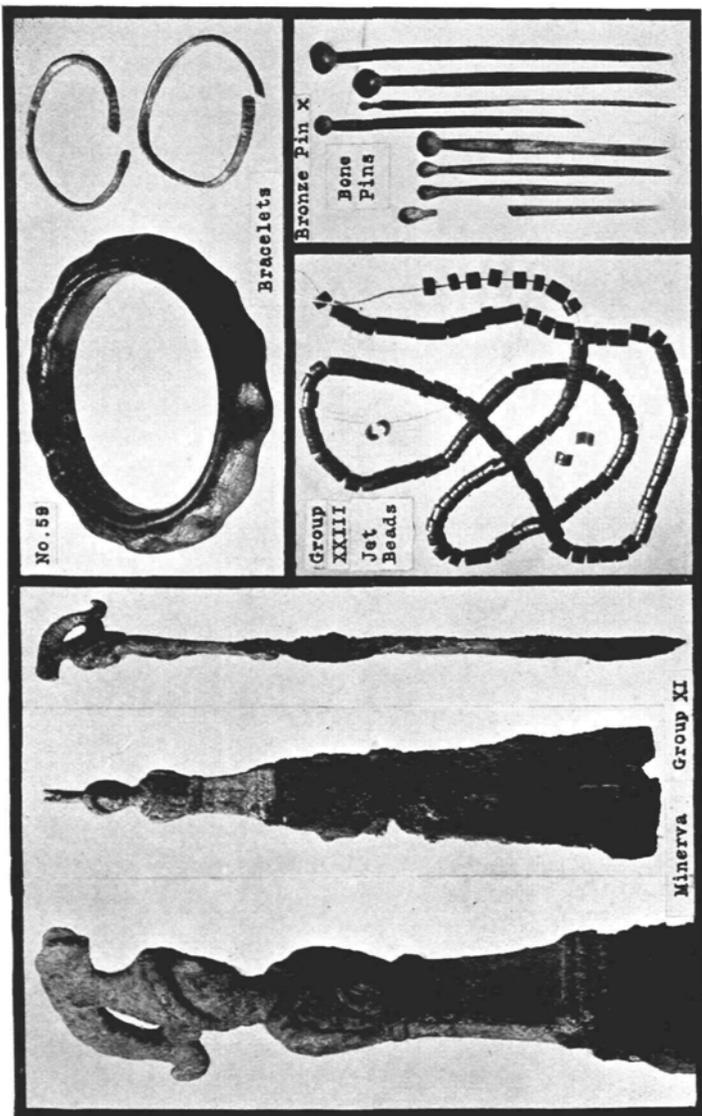


A ROMAN CEMETERY DISCOVERED AT
OSPRINGE IN 1920.

BY W. WHITING.

ALTHOUGH the situation of this cemetery was indicated in our last volume, it was not mentioned that the site, which a few years ago was a nursery plantation for the young trees required on the Syndale Estate, is now in use as a timber yard, and that it was the logs of oak and elm deposited there which had previously prevented search in many directions. In June 1921 a clearance was made which enabled further excavations to be undertaken, and from the 17th of that month until the 27th July the following pottery and other articles numbered 38 to 59 were discovered. The digging was continued southwards from the finds located on the plan accompanying the last report; it was confined to a width of 25 ft., owing to buildings on the one side and a tram-road connected with sawing machinery on the other; and the last piece found was 26 ft. south of Group X. The digging was extended a further 12 ft. for the whole width, and a trench about 5 ft. wide was carried another 5 ft., but no pottery or other tangible evidence of burials being met with, the excavations were discontinued.

About 5 ft. beyond the last half dozen articles mentioned, and 2 ft. below the surface, an area, approximately 11 ft. long by 3½ ft. wide, was found irregularly paved with pieces of sandstone and Roman tile. Charcoal on these stones and small grains of it between and under them, the burnt and semi-burnt condition of the clay around, and other details, afforded convincing evidence that this was a sort of hearth on which there had been fires, so it is assumed to be the spot where the funeral pyres were consumed.



Objects unearthed in Roman Cemetery at Ospringe

GROUP XI.

