

THE 'BELGIC' CEMETERY AT ALLINGTON

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In his report on the discoveries at Swarling, Bushe-Fox refers to a group of similar vessels and brooches in Maidstone Museum, from Allington to the north-west of Maidstone.¹ The Hermitage Farm burial group published by Bushe-Fox was a separate find made in 1923; the much larger collection of pottery and brooches referred to, providing parallels for several of the Swarling vessels, has remained unpublished, apart from brief references.² The collection in Maidstone Museum comprises 26 vessels, and 4 brooches; of these two pots and one brooch made up the Hermitage Farm burial group. All the other objects are apparently from 'Tassel's Quarry', 'discovered about 1860 in ragstone quarry between Maidstone and Allington'.³ This quarry is evidently that referred to as the site of a cist grave of unknown date in 1849: 'The site of this discovery is a large stone quarry in the parish of Allington, about a mile north-west of Maidstone, and occupied by Mr. Tassel, architect and builder'.⁴

The 6 in. O.S. map TQ 75 NW, 1966 edition, has the spot marked 'Iron Age Cinerary urns found A.D. 1860' at TQ 74555735, in a quarry in the loop of the main railway line, and now in the north-west suburbs of Maidstone. The Hermitage Farm burial is marked about 1 mile to the south-west, at TQ 731561.⁵

The 1860 discoveries were presented to Maidstone Museum by the contemporary owner of the quarry, a Mr. W. H. Bensted, who

¹ J. P. Bushe-Fox, *Excavation of the late Celtic Urnfield at Swarling, Kent*, 1925, 19-20; Pl. XI, 7 & 8, Hermitage Farm; Pl. XV, 14 & 15, brooches.

² A. J. Evans, 'On a late-Celtic Urnfield at Aylesford, Kent. . . .', *Archaeologia* 52/2, 1890, 350; D. B. Kelly, 'Quarry Wood Camp, Loose: a Belgic Oppidum', *Arch. Cant.*, lxxxvi (1971), 73-4.

³ MS. Gazetteer in Maidstone Museum.

⁴ Rev. Beale Poste, *J. Brit. Arch. Ass.*, iv (1849), 65.

⁵ This is the reference given under 'Allington' in the O.S. *Map of Southern Britain in the Iron Age*, 1962, 55.

reported that 'a number of pits containing evidence of burning were found by the workmen'.⁶ It seems clear, however, that the 24 Tassel's Quarry pots are from two different discoveries; those amongst them of obvious Romano-British date possibly correspond with four vessels reported to have come from the foundations of a building in 1844, in what was then Tassel's Quarry.⁷ Poste states that in 1844 the last remains of this building were removed; Mr. T. Charles, of Maidstone, only managed to rescue 'a few fragments of a hypocaust'.⁸

There is some confusion in the labelling on the vessels themselves. They were examined by the writer as part of research into the 'Belgic' pottery of Kent, Hertfordshire, and Essex, at the Institute of Archaeology, University of London.

THE POTTERY

Fig. 1.

1. Tassel's Quarry, 4 AL 1.7. Hard grey-buff wheel-made pedestal urn, rim slightly irregular, showing inexperience in using the fast wheel; hard grey smooth core, possibly grog-tempered. A late version of a pedestal urn, to judge by the perfunctory base; the particular form of curved neck and step instead of cordon has parallels in Kent: e.g. Canterbury, Burgate Street, dated to the later first century A.D.⁹ The lack of thickening of the everted rim is another local characteristic, and seen on other Allington vessels. This pot does not have much connection with true pedestal urn types, but cf. Verulamium Group B no. 47,¹⁰ which is of a similar size and has a stunted pedestal. However, Wheathampstead also produced a pot with a stunted pedestal, of a much earlier date.¹¹

2. 'Allington' with number now indecipherable. Hard, hand-made, heavy and solid buff fabric with flint gritty lumps, patchy black on a smooth outer surface, especially around the base. A pinch pot, possibly, from its thickness. It bears a basic resemblance to the simple 'Belgic' jar shape, as also represented here by nos. 5, 7, and 17.

3. Tassel's Quarry, 4 AL 1.11. Pale buff grog-tempered fabric, red surfaces, burnished but worn. Shows turning lines. A photograph of this vessel in Fox, *Pattern and Purpose*, 1958, pl. 26 (wrongly described as from Aylesford) shows up the worn surface texture typical of these

⁶ MS. Gazetteer, Maidstone Museum.

