

# ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEFS IN AVON AND SOMERSET 1977

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## INTRODUCTION

In April 1977, C.R.A.A.G.S. (the Committee for Rescue Archaeology in Avon, Gloucestershire and Somerset) appointed an assistant field officer in charge of developments. The more important sites resulting from fieldwork in 1977 are recorded here; the remainder are briefly noted elsewhere in this volume. I am grateful to the following for their specialist comments: Ann Ellison for the prehistoric finds, Roger Leech for the Romano-British pottery (Leech, 1978, chapters 1, 5, 9, appendix 1), Michael Ponsford and Terry Pearson for the medieval pottery, and Warwick Rodwell for the samian at Marchey Farm. I am especially grateful to Roger Leech for his assistance. The sites are listed alphabetically by parish, separately under Avon and Somerset.

### BLEADON, AVON, ST 337571

Medieval pottery was found on a building site at ST 33665705. No archaeological features were seen on the ground.

*The Pottery.* The pottery, dating from the 11th to 14th centuries, comprised: one Ham Green sherd; eight sherds similar to pottery of the 12th-13th centuries found at Worle; five sherds similar to pottery found at Crandon Bridge and Ilchester, with quartzitic, haematite, and calcareous grits; and one Bristol Ware rimsherd, including part of the spout of a jug decorated with crude thumbed anthropomorphic representations. This is in a hard fabric, oxidised red with a grey core, with fine calcareous and quartzitic inclusions, green glazed externally with splashes internally (Fig. 5, 1).

### LONG ASHTON, AVON, ST 547703

Earthwork remains of a deserted medieval village, probably that of Ashton Philips, were noted in April 1977 on a site due to be developed for housing. The plan shows the earthworks as surveyed in May 1977, with some additions resulting from historical research now in progress (Fig. 1). The site is now (June 1978) being excavated by C.R.A.A.G.S. in advance of development.

### PORTISHEAD, AVON, ST 462757

Medieval pottery was found during site clearance to the east of Wetlands road at ST 46217569. The pottery was associated with a wall foundation 0.9 m wide and at least 6 m long. This underlay a former field boundary bank, and was possibly part of a building.

*The Pottery* (Fig. 5, 1-2). The assemblage included sherds from 11th and 12th-century vessels, and Ham Green and Bristol Ware sherds of the 13th century. No sherds were of a later date. One Neolithic/Bronze-Age trimmed flint flake was also found.

#### *The Illustrated Pottery*

1. Rim; hard fabric with sub-angular quartzitic inclusions, oxidised grey and buff with a reduced red-grey core; 12th century.
2. Rim; red-grey fabric with calcareous inclusions, decorated with thumb indentation.

### WORLE, AVON, ST 361636

During the construction of a housing estate to the south of Castle Batch, Romano-British pottery was found over an area of 60 m by 50 m, centred on ST 36086361. The material came from a horizon of grey clay, with lenses of black silt, at 5 m OD, 1 m below present ground surface. This band of grey clay both overlay and was sealed by brown estuarine clay. The depth of the material is comparable to that recorded on the Somerset Levels south of the Mendips, and is greater than that for the north Somerset Levels (Lilly and Usher, 1972; Leech, 1978, chapter 5).

*The Romano-British Pottery* (Fig. 5). Black burnished 1 wares and grey wares formed 33% and 63% of the total assemblage (108 sherds). Oxfordshire ware comprised the