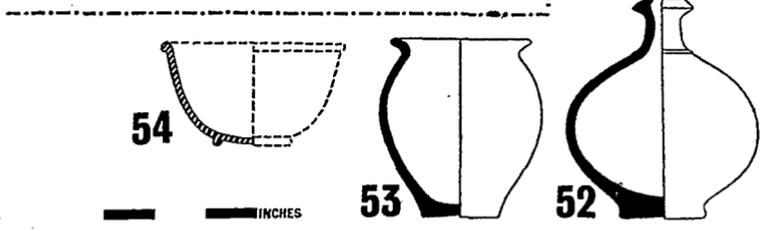
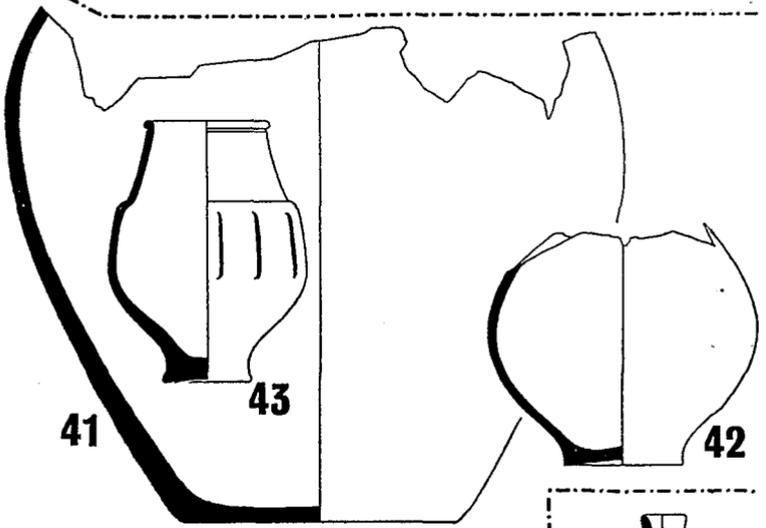
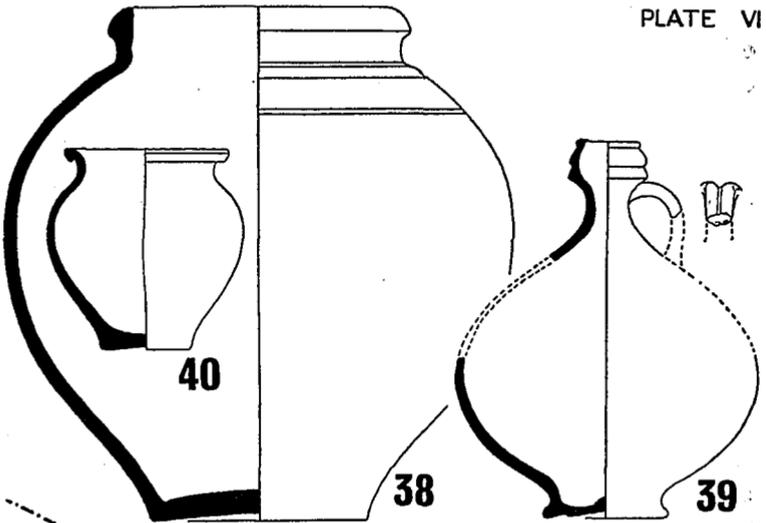
- No. 38. URN, containing calcined bones; gritty grey clay; 10 $\frac{1}{8}$ in. diameter, 10 $\frac{1}{4}$ in. high.
- No. 39. ONE-HANDLED FLAGON, 6 in. diameter, 7 $\frac{3}{8}$ in. high; soft red clay, shewing traces of white slip coating.
- No. 40. OLLA-SHAPED BEAKER, 3 $\frac{7}{8}$ in. diameter, 4 in. high; sandy red-brown clay, coated black.

This group of pottery is dated about the middle of the second century. Buried upright in the earth and touching the side of the urn was an object, the upper portion of bronze, 3 $\frac{1}{2}$ in. long, being welded over the lower portion, 5 $\frac{3}{4}$ in. long by about 2 in. at its widest end, of iron, very rusty and with traces of wood fibre in the rust on the front only. This was thought at first to be a knife, but it is considered that the jointing of the bronze handle to the blade would not be of sufficient strength for much usage. The handle is a high crested female figure and apparently represents Minerva with the Gorgoneion on her breast. The Gorgoneion consisted of the head of Medusa, which converted all it looked on into stone, and was placed on the shield of Minerva in order to strike terror into her enemies. Some iron hobnails were found with this group.

GROUP XII.

- No. 41. Lower portion of OLLA, about 12 in. diameter; coarse gritty clay, light drab to brown-black.
- No. 42. Lower portion of FLAGON, 5 $\frac{3}{8}$ in. diameter; clay, light drab on black core with black surface.
- No. 43. BULBOUS BEAKER, with 14 vertical indentations; 3 $\frac{7}{8}$ in. diameter, 5 $\frac{1}{4}$ in. high; hard white to buff clay, coated black; c. A.D. 150—200.

Hobnails were found under this urn; apparently the sandals had been deposited in the grave and the pottery placed on them. The beaker was found on its side on the



calcined bones in the urn: the only case in this cemetery of one vessel being discovered complete within another.

