

A ROMAN CEMETERY AT ST. MARTIN'S HILL, CANTERBURY.

BY W. WHITING AND H. T. MEAD.

IN the course of road making, excavations for foundations, gas, electric, and water supplies etc., for the new dwellings comprising the City Borough's first Housing Scheme, much Roman Pottery was discovered, sufficient to show that the site chosen was also that of a Cemetery of considerable extent.

Builders can hardly be expected to excavate beyond the minimum required under their contract even under such interesting circumstances as these ; the Archæological work therefore was not so intensive, systematically supervised, nor recorded as one would wish.

The site is not more than a quarter of a mile from St. Martin's Church, a building of Roman origin and dedicated to St. Martin, Bishop of Tours, who died in A.D. 395. It is beautifully situated about $1\frac{1}{2}$ mile outside the City walls, on the Littlebourne Road, and adjacent to the Mill House Inn. It is also quite near to the so-called "Scotland Hills" leading to Fordwich, where distinct evidences of a Roman Fortress or Stronghold are still to be traced.

Work on the Housing Scheme was started early in the Spring of 1926, and it was when excavating the now named "Windmill Road" the first find was made (Group 1). It was reported to Mr. P. H. Warwick, M.I.M.E. Cy. E., the City Surveyor and Engineer, who at once communicated with the Curator of the Royal Museum. A visit to the site followed and the men were instructed to take care of any objects discovered, and if possible to leave them in position until viewed by the Curator ; Mr. Shaw, Clerk of Works on the job was also interested and promised to chart all "finds" on the plan.

The Museum Committee promised suitable rewards for all objects found. This promise was kept and the men

decided to pool the rewards and use it for a day's outing so that all on the job should have a share whether they had been lucky or not in the "finds." With this excellent spirit prevailing among the men, who were greatly interested after the first find or two, they readily reported all finds that came to light subsequently, and the objects are now exhibited in the Royal Museum or Beane Institute.

Hitherto five Roman Cemeteries have been recorded in or near Canterbury, and it would appear from the number of grave groups noted in this report that a sixth has now been discovered.

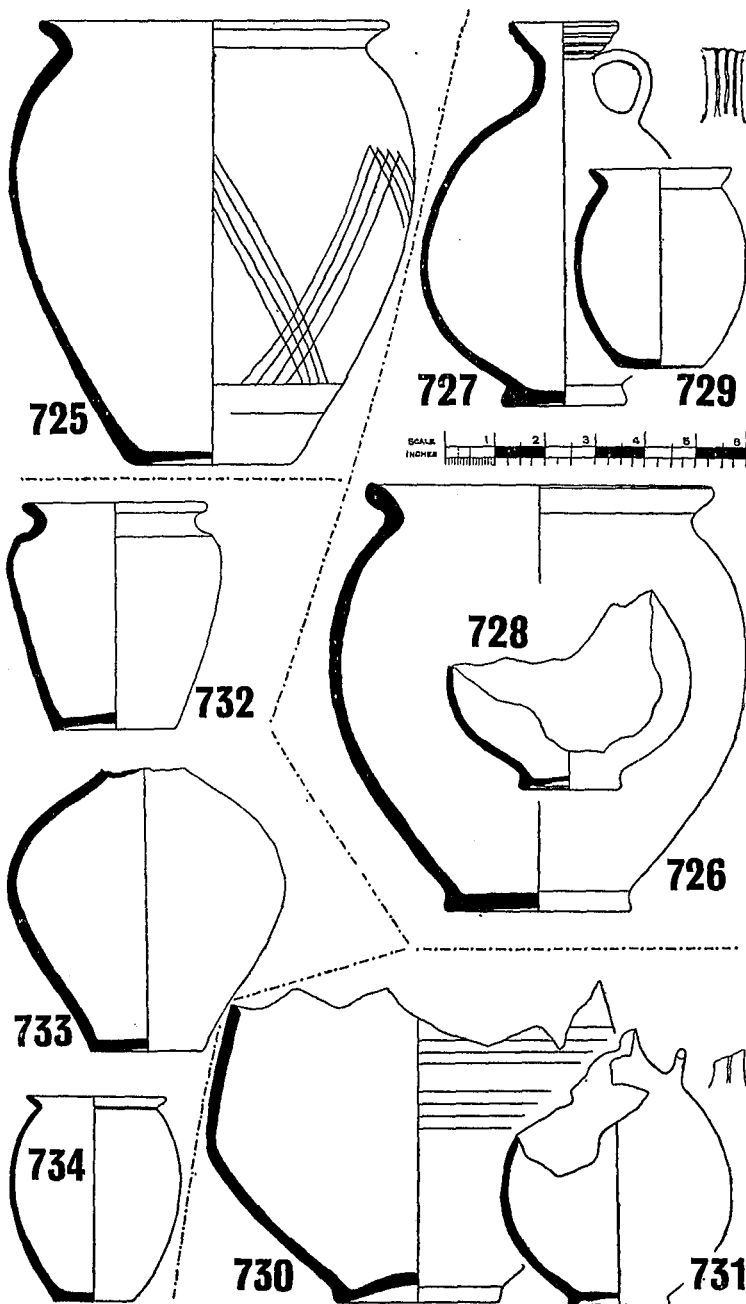
In addition to the help received from the City Surveyor and Clerk of the Works, it should be recorded that Mr. J. H. Kaehler and Mr. Geoffrey Wells of Canterbury, and Mr. R. S. Giles of the Ospringe Museum, rendered excellent service in restoring, drawing and recording the pottery. For the following full technical description of the groups and pots numbered up to 751, we are again indebted to Mr. Thomas May, F.S.A.