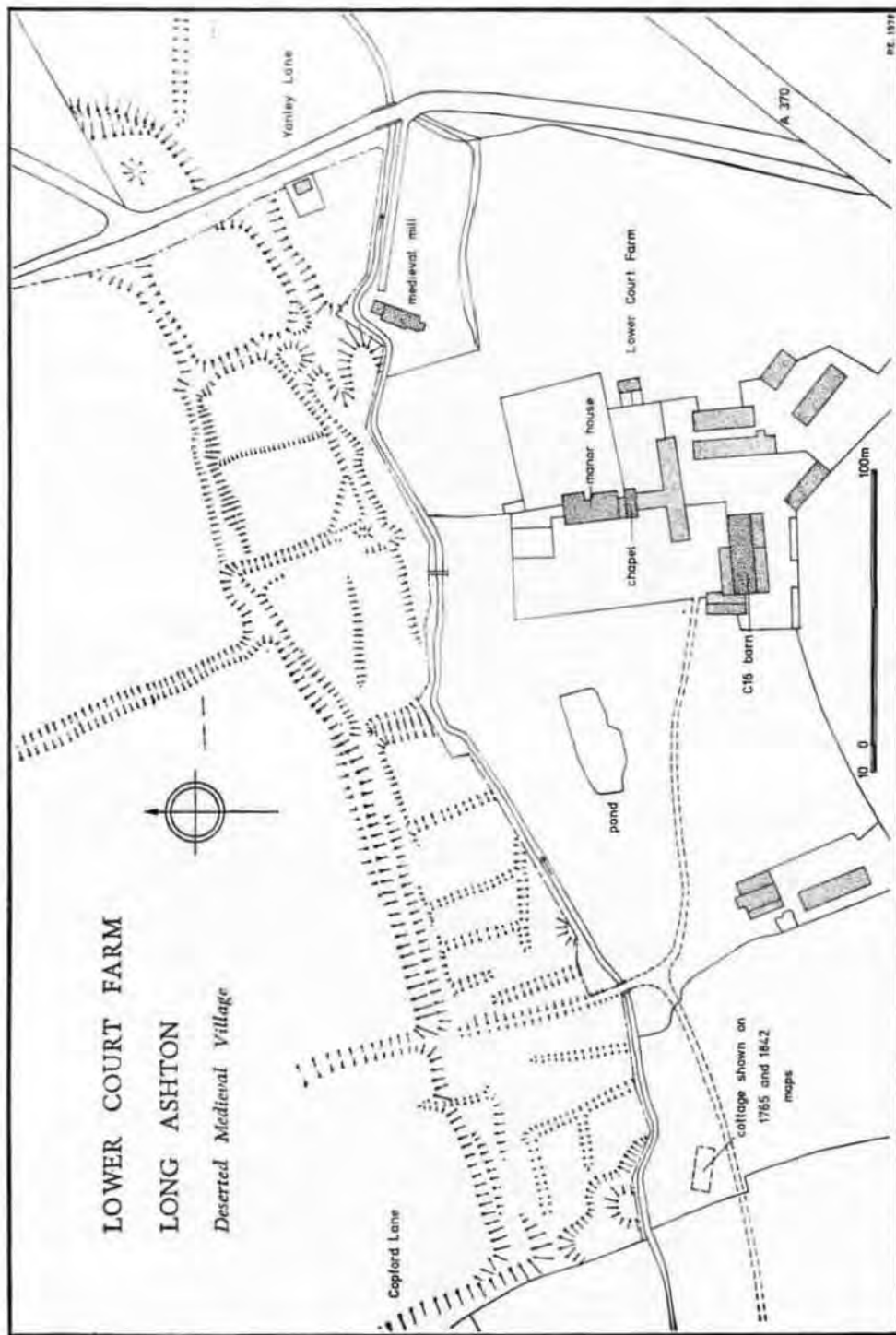


Fig. 1.

remaining 4%. No material was specifically of the 4th century. Black burnished 1 flange-rimmed bowls and grey-ware flagons and jars with double-beaded rims, as found at nearby Congresbury (Lilly and Usher, 1964), were noticeably absent. The grey wares were of a sandy, slightly micaceous fabric with fine inclusions, some with a not fully oxidised core. The high proportion of locally made black burnished 1 and grey wares may indicate that the site was close to a potter's kiln. Pottery making and salting were activities typical on low-lying marshlands (Bradley, 1975).

#### The Illustrated Finds

1. Jar with everted rim, black burnished 1, 2nd to 4th century.
2. Dish with flat rim, black burnished 1, 2nd century.
3. Dish with straight sides, black burnished 1, 2nd to 4th century.
4. Jar with everted rim, grey ware, 2nd to 4th century.
5. Jar with heavy everted rim, grey ware.
6. Storage jar, hand-made, grey ware, 2nd to 4th century.
7. Bowl with grooved flat rim, grey ware, possibly 1st or early 2nd century.
- 8-9. Tankards, grey ware, 1st or 2nd century, a Severn Valley type (Webster, 1976).