GROUP XIII.

- No. 44. URN OR OLLA, $9\frac{3}{4}$ in. diameter, $9\frac{1}{4}$ in. high; hard, coarse gritty clay, light drab to black, coated with a smooth soapy slip.
- No. 45. ONE-HANDLED FLAGON, $6\frac{1}{2}$ in. diameter, about $10\frac{1}{4}$ in. high; soft red clay, with traces of white slip coating; c. A.D. 100—150.

The only evidence of the handle to this flagon is the impression where it was attached to the shoulder; careful search failed to find it, and other signs tend to shew that it may have been broken off before burial.

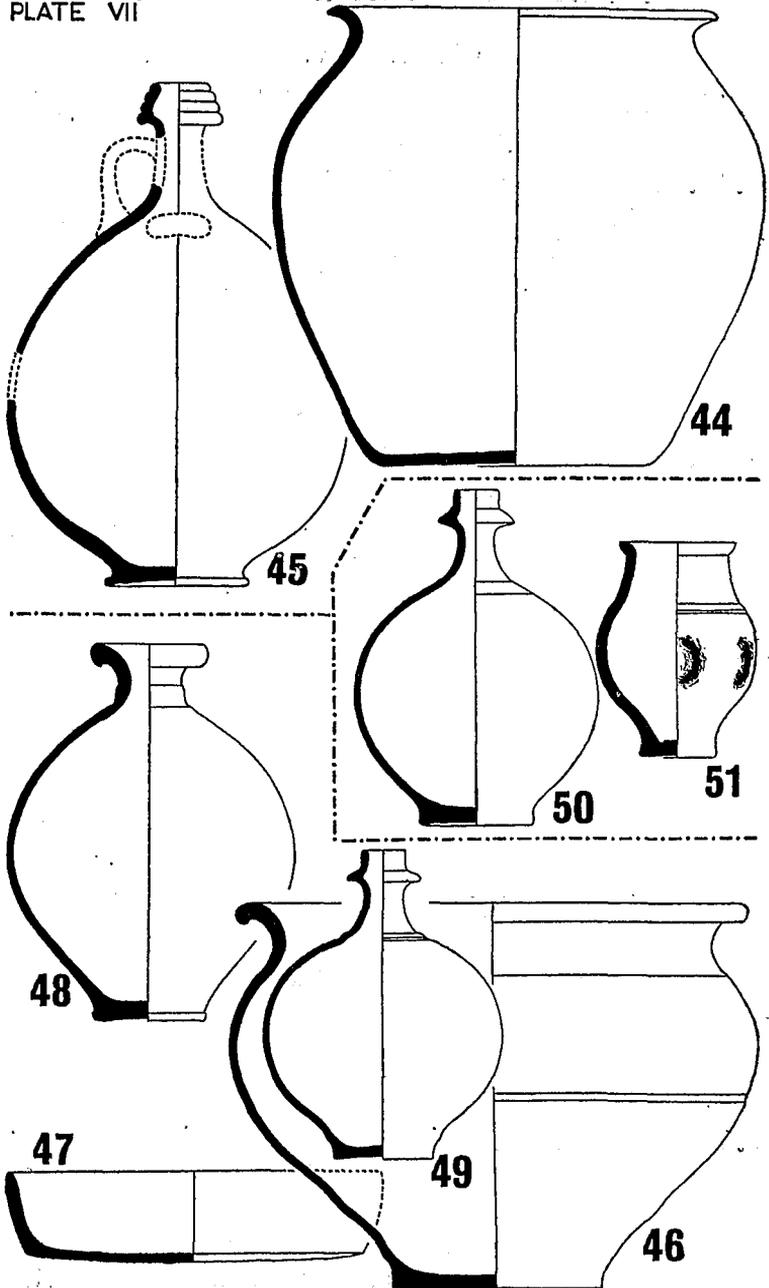
GROUP XIV.

- No. 46. BOWL-SHAPED URN, containing calcined bones; $10\frac{1}{2}$ in. diameter, $7\frac{3}{4}$ in. high; gritty clay with dark grey core and drab surface.
- No. 47. BOWL OR PLATTER, $7\frac{1}{2}$ in. diameter, $1\frac{3}{4}$ in. high; coarse gritty clay with drab surface on a black core and with grey to black coating.
- No. 48. FLASK, BOTTLE OR FLOWER VASE, Form 65 Dechelette; $5\frac{3}{4}$ in. diameter, $7\frac{5}{8}$ in. high; sandy red-brown clay, coated black, with burnished base and shoulder.
- No. 49. BELGIC FLASK OR BOTTLE, $4\frac{3}{4}$ in. diameter, $6\frac{1}{4}$ in. high; earthy grey clay, coated black; A.D. 200 or later.*

The bowl and also the two flasks in this group were lying horizontally on the rim of the urn, not around and touching it side by side as in every other instance in this cemetery.