GROUP No. 1. (2 ft. down, 26th April, 1926.)

- No. 725. Ordinary Roman Olla (cooking pot) used as URN. With outbent rim a prototype of the cavetto rim of the late IV Cent. type. Decorated with a wide, $5\frac{1}{2}$ inch zone of scored oblique and lattice lines; the width of which is an indication of the date, decreasing to $1\frac{1}{2}$ inch to 2 inches in the IV Cent. Hard sandy eroded clay, II Cent. type. With the calcined bones in this urn were found a circular metal mirror, 2 small bronze rings and a circular fibula.

GROUP No. 2. (2 ft. down, 15th May, 1926).

- No. 726. URN. Thick set olla of ordinary Roman character with outbent thickened rim and raised foot. Hard sandy grey clay.
- No. 727. FLAGON, with saucer mouth of four rings, four ribbed handle, and drooped holder, modification of the Roman flagon under Roman-Belgic influence in the II Cent.



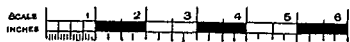
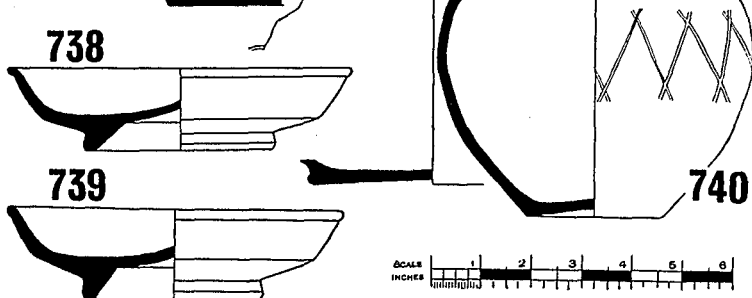
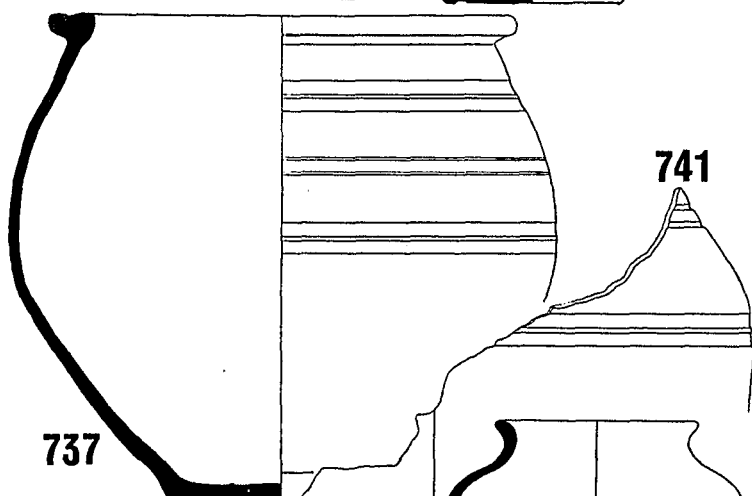
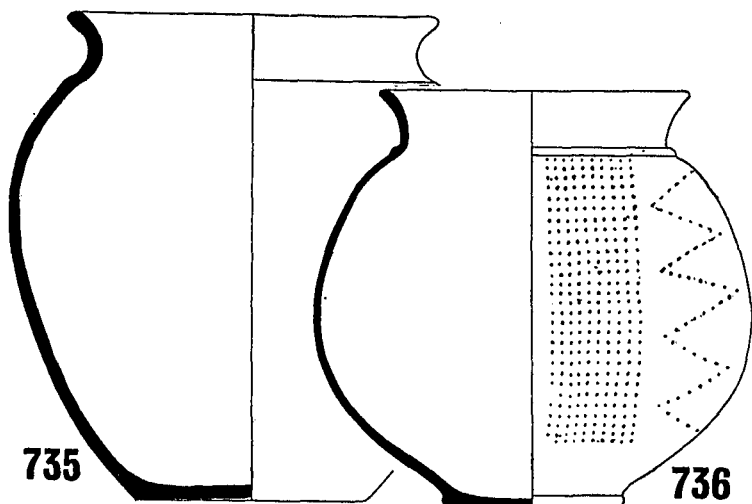
- No. 728. BOTTLE, fragments of lower part of bottle or flagon with incurved support and grooved and rising base. Soft red clay.
- No. 729. BEAKER; oval bodied beaker with straight oblique rim. As drinking vessel.

GROUP No. 3. (3 ft. down, 18th May, 1926.)

- No. 730. URN, lower portion of wide carinated olla with double girth grooves above the angle of the side. Hard sandy grey clay.
- No. 731. FLAGON. Part of a round bulged thin sided flagon with two ribbed handle and grooved rising base, neck wanting. Fairly hard buff clay with grey core. Pale clay is preferred for flagons and mortaria (wash-hand basins) in I and II Cents. throughout the Empire as at present day.