#### CADBURY FARM, YATTON, AVON, ST 429651

One Neolithic/Bronze-Age trimmed flint flake and fourteen Romano-British sherds were found during building works for a new housing estate at ST 42916506. The presence of Romano-British pottery at the junction of low-lying marshland and slightly higher ground could indicate seasonal activities such as salting or pottery making (Bradley, *op. cit.*). No archaeological features were seen during house construction.

*The Pottery* (Fig. 5). The assemblage comprised two featureless sherds of black burnished 1 and twelve of grey ware.

1. Jar with slight everted rim, grey ware, 1st to 2nd century.
2. Jar with everted rim, grey ware, 2nd century to 4th century.

#### CURRY RIVEL, SOMERSET, ST 393241 and 395243

Two sites were noted during trench excavation for a water pipe (Fig. 2).

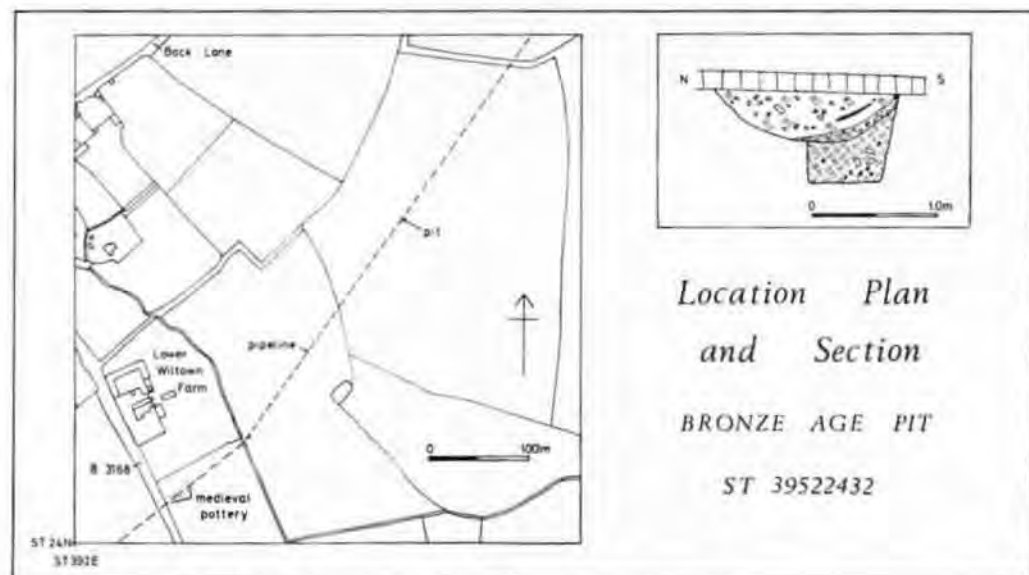


Fig. 2.