* *British Museum Guide to Antiquities of Roman Britain*, 1922, p. 121, Pl. XII. 15.

PLATE VII



GROUP XV.

- No. 50. BELGIC FLASK OR BOTTLE, $4\frac{7}{8}$ in. diameter, $6\frac{3}{4}$ in. high; clay as last.
- No. 51. BULBOUS BEAKER, with six round indentations on bulge; $3\frac{1}{8}$ in. diameter, $4\frac{1}{4}$ in. high; grey clay; second century. The finding of this thumb pot cancels the statement that No. 30 was the only indented beaker found on this site.

GROUP XVI.

- No. 52. FLASK OR BOTTLE, $3\frac{3}{4}$ in. diameter, $4\frac{3}{4}$ in. high; soft tile-red clay.
- No. 53. OLLA-SHAPED BEAKER, $3\frac{1}{4}$ in. diameter, $3\frac{5}{8}$ in. high; red-brown clay with grey core and earthy grey surface.
- No. 54. A METAL CUP OR BOWL of about 3 in. or 4 in. diameter lay touching the last two vessels; it was so decayed that its form could scarcely be ascertained; no fragments larger than half an inch were recovered, and its restoration is impossible. Analysis of a fragment of the metal shews about 47·50 per cent. of tin and 21·54 per cent. of lead.

GROUP XVII.

- No. 55. BELGIC FLASK, $4\frac{7}{8}$ in. diameter, $6\frac{1}{2}$ in. high; soft drab clay with black core and earthy grey to black coating.
- No. 56. METAL VESSEL, apparently a flat tray or dish, about 10 in. diameter; decayed as No. 54; probably originally consisting of tin, as analysis gave 62·4 per cent. of that metal and only a trace of lead.
Hobnails and other nails were found with this bottle and tray.

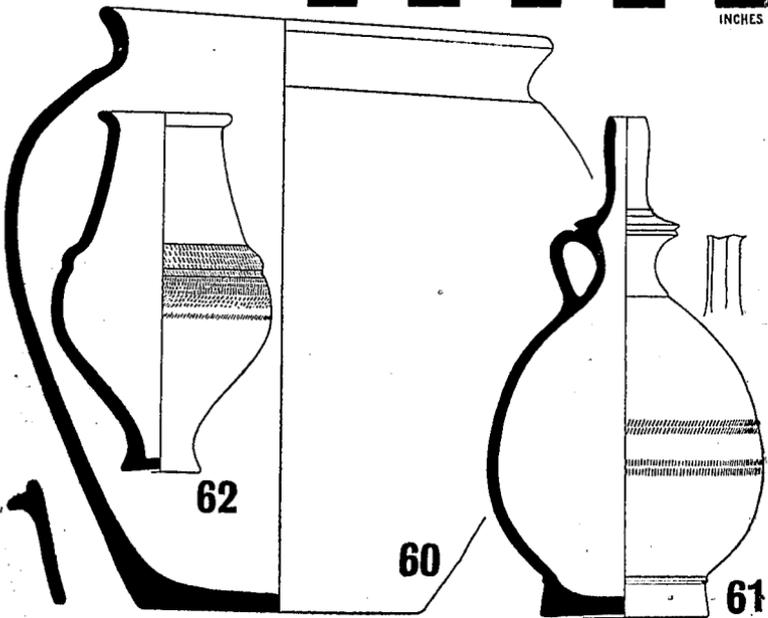
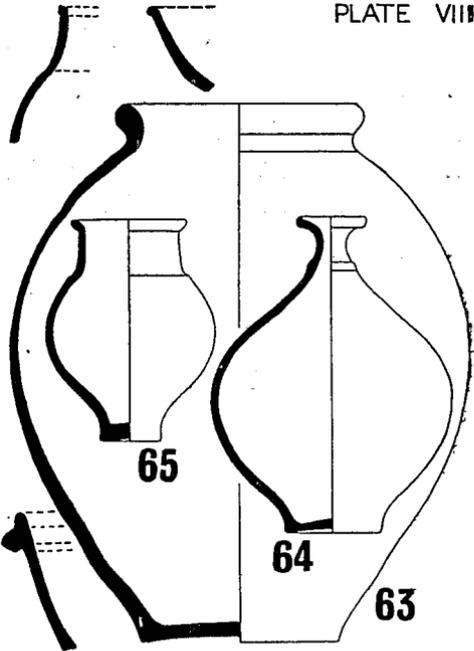
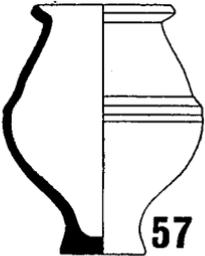
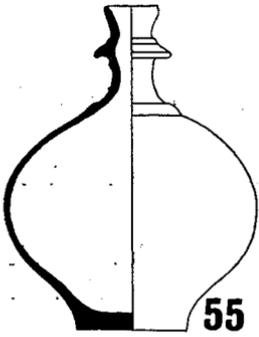
GROUP XVIII.