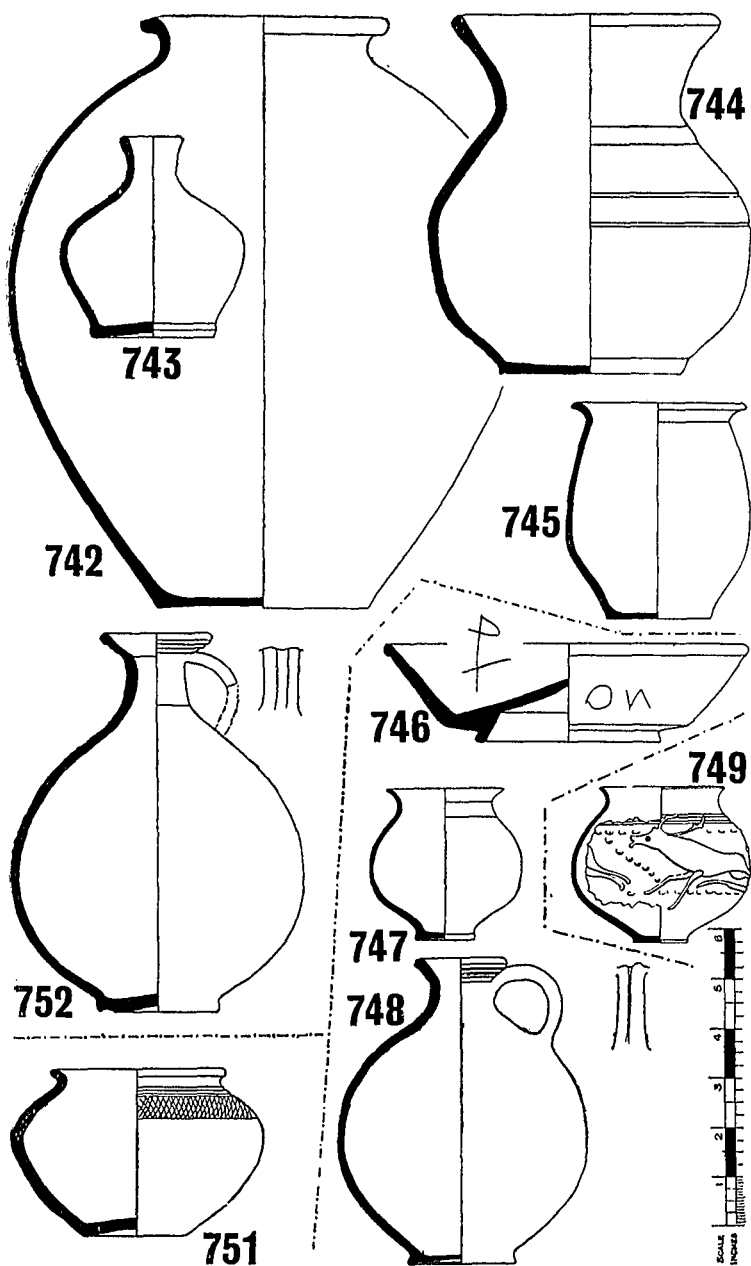
UNASSOCIATED VESSELS.

- No. 732. BEAKER (No. 4), 2½ ft. down, 24th June, 1926. Found in wine amphora used as urn. High shouldered beaker with nearly straight sided conical body and rim sharply incurved. Hard sandy grey clay.
- No. 733. (No. 10). Holder of a pear-shaped flask or bottle (neck wanting). Grey clay burnt to reddish grey outside. On the under base four owners' marks in the form of crosses (giving a kind of protest against communism in their social habits).
- No. 734. (No. 15.) Oval Beaker or drinking mug, thin walled, with small thin edged oblique rim of Belgic type. Soft reddish clay with grey core.
- No. 735. (No. 7.) Boldly outbulged ovoid olla with recurved rim of early I Cent. Roman character. Compare No. 718 (K) from St. Dunstons in our last Volume.
- No. 736. (No. 9.) Unusually large and round bodied beaker, prototype of the "poppy-head," with oblique rim separated from the body by a cordon and decorated with rows of clay studs, in oblong groups and zig-zag lines *en barbotine*.
These and other similar devices are to afford a finger hold in place of handles and result from socialistic



habits and poverty, one drinking vessel being handed round a family circle or company at every meal. Smooth pale grey surfaced clay, darker at core.

- No. 737. URN. Large thick-set cooking pot with outbent level rim, divided into zones by three sets of girth grooves. Hard sandy grey clay. Local I Cent. type with Belgic features.