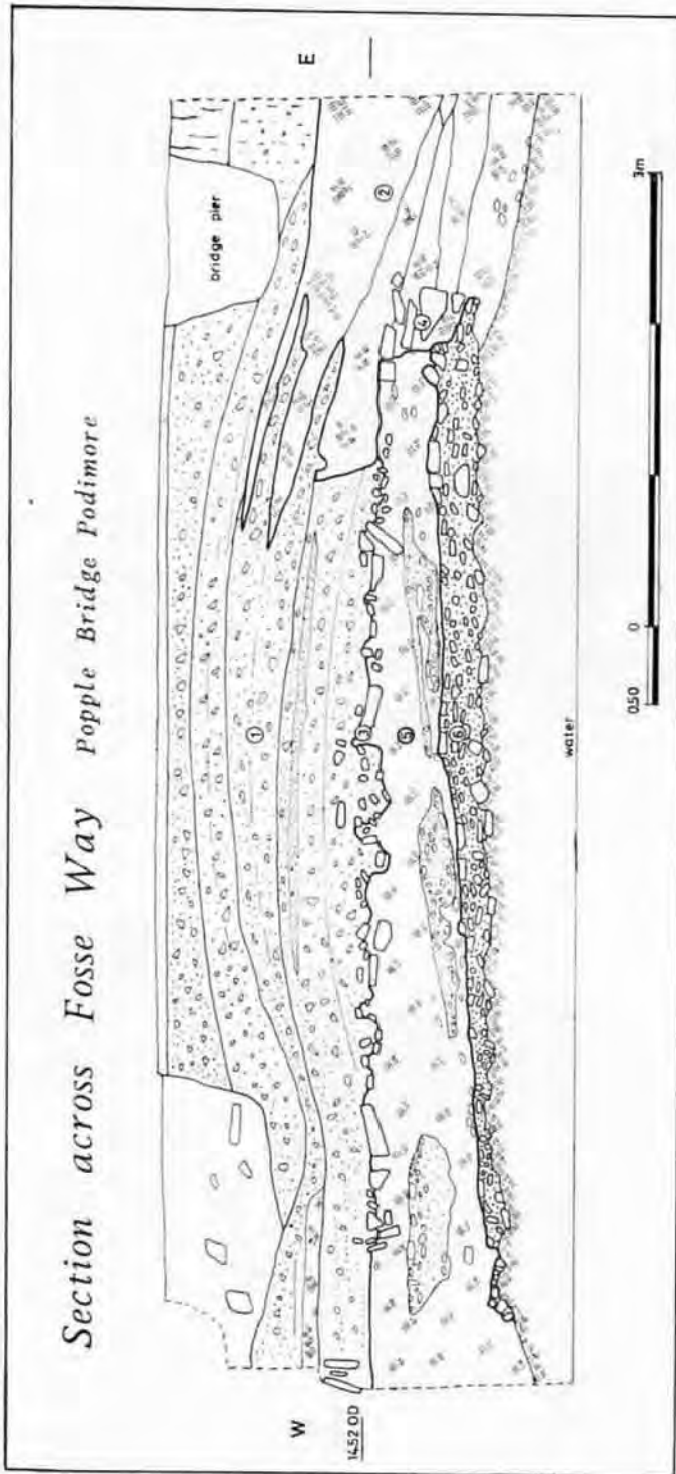


Fig. 3.

*Bronze-Age Pits*, ST 39522432. Ten sherds of Bronze-Age pottery were found in a concave-profiled pit, 1.45 m wide and 0.7 m deep. The upper fill of the pit was of brown clay and charcoal. Cut by the pit was a steep-sided flat-bottomed feature, filled with brown clay, charcoal and large lias stones.

*The Pottery* (not illustrated). The ten sherds came from one vessel of soft, coarse grog-tempered fabric, with a grey core and red oxidised surfaces. There were no diagnostic sherds. The fabric was too thin to be a collared urn, while grog temper is rare in local Trevisker assemblages. The sherds were of the Early or early Middle Bronze Age.

*Medieval Pottery Scatter*, ST 393241. Medieval pottery was found in the topsoil to the east of the B3168 road at ST 39302405. The sherds were comparable to Donyatt and Ilchester types of the 12th to 14th centuries.

#### LANGPORT, SOMERSET, ST 425267

Medieval pottery was found on a building site east of Bennett's Cottages, south of The Hill at ST 42462667. Although no archaeological features were seen on the ground, the site abuts that of tenements demolished in the early 19th century (Bush, 1974, 20). The pottery (not illustrated) comprised two Ham Green sherds, fifteen from Donyatt and 81 comparable to Ilchester types, mostly from baluster jugs and cooking pots and dating entirely from the 13th to 14th centuries. A Neolithic/Bronze-Age flint flake was also found.

