

Archæologia Cantiana.

ROMANO-BRITISH INTERMENTS

DISCOVERED AT

BAYFORD NEXT SITTINGBOURNE, KENT.

BY GEORGE PAYNE, F.S.A., F.L.S.

BAYFORD, formerly called Badford, is a manor lying to the north-east of the towns of Sittingbourne and Milton; its lands form the eastern boundary of Milton Creek, which runs from the river Swale into the latter town. It derives its name doubtless from a "ford" that once existed across the creek, near this spot; long since obliterated by the silt, which has of recent years accumulated to an extent that threatens to deprive the towns above mentioned of that which has contributed in no small degree to their wealth and prosperity. The combined action of the large brick and cement manufacturers, whose works are situate on the banks of the creek, could by constructing a canal render such a catastrophe impossible, and facilitate the working of the vast fleet of barges they employ. The pedestrian walking from Sittingbourne to Adelaide Dock, Murston, would pass by the moated manor-house at Bayford; and a few paces from the north-east corner of the moat he would notice a small pond, on

the right of the road. In a map dated 1590, in the possession of the executors of the late George Smeed, Esq., this pond is shewn as "Cleke" pond, a name it still bears. Within a hundred yards eastward of the pond, the interments about to be described were found. The first grave (No. 1) was discovered on the 7th of March 1877; it contained twenty-two articles, which have already been published.* On November 6, 1879, a second grave (No. 2) was met with, about twenty yards distant, towards the north-east, at a depth of 3 ft. 6 in. from the surface. The relics, numbering thirty, appeared to have been simply packed together in a hole, which had been dug for their reception; the earth being afterwards thrown in upon them. They comprised:—

I. Square cinerary vessel of thick blue glass, filled with calcined human bones, and capable of holding about two gallons; height $15\frac{1}{2}$ inches, width 8 inches.

II. Pale greenish-blue glass jug, with handle; height $3\frac{1}{4}$ inches.

III. Circular pale blue glass bottle, similar in form to the well-known round cinerary vase; height $6\frac{1}{2}$ inches, diameter 6 inches.

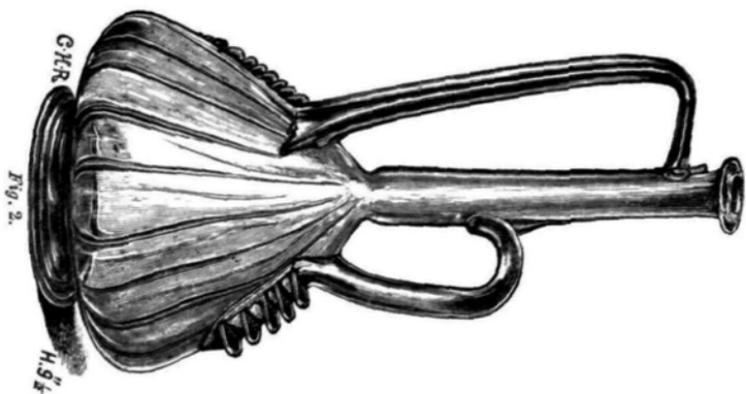
IV. Vase of white transparent glass. This vessel was broken into innumerable fragments, and past all repair. When whole it was probably 4 inches in height and about 2 inches in diameter, and had four indentations upon its sides.

V. Pale olive-green glass vase, with a long slender neck and two handles; height $9\frac{1}{4}$ inches, diameter of bulge $4\frac{3}{4}$ inches.

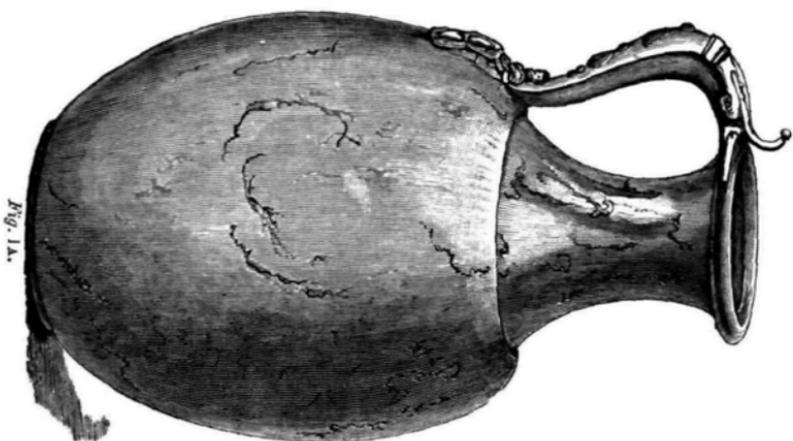
VI. Bronze vase, height 10 inches, diameter $6\frac{1}{4}$ inches. The handle is of solid metal, the lower part being cast in high relief. It will be seen from the illustration (fig. 1) that the figure of the man is represented in an attitude ready to attack. In his right hand is an uplifted sword; in the left, which is raised to the centre of the body, is the scabbard, and over the arm is a cloak, with the folds clearly defined below. His

* *Arch. Cant.*, Vol. XI., pp. 47, 48,

GLASS VASE.
(No. V., from Grave No. 2.)