- No. 57. BULBOUS BEAKER, 4 in. diameter, 5 in. high; hard, sandy grey clay.
- No. 58. METAL TRAY or DISH; similar, as far as could be ascertained, to No. 56.
- No. 59. BRACELET of Kimmeridge Shale; $3\frac{1}{4}$ in. outside diameter; found about 18 in. from Nos. 57 and 58.

It will be noticed that in Groups XV. to XVIII. there were no urns containing cremated remains; no evidence of burial by inhumation, similar to that recorded with Groups VII. and VIII., could be found. It is interesting to record here that the skull in Group VII. was that of an adult, but the teeth with Group VIII. were milk teeth, and therefore those of a child.

For convenience and comparison two metal bracelets are illustrated alongside the shale one, although they were found in another cemetery about 300 yards away, details of which are being given later on. Where a little of the patina has been scraped off, one of these bangles shines like gold; it is pronounced to contain, however, no trace at all of that metal or of lead, but only copper with large traces of iron and zinc, and it should therefore be described as brass rather than bronze. The size of these ornaments would denote that they belong to a child, and confirmation was forthcoming less than a foot away in the discovery of fragments of a jaw with permanent teeth in the gum and milk teeth above them on the surface. Other pieces of unburnt bone were seen, but of so fragile a nature that they fell to pieces at a touch; none of the pottery was close enough to be considered as associated with the burial.

Gratitude must be expressed to Mr. Thos. May, F.S.A., for continued assistance on the lines already recorded, especially for giving dates to which he assigns the pottery; to F. W. F. Arnaud, Esq., F.I.C., for his analysis of the metal objects found; to Mr. Cyril A. Downer for very many hours



of patient assistance in cleaning, restoring, and afterwards drawing the full-size sections of the pottery for illustration; to the Kent Archæological Society and others for contributions towards the cost of the excavations; and again to several curators for references and information.

A BURIAL DISCOVERED AT KENNAWAYS, OSPRINGE.

In November 1920 a group of pottery was brought to light at Kennaways, in the angle formed by the two roads leading to Throwley and Stalisfield respectively. It was an unexpected "find" in a gravel pit, and while the three pieces illustrated were fortunately rescued unbroken, a fourth vessel (said to be of red ware, about the size of a breakfast cup, with a lid to it) was smashed by the falling stones and no fragments of it were saved by the workmen. The fragment illustrated in section, but not numbered with the group, came from this site; whether it is part of the vessel observed by the men is uncertain, as it is of a dark grey ware which does not agree with the description they gave.

GROUP XIX.

No. 60. URN OR OLLA, containing calcined bones; $11\frac{1}{2}$ in. diameter, 12 in. high; hard, gritty, coarse, drab-grey clay, with smoked patches or remains of black coating.

No. 61. ONE-HANDLED FLAGON, $5\frac{3}{8}$ in. diameter, 10 in. high; hard, smooth, buff clay, with brown slip coating and with engine-turned bands round bulge.

Very similar flagons can be seen in the museums at Maidstone and Dartford.

No. 62. BULBOUS BEAKER, $4\frac{3}{8}$ in. diameter, $7\frac{1}{2}$ in. high; hard buff clay.

In Maidstone Museum there is a beaker from Strood which is practically a replica of this one; there is also another of similar proportions, but not quite the same shape or clay, mentioned in the Museum Report, 1907, p. 21, as containing coins of Tetricus (A.D. 267).

Mr. Reginald Smith, F.S.A., of the British Museum, dated this group about A.D. 300; it should be mentioned also that some surprise has been expressed that the urn contained calcined bones, seeing that the general practice of cremation was being superseded by inhumation about half a century before this time.

ANOTHER CEMETERY NEAR THE WATLING STREET AT OSPRINGE.

On the 6th July 1921 a discovery was made under the public footpath, 285 yards west of the 46th milestone in Ospringe Street referred to in our last volume, the find being made by the men of the Faversham Gas Company when exposing their main for the purpose of locating a block in it. The complete vessels are illustrated as Group XX, and fragments found with them indicate the probability that when the gas pipe was laid in the first instance other pottery was disturbed.