- No. 738. (No. 13.) Small Sigillata bowl, form 31 Drag; with high coned base and central stamp of potter illegible owing to the erosion of glaze and surface by deposit in clay.
Reg. A. Smith, Proc. Soc. Ant. London, p. 279, pl. xxi. A.D. 150-190. Pan-Rock Series.
- No. 739. (No. 14.) Rather a thicker and heavier bowl of similar description and date belonging to the Antonine period c. A.D. 140-190. Imported wares from Central Gaul of this description indicate increasing wealth, comfort, and commercial intercourse among the surrounding population.
- No. 740. (No. 11.) Small olla or boldly outbulged beaker with narrower opening and recurved rim. Round the middle slight provision for giving a finger hold in the form of scored zig-zag lines is made. Soft red clay blackened in places and dark grey core.
- No. 741. (No. 6.) Portion of a large squarish carinated olla (used as urn). Hard sandy grey clay.
Compare No. 722, Urn M, from St. Dunstons, in last Volume of Arch. Cant.
- No. 742. (No. 8.) Narrow necked widely outbulged urna used as a store vessel and sometimes for casting lots as only admitting one hand. Smooth light grey clay. I Cent. type.
- No. 743. FLAGON, with plain mouth, no handle. Hard red clay.
- No. 744. (No. 12.) Early example (or prototype) of the bulbous beaker or "poppy-head," which became common at a later period; round body (or holder) and widening bell-shaped opening. Soft tile red clay. Raised bands or low cordons at the base of the neck and above the middle indicate a Belgic tribal origin under increasing Roman influence.