#### POPPLE BRIDGE, PODIMORE, SOMERSET, ST 537259

The replacement of Popple Bridge across the River Cary on the Fosse Way (here the A37) enabled two sections of superimposed road surfaces, 10 m apart, to be recorded. At this point, the road today is raised on a causeway 1 m above the surrounding ground. The section illustrated (Fig. 3) shows (1) a series of cambered surfaces of compacted gravel, partially eroded to the east by (2) brown silty clay, and overlying (3) a layer of waterworn lias boulders associated with (4) a stone feature subsequently excavated by John Bentley and others, and shown to be a revetment alongside the river. Layer (3) overlay and sank into (5), a band of red-brown clay with pockets of stone and gravel. This layer sealed (6) a layer of stone and gravel 6.8 m wide and 0.3 m thick, resting on alluvial clay, and cut by (4). During construction work for the new bridge, a roughly-worked timber pile was noted underlying (6).

The excavation conducted by John Bentley indicated that (3) and (4) were the initial metalling and revetting of the turnpike road. Layer (6) beneath may be a surviving portion of the Fosse Way.

#### MARCHEY FARM, WOOKEY, SOMERSET, ST 479462

Romano-British, Saxon, medieval, and post-medieval pottery was recovered from ditch-cleaning to the south of the known site (Batt, 1969) at Marчей Farm (Fig. 4). A few sherds of Romano-British pottery were also found directly under the flagstones of a room in the farmhouse. This pottery, together with the pre-Conquest pottery noted below, indicates possible continuous occupation. Clearly, any future building work on this site should be preceded by archaeological investigation. The farmhouse has been recorded by M. Batt, whose drawings are deposited with the National Monuments Record.

##### *The Finds:*

*The Romano-British Pottery.* Black burnished 1 wares and grey wares formed 32% and 65% of the total assemblage (607 sherds), samian, Oxfordshire, New Forest, Rhenish and other local wares forming the remaining 3%. Grey wares were of a sandy micaceous fabric, some with gritty inclusions, and a few pitted with the marks of dissolved-out limestone particles. The samian included an unusually high proportion of East Gaulish ware, and as a group belonged to the second half of the 2nd century. Some of the East Gaulish sherds could be early 3rd century. The Romano-British