⁷ *Ibid.*

⁸ Poste, *op. cit.*, 67.

⁹ A. Williams, 'Canterbury Excavations in 1945', *Arch. Cant.*, lx (1947), Fig. 6 nos. 3 & 4.

¹⁰ R.E.M. & T.V. Wheeler, *Verulamium, a Belgic and two Roman cities*, 1936, Fig. 16.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, pl. XLIX, 1.

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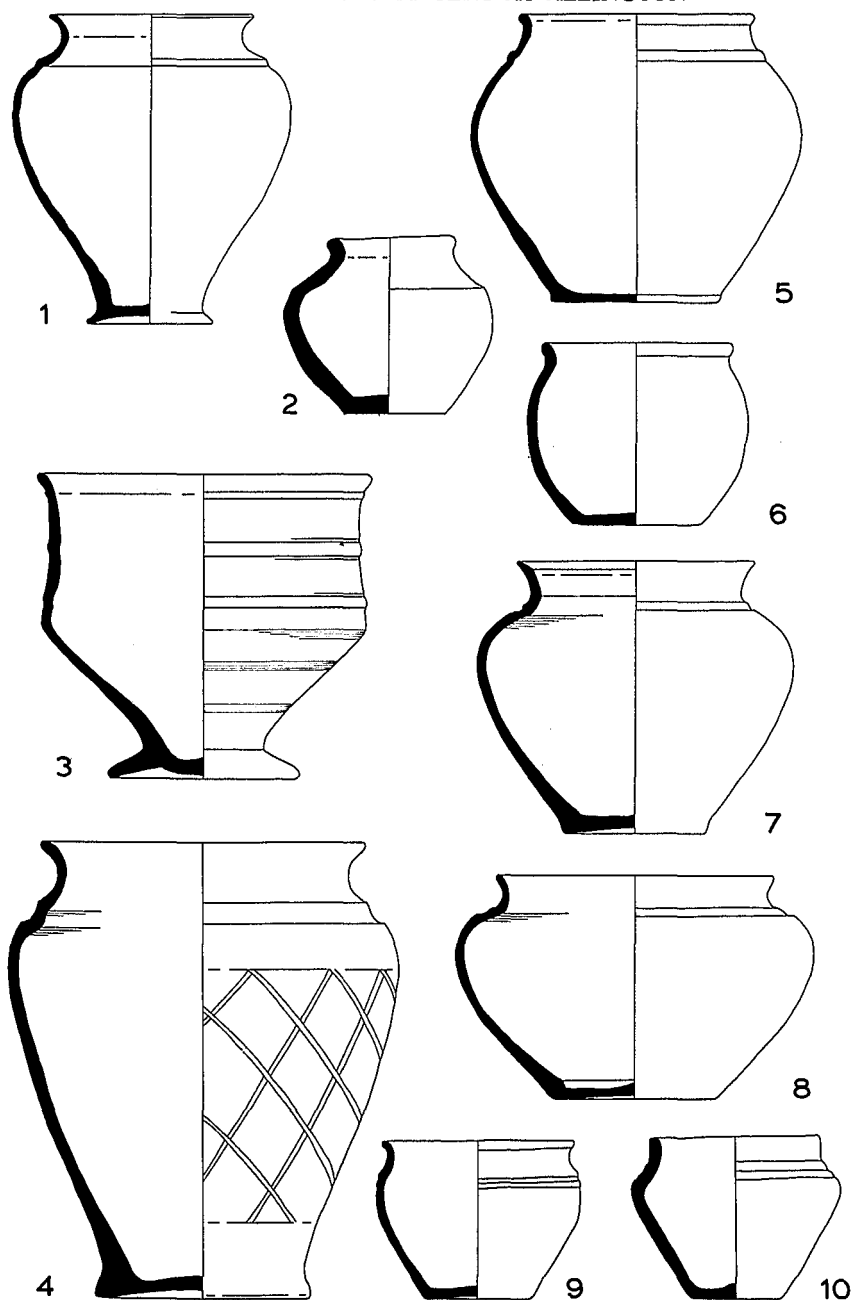