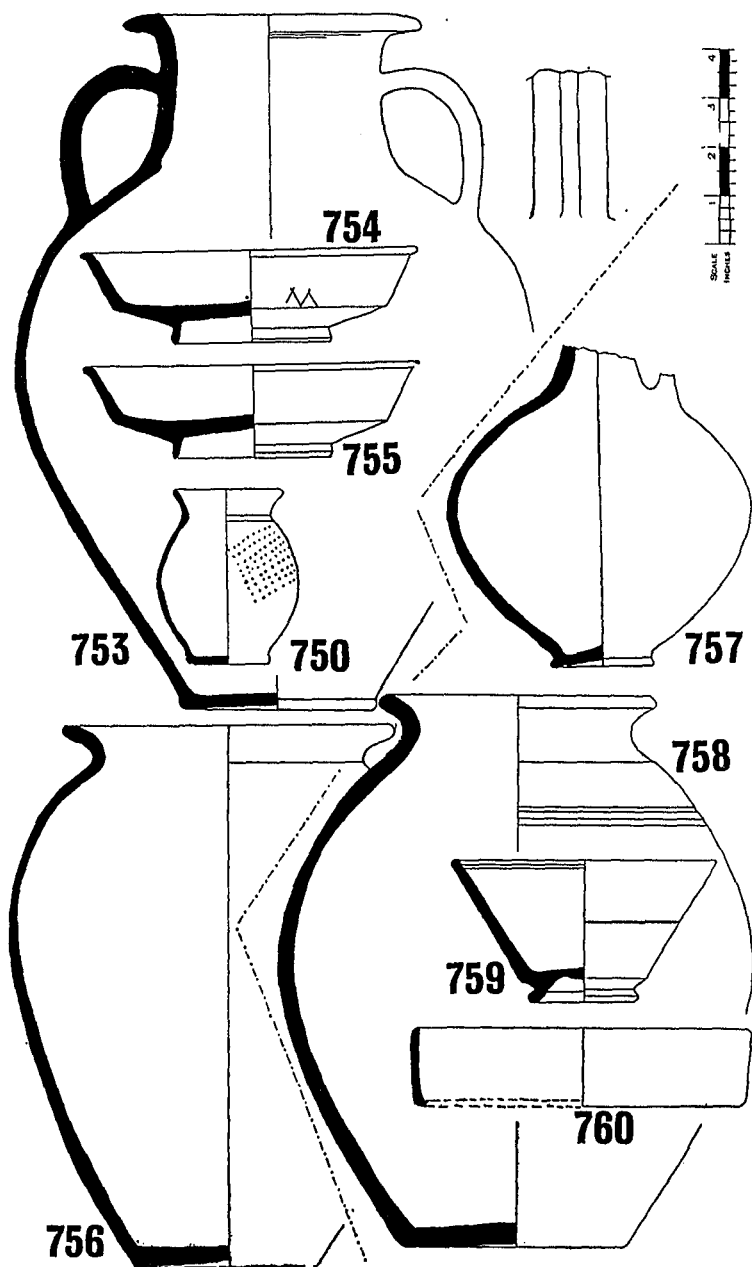


- No. 745. (No. 16.) Beaker or drinking mug with outcurved rim. Soft buff clay with grey core, which indicates exposure to wood flames in cremation. The irregular shape suggests a local origin.