With the permission of Major George Wheler and Mr. Lambert Phillips, the owner and tenant respectively of the adjoining hop-garden, excavations were made therein as close as practicable to this spot, commencing on the 25th October 1921. The existence of another cemetery here, approximately 300 yards distant from the one previously recorded, was at once confirmed, the work on the first day alone revealing pieces numbered 66 to 74. At this time an area 30 ft. by 15 ft. only was examined; about 60 vessels were recovered from it, and on the 9th November the work was discontinued owing to the labour involved in restoring and recording the objects already found, and the uncertain

expense of continuing the search until it was known how much further the graves extended.

In September 1922, and again in February 1923, the owner of the field and the surrounding lands initiated some explorations within and near the camp, about 500 yards westwards, but the results were mostly of a negative character. On the second occasion it was decided to resume work in the cemetery with the object of endeavouring to ascertain its extent, and this was more successfully accomplished. To begin with, a strip 15 ft. wide was searched, parallel and close to the boundary hedge at the side of the footpath, first up the hill towards the west, and then to the east; the extreme burials encountered in this direction were 70 ft. apart. A trench $2\frac{1}{2}$ ft. wide was then carried northward between two rows of the hop hills, the last find in it being 106 ft. from the hedge just mentioned. A pit in the shrubbery on the other side of the road disclosing the remains of two burials by inhumation, the search was continued still further to the south in the park itself; here five or six cremation burials were uncovered, proving the burial-ground to be at least 194 ft. from north to south.

On the 16th April 1923 the work was once more discontinued for much the same reasons as before; this ten weeks' work, however, had added to the collection over 100 earthenware pots and glass vessels, and many other miscellaneous objects of interest, all of which it is hoped to piece together and record in due time.

It will be observed that the present road, which is known to have been formed little more than a century ago,* passes right over the site, and without doubt it covers very many more graves.

There is a curious diversion here from the straight line usually followed by Roman roads. The original track of Watling Street would appear to have branched north-westward just above the site of the first graveyard, and after about 300 yards to have turned again westwards

* *Archæologia Cantiana*, IX., lxxiv.; and Crow's *History of Ospringe*, in the Faversham Institute Journal for January 1919, p. 40.

towards the camp on the top of the hill in Syndale Park already referred to. It is in the angle thus formed that this cemetery has been located, and the two burying-grounds were therefore situated one on either side of the original road.

GROUP XX.

- No. 63. URN, containing calcined bones; $9\frac{1}{8}$ in. diameter, $10\frac{3}{4}$ in. high; drab clay on black core, with black surface.
- No. 64. BELGIC FLASK OR FLOWER VASE, $4\frac{5}{8}$ in. diameter, $6\frac{3}{8}$ in. high; clay similar to last.
- No. 65. BULBOUS BEAKER, $3\frac{3}{8}$ in. diameter, $4\frac{1}{2}$ in. high; hard grey clay; c. A.D. 200—250.

The unnumbered fragments include a piece of Samian or Terra Sigillata ware, apparently a portion of the side of a bowl, Form 31 Drag.