Fig. 1. Pottery from the Allington Cemetery. (Scale: $\frac{1}{4}$)

grog-tempered vessels. The form is the pedestalled cup, Camulodunum type 210: this is not really as rare as noted by Hawkes and Hull,¹² although the pedestal is often broken. In Kent, it is quite usual to have a hollow pedestal; in Hertfordshire, and often in Essex also, the surviving pedestals are usually attached separately to the solid base, as in the Hertfordshire 'mortar' vessels. An example of this occurs at Cheriton;¹³ examples of the hollow type in Kent also exist from Mill Hill, Deal,¹⁴ and Springhead (unpublished). Examples from Aylesford (Grave Z, unpublished), and Stone¹⁵ may originally have had pedestals, or may rather belong to the unpedestalled form, Camulodunum type 211.

4. Tassel's Quarry, 4 AL 1.1. Grey grog-tempered fabric with pale buff surfaces, burnished on the foot and shoulder. One of the tall jar types, not a flask. The stepped effect and thin everted rim are local characteristics. Compare two Lullingstone jars.¹⁶ The lattice decoration is unusual over such a large body area; the wideness of the mouth is also uncommon.

5. Tassel's Quarry, 4 AL 1.22. Dark grey grog-tempered fabric with orange surfaces, wheel-made, black patches. Smooth exterior surfaces. This rather fine globular jar shape is related to the very common type Camulodunum 221, which usually has one cordon on the shoulder below an everted rim, and is also a squat, not tall, shape; but there exists a sub-group of jar, like this example, which lacks the flaring rim. They occur all over the area of grog-tempered pottery but as might be expected those closest to this vessel are also from Kent: Swarling (Birchall 19),¹⁷ and Rochester (unpublished vessel in British Museum); Aylesford (Birchall 60)¹⁸ provides a smaller example.

6. Tassel's Quarry, 4 AL 1.15. This is in a rough Iron Age black-brown fabric, but is well made, by hand. Crayford fig. 5 no. 4 is a taller but very similar example¹⁹ but it is shell-tempered, a tempering found west of the Medway in the late Iron Age but seldom east of it.

¹² C. F. C. Hawkes and M. R. Hull, *Camulodunum*, 1948, 258.

¹³ P. J. Tester and H. F. Bing, 'A first-century Urn-field at Cheriton, near Folkestone', *Arch. Cant.*, lxii (1949), 21 ff., Fig. 3 no. 31.

¹⁴ J. D. Ogilvie and G. C. Dunning, 'A Belgic Burial-group at Sholden, near Deal; and a Belgic Tazza from Mill Hill, upper Deal', *Arch. Cant.*, lxxxii (1967), 221-226, Fig. 5.

¹⁵ M. A. Cotton and K. M. Richardson, 'A Belgic Cremation Site at Stone, Kent', *Proc. Prehist. Soc.*, vii (1941), Fig. 3 no. 5.

¹⁶ G. W. Meates, E. Greenfield and E. Birchenough, 'The Lullingstone Roman villa', *Arch. Cant.*, lxiii (1950), Fig. 5 nos. 7 and 8.

¹⁷ A. Birchall, 'The Aylesford-Swarling culture: the Problem of the Belgae reconsidered', *Proc. Prehist. Soc.*, xxxi (1965), 241-367.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*

¹⁹ J. B. Ward Perkins, 'An Early Iron Age Site at Crayford, Kent', *Proc. Prehist. Soc.*, iv (1938), 151-168.

7. Tassel's Quarry, 4 AL 1.13. Charles Coll. (presumably Mr. T. Charles, of Maidstone). Wheel-made, dark-brown grog-tempered fabric with burnished smooth hard dark grey surface. Contains bones. Has the common local non-thickened straight rim; hard and regular, and possibly romanizing. With a thicker, rounder rim it would exactly match the very common Camulodunum type 221.