GROUP No. 4. (25th June, 1926.)

- No. 746. (No. 17.) Late example of Sigillata bowl of form 31 Drag. with central potter's stamp illegible on a high coned base, datable to the latter half of the II Cent. The successive owners' marks scratched on the outside surface are made protesting against communistic ownership or pilfering. Reg. A. Smith, Proc. Soc. Ant. London. Vol. XXI, 2 Ser., p. 279, fig. No. 11. Pan-Rock Series. (These remarks of Mr. May's are interesting when compared with the note on this bowl published in the Antiquaries Journal for July, 1927 (Vol. VII, No. 3). The graffiti of the *Chi Rho* and an owner's initials should be observed, and the paragraph referred to should be read by all students of early Christian Symbolism.)
- No. 747. (No. 18.) Poppy-head beaker with outcurved neck, low cordon at the base of the neck and round body. The elegantly cavetto (ogee) incurving support and well finished foot are also indications of Belgic influence.
- No. 748. (No. 21.) Small flagon with saucer-mouth four times understepped and two ribbed handle. The holder is well rounded and the foot well moulded on a grooved and rising base. Hard sandy red clay. (In the I and II Cents. such vessels are of white, buff, or other pale clay or coated with white slip almost uniformly throughout the Empire, but faint and worn traces of white coating are sometimes overlooked. Compare Flagon in Group 3.)

It is recorded that three Urns with bones were found at the same time as the vessels comprising this Group—all were broken and at first recorded as beyond repair, but it is now possible that Nos. 737, 741, or 742 have been restored from some of the fragments.



UNASSOCIATED VESSELS.

- No. 749. (No. 20.) Castor ware hunt cup or small stunted beaker of unusual shape, with outcurved rim, round bulged body and incurved support. It is decorated *en barbotine* with stag and hound on a bead row bordered zone which the animals overlap, and a countersunk cordon at the base of the neck indicating Belgic influence.
- No. 750. (See after No. 752.)
- No. 751. (No. 19.) Wide bulged stunted beaker with contracted opening and foot on a rising base, decorated with a countersunk cordon on the neck and a $\frac{3}{4}$ inch zone of scored lattice lines directly underneath. Found 18 inches below surface with a bronze ring and near it a farthing of Carolus II.
- No. 752. FLAGON, with saucer mouth and two ribbed handle. Soft red clay.

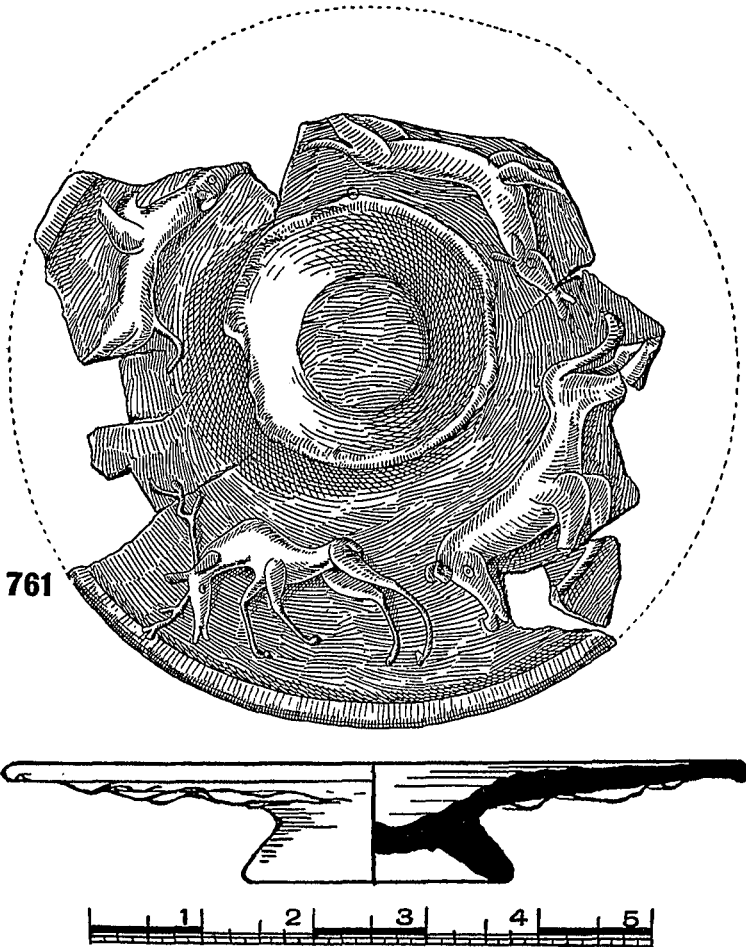
GROUP 5. (20th January, 1927.)