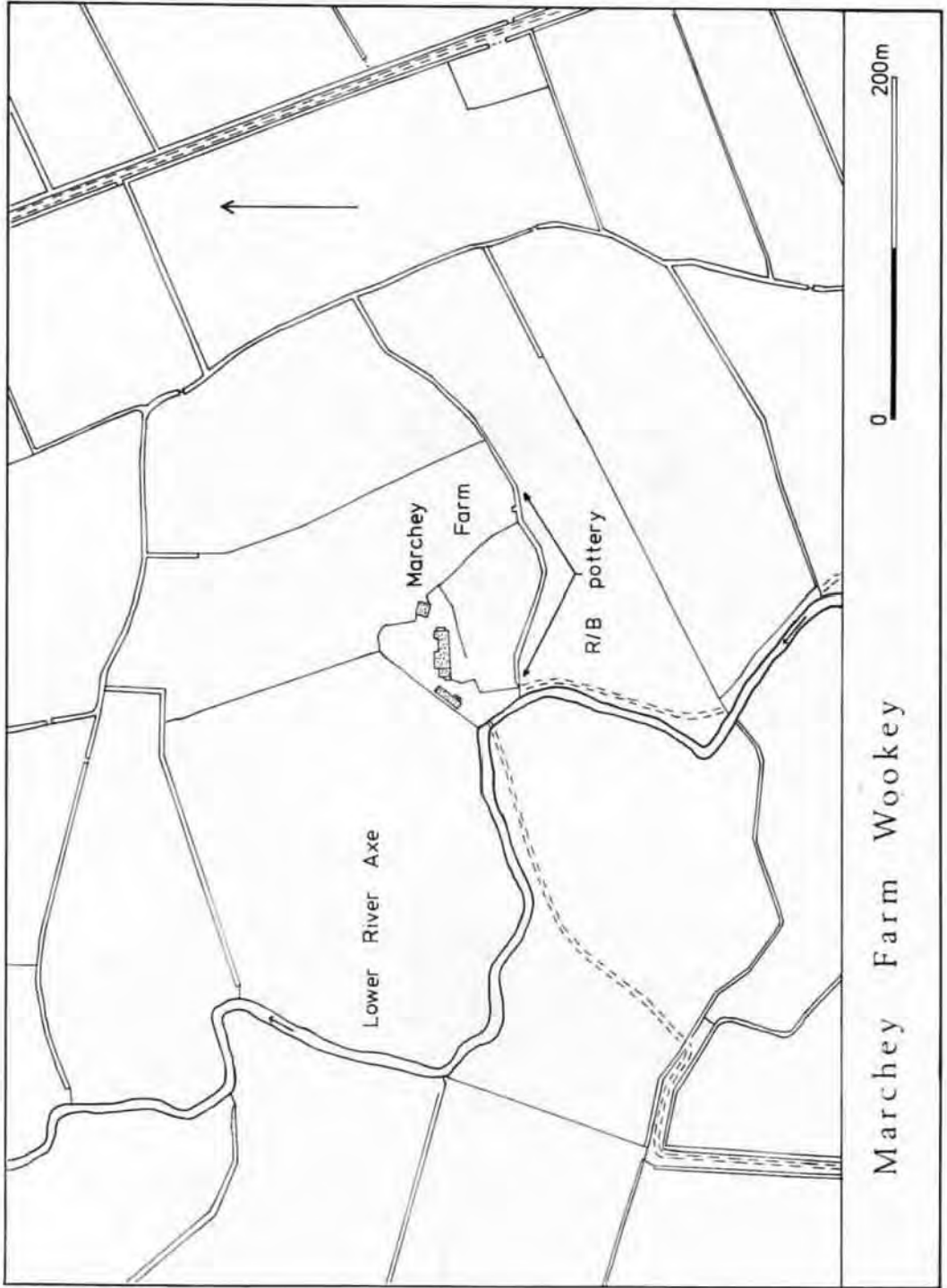


Fig. 4.