8. Tassel's Quarry, 4 AL 1.12. Pale pink grog-tempered fabric shows at rim; surface patchy dark grey and pink, roughly tooled all over. Contains bones. Again note the straight rim. Rough and irregular, and now distorted, but corresponds with the shallower, wider-mouthed examples of Camulodunum type 221, the ubiquitous plain jar with shoulder cordon. Compare Verulamium Group B no. 70;²⁰ Verulam Hills Field no. 4;²¹ and Wheathampstead no. 10.²²

9. Tassel's Quarry, 4 AL 1.16 (see also no. 10; both pots have this accession number clearly painted on, and this pot also has '4 AL 1.12' in ink on the base, another duplication). Charles Coll. Black gritty fabric with buff surfaces. Tooling lines all over outside. Small cup, hand-made and of indeterminate shape, but could fall within the definition of Camulodunum type 264, 'cooking-pot with simple rim', rounded, plain, with offset neck. There are two somewhat similar simple vessels, unpublished, from Faversham, in the Royal Museum, Canterbury, but such a basic shape is liable to too much variation to produce exact parallels.

10. Tassel's Quarry, 4 AL 1.16. Hand-made but well executed, hard, brown gritty fabric with dark brown surfaces, patchy black, smooth and probably with some burnishing, but not apparently intended to be shiny. Somewhat similar to no. 9 but no really good parallels. It is a very small version of some of the rippled jars like one from Billericay, Birchall's no. 165, and at Camulodunum would be classified as type 229 (liable to much variation).

Fig. 2.

11. Allington, 4 AL 1.23. Wheel-made, brown-grey grog-tempered fabric with buff interior surface and pale red outer surface, softish, smoothed but not burnished. Since breakage by firemen the fabric can be clearly seen. This is one of a group of interesting early attempts at producing locally made jugs: there are a few parallels in first century A.D. contexts for this method of attaching the jug handle to the body of

²⁰ Wheeler, *op. cit.*, Fig. 21.

²¹ I. E. Anthony, 'Excavations in Verulam Hills Field, St. Albans', *Herts. Arch.*, i (1968), Fig. III.

²² Wheeler, *op. cit.*, pl. XLIX.

²³ K. M. Kenyon, *Excavations at the Jewry Wall site, Leicester*, 1948.

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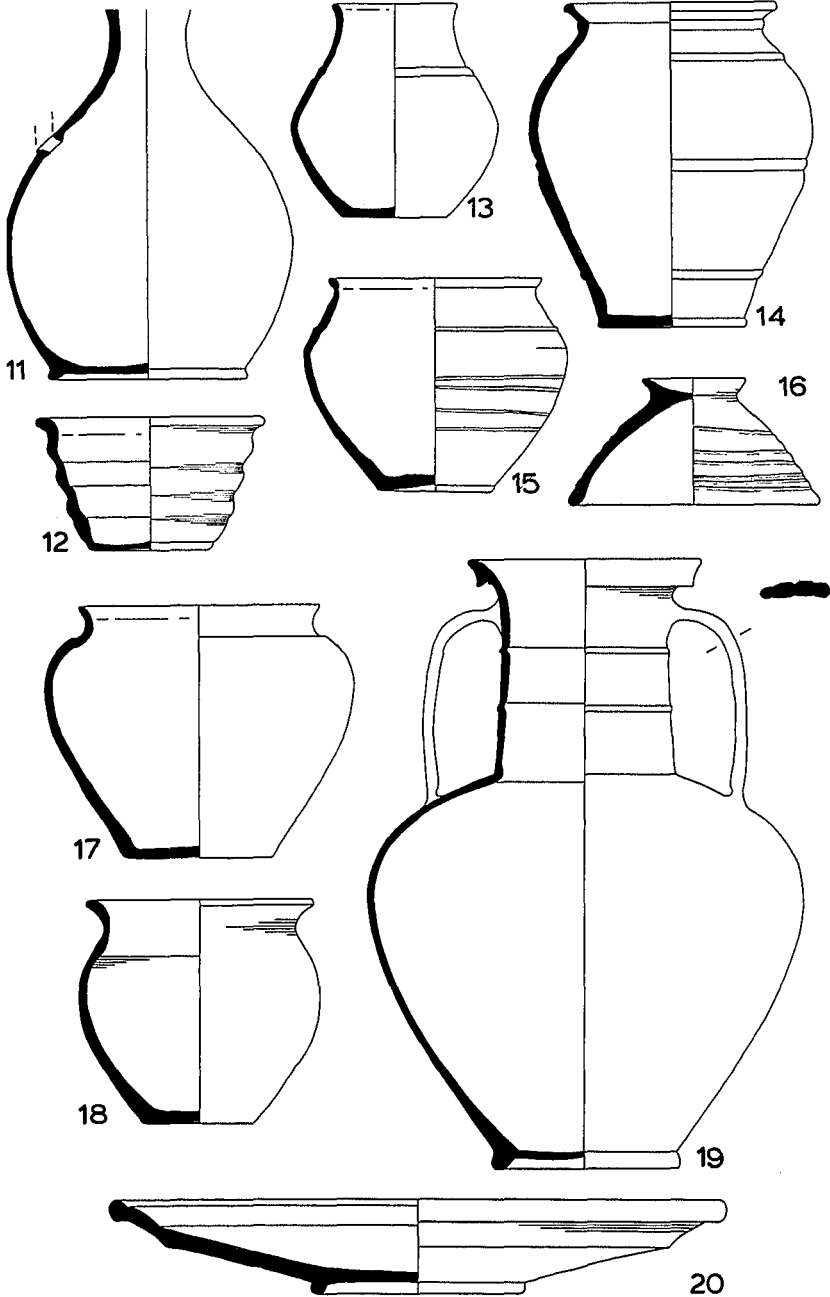