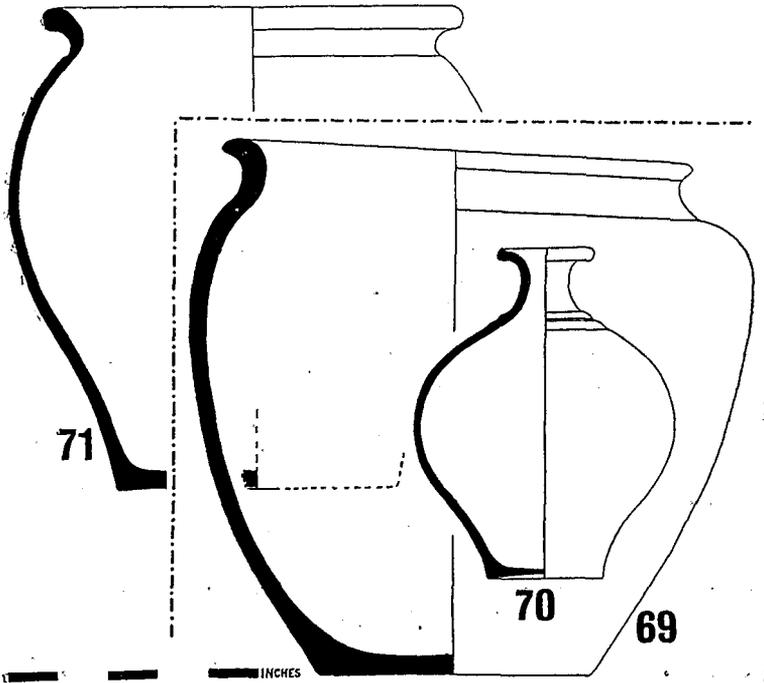
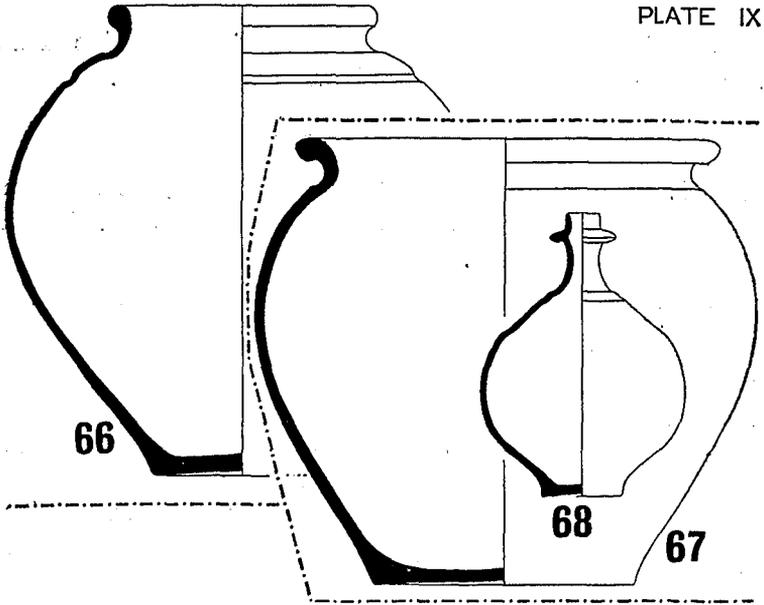
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- No. 66. URN, containing calcined bones; $9\frac{1}{2}$ in. diameter, $9\frac{3}{8}$ in. high; hard red-grey clay with grey core.

GROUP XXI.

- No. 67. URN, containing calcined bones; 10 in. diameter, $9\frac{1}{8}$ in. high; hard, sandy grey clay.
- No. 68. BELGIC FLASK, $4\frac{1}{8}$ in. diameter, $5\frac{5}{8}$ in. high; soft tile-red clay.

GROUP XXII.

- No. 69. URN OR OLLA, containing calcined bones; 11 in. diameter, $10\frac{3}{4}$ in. high; hard, coarse, gritty clay, drab to black, coated with a smooth soapy slip.
- No. 70. FLASK, BOTTLE OR FLOWER VASE, $5\frac{1}{4}$ in. diameter, $6\frac{3}{4}$ in. high; grey clay.



In this case the bottle was touching the south side of the urn, whereas in the last group it was on the north.

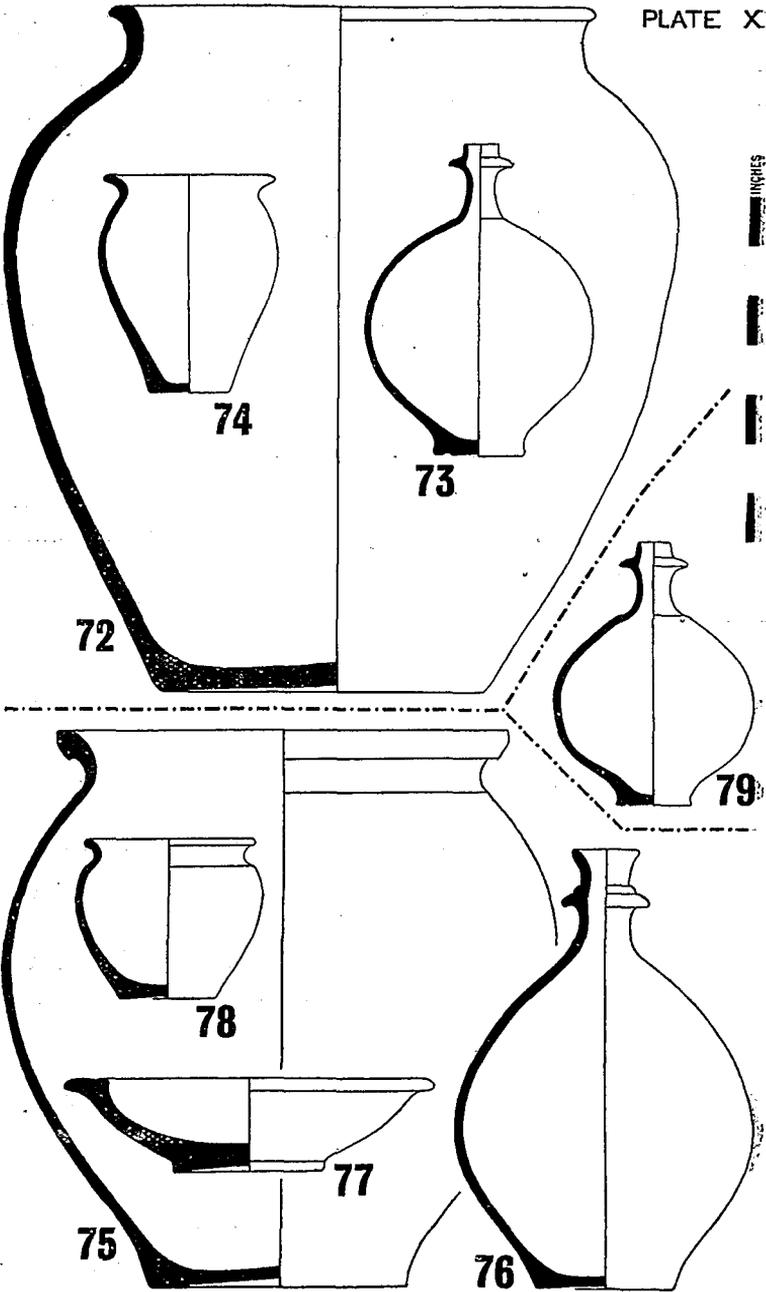
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- No. 71. URN, containing calcined bones; $9\frac{3}{4}$ in. diameter, $9\frac{3}{4}$ in. high; hard, sandy grey clay, with brown-red surface.

