightly built metatarsals.

*Inhumation B5* ♀ Age 33±5

The posterior half of a calva. Probably originally meso-cranial. Lightly built. No tuber occipitale. No pathology noted.

*Inhumation B6* ♀ Age 30±5

Surviving are:

About two dozen small fragments of cranium, three of maxilla bearing the following teeth:

R        ? 7 6 ? 4 3 2 1    |    1 2 3 4 5 6 7 ?        L

Marked dental attrition is present but no caries.

*Inhumation B7* ♂ Age 30±5

A male of moderate development as far as the surviving bones suggest. Present are: several dozen small fragments of cranium. Most of the maxilla; the mandible (damaged). The atlas, axis and 3rd cervical vertebra.

Teeth:

R        0 7 6 5 4 3 2 0    |    1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8<sup>C</sup>        L  
       8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1    |    1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8

Attrition is heavy and the maxillary L. 3rd molar has a large caries cavity on its occlusal surface.

The following measurements were obtainable

	G <sub>2</sub>	41.0		PH	20.3
h <sub>1</sub>	33.1		c <sub>yl</sub>	21.9	m <sub>2</sub> P <sub>1</sub> (R) 30.8
zz	44.8		c <sub>r</sub> h	69.8	gn <sub>g</sub> o (l) 86.8?
rb'	34.5		c <sub>y</sub> h	60.2	gn <sub>g</sub> o (r) 87.2?
g <sub>o</sub> g <sub>o</sub>	105.4?		ih	51.4	

The mandible has a moderately prominent chin and strongly everted gonial angles.

*Pathology*

In addition to the carious molar there is some osteophytosis of the vertebrae.

The general evidence of the inhumations points to a group of individuals of moderate size but whose work developed powerful muscles. They may have been accustomed to bear heavy weights and practise strenuous labour in view of the widespread osteophytosis of their spinal columns. Their diet was undoubtedly coarse and dental attrition evidently began early in life. As a group they seem to have died young—probably 30–35 is about average for the eight specimens on which we can form an estimate.

### *Conclusions*

The material of this report raises numerous questions, mostly unanswerable in our present state of knowledge. On the date for the change from cremation to inhumation the Oakley Cottage material is too meagre to give much help, but it does suggest as far as it goes, that the change may have been complete by the middle of the 3rd century. The cremation pottery seems to end about A.D. 200, but even that dating is uncertain, and cremations after that date may always have been buried elsewhere. The general feeling of the site however is against this, especially in the spatial arrangement, and the physical continuity of the skeletal remains.

On the actual procedure of cremation two different points may be connected. Dr Wells has noted the 'token recovery of the ashes', while small square pits filled with bone and charcoal were noted by the writer. It would seem that after cremation the relatives appeared with a suitable vessel, perhaps in the case of Cremation V a leather bag or wooden box, into which they put some of the more easily recoverable remains. In most cases the size of the pot determined the amount of bone collected; in Cremation XH a large pot (no. 4) contained many hundreds of fragments of bone, while in Cremation XT a small pot (no. 7) contained a far smaller amount. Whatever the reason only a part of the ashes was collected from the burnt-out pyre and then a small pit was dug into which every last fragment of bone and ash could have been put. This favours Dr Wells's second suggestion of difficulty in collecting and accommodating the ashes, inefficiency of collection and interment seems less likely. A further point in the actual process is the 'smashing of the bones'. No explanation can be offered but the occurrence of large (3 inches  $\times$  2 inches  $\times$  1 inch) burnt stones on top of the ashes, but sometimes covered by the collapsed pot must be mentioned.

The last matter of importance is what can be learnt of the collective subjects of this paper; for, however they are classified, measured and numbered, they were once individual beings. Romano-British

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archaeology only deals with people on rare occasions, and if their skeletal remains are not duly considered much is lost. The evidence is of a different nature for the cremations and for the inhumations, but, if the cemetery is regarded as the continuous burying place of one section of the community, then the evidence is complementary. Rough time limits are fixed by the pottery, which suggests a beginning soon after the Conquest, and, by default, an end somewhere in the 3rd or 4th century. The complete absence of grave-goods with the cremations, and a scarcity with the inhumations indicates that these people were undoubtedly very poor. The ashes of superior inhabitants of Corinium were deposited in specially made glass cinerary urns with beads and other goods; and then were contained in a tomb of stone surrounded by walled enclosures (Skinner MSS, B.M.; Corinium Museum records). But the ashes with which we are dealing were buried in used and worn cooking pots in an open cemetery. The contrast is obvious. We are dealing with a burial-ground for poor people in the early and middle stages of Roman Corinium. These, to quote the record of the cremations, were 'a rather poverty-stricken community, who skimmed the funeral pyres, usually died young, and were humble in habits as they were probably poor in health and physique'.

Whom did this community represent in terms of race? It seems out of the question that any Roman community would have sunk to such a level within ten or twenty years of their arrival; nor would a Gaulish supply of labour have been imported to an inland part of Britain already well populated. This leaves only a native British community; and since the earliest pottery has Belgic affinities in fabric, design and ornament, it is reasonable to conclude that these are the remains of the former inhabitants of Bagendon, or some other Iron Age site, and their descendants, who had moved into the newly growing town.

As to their condition, the vertebral fragments from both the cremations and the skeletons show marked osteophytosis, and similar conclusions may presumably be drawn. Thus, we have a poor community 'whose work developed powerful muscles', who 'may have been accustomed to bear heavy weights and practice strenuous labour', whose 'diet was undoubtedly coarse', and who 'seem to have died young'. The picture is not wholly pleasant, but not far from what would be expected of the impact of a conquering Roman army, first of soldiers, then of officials, on a cheap source of labour. The evidence taken piece by piece is tenuous, but as a whole it interlocks and gives a picture of the humbler members of the native community of Roman Corinium.

*Acknowledgments*

Thanks are due to many people for kindness in every stage of this work; and especially to the Bristol and Gloucestershire Archaeological Society for a grant towards Dr Wells's expenses. The owner, Mr P. D. Fitzgerald, gave a free hand to work on the site, and was encouraging at all times. Mr J. Real, custodian of the Corinium Museum, deserves special gratitude for his prompt action on discovery of the site, and for his work in preparing the material for examination and in restoring the pottery. Mr Peter Broxton and Mrs Marjorie Klitz helped in maintaining an almost twenty-four hour watch on the site, and the actual work was much assisted by the interest and consideration of the builders, especially the driver of the mechanical excavator. The report by Dr Calvin Wells is the backbone of this paper, and his kindness in undertaking a report on such damaged material, and producing it in about two months, amid his other work sets a magnificent example. Lastly I must thank Professor I. A. Richmond for reading the manuscript of this report and making many very valuable suggestions.

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