Fig. 2. Pottery from the Allington Cemetery. (Scale: $\frac{1}{4}$)

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the pot: Jewry Wall Fig. 34 no. 3;²³ Camulodunum type 132, native, no exact provenance, and Camulodunum type 249, from Sheepen, a fat bead-rim vessel of polished black ware, with one or more handles pushed through the body; Verulamium Group D no. 1,²⁴ a two-handled flagon. Three examples of the late first century B.C. occurred in the Welwyn Garden City chieftain grave.²⁵ All these early jugs show much individuality of form. The Allington example perhaps copies a metal prototype. The drawing shows where the wall of the pot was spread around the plug handle to attach it firmly; but it was evidently not firm enough. A more summary version of the same technique is known in the Verulamium region in the second century²⁶ where a slit is made in the wall of the pot and the handle base pushed through; this is a local aberration on otherwise normal Roman ring-necked flagons, while the first century examples are oddities from a period before the Roman series became standard.

12. Tassel's Quarry, 4 AL 1.9. Wheel-made, black gritty fabric with pale buff-brown patchy surfaces, burnished. The fabric is not easy to distinguish. A unique miniature version²⁷ of the bucket-like vessels with corrugated walls, Birchall's type II; this is still otherwise confined to Aylesford and Swarling, although a somewhat similarly corrugated bowl is now known from Woodham Walter, Essex (unpublished; also small).

13. Tassel's Quarry, 4 AL 1.19. Brown gritty fabric common at both Aylesford and Swarling, but not found north of the Thames; tooling marks all over the surface. A curious little flask shape; cf. the more sharply defined example from Aylesford (Birchall 65). These are apparently related to Camulodunum type 234, defined as 'a small flask with mildly flattened shoulder', usually in thin romanizing native ware. It was thought to be rare outside Sheepen, but there are parallels, mostly in rather late contexts, over Essex, Hertfordshire, and Kent. The Allington vessel has no exact parallel for its flattened profile.

14. Tassel's Quarry 4 AL 1.2. Kent gritty fabric, brownish-grey; interior conjectural as now badly distorted and much restored. Rim accurate. Apparently a butt-beaker copy, Camulodunum type 115; the beaded foot is rare. These copies can be extremely varied: this one is very close to the large wide-mouthed, often cordoned, jars like no. 25 below (q.v.).

15. Tassel's Quarry 4 AL 1.5. Charles Coll. Kent gritty fabric, grey-

²⁴ Wheeler, *op. cit.*, Fig. 23.

²⁵ I. M. Stead, 'A La Tène III Burial at Welwyn Garden City', *Archaeologia*, ci (1967), Fig. 9, nos. 33-35.

²⁶ A box of such jugs from Verulamium and Bromley Hall Farm in the Verulamium Museum store.

²⁷ Already published in F. Jenkins, *Men of Kent before the Romans*, 1962, Fig. 2, no. 3.

buff, traces of burnishing and tooled lines on outside. This basically biconical shape with the small rim is closely paralleled by two vessels from nearby Aylesford, Birchall 60 and 84: these are also of a similar size, while other two-angled wide-mouthed jars, like Allington 5 above, are generally larger. Several taller jars from Stone have body lines,²⁸ as does an unpublished early Romano-British jar in the Royal Museum, Canterbury (RM 5191).