BRONZE VASE OR JUG,
(No. VI., from Grave No. 2.)



HANDLE OF BRONZE VASE OR JUG.



ROMAN VESSELS FROM CEMETERY AT BAYFORD, NEAR SITTINGBOURNE.

From Drawings by C. H. Rea, F.S.A.

head, which is slightly thrown back, is covered with a cap; the mouth is open, as if intended to convey the impression that the man is shouting. Under the right hand is a decapitated ram or goat, legs uppermost, with blood flowing from the neck, the head having fallen at the man's feet. Between his legs reclines an ox, and outside the left leg is the head of a boar with uplifted snout. Above the man's head a goat is represented galloping, over which are two animals somewhat indistinct, sitting close together and looking in opposite directions; above these is the figure of a human being seated, holding a crook in the right hand; above which the handle is encircled half way round by a band, having a thin line of silver inlaid in the centre. The rim of the vessel is clasped by the heads of two birds with silver eyes, the long beaks being drilled with holes as if to represent teeth; the necks of the birds are divided by a scroll pattern, which flows down the handle to the band before mentioned.

VII. Iron lamp-stand, with bar for suspension.

VIII. Bowl-shaped cup of delicate cream-coloured pottery, barely 2 inches in height and $4\frac{1}{4}$ inches in diameter; it is exquisitely finished and almost as thin as egg-shell china. It is decorated with incised markings, done with a pointed instrument.

IX. and X. Urn-shaped vases of pure Upchurch pottery, ornamented with the raised "dot" pattern, so common on this ware. They are both about $4\frac{3}{4}$ inches high and 4 inches in diameter.

XI. Pitcher with handle, of red clay; height 10 inches, diameter of bulge 8 inches.

XII., XIII., and XIV. Fragments of three bronze strigils.

XV. Bronze flat split-ring, in the form of the letter D, upon which was suspended the strigils and a bronze patera with handle. Either could be detached when required for use.

XVI. Samian patera, height $8\frac{1}{2}$ inches, diameter $1\frac{5}{8}$ inches.

XVII. " " $6\frac{1}{4}$ " " $1\frac{1}{4}$ "

XVIII. " " $6\frac{1}{4}$ " " $1\frac{1}{4}$ "

XIX. " " $6\frac{3}{8}$ " " $1\frac{1}{4}$ "

XX. " " $6\frac{1}{8}$ " " $1\frac{3}{8}$ "

XXI. " " $6\frac{5}{8}$ " " $1\frac{1}{2}$ "

ornamented with leaf pattern round the rim.

XXII.	Samian cup, height	$1\frac{3}{4}$	inches,	diameter	$4\frac{7}{8}$	inches.
XXIII.	„	„	„	„	$4\frac{7}{8}$	„
XXIV.	„	„	2	„	$4\frac{7}{8}$	„
XXV.	„	„	$1\frac{7}{8}$	„	$4\frac{7}{8}$	„
XXVI.	„	„	$1\frac{1}{4}$	„	$3\frac{5}{8}$	„
XXVII.	„	„	$1\frac{1}{4}$	„	$3\frac{5}{8}$	„
XXVIII.	„	„	$1\frac{1}{8}$	„	$3\frac{5}{8}$	„
XXIX.	„	„	$1\frac{1}{8}$	„	$3\frac{5}{8}$	„
XXX.	„	„	$1\frac{1}{4}$	„	$3\frac{3}{4}$	„

ornamented with leaf pattern.

On the 7th of November 1879 the writer explored the site of the funeral pyre, which was adjoining the grave, and found among the burnt earth numerous fragments of Roman tiles, portions of antlers of old red-deer which had been sawn off, the lower jawbone of a boar, and a portion of the jawbone of an ox. The importance of the Bayford discoveries necessitated almost daily supervision, during the excavations for brick-earth; but nothing further was met with until January 27th, 1880, when another pyre was cut through; revealing many varieties of potsherds, including a portion of the rim of a mortarium, also the horn cores and upper part of the skull of an ox. On the same day a third grave was discovered, containing a large hand-made cinerary urn, of coarse reddish-brown ware of the usual type, half filled with calcined human bones, height and diameter 13 inches; an iron lamp-stand, with hand hook; a Samian patera, stamped BOVDVSF, height $1\frac{3}{4}$ inches, diameter $7\frac{1}{2}$ inches; a miniature urn of Upchurch ware, height $4\frac{1}{4}$ inches. The following day an interment came to light, within a few inches of the above, containing a very fine cinerary urn of black pottery; height 16 inches, diameter 12 inches; in it were calcined bones and two iron nails; a jug with handle of red ware,

height 7 inches, diameter 6 inches; a Samian patera, stamped CRACISAF, height $1\frac{3}{4}$ inches, diameter $7\frac{1}{2}$ inches.

