

PLATE VIII



The Earliest Glastonbury Seal

Notes

THE EARLIEST GLASTONBURY SEAL

A CHARTER of Robert of Winchester, Abbot of Glastonbury from 1171–1178,¹ has recently been discovered in the county record office at Gloucester. This document, which measures 9 in. by 4½ in., is in a typical late twelfth-century charter hand and grants to Herbert le Warre of Bristol the land belonging to St. Stephen's church Bristol, which Herbert had bought from Herbert de Munemue and Nicholas of Gloucester. Herbert is to render yearly a gold bezant to St. Stephen's church, binds himself to give a bezant to the Abbot of Glastonbury as relief in default of heirs and has given to Abbot and Convent 2 oz. of gold and two barrels of wine for the charter.

The chief interest of the document, however, lies in the conventual seal of Glastonbury which is attached to it. This seal gives what appears to be the only known representation of Glastonbury before the great fire of 1184.² It shows the monastic church viewed from the west. In the foreground is the *vetusta ecclesia* or 'wattle-church': a smallish building with western turrets each topped with a small 'pepper-box' cap. As far as can be seen the roof is pyramidal with dormer windows to let in the light. It is interesting to notice the similarity of the wattle-church to the stone Lady Chapel which succeeded it and it is clear that the latter is intended to be a copy in stone of its predecessor. It is certain from William of Malmesbury's description of the wattle-church, that this ancient chapel had been covered with wooden boards and with lead.³ This description both bears out the representation of the seal and also accounts for the singular buttresses of the present Lady Chapel which appear to imitate wooden posts. Signs of the pyramidal roof of the Lady Chapel may still be seen on the turrets—turrets whose shape is markedly similar to those shown on the seal.

To the south of the 'wattle-church' is shown the bell-tower of Abbot Henry of Blois;⁴ this stood in the 'holy cemetery'.⁵ Further to the south may be seen what appears not to be a building and may well be a representation of one (if not both, the seal is very damaged here) of the famous 'pyramids' or large standing crosses which excited the wonder and interest of visitors from the

¹ *Adam of Domerham*, ed. Hearne, pp. ii, 331–2.

² In its present damaged condition it measures 1½ in. by 1¼ in.

³ *Adam of Domerham*, I, p. 28.

⁴ *Ibid.*, II, p. 316.

⁵ This graveyard was of course the oldest and holiest spot at Glastonbury (*ibid.*, II, pp. 27–8). It was the presence of this cemetery which made the small and cramped cloisters of the abbey inevitable.

days of Malmesbury⁶ to those of William Worcester and Leland. These crosses stood to the south of the Wottle-church.

No seal aims at giving more than a mere symbolic representation of the building it portrays—but the discovery of this early picture of Glastonbury forges without doubt another link in the story of the abbey.⁷

TEXT OF THE CHARTER

Sciant tam presentes quam futuri quod ego Robertus Dei gratia Glaston ecclesie abbas, consilio et assensu eiusdem ecclesie conventus, concessi et sigillo nostro et ecclesie nostre confirmavi Herberto la Warre de Bristollo terram quam emit de Herberto de Munemue et aliam terram quam emit de Nicholao de Gloucestria que pertinent ad ecclesias nostram Sancti Stephani de Bristollo, sibi et heredibus suis hereditario iure tenendam, reddendo inde annuatim ad festum Sancti Michaelis unum bizancium auri ecclesie Sancti Stephani et in remotione heredum debet dari unus bizancius abbati Glaston. in relevamine. Et propter hanc nostram concessionem et confirmationem dedit predictus Herbertus in recognitione nobis duas uncias auri et duo dolia vini.

His testibus: Magistro Thoma, Magistro Rogero, Ricardo de Herieth, Henrico Drugeman, Herberto Dapiffero, Jordano la Warre et Johanne filio eius, David la Warre, Simone et Waltero, Giliberto la Warre, Augustino sacerdote.

ÆLFRED WATKIN.

A NOTE REGARDING A LETTER WRITTEN BY SAMUEL HASELL TO SIR RICHARD COLT HOARE ON THE SUBJECT OF THE ROMAN VILLA AT PITNEY

The letter referred to is dated 6 February 1831, and written from Littleton, where Hasell lived. It appears important, since it throws new light on the fragmentary sepulchral inscriptions, said by Colt Hoare in his *Pitney Pavement* (1832), p. 18, to have been found 'within the quadrangle', i.e., inside the Courtyard of the Villa. This statement is repeated by Haverfield in the *Victoria County History of Somerset*, Vol. I, p. 327. For some unknown reason Colt Hoare seems to have disregarded H's letter, while Haverfield was probably unaware of its existence. In any case Haverfield's opinion of H is well known, though judging from all evidence available, apparently undeserved.