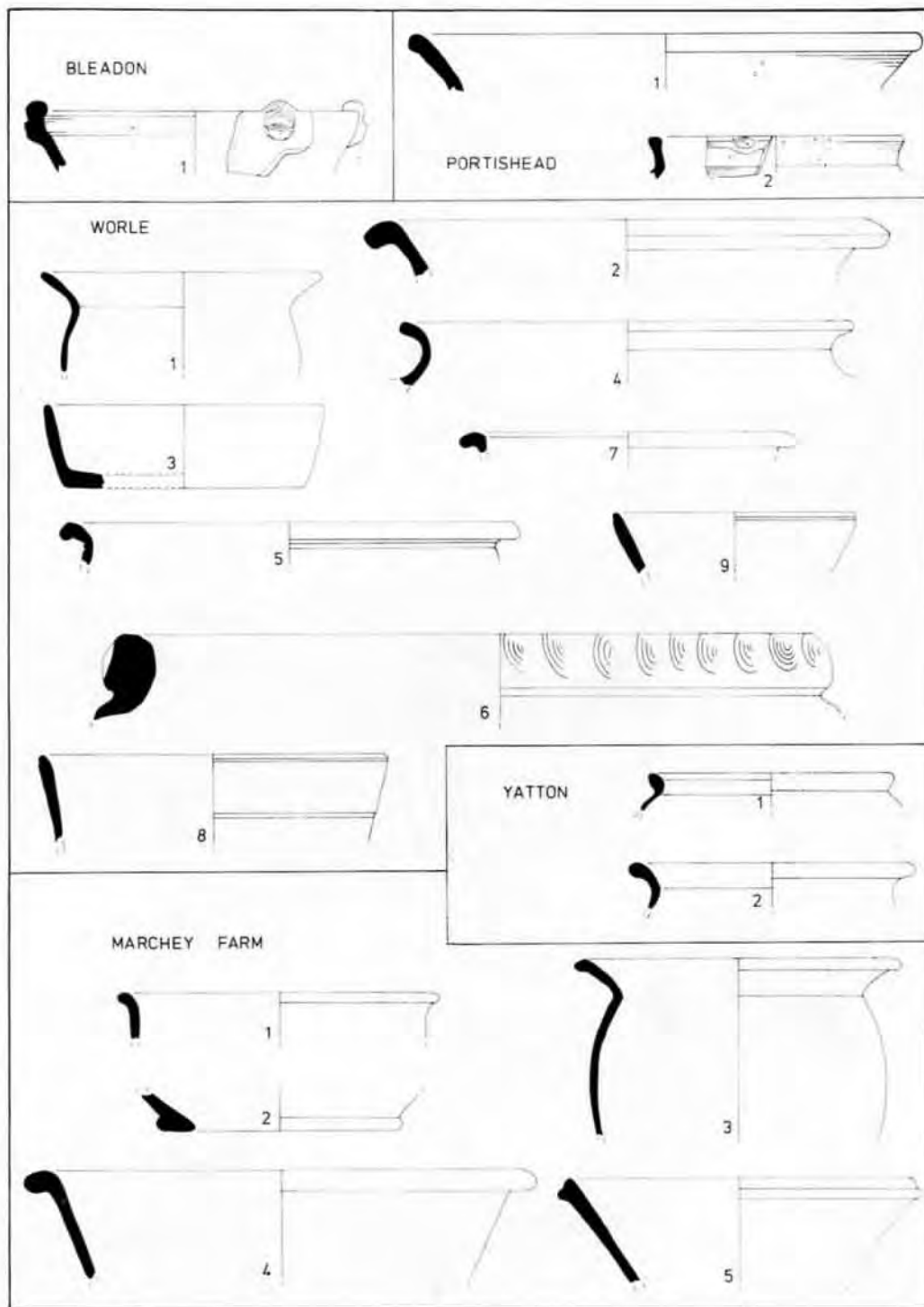


Fig. 5. Romano-British and medieval pottery (†).