16. Tassel's Quarry, 4 AL 1.10. Hard hand-made Kent gritty fabric, black core, patchy brown-black worn burnished outside surface, grey smooth inside. Charles Coll. This is closely paralleled by Camulodunum lid type pl. LXXXV, 4, and has body striations like no. 15 above. These deep lids could easily be used as small bowls.

17. Tassel's Quarry, 4 AL 1.8. Dark brown probably grog-tempered fabric with patchy brown-buff-black surface. A plain version of Camulodunum type 221, the standard shallow wide-mouthed jar type. The rim here is the local unthickened version, only slightly everted. There is a plain rim, rather similar, from Gun Hill, in south-east Essex, no. 107;²⁹ cf. also Wheathampstead no. 10, and other uncordoned Hertfordshire examples.

18. Tassel's Quarry, 4 AL 1.6. Contains bones. Roughish pale red fabric, not very hard, pale grits, and patchy red-buff-black surface, once burnished black over rim and shoulder. A curious elegant tulip shape reminiscent of the earlier Iron Age tradition of everted-rim foot-rim bowls and similar vessels, such as Crayford (*op. cit.*) Fig. 11, no. 8.

19. Allington, 4 AL B (*sic*). Hard pale cream fabric, light weight. Camulodunum type 161 Ab, imported, before A.D. 50. There are no less than three similar flagons from Tong³⁰ with South Gaulish samian, and a 'Belgic' cup that could be post-conquest. Another was found at Murston in an early Romano-British cemetery, apparently associated with a pedestal urn, of pre-conquest shape but romanizing fabric.³¹

20. Unmarked, but always associated in Maidstone Museum with the Allington pots. Brown-grey grog-tempered fabric, burnished brown-grey surfaces, originally well-made but much distorted in restoration. This large native platter is closest in form to Camulodunum type 4, which begins early but carries on in degenerate form into the Claudian period.³² This copy seems quite close to the

²⁸ Cotton and Richardson, *op. cit.*, Fig. 2, nos. 5-8.

²⁹ P. J. Drury and W. Rodwell, 'Excavations at Gun Hill, West Tilbury', *Essex Arch. and Hist.*, v (1973), Fig. 17.

³⁰ W. Whiting, 'On some Jutish Pottery found in Kent, and further Romano-British Pottery found in Kent', *Arch. Cant.*, xxxix (1927), 43, nos. 686-8.

³¹ G. Payne, *Collectanea Cantiana*, 1893, 38; Fig. p. 35. The pedestal urn is in the British Museum store.

³² Hawkes and Hull, *op. cit.*, 216.

prototype, however, and would perhaps be more likely to date before the conquest.

Fig. 3.

21. Tassel's Quarry, 4 AL 1.3. Roman, hard, wheel-made jar, pale grey fabric sandwiched between pinkish-red, with red surfaces, gritty, no burnish. Not two handles, but possibly one. Has the base of a jug. All parallels are second or even third century: Verulamium Excavations nos. 404, A.D. 105–30; 805 and 807, A.D. 150–60 (jugs); also a jar, no. 826, A.D. 150–60.³³ The low centre of gravity is common at this date.

22. Tassel's Quarry, 4 AL 1.18. Hard sandy patchy brownish-pink Roman fabric with black patchy surface on the outside, surfaces tooled inside and out.

22. Tassel's Quarry, 4 AL 1.17. Hard dark brownish-grey Roman fabric, restored, tooling on outside, probably originally had vertical lines lightly burnished on exterior. Both second century.

24. Tassel's Quarry, 4 AL 1.21. Very hard grey Roman fabric, smooth pale grey core, interior conjectural. No parallels.

25. Hermitage Farm. 'Late Keltic, nr. St. Lawrence Chapel Allington, Jan. 19th . . . presented by Mr. G. . . . 19 Feb. 1923'. Wheel-made but uneven shape, dark brown-grey fine gritty fabric, patchy brown-grey surfaces, burnished on exterior. Marked wheel-lines on base. Foot not symmetrical. Broken by firemen, June 1977. A tall cordoned ring-footed jar, with some resemblance to the flat-footed pedestal urns with cordons from Aylesford, Birchall 64 and 68. This pot's general category is that of the tall wide-mouthed versions of the 'flasks', Camulodunum types 231–2: cf. Billericay, Birchall 178; Minnis Bay, Well 30, A.³⁴ It is commoner, however, for this type to have cordons confined to the shoulder.

26. Hermitage Farm, St. Lawrence's Chapel. Brown-grey softish fabric, burnished underneath, possibly grog-tempered, to judge by appearance on outside, where pale inclusions are invisible. This is a Camulodunum form 28, a native copy of the Gallo-Belgic platter form Camulodunum 14; these copies can be varied but always have the high offset, and are of this general size. The date range at Camulodunum of form 28 was post-conquest.

³³ S. S. Frere, *Verulamium Excavations*, i, 1972.

³⁴ T. C. Champion, *The earlier Iron Age in the Region of the lower Thames: insular and external Factors*, D. Phil. thesis, Oxford, 1977.

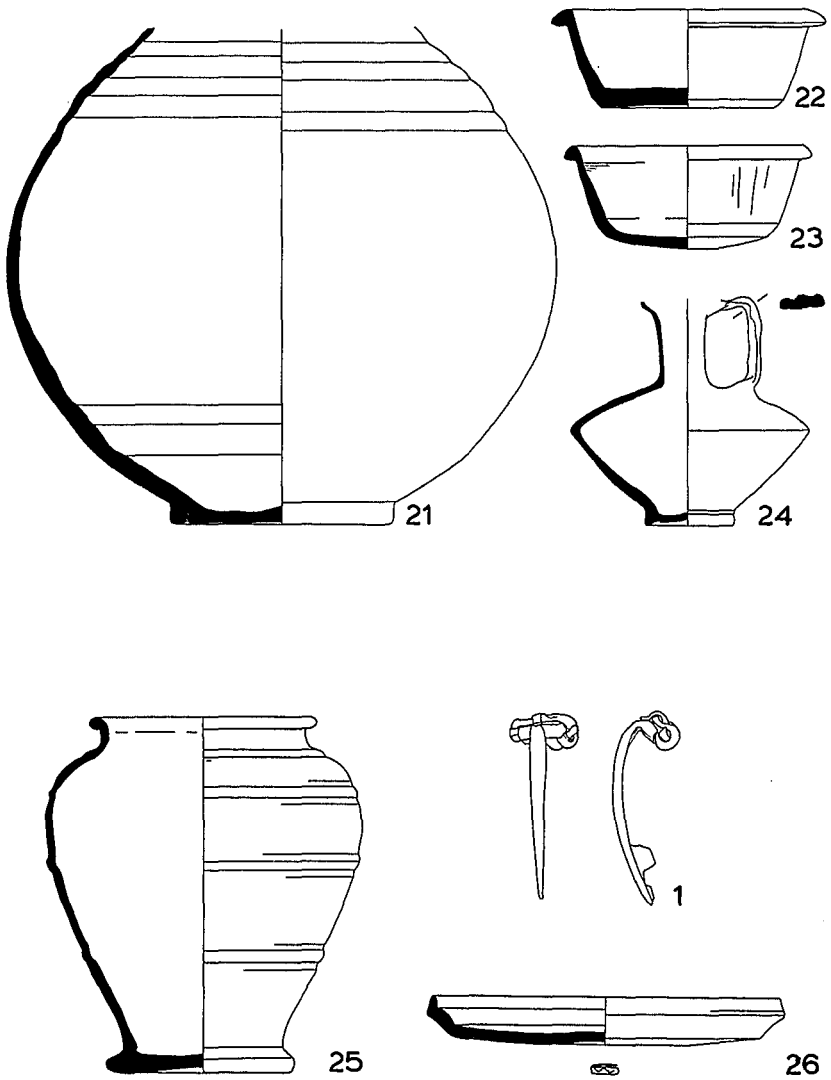


Fig. 3. Roman Pottery from Allington (nos. 21-24); Hermitage Farm Burial Group.
(Scale: Pottery: $\frac{1}{4}$; Brooch: $\frac{1}{2}$)

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THE BROOCHES

1. (Fig. 3.) Bronze brooch, with slightly flattened bow, 6-coil spring, 2 small side-wings and hook on top of bow to keep the external chord in place; broken catchplate; no pin. Found with the Hermitage Farm burial. A standard example of a 'Colchester' brooch, without early features; date could be anywhere in the last few decades of the pre-conquest period or shortly after.³⁵

Nos. 2-4 (Fig. 4) are from the cemetery, but all associations have been lost.

2. Large bronze brooch with straight bow, fretted catchplate, hood over 6-coil spring with external chord. One of the 'straight-bow' brooches that are the beginning of the 'Colchester' type, and commonly found in Kent.

3. Bronze brooch with high curve to bow, pierced catchplate, 8-coil spring broken off on one side, side-wings and hook to keep external chord in place. A 'Colchester' brooch, but an early piece since it retains the pierced catchplate in its full form.³⁵

4. Small iron brooch with broken solid catchplate, straight bow, hood over 10-coil spring and external chord. These iron brooches are hard to date but this is not out of place amongst the other Allington brooches, of the later pre-conquest period, and possibly just overlapping the conquest.

It is not easy to define the date range of the Allington vessels exactly, although they clearly represent three different potting traditions: the 'earlier' Iron Age (nos. 6 and 18) which yet survives alongside new fashions and techniques down to the conquest, particularly west of the

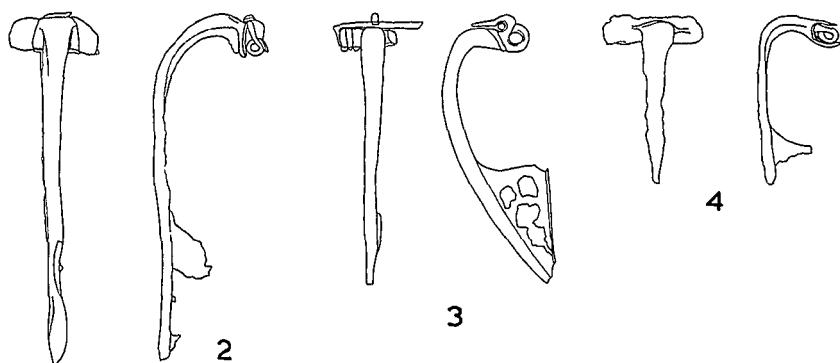


Fig. 4. Brooches from the Allington Cemetery. (Scale: $\frac{1}{2}$)

³⁵ Bushe-Fox, *op. cit.*, Pl. XV, 15, and p. 44 = no. 1; Pl. XV, 14, and p. 44 = no. 3.

Medway; the so-called 'Belgic' styles, which make up the majority of the finds, of elegant, curving, mostly wheel-made vessels with pedestals and cordons, made either in the grog-tempered brownish-grey fabric common to these styles in Hertfordshire, Essex, and north Kent, or in a fine gritty fabric of north Kent, commoner in the Aylesford and Swarling cemeteries than the grog-tempered fabric; and finally the new styles of the early post-conquest period represented by the fine imported flagon. The large platter no. 20, assuming it truly belongs to Allington, and the butt beaker copy, no. 14, as well as the early attempt by a native potter at a jug, no. 11, would in any case bring the date range of the cemetery to about the period of the Roman conquest. We may judge the later end of the range as *c.* A.D. 50; the earlier date bracket is perhaps the closing years of the first century B.C. but this is at best a vague estimate. The details of the vessels show many local characteristics, and only more general resemblance to the wider distribution of their types: this is entirely typical of this kind of pottery.

The Hermitage Farm burial group is dated to the conquest period by the platter.

The difficulty encountered in closely dating this pottery is not, of course, surprising, since we are attempting to date objects within a time span of only three or four generations with neither any directly relevant written evidence nor any knowledge of their period of use, if any, before deposition. The distinctively local features of many of the vessels add to our problems; and it is clear from a detailed study of much published and unpublished material from the whole area covered by grog-tempered 'Belgic' pottery that this emphasis on local characteristics is the rule, not the exception. Aylesford and Swarling are not representative of the cemetery wares of this area, since so much variation is possible: and Allington, after all, is only a few miles from Aylesford itself. The study of the Allington cemetery is only a small part of a comprehensive review of this pottery, its forms and its fabrics, intended to show up local peculiarities and underlying generalities. Thus despite their loss of associations these pots can be regarded as interesting and informative.

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