With this urn fragments were found of similar textured pottery $\frac{1}{4}$ in. thick, which, when pieced together, formed three parts of a disc that just filled the opening of the urn, possibly the remains of a flat dish or platter that had been used as a cover for it. Approximately one-third of both this urn and its cover were missing.

Unfortunately a good deal of modern brick rubbish is found in the soil, in some places to a depth of over 3 ft.; at this point it seemed a trench had been dug and filled with it, probably to assist the surface water to soak away. At another point a little further along it appeared to be the filling up or foundation laid down in making the adjacent road and footpath, where it had spread beyond the boundary as marked by the present hedge. These disturbances in recent times, in addition to those caused when inhumation burials were made in the same area, regardless of the earlier cremated remains already there (evidences of which were seen in the previous cemetery as well as in this one), would readily account for one half of an urn being dispersed, while the other half remained with some of its contents practically undisturbed.

GROUP XXIII.

- No. 72. URN, containing calcined bones; $13\frac{1}{2}$ in. diameter, 14 in. high; clay similar to No. 69.
- No. 73. BELGIC FLASK OR BOTTLE, $4\frac{1}{2}$ in. diameter, $6\frac{1}{4}$ in. high; fine grey clay.
- No. 74. OLLA-SHAPED BEAKER, $3\frac{1}{2}$ in. diameter, $4\frac{3}{8}$ in. high; clay as last.



This burial is one of the most interesting so far discovered here, and is doubtless that of a lady. The urn was covered with a roofing tile or tegula 12 in. wide; the bottle and beaker were in the urn with the burnt bones, together with a bronze pin $4\frac{1}{8}$ in. long, seven bone hair-pins, and also a set of over 150 jet beads, all cylindrical, .15 in. diameter, total length when strung about 19 in. These beads appear to have been made from a long tube of jet incised or cut all round every .05 in. apart, and then broken into sections, some of the beads consisting of one section only, the majority of two sections, and some also of three, four and five sections.

GROUP XXIV.

- No. 75. URN, containing calcined bones; 11 in. diameter, $11\frac{1}{2}$ in. high; sandy, red-brown clay with black coating.
- No. 76. FLASK OR BOTTLE, $5\frac{3}{4}$ in. diameter, 9 in. high; drab clay, coated black.
- No. 77. FLAT BOWL, $7\frac{1}{2}$ in. diameter, $1\frac{3}{4}$ in. high; hard buff to red clay.
- No. 78. OLIA-SHAPED BEAKER, $3\frac{3}{4}$ in. diameter, $3\frac{1}{4}$ in. high; hard, sandy, drab-grey clay.

Some small pieces of bronze wire were found with the bones in this urn; the bowl was partly on the rim of the urn, to which it may have originally acted as a covering. On the south side of it were the beaker and the bottle, the mouth of this last being exactly 18 in. below the present surface.

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- No. 79. BELGIC FLASK OR BOTTLE, 4 in. diameter, $5\frac{3}{8}$ in. high; soft tile-red clay.

With this bottle were a few sherds of pottery, some of which were doubtless portions of an urn. In this case the cinerary vessel had been almost wholly swept away, while the food vessel remained practically intact.