- No. 750. Small Poppy-head Beaker—grey fumed ware studded. See No. 736.
- No. 753. Amphora used as Urn—sandy red clay.
- No. 754. Sigillata Bowl, form 31 Drag. potter's stamp *CHTV*—(?), owner's mark scratched on outside.
- No. 755. Sigillata Bowl as last, stamp illegible.
- No. 756. URN, dark fumed grey clay.

GROUP 6.

- No. 757. FLAGON, handle and neck missing. Hard buff clay.
- No. 758. URN—fumed grey clay.
- No. 759. Sigillata Cup, form 33 Drag., no potter's stamp.
- No. 760. DISH—flat bottomed with upright sides. Hard brown clay.

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- No. 761. One of the last objects discovered is incidentally one of the most interesting. Inside one of the Urns with the burnt bones and ashes, were found fragments of very soft grey pottery from which the pot lid or flat dish illustrated opposite has been reconstructed. It is not now certain in which of the Urns the sherds



were found, but, more unfortunate still, none of the Urns seem to have been made to receive it as a cover. Pot lids and saucer-mouths or cup-mouths of bottles and flagons often served a double purpose of drinking directly or indirectly from the same vessel, like the modern costrel. A vent-hole to facilitate the flow of liquor was sometimes provided at the base of the neck of flagons of the late Roman period. Mr. Reginald Smith, F.S.A. considers it a cover, on the lines of the conical lid to Urn No. 706 found at

St. Dunstons and illustrated in our last Volume ; he acknowledges however that he has not before seen a handle to such a cover formed as this one. The so-called handle is quite like the foot ring of a flat dish or bowl, but if so intended for use, it is curious the fine ornament of the stag and hounds should be underneath. Our sketch has been made from a photograph of the pot as pieced together, most of the rim was missing but luckily a complete section was found and it has been possible to restore it to its original form, and we would welcome reference to any similar pot lid or dish discovered elsewhere. Mr. May illustrates a pot lid, type 7, plate lxxix, in his *Silchester Pottery*, which we observe appears to have a grooved and rising base. Should this also be more correctly described as a flat dish ?

It is with some feelings of diffidence that we would suggest to the two authorities mentioned that the "pot-lids" might possibly be more accurately considered as fruit dishes ; we would point to the black painted earthenware TAZZA of Greek origin dated about IV Cent. B.C. to be seen at South Kensington as our precedent for the elaborate ornamentation on the underside of a dish, and indicate further that the somewhat rare forms of sigillata ware, Nos. 47 and 48 Drag. might have been crudely imitated by some native potter in making the example illustrated here. This discovery tends to show how important it is that all fragments as well as complete vessels should be carefully preserved and systematically recorded at once ; had there been an experienced watcher on the site to concentrate on the minute details required in scientific research of this nature, it is our opinion that several of the so-called "unassociated" pots would have been linked together in grave groups, and that little bit of additional excavation would have been done to add considerably to our knowledge of this cemetery. It is to be hoped that the area will be carefully watched by the citizens and that someone *on the spot* will be found to take an interest in recording future finds.

June, 1928.