Two feet from this group another vessel was found, of small dimensions, filled with burnt bones. Earth digging being discontinued at this spot for a time, no more discoveries were made until March 1881; when the writer's attention was called to a large space of ground which bore traces of having been disturbed. The earth appeared to have been removed, to the depth of four feet, over an area thirty-six feet by thirty, and replaced by a layer of burnt earth and charred wood, from which the following were obtained: portions of antlers of old red-deer; bones, jawbones, and teeth of ox, horse, pig, dog; horn cores of bos longifrons; oyster shells; two handles of amphoræ; numerous fragments of Roman pottery, including Samian, Durobrivian, and Upchurch ware; a quantity of broken flue, flange and paving tiles; a fragment of a mortarium; several pieces of iron, long iron nails, an iron spear-head, a small iron knife; a bronze ring, and part of a ring of twisted bronze wire. Many of the bones, and tines of antlers, had tool marks upon them. A few yards from the above, the sites of three pyres were discovered; from which we obtained fragments of various kinds of tiles and pottery as before, bones of animals, oyster shells, two broken bone pins, a defaced middle brass coin, a glass stud, part of a jet armilla, iron nails, a bronze pendant or ornament, the bases of two Samian cups, one stamped VOCENT, the other OF MO...MO (middle letter blurred), also a portion of the rim of a mortarium bearing the letters NVS, which doubtless formed part of the name SAVRNVS as figured by Mr. Roach Smith in his *Collectanea Antiqua*, vol. i., plate L.

The foregoing description, somewhat tedious to follow, has been given in detail to shew the similarity between the discoveries, and to establish the theory that the western portion of the field, in which the rich sepulchral deposits mentioned in the early part of this paper were found, was set apart for the "bustum" or "place where dead bodies were burned." To return to the graves and their contents. That we have discovered at Bayford a private burying ground there can be little doubt; the remarkable similarity between the first and second interments is worthy of note, and suggests the idea that these two, at any rate, were the graves of members of one household.

In both cases, the same feelings seem to have been present in the minds of those who were called upon to perform the last sacred rites, over the remains of their departed relatives; for we find the bones of each placed in a glass urn, accompanied by a bronze vessel, a lamp-stand, a pair of earthen pots, a set of bathing accessories, three or four glass vases, a bronze patera, and several cups and pateræ of Samian ware.

It is unusual to find elaborate sepulchral deposits, such as those in question, merely placed in the ground without protection of any kind. We should have expected to have seen the remains enclosed in a stone sarcophagus, as at Avisford in Sussex;* or covered with tiles, or slabs of stone. There seems to have been no such strict repulsive rule laid down, with regard to the form of burial in Romano-British times, as there is in our day. A glance at the various discoveries which have been made, in this and other

* *Collectanea Antiqua*, vol. i., plate XLIV.

countries, shews clearly that individual affection was respected, if not consulted.

It may be said that no two graves are alike; and apparently every family was free to dispose of its dead according to its own peculiar ideas, and religious views. The bronze vessel VI. from grave No. 2, fig. 1, is an elegant example of ancient art, and probably of Italian manufacture.

The elaborate decoration upon the handle may be emblematical of the sacrificial ceremony; if so, the vase is probably the "præfericulum," which contained the wine intended for libations; vessels of this type are invariably depicted on altars, which have been found in various parts of England. To this class doubtless belongs the jug with three lips from grave No. 1.* The glass goblet (V. from grave No. 2), fig. 2, is of a well-known shape, but the presence of a second handle renders it unique. The larger handle occurs, in Kent, on vases found at Bex-hill in Milton next Sittingbourne,† Lockham Wood near Maidstone, Faversham,‡ and East-hall near Sittingbourne.

The Samian ware from graves No. 1 and No. 2 is of a brilliant colour, close texture and exquisite finish, and is remarkable for an entire absence of potters' names upon the specimens. Many of the cups are of uncommon shape, and identical with one figured by Mr. Roach Smith.§ There is nothing of special interest to record about the interments adjoining the

* *Archæologia Cantiana*, Vol. XI., p. 47, fig. D.

† *Ibid.*, Vol. IX., p. 170.

‡ Gibbs' Collection, South Kensington Museum.

§ Catalogue of the Museum of London Antiquities, p. 25, fig. 99.

above ; beyond a suggestion that they may be regarded perhaps as the graves of dependants, or less important members, of what may be designated the Bayford family. The discoveries we have enumerated are of the highest interest ; and, taken in connection with others which it has been the good fortune of the writer to bring to light, and to record in the pages of *Archæologia Cantiana*, they shew how thickly the neighbourhood of Sittingbourne was populated, during the Roman occupation of Britain.