The presence of interments within the precincts of the house must have puzzled many archæologists, since such practice was contrary to the Law of the Twelve Tables (X, 1), *Hominem mortuom in urbe ne sepelito neve urito*. H's letter to Colt Hoare, however, puts the matter quite differently. He says: 'I did not open any new site

⁶ *Adam of Domerham*, I, pp. 44-5.

⁷ It might be thought that this seal was that of the mid-thirteenth-century abbot Robert of Bath—were it not that the writing is clearly of the earlier period.

this past autumn. The Inscriptions I gave you notice of were found under the following circumstances. About an hundred yards to the east of that villa at Pitney which contains the grand mosaic¹ I observed the marks of a small ruin of about similar shape and size which one of our modern dove houses may be supposed to present a thousand years hence. I opened it and found it contained angular tiles and other Roman indications; on continuing the examination fragments of inscriptions were dug up. Pieces of lachrymatories and human skeletons.'

A further point of interest in H's letter is with regard to 'many coins (large brass) of Vespasian and of the Antonines were here also found', i.e., with the inscriptions and skeletons, etc. The writer is not aware of evidence apart from this, as to the date or period during which the Villa was inhabited.

It is perhaps worth-while recording here that the stone with inscription reading:—

VIXISIN
TRIGINTA
QVAECAPI
NONOA

is now in the Admiral Blake Museum, Bridgwater. It was acquired from his friend H by William Stradling, sometime of the Priory, Chilton Polden, and remained at the Priory until about 12 years ago, when it was presented to the Blake Museum by Mrs. J. Maltwood. The present location of the other inscriptions is unknown.

H's letter referred to formed part of a collection presented to the Society by Mr. H. Laver in 1901.

H. S. L. DEWAR.

The following note is reprinted from 'Notes and Queries (Somerset and Dorset)' Vol. XXV, Part CCXLIII (December, 1949.) Note 167.

THE RESTORATION OF TARR STEPS, HAWKRIDGE

The damage to the Steps was caused by three big floods in December 1939, January 1940 (with ice flows and suspended timber) and November 1940. Temporary repairs were carried out by the County Council in March 1941 after lengthy discussions on the question of liability for repair.

When the offer of the Royal Engineers (T.A.) to restore the bridge was accepted, a meeting of representatives of the Somerset Archaeological Society, Ministry of Works (A.M. Branch), Royal Engineers and the County Council was held at the Steps to discuss the methods of restoration to be adopted.

Following this meeting a survey of the Steps was made and from the details of the stones lying on the bed of the river and a good collection of old and recent photographs, cardboard models of the

¹ Destroyed in 1836.

clapper-stones were made and fitted into position on the plan. From this the positions of the piers were fixed and a drawing was completed and used as the working drawing—on the site.

From information obtained from local sources it would appear that the Steps had been partially destroyed and rebuilt on several occasions. One person volunteered the information that the Steps had been completely washed away about 90 years ago.

Work was commenced by the 116 Army Engineer Regt. (T.A.) under the command of Lieut-Col. J. A. Chapman, the programme being as follows :—

Sept. 3rd & 4th.	Erection of temporary suspension bridge on upstream side of the Steps.
10th & 11th.	Suspension bridge completed.
17th & 18th.	Demolition of steel girders and concrete. Collection and classification of stones on site.
24th & 25th.	Demolition of concrete completed. Re-erection of piers and clapper-stones commenced and existing piers strengthened.
Oct. 1st & 2nd.	Restoration of piers and clapper-stones continued. Scour-holes under piers filled in with gravel and shingle from river-bed. Last clapper-stone fixed on Sunday at midday.
8th.	Remaining raking-stones and supporters fixed to piers and check-stones placed on upstream side of ford.
9th.	Clearing site.

As the concrete ramp to the girder bridge was built directly on the clapper-stones each side of the gap, it was feared that, when this concrete was broken up, the stones would be damaged. Fortunately concrete paper had been placed on the clappers and the concrete had not adhered to the stones. The concrete was broken-up by pneumatic drills driven by compressed air.

Before re-erecting the piers, shallow trenches were excavated in the stream bed and the base stones of the piers were firmly embedded on fine gravel. The erection of the piers was difficult in some cases owing to the uneven and rounded surfaces of the stones. After a little practice and care in the selection of stones, this work became easier.

The clapper-stones and big pier stones had been moved clear of the site by a two-ton mobile crane. The heaviest stone moved weighed between 25-30 cwt.

Whilst the piers and clapper-stones were being replaced, a small party of Engineers made good the existing piers. The raking-stones were lifted and placed in position by means of improvised shear-legs and the anchor stones were man-handled into position. The scour holes around and between the piers were filled in with fine gravel and shingle, with a layer of larger stones on the surface.

SOMERSET

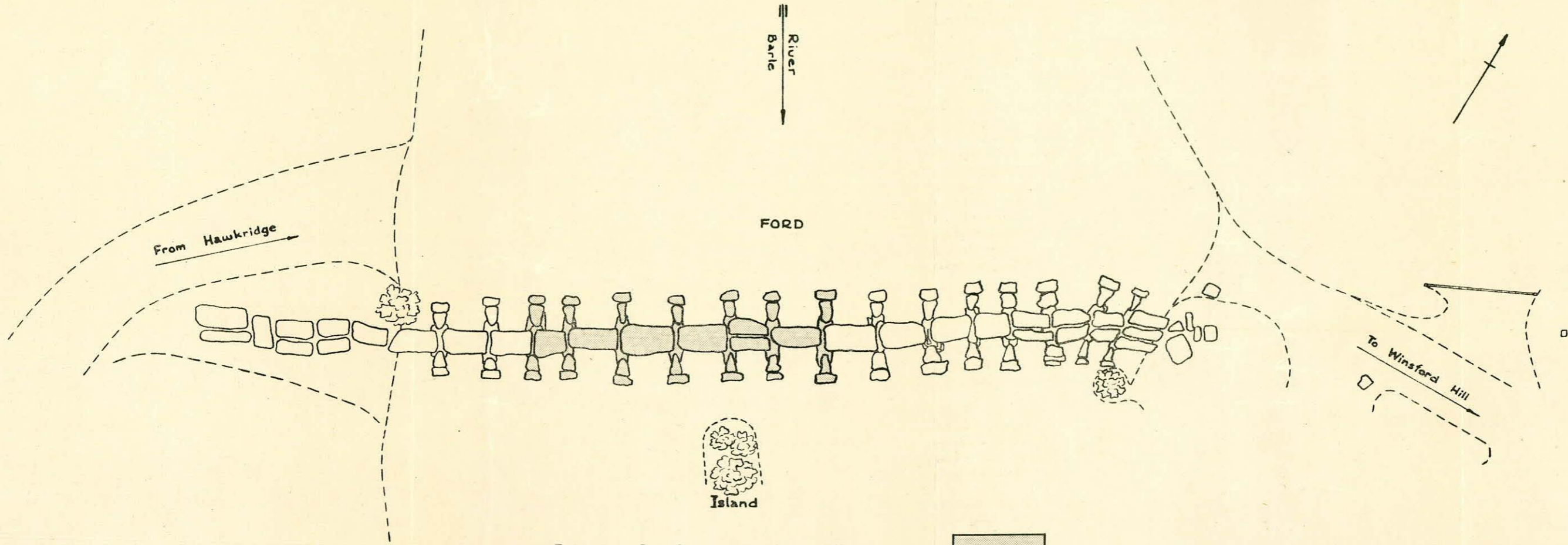
COUNTY

COUNCIL

DULVERTON

RURAL

DISTRICT



Scale: 20 Feet to 1 Inch.

TARR STEPS RECONSTRUCTION - 1949

D.A.A.

12:10:49.

Fig. 7.

[By Permission of the Somerset County Council.]

The clapper-stones fitted generally with little difficulty, but on two occasions it was necessary to rebuild the piers to eradicate rocking of the clappers.

The original levels of the piers and clappers were followed as nearly as possible. There was a fall from each bank to quarter-spans and a rise from these points to centre-span. The difference in level between quarter and centre span was 14 inches. The line of the old Steps had a bow in the downstream direction and this line was preserved.

The function of the raking-stones would appear to be to break the force of the river when in spate and to carry any timber or debris over the Steps.

It is apparent from the denuded state of the river-bed from the Steps and ford to a point some 150 feet upstream, that the stones used in the Steps were taken from this portion of the river-bed. This bare patch had the effect of accelerating the flow of the river over this area towards the Steps. As an experiment surplus stones from the restoration work were placed on the upstream side of the ford in an endeavour to impede the flow towards the Steps. If this is successful the number of stones so placed should be increased.

The Steps will be carefully watched this winter and any defects will be made good by the County Council.

D. A. ALVES, A.M.I.C.E.,
County Surveyor's Dept.,
Taunton.

ROMAN COUNTERSUNK-HANDLED JAR FROM HUNTSPILL

Extensive Romano-British occupation of the peat-land in the vicinity of the Burtles in the Brue Valley had long been known to Antiquaries such as William Stradling and John Morland before being systematically examined by Dr. A. Bulleid, F.S.A., in 1914.¹ This turbary land is hemmed in on the seaward side by a belt of clay about 5 miles wide. The coastal clay-belt was cut through during the last War (1939-45) by the artificial Huntspill River or 'Cut'. During this operation, carried out by the Somerset Rivers Catchment Board, it came to the notice of H.S.L.D., who was granted access to the site, that extensive deposits of Romano-British pottery, luting, 'fire-bars' and briquetage, comparable to those recorded by Bulleid on the open turbary, were being exposed by the mechanical excavators of the Board.

Dr. H. Godwin, F.R.S., was informed so that pollen analyses could be made, and as a result of borings made by the Board, as well as by Godwin himself, and field observations by Miss W. Aberly, a schematic profile was published by Godwin² showing the buried

¹ Bulleid (A), 1914, *Proc. Soc. Antiq.*, xxvi, p. 137.

² Godwin (H), 1943. *Journal of Ecology*, xxxi, pt. 2, p. 217.

R.-B. surface in relationship to peat, clay and O.D., from Withey Bridge to a point about half-way between Woolavington Causeway and Puriton Drove. The R.-B. (peat) surface is shown buried from zero in the east to approximately 9 ft. in the west, by clay. This has already been pointed out by H.S.L.D. elsewhere,³ and specimens of the pottery have been presented to Taunton Castle Museum, while the positions of the R.-B. working sites have been recorded on the 6-in. Map for the Archæology Branch of the Ordnance Survey.

On 23 December 1949, Mr. R. Calvey, patrolling the north bank of the Huntspill River between Woolavington Causeway and Puriton Drove at low water, noticed a dark, globular object protruding

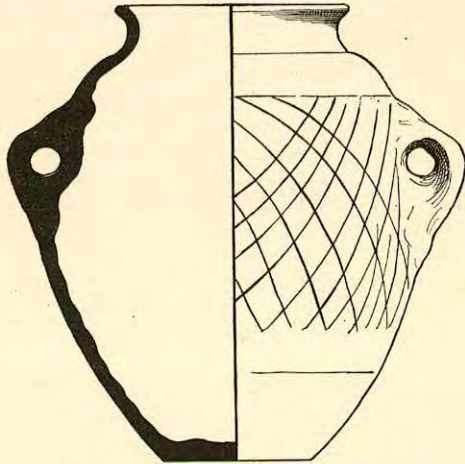


Fig. 8. Jar from Huntspill 'Cut' (¼).

from the mud. Being satisfied that it was not a bomb, he was skilful and fortunate enough to recover intact the fine specimen of Romano-British ware, a jar with countersunk lugs, illustrated in Fig. 5. It will be remembered that water is frequently pumped out and/or let in to the river, and it is suggested that in the course of these operations, the vessel was either released from one of the dumps of working *débris* or, alternatively, washed out of one of the deep erosion channels cutting across the line of the river near the site of the find.

The jar is in almost perfect condition, except for a series of fissures, which appear to be the result of fire cracks, round the body. There is no wear on the base and the vessel is probably a 'waster', suggesting that it was made near the find-spot. It

³ Dewar (H. S. L.), 1949, *Somerset and Dorset Notes and Queries*, xxv, pt. 241, p. 201.

may be described as a collar-necked jar, globular in shape with narrow base, having two countersunk handles. It is of dark grey ware, with lighter body, burnished above and below the trellis-work pattern, which on account of the handles is rather roughly executed. Height: $9\frac{1}{2}$ in.; diameter, at mouth: $4\frac{11}{16}$ in.; across handles: $9\frac{1}{8}$ in.; at greatest width: $7\frac{13}{16}$ in.; at base: 3 in. The form is derived from the bead-rim vessel with countersunk handles found in many places in Wessex during the latest phase of Iron Age B and during the Belgo-Roman overlap period (c. 50 B.C.—A.D. 70).⁴

Parts of similar but larger vessels with countersunk handles and striations on body, which must date from at least as late as the Antonine period, and probably much later, were found at Bedmore Barn, Ham Hill, near the Roman Villa and are now in the Taunton Museum. These vessels contained part of the hoard of *sestertii*, over a thousand in number, dating from Augustus to Postumus (A.D. 259–267).⁵ Other jars of this class in Taunton Museum are portions of two found in 1903 by Walter Raymond in the parish of Preston Plucknett, near Yeovil, in a field adjoining the old Roman road from Ilchester to Dorchester, now called Lark Hill Lane.⁶ Portions of four more are in the possession of Mr. J. Stevens Cox of Ilchester where they have been found during excavations in recent years.

Part of another vessel, very similar to that from Huntspill but larger, with trellis-work pattern and small handles was found at Combwich in 1940.⁷ In addition there were one or two handles of similar pots from the same site. These are also in Taunton Museum. Portions of jars with countersunk handles of Claudian date, which appear to be the link between the Wessex Iron Age form and the Huntspill form of well-established Roman make, were found during excavations at Woolworth's, Exeter, in 1933.⁸

The exact purpose of these handled jars cannot be determined without a closer inspection of all the sites where they have been found. Their use as money chests seems only of secondary importance, but that they were meant for some form of transport with a cord tied through the perforated lugs is a reasonable assumption. They may well have been used as storage vessels for dropping down wells or shafts in order to keep the contents cool, being easily let down or drawn up by the cord. By comparison with other

⁴ Wheeler (R. E. M.), 1943, *Maiden Castle, Dorset*, pp. 210–12; Fig. 65 pl. xxvi (map), and p. 216, Fig. 74.

⁵ Norris (H.), 1886, *Proceedings*, xxxii, i, 48 and Gray (H. St. G.), 1902, *Proceedings*, xlviii, i, 47 (The Walter Collection). A list to be published in the *Numismatic Chronicle* for 1949.

⁶ Gray (H. St. G.), 1903, *Proceedings*, xlix, i, 57.

⁷ Dewar (H. S. L.), 1940, *Proceedings*, lxxxvi, 129–33.

⁸ Montgomerie-Neilson (E.) and Montague (L. A. D.), 1934, *Proc. Devon Arch. Explor. Soc.*, ii, pt. 2, p. 89, Fig. 8.

vessels having a collar-neck, slight shoulder and the same globular form our example can be dated somewhere between the later years of the 1st Century A.D. and the Antonine period.

H. S. L. DEWAR and W. A. SEABY.

THE MEARE LAKE VILLAGE, 1948

Following the publication of *The Meare Lake Village Excavations*, Vol. I, by Dr. A. Bulleid and Mr. St. George Gray, in July, excavations were resumed at Meare from 6 to 27 September on a rather smaller scale than in pre-war times, owing to the scarcity of paid labour for the heavier work. Dr. Bulleid being no longer available owing to advancing years, Mr. St. George Gray directed the work alone, with the help of Mrs. Gray and several volunteers, mostly members of the Somerset Archaeological Society, and some young students.

The excavations were continued in the eastern half of the village on two sites known as Mounds XXVIII and XXX. The former from surface indications was seen to be a comparatively very large area of clay. After the first ten days' work from the south, digging was discontinued for this season, after investigating several clay floors and the accompanying hearths, also of clay.

Attention was then centred on a smaller dwelling-mound (No. XXX) about half of which was excavated. Here again the clay floors and hearths were of interest, the latter proving to be built up of six layers, the upper covered by a stone surface. In this area a die, oblong in shape, marked 3, 4, 5, 6, an ornamented gaming-piece and a large plain cooking-pot were found. The 'finds' also included two saddle-querns, a La Tène III bronze fibula, spindle-whorls (complete and in process of formation), flint scrapers, a triangular crucible, an iron spearhead and some ornamented pottery. Care was taken to record from which floor objects were taken, but the majority of the 'finds' were discovered below the clay floors in the black earth.

H. ST. GEORGE GRAY.