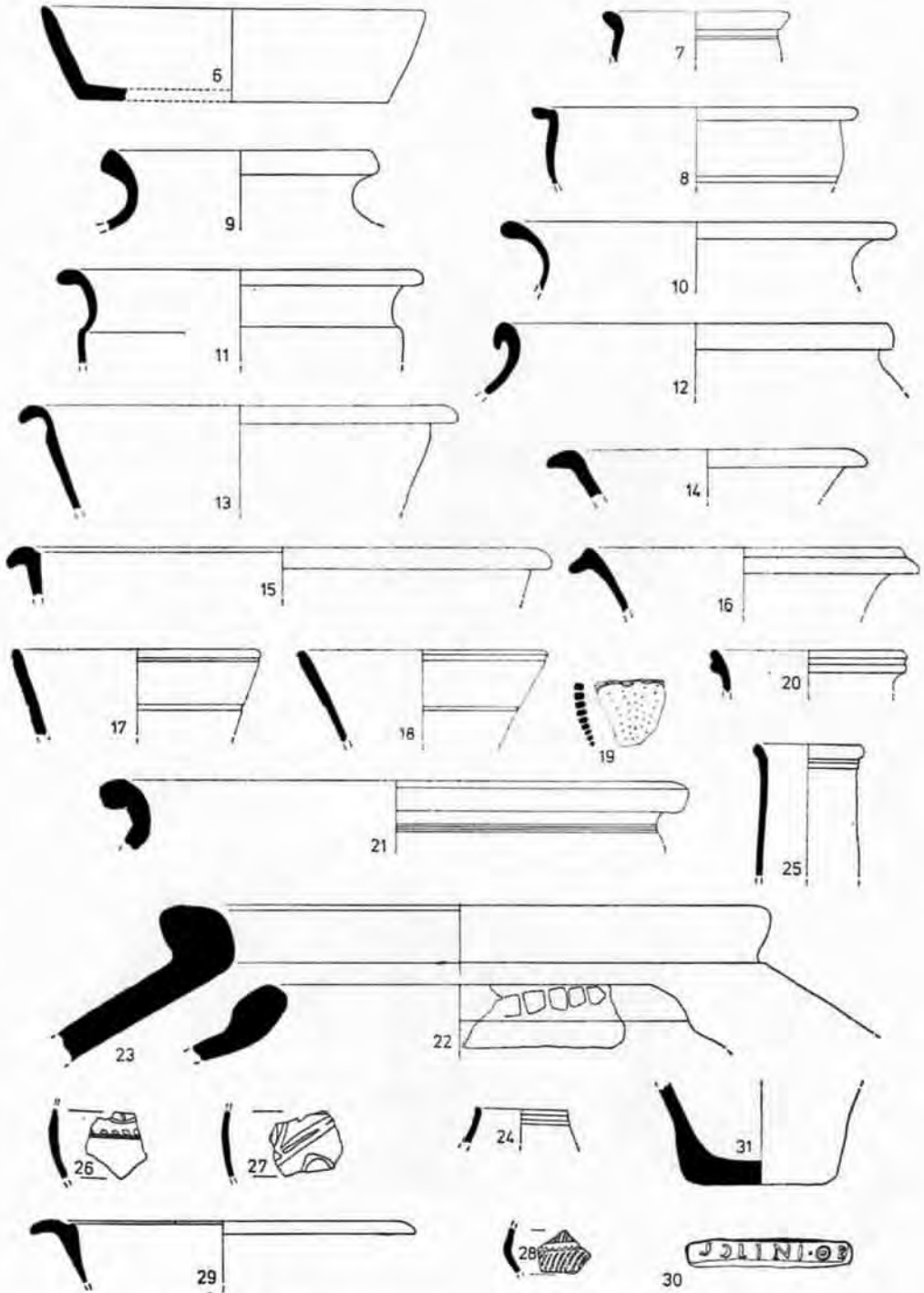


Fig. 6. Romano-British and medieval pottery from Marchey Farm ( $\frac{1}{4}$ , stamp 1 : 1).



pottery, of which a selection is illustrated, ranged in date from the later 1st century to the 4th century. There was no earlier pottery.

*The Illustrated Sherds* (Figs. 5 & 6).

1. Jar with slight everted rim, black burnished 1, 1st or early 2nd century.
2. Base with footing, black burnished 1, 1st or early 2nd century.
3. Jar with everted rim, black burnished 1, 2nd to 4th century.
4. Bowl with flat rim, black burnished 1, 2nd century.
5. Bowl with flanged rim, black burnished 1, 4th century.
6. Dish with straight sides, and faint burnished decoration, black burnished 1, 2nd to 4th century.
7. Jar with slight everted rim, grey ware, 1st or early 2nd century.
8. Jar with everted rim and lid groove, grey ware, possibly 1st or early 2nd century.
- 9-10. Jars with everted rims, grey ware, 2nd to 4th century.
11. Jar with everted rim and pronounced shoulder, grey ware.
12. Jar with hooked rim, grey ware, 3rd to 4th century.
13. Bowl with outbent rim, grey ware, late 1st to early 2nd century (Cunliffe, 1971, fig. 108, type 224).
14. Bowl with flat rim, grey ware, 2nd century.
15. Bowl with flat rim and slight groove, grey ware, 2nd to 3rd century.
16. Bowl with flanged rim, grey ware, 4th century.
- 17-18. Tankards, grey ware, 1st century.
19. Cullender, grey ware.
20. Flagon with double-beaded rim, grey ware, 3rd to 4th century.
21. Storage jar, hand-made grey ware, 3rd to 4th century.
- 22-23. Storage jars, hand-made grey ware.
- 24-25. Bag beakers, New Forest 1a, c.260+ (Fulford, 1975, fig. 16).
- 26-27. Beakers, Oxfordshire possibly type C27, 270-400+ (Young, 1977).
28. Globular Beaker, Oxfordshire type C23, 270-400+ (Young, 1977).
29. Bowl or mortarium with slight rim and wide flange, cream fabric with grog inclusions, 1st or early 2nd century (Cunliffe, 1971, figs. 97 and 98, types 134 to 141).
30. Samian stamp, form 33 base, by Solinus of Lezoux, probably Antonine.

*The Medieval and Post-Medieval Pottery.* Only a little medieval pottery was found; this included the base of a pre-Conquest jar (Fig. 6, 31). The post-medieval assemblage included material from the Wanstrode kilns, from Hampshire and from the Iberian peninsula.

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