Blaise Castle Hill, Bristol. 1957

By
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With reports on the Iron Age pottery and Brooches by A. M. APSIMON

SUMMARY

This report describes a trial excavation made in the winter of 1956–7 which confirmed occupation in the Iron Age, Roman and medieval periods, and summarizes the evidence from previous excavation and earlier finds from the site. *Fig.* 33 shows a plan of the site.

INTRODUCTION

The excavation was done on Sunday afternoons during January to April, 1957, with the help of volunteer labour, including members of the U.B.S.S. We should like to thank Mr. A. M. ApSimon for his reports on the Iron Age B pottery and brooches, Mr. P. F. Bird for his on the animal bones from Pit A, Mr. G. C. Boon for his on the coins, Mr. P. F. Ewence for drawing the finds, Mr. L. V. Grinsell for his note on the Saxon strap-end, Mr. E. M. Jope for advice on the medieval pottery, Dr. H. Taylor for his note on the human bones, Dr. A. J. Willis for identifying the grain, and the Corporation of Bristol for permission to excavate. Finds and detailed records have been deposited in the City Museum, Bristol.

The aim of the excavation was to determine the areas of Roman and medieval occupation as witnessed by extant material, and particularly to check the dating of a building found in 1918. It may here briefly be said that, although this building was considered to be medieval, the bulk of the material found was Roman, and it seemed possible that the building itself might be of this date, and if so, where was the medieval building whose roofing crests have been found on the hill? In these aims we were not successful; the dating of the 1918 building is still uncertain, though it seems more likely to be Roman than medieval.

Our method of excavation was to dig test holes 4 ft. square at intervals of 50 ft. over the top of the hill, and although this has yielded useful information, it is clear that nothing short of meticulous area excavation can solve the problem of Roman and medieval occupation. The holes did show incidentally that the area within the defences of the hill-fort is particularly rich in Iron Age features, such as the five pits found in 1957.

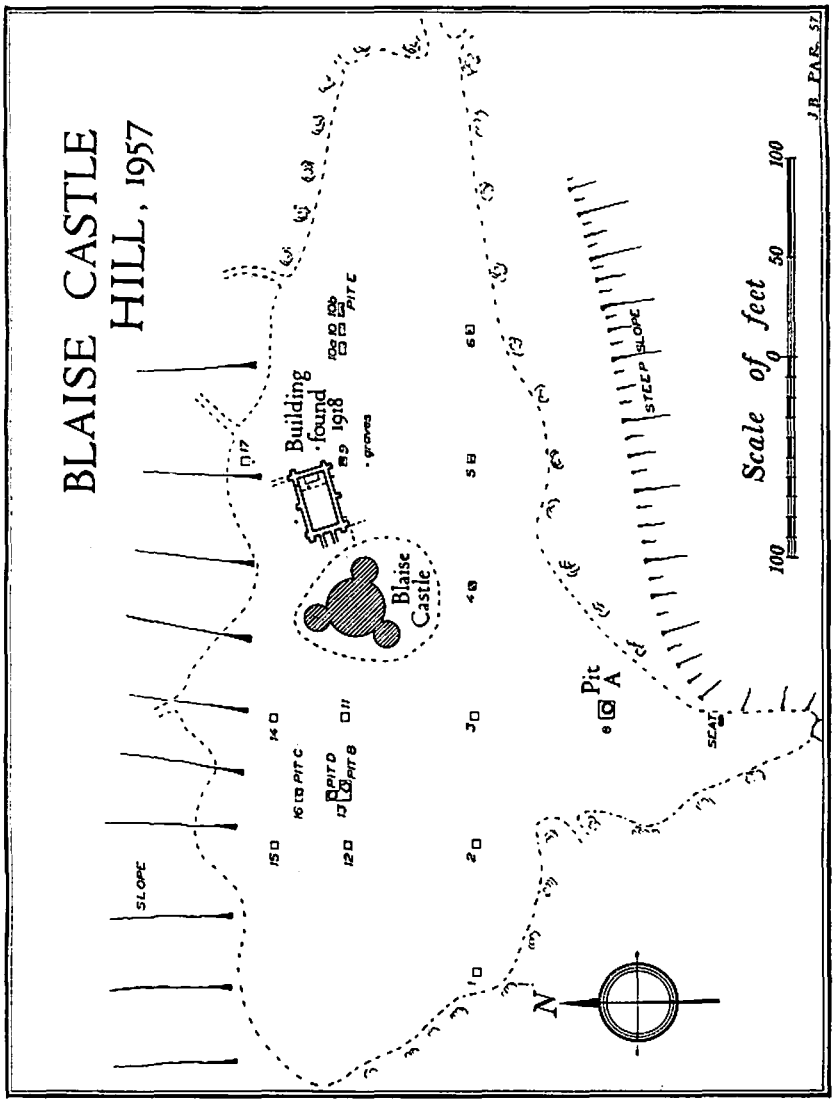

Fig. 33.

THE SITE

Blaise Castle Hill is in a commanding position on the NW. side of the limestone ravine of the Henbury Trym, on the western outskirts of Bristol and overlooking the Severn estuary. The top of the hill, just above the 300 ft. contour, is a plateau of 4 to 5 acres; about three acres are open grass, crowned by Blaise Castle (1768); the rest is wooded, and so are the slopes, which are

steep on all sides and precipitous to the south. To the southwest is the hill-fort of Kings Weston Down (Rahtz, 1957) separated from Blaise by a dry rocky gap 75–100 ft. deep (Echo Gate). A third hill-fort, Combe Hill (Tratman, 1946), lies on the other side of the ravine, but its earthworks are largely obliterated. The north and west slopes of the hill carry earthworks, which have been considerably levelled and altered by landscaping in the 18th century. These are the defences of the Iron Age B settlement, and dry stone walling may still be seen in places. They are not discussed further in this paper, which is concerned only with the top of the hill.

PREVIOUS REFERENCES

Atkyns, 1768, mentions the chapel of St. Blaise, and says that its foundation stones "were dug up in 1707, when many modern coins, and also ancient Roman coins, and other Roman antiquities were found; and in a vault ten yards long and six yards broad, supposed to have been in the church, many human bodies were discovered, whose skulls were white, entire and firm". He mentions a tradition that the hill was a Roman fortification, and the "bulwarks of great height and thickness on the west and north sides". Rutter, 1779, says that "about 1766, in digging the foundations of a pleasure-house on the top of the hill, some brass coins of Vespasian, Antoninus, Constantine, Constantius, Tetricus, and others of the later empire, were found, with a few silver ones, chiefly of Gordianus". He suggests that these were "only the gleanings of the fuller harvest of 1707", referring to Atkyns. Seyer, 1821, gives a plan and describes the hill and its defences (the latter turned into gravelled walks), and a supposed Roman road in the vicinity. He lists coins turned up when the foundations of the Castle were dug in 1768, and also found while planting some trees near Blaise Castle in 1819; and in section 62, p. 158, others found "in the same place, several years ago" (i.e., before 1821).

The most important reference is that in Bartlett, 1919. He describes traditions concerning the chapel of St. Blasius, and his excavation in 1918 to search for it. He dug mainly to the east of the Castle, and includes in his paper a plan of a building whose foundations he exposed in that area, which he assumed to be the chapel.* The plan is that of barely extant foundations; which seem to have been little more than the levelled and mortared surface of the bedrock, on which were slightly raised beddings of mortar some 2 ft. 6 in. wide; on these were a few stones on their original alignment. The building

* It should be noted that the scale of 1/60 given on the plan as published does not tally with the measurements given in the text: it seems likely that this was the scale of the original drawing, which was reduced to about half by the printers without altering the scale. The inclusion of the outline of this building in our plan in *Fig.* 33 is based on the measurements in the text, and its position in relation to the Castle is as accurate as the reference points on Bartlett's plan allow.

was 28 ft. by 14 ft. internally, with buttresses; at its east end was a platform, and in the front of this was a fissure or trench some 6 ft. deep extending north and south across the building (the fissure is not shown on Bartlett's plan). In the soil were fragments of Lias 1½ in. thick (which Bartlett thought were the main flooring flagstones), Lias roof-tiles and nails, and small red tiles, hard-baked, with black cores (the latter thought to be the flooring of the platform, which is referred to as the "altar platform").* There were also fragments of red coated brown plaster and a few pieces of worked freestone. Several skeletons were found lying close to the foundations, buried 4 to 5 ft. below the surface. These were apparently in shallow graves cut in the solid rock, oriented with heads to the west, and covered by a layer of stones, sometimes mortared in place. One skeleton had its teeth worn perfectly flat, another had a roughly shaped stag-horn handle of a knife or dagger, while a third was 6 ft. 3 in. high. *Under* the altar platform was most of a skeleton with its head to the east. Near the east end of the north wall foundation were three superimposed interments, the latest cut into the foundations. There were also patches of quick-lime, which Bartlett thought were post-Reformation plague burials. Other finds were fragments of red Roman roof-tiles, and "Romano-British" potsherds, which were found in quantity in the neighbourhood of the fissure in front of the altar; at the base of the fissure was black greasy soot. The sherds are described as of slate coloured clay with white quartz particles, and one was ornamented with a rough lattice. Under the altar was a piece of sandstone, thought to be the horn of a Roman altar, and here Bartlett suggests that, in view of the Roman tiling, hard grey Roman mortar (not previously mentioned), Roman plaster lined in Indian red (previously implied to be medieval), and coins in the neighbourhood of the altar platform, there may have been a Roman shrine or temple on the site. The coins mentioned (*see* Table, p. 153) are mostly late, down to Gratian, but include a second brass of Nerva. There were also minims, "probably British", and flint flakes. Bartlett also dug pits in various parts of the plateau, but found only solid rock 1–3 ft. below the turf, pottery and hard grey mortar, but "no trace of the great vault 40 ft. by 20 ft., full of bones, which is supposed to have been discovered in 1718". He is evidently here referring to Atkyns, 1768, but has mis-quoted date and dimensions. His plan shows an east-west rectangular structure with buttresses in the centre of each long wall, and double buttresses on each corner. There are projections from the west wall marking an entrance 3–4 ft. wide, a bed of brown mortar outside the S.W. corner, and "black soil, 5 ft. 2 in. deep", to the north of the building.

* No Lias fragments were found in the 1957 excavations, nor would they be usual in this area: it seems probable that Bartlett is in fact referring to Pennant sandstone, which is common on the site.

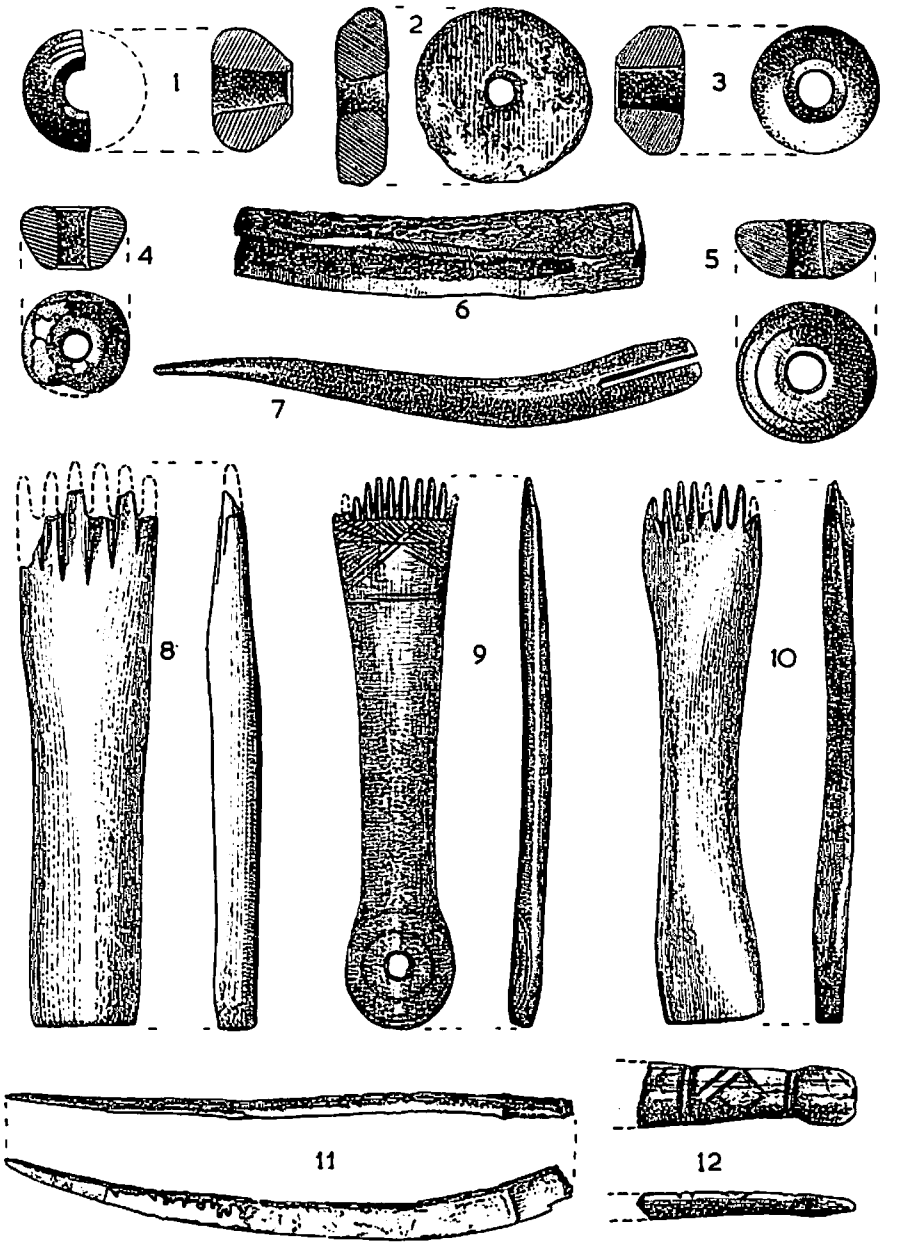

Fig. 34—Sc. ½.

The pre-1957 finds are in the collections in the City Museum, Bristol, and that of the U.B.S.S. None of Bartlett's material is among this as far as is known, and the objects have been found mostly in animal disturbances on the hill from time to time, particularly by W. A. Ackland, R. Hughes and others since 1919.* The prehistoric pottery, consisting of several hundred sherds, is considered, with that from the present excavation, in Mr. ApSimon's report on p. 160. He considers it to be entirely Iron Age B. Apart from some good quality flint flakes and a few mesolithic flints picked up recently by Messrs. Marachan and Reed,† there is no reason to postulate any settled occupation earlier than Iron Age B, and the layout of the defences is consistent with this date.

Apart from the pottery there are several other finds which can be related to the Iron Age B or Roman occupations (all in the City Museum, Bristol): five spindle-whorls of shale and pennant (*Fig.* 34, Nos. 1, 2, 4, 5); a perforated disc of lead one inch in diameter; a saddle quern 12 in. by 7 in.; fragments of rotary querns; pot-covers of pennant sandstone; two dozen slingstones, weighing between 2 and 4 oz.‡; six sling bullets of baked clay, average weight 2 oz., similar to those from the present excavation (p. 157); a bone weaving comb (*Fig.* 34, No. 12§); a clay loom weight; a handle made from a small antler tine, with a slotted end (*Fig.* 34, No. 6); fragments of burnt daub and slag; and pennant and ceramic roof-tiling, the latter probably Roman. Roman sherds number about 200; they include Flavian samian and New Forest indented beaker sherds and thus cover the greater part of the Roman period, as do those from the current excavation. As the Roman occupation is well dated by coins, no attempt is made now to publish the Roman pottery, which is wholly from unsealed levels.

There are no Roman coins in the collections which were definitely found on the site; the table opposite is based on those listed in earlier reports, and those from the present excavation.

An Anglo-Saxon strap-end from the site is described in Appendix C, p. 168.

The medieval material includes several dozen sherds and fragments of 13th–14th century glazed roof crests; similar pieces have been found in the present excavation; the pottery has been examined by Professor E. M. Jope, who considers that most of it is of the 13th–14th centuries A.D. with a few fragments that might be 15th. These are not described in detail in the

* Many of these are described and drawn in Ackland's MS. Notebooks, recently deposited in the City Museum.

† Information from L. V. Grinsell.

‡ Cf. those of similar size from Kings Weston Down Camp (Rahtz, 1957).

§ This is labelled "T. Hughes, Lovers Leap"; this is the same Hughes who collected palæoliths from the Avon terraces.

Roman Coins	*1st–2nd centuries*	*3rd century*	*Early 4th century*	*Late 4th century*	*Total*
Castle 1766* (Seyer 1821)	2	3+	3+	—	8+
Castle 1768* (Rudder 1779)	8	6+	5+	6+	25+
Trees 1819 (Seyer 1821)	2	1	4	1	8
"Some years before 1821" (Seyer 1821)	1	2	—	—	3
Bartlett 1918 (Bartlett 1919)	1	—	5+	2+	8+
1957 excavation (*see* Appendix B, p. 168)	1	—	2	4	7
	15	12+	19+	13+	59+

* These may be the same.

present paper, as, like the Roman sherds, they are not from significant levels.

SUMMARY AND COMMENTS ON THE FINDS AND REFERENCES UP TO 1957

The periods of Iron Age B, most of the Roman period, and the 13th–15th centuries A.D. are thus represented on the hill, as well as a single find of Anglo-Saxon date. No detailed examination or survey of the Iron Age defences has been made, and it is sufficient here to emphasize the defensible nature of the site, its precipitous slopes, the relatively small area available for settlement within the defences, and the widely spaced ramparts, with revetments of dry stone walling, suitable for sling warfare. These features are in strong contrast to the weakly defended and more spacious site of Kings Weston Down on the other side of the valley, which is of Iron Age A date (Rahtz, 1957). The pottery shows no more overlap of form and fabric than might be expected from people making pottery from identical materials. Sling-stones and sling bullets are very common at Blaise, while at Kings Weston Down the former occurred only in a secondary context* (Rahtz, 1957, p. 34).

The Roman occupation is clearly a major one, and continued throughout that period. The number of early coins is impressive; the site is not far from

* The evidence from Kings Weston Down and Blaise Castle suggests that on the arrival of the Glastonbury folk, the occupation of the former site was brought to a violent end, quite probably with the aid of a new tactical weapon—the sling. The defeated and dispossessed Iron Age A people made some contribution to the new culture in the shape of La Tène I brooches, weaving equipment, and pottery, though in this respect the contribution while quite certain is less explicit, than, for example, at Maiden Castle, and the Blaise Castle pottery is most predominantly "B" in character. (A. M. A.)

Sea Mills, which was occupied from the Claudian period onwards (Boon, 1949), and commands extensive views of the Severn estuary and Wales. It has been suggested that Blaise was a signal station for communication between Sea Mills and the Welsh shore (Seyer, 1821, p. 157, and Boon, 1949). The Roman material is scattered over the whole of the site, but is concentrated on the north side of the hill, which overlooks the salt-marshes and estuary of the Severn; this is a similar position to that of Lydney, the late Roman temple-settlement on the opposite side of the Severn (Wheeler, 1932). Apart from the fourth-century coins and pottery from Blaise, there is building material and painted plaster;* a late Roman hill-top temple is a possible interpretation of this material.

The 13th–14th-century roof-crests imply the existence of a medieval building on the hill, and this could be the reputed chapel of St. Blasius or St. Werburga; the chapel may have been dedicated to both in succession, or the chapel of St. Werburga may be elsewhere (*see* Bartlett, 1919†). The structures found in 1707 and 1918 were both claimed to be part of this chapel. In 1707 (Atkyns, 1768), a vault 30 ft. × 18 ft. full of skeletons, and in 1918, a building which measured internally 28 ft. × 14 ft. were found, also associated with skeletons (Bartlett, 1919). It is difficult to resist the conclusion that these two structures were one and the same, the walls standing to a greater height in 1707 than when Bartlett uncovered them in 1918. He found the "floor level" at a depth of 3–4 ft. below the surface, and the earlier diggers might well have considered such a structure to be a "vault".

In neither excavation was anything reported which was definitely of post-Roman date.‡ On the other hand, quantities of Roman material were found on both occasions, and the building may have been also of this date. Bartlett admitted the possibility of the chapel being built on an earlier Roman shrine, and this may still be true. The plan drawn in 1918 has no features which are certainly medieval, except, perhaps, the cross buttresses on the corners, though these could well be Roman. The plan could indeed be compared with that of the cella of the Lydney temple, though on a smaller scale. On general grounds, the brown mortar found by Bartlett is more likely to be Roman than the grey which he assumed to be so. The skeletons are both earlier than or contemporary with, and later than, the building, and yielded no decisive independent evidence of their date, though a stag-horn handle is less likely to belong to post-Roman times.

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* A piece of Bathstone roof-coping, similar to that found on several local late-Roman buildings, was recently found built into the masonry of the North Bastion of the castle.

† And note in *Trans. B. & G. A.S.* forthcoming.

‡ Except the "modern coins" of 1707, which were presumably of the seventeenth century and difficult to account for.

THE PRESENT EXCAVATION

Trial-holes 4 ft. square (except 10) were dug as shown on the plan, *Fig.* 33; Nos. 8, 9, and 13 were extended to include features in their sides, and further cuttings were made either side of No. 10 (10a and 10b). Only significant details are included here, except pit A which is described in full.

T.H. 1. Bedrock at 9–10 in.; flints and I.A.* sherds.

T.H. 2. Bedrock at 10–12 in.; flints, I.A., Roman, and 13th-century sherds.

T.H. 3. Bedrock at 14 in.; flints, slingstone, I.A. and late Roman sherds and tile, medieval tile and slate; brown and white mortar.

T.H. 4. White mortar in patches from 10–12 in.; above this were medieval and later sherds and slate; below this, charcoal-flecked soil with Roman sherds down to bedrock at 13 in.

T.H. 5. Bedrock at 12–18 in., except southern third of hole, where it is apparently cut away to 24 in.; Roman and I.A. sherds only in deeper part; above this more Roman and I.A. sherds, slate, tile, 18th-century sherds and several kinds of mortar. Roman sherds are early and late.

T.H. 6. Bedrock at 12 in.; above this, dark soil with several 2nd-century Roman sherds, burnt daub, fragments of Pennant stone, tiles and freestone; the dark soil and sherds continue into post-hole 12 × 10 in., cut 9 in. into the rock, alongside west side of hole 2 ft. 3 in. from N.W. corner.

T.H. 7. Not dug.

T.H. 8. See "Pit A", which occupied hole and extension.

T.H. 9. Turf and top-soil 4–5 in.; below this, down to bedrock at 18 in. (except grave), was a layer of sticky, clayey soil with much mortar, plaster and stone (including Pennant roofing tiles). In this layer were a few I.A. sherds, early and late Roman sherds, a coin of *Domitian* (No. 1) at 9 in., dozens of human bones, representing at least five individuals, *see* Appendix E, p. 170, fragments of Roman tile, including pieces of *tegula* and *imbrex*, 7 different kinds of mortar, and 6 different kinds of plaster (probably all Roman, in several colours).

The Grave

Below layer 9 was a shallow grave cut 6 in. into the rock. In this, but very mixed-up with the layer above, was a skeleton of a child about 6 years old (*see* Appendix D, p. 169) orientated with head to west; the west end of the grave was rounded and 1 in. deeper than the rest of the grave. The skeleton was extended, and very much disturbed. The skull was smashed, but *in situ:* below it, and found only when the surface of the bedrock was scraped, was a 4th-century coin of *Fel. Temp. Reparatio* type (No. 7). This could have been in the mouth of the skeleton, but because of the disturbed condition of the grave and the relative frequency of Roman coins in the soil, it cannot be associated with the skeleton with certainty, though we are of the opinion that it was.† Nor is it certain that the grave antecedes the mortary layer: it could have been dug through it.

T.H. 10. Turf and top-soil 8 in.; mortary soil and stones 8–10 in., some dark soil mixed at base; floor of crushed stones with some flagstones 8/10–12 in. set on levelled bedrock; dark soil on, among, and below these stones; in mortary level were fragments of Pennant stone roofing-tile, Roman and I.A. sherds, part of a 13th-century glazed ridge crest, and an *Urbs Roma* coin (No. 2). Among and on the stones of the floor were flint flakes, and Roman and I.A. sherds. Sealed below the floor were a few sherds, which were all of I.A. date.

T.H. 10a was similar to 10, except that there were several pieces of glazed ridge crest and a piece of medieval or later lead window edging. The dark soil on the stone floor was an inch thick, and distinct from the layer above it; it contained nothing but I.A. material (sherds, daub, sling-stones and bronze droppings).

T.H. 10b. Here the soil contained more large dressed stones, flanged Roman tile fragments, and painted plaster at the west end of the hole, and a coin of *Valens* (No. 3) at 6 in. At the east end of the trial-hole the stratification became complex, and the stone floor sagged round the sides of what appeared to be another pit (E), with some collapsed stones, which could be the steining of the pit. But at this point the

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* I.A. = Iron Age.

† See Dr. Taylor's note in Appendix D, p. 169.

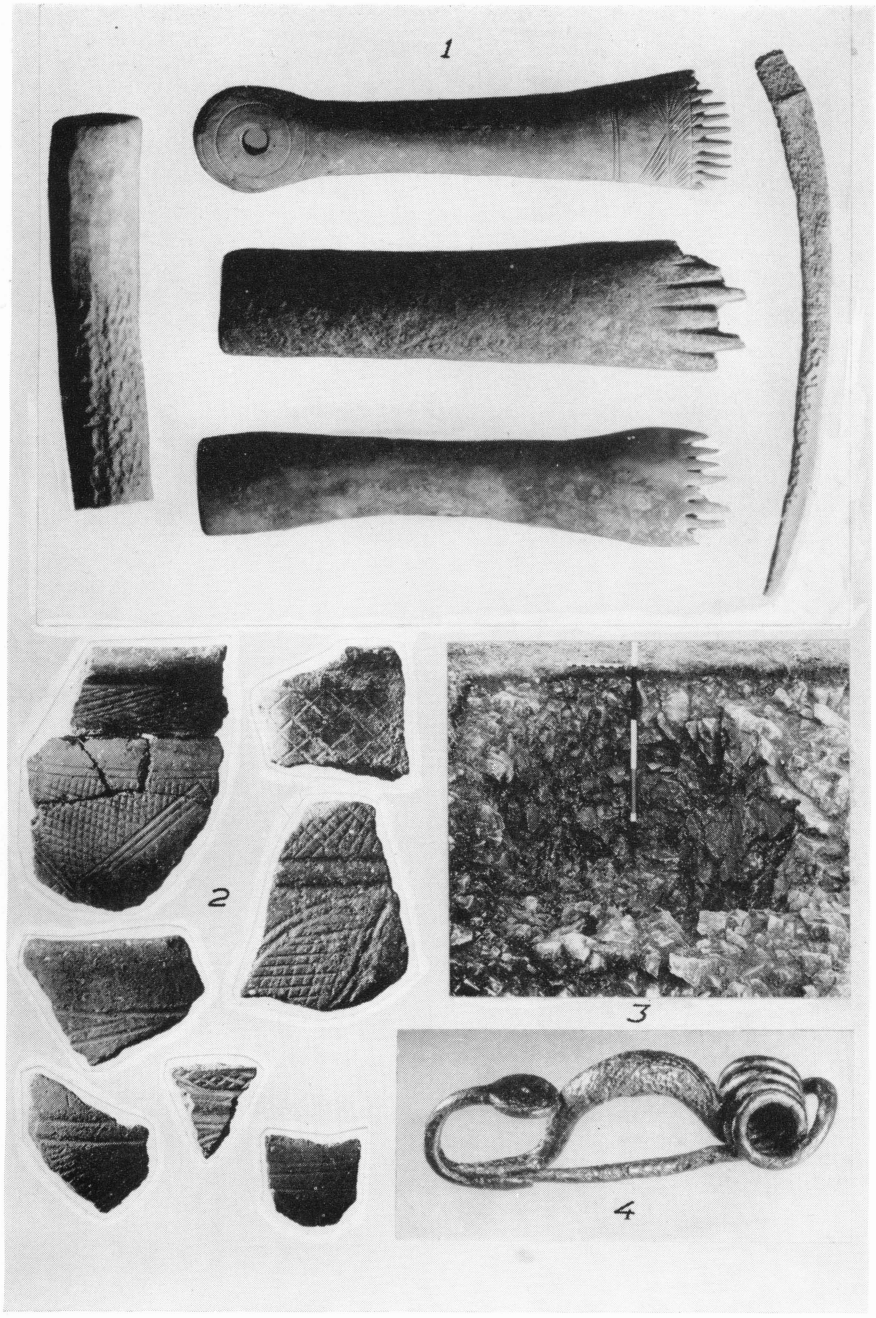

PLATE II. Nos. 1 and 2 Sc. $\frac{1}{2}$. No. 4 Sc. $\frac{1}{1}$.

trench was crossed by other stones which looked like a secondary wall, with Roman sherds among them. These features cannot be understood until more ground is opened, and have been left *in situ:* detailed sections have been deposited with the finds.

T.H. 11. Turf and top-soil to 4 in.; dark brown stony soil to 12–15 in.; broken rock to 18–21 in.; dark brown stony soil to 28 in.; coin of *Valens* (No. 4) and a few Roman sherds; dark brown soil to bedrock at 36 in.

T.H. 12. Bedrock at 6 in.; above this few flint flakes and fragments of the lining are of iron-smelting bowl furnace.

T.H. 13. *See* Pits B and D, which occupied most of the hole and extensions.

T.H. 14. Bedrock at 12 in. in S.W. corner, sloping to 24 in. on east side (possibly natural slope); above this rather dark soil with very few Roman sherds, including New Forest ware, a flint scraper and a coin of *Gratian* (No. 6).

T.H. 16. *See* Pit C, which occupied most of hole and extensions.

T.H. 17. Bedrock at 10 in., clean brown soil with two Roman sherds only above this level.

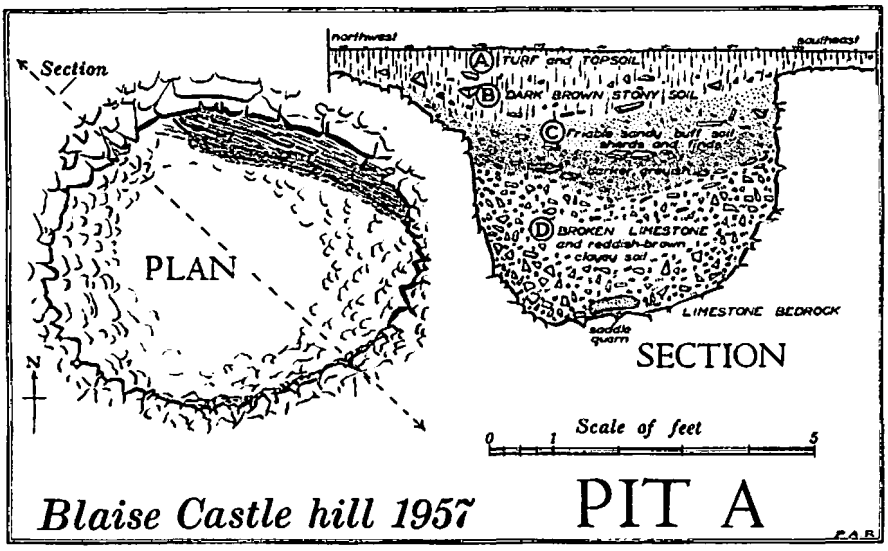

Fig. 35.

Pit A

(*Fig.* 35 and *Plate* 11, No. 3)

From the turf and top-soil (layer A) came Victorian and Roman sherds, tile and bone; below this the outlines of the pit could be seen, and it was cleared in two halves to give the section shown in the figure. From the upper stony filling (layer B) came two Roman sherds (8B and 8U), 16 I.A. sherds (8C–F and 8H–T); a quern rubber of Pennant sandstone, $6 \times 5 \times 2\frac{1}{2}$ in.; 2 dozen featureless flint flakes; a slingstone; a lump of iron slag; and part of a twist of bronze wire.

The third layer (C) was heavily charcoal-flecked and very prolific; it yielded the following finds, all of Iron Age date:

317 I.A. sherds of many different pots (*see Report on the Iron Age Pottery*, p. 160, and *Fig.* 36, Nos. 1 to 8) (marked with prefix A1, A2, A3 or A4*).

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* These and similar prefixes refer to identification marks on the material deposited in the Bristol City Museum.

Fragments of a bronze brooch (A1/29)—La Tène I (*Fig.* 37, No. 2, and pp. 159–160).

Complete bronze brooch (A4/2)—La Tène I (*Pl.* 11, No. 4 and *Fig.* 37, No. 1 and pp. 159–160).

3 weaving combs, one decorated (A1/30, A4/14 and A4/15) (*Pl.* 11, No. 1 and *Fig.* 34, Nos. 8–10).

Knife handle of antler (A1/31) (*Pl.* 11, No. 1 and *Fig.* 34, No. 6).

Bone point (? gnawed) (A1/5) (*Pl.* 11, No. 1 and *Fig.* 34, No. 11).

Fragments of an iron pin (A4/17). An iron lump (A4/21).

Quartzite stone spindle-whorl (A1/62); *see Fig.* 34, No. 3.

Quartzite stone disc, 1½ × ½ in., unfinished spindle whorl?

Quern rubber (A4/1), roughly circular, 5½ in. diameter, smooth convex surface (O.R.S. conglomerate).

Hammer-stone, double-sided (A4/3); 4 × 3 × 1½ in.; (Triassic pebble).

Hone (A4/16), 4 × 2 × ½ in., limestone pebble. Hone (A1/1), 3 × 1¾ × 1 in. 3 smooth facets (O.R.S.).

Pebble fragment (A1/85), 1 × 1 × ¼ in., limestone.

15 flint flakes, including a few poor scrapers.

3 slingstones (A1/2, A1/3, A1/64) average 3 oz. weight.

Sling bullet of baked clay (A1/61), 1¼ × 1 in., weight 2 oz.

3 fragments of burnt daub, one with wattle impression.

2 pieces of Pennant sandstone.

3–4 oz. of bronze droppings.

About 300 pieces of animal bone (*see* p. 170).

The bottom layer consisted almost entirely of broken limestone and yielded a few finds: an iron nail (A5/1), a large smooth pebble of quartzite (A5/4), 5 × 3 × 2½ in., another quern rubber (A5/3), 5½ × 3 × 1½ in., of O.R.S., and a saddle quern (A5/2). This lay face down on the base of the pit. It is 15¾ in. long, 3 in. thick, with a smooth concave upper surface, considerably worn; it is of O.R.S. conglomerate.

The pit (*Pl.* 11, No. 3) was almost vertical-sided, with roughly-cut sides, except on the N.E. side, where the bedding-plane was cut along its axis. It is 5 ft. 9 in. by 4 ft. 9 in., egg-shaped, with a maximum depth of 4 ft. 4 in. It may have been a storage pit, though there was no evidence of this, nor of any post-holes in the limestone around the edges. It seems probable that layer D was derived from the digging of another pit, after Pit A had gone out of use, as the material was unweathered. Layer C was probably domestic débris thrown in the depression left by the subsidence of layer D; there were a large number of sherds and they would appear to be, with the other finds, the accumulation of some long period, rather than the clearance of a single dump from a hut-site. The finds were all broken or worn, with the exception of the better of the two brooches, which must have been in perfect order when discarded or lost. They reflect well the material equipment of Iron Age B, including the usual spinning and weaving tools, and there was also evidence of bronze smelting (as in T.H. 10, p. 155). The pit is near Lovers' Leap, from the scree of which several of the pre-1957 finds were collected, including the weaving comb (*Fig.* 34, No. 12).

Pit B

Pit B was roughly pear-shaped with narrow end to the N.W.; it was 6 ft. by 4 ft. 6 in., with steeply sloping sides to an oval, roughly flat base 3 ft. 6 in. by 2 ft. 6 in. on the N.W. side; the side is cut down in a rough step 2 ft. 6 in. from turf. The whole filling of both step and pit was loose, disturbed and homogeneous, and although it contained several I.A. sherds, it must be regarded as suspect, either as having been previously excavated,* or as being of more recent origin; it may even be a hole dug to plant one of the trees in 1819 (Seyer, 1821). Around the pit was a considerable quantity of Roman and Iron Age material (sherds, slingstones, tile, mortar), but these also lay in rather disturbed soil. This "occupation level" was notably less in the surrounding test-holes, and a slight rise in the ground here suggests that it may be comparatively recent dump (cf. broken rock in T.H. 11).

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* A "pit dwelling" and a blown-down tree are shown roughly in this position in the Ackland MS. Notebook "Blaise Castle"; no mention is made of the "pit-dwelling" in the text.

Pit C

The area around this pit was almost devoid of finds, and bedrock lay at 18 in. to 2 ft. from the turf. The pit showed as an area of loose stone and dark soil, and this continued down to 18 in. Below this the filling was more compact, with much dark earth, charcoal, and much carbonized grain.* This continued as a homogeneous layer to within a few inches of the base of the pit, on which lay only a thin layer of shattered limestone.

Finds: 8 I.A. sherds (C 1–5, 10, and 12–13); 2 slingstones; 1 sheep mandible; fragments of burnt daub; and 11 flint flakes.

The pit was 4 ft. in diameter, roughly circular, steep-sided, roughly flat-based, with a maximum depth of 4 ft. 3 in. from the turf, or 2 ft. 9 in. from the surface of the bedrock. There can be little doubt that Pit C was a storage pit; there is good reason to think that the carbonized grain was *in situ* as there was no rock filling as in Pit A to suggest that the pit had gone out of use. The top stony filling evidently accumulated when the grainy material had subsided.

Pit D

Pit D was visible as an area of dark soil and stones in the northern extension of T.H. 13. The same rather disturbed dark soil as around Pit B extended over this area, with a coin of *Gratian* (No. 5) at 7 in. from the turf, and several I.A. and Roman sherds, but it cannot be certain that the layer was not also derived from elsewhere. The excavation of the pit was not completed; details of the work so far done are included with the finds.

Pit E

Pit E was not excavated (*see* T.H. 10b).

CONCLUSIONS

The present excavation has shown that only large-scale work can solve the problems of the Roman and medieval buildings. The Iron Age B occupation is clearly intensive on the plateau: the finding of no less than five pits in opening such a small area suggests that there may be very many more, and that systematic stripping of the whole area would be very productive; hut-plans should be recoverable, and one of these may lie in the area around holes 10, 10a and 10b, where the rough stone floor and dark soil appear to be of Iron Age date.

The discovery of early and late Roman coins and pottery, and medieval pottery and glazed ridge-crests, merely confirms the evidence of the extant material; it is clear now, however, that the buildings of both periods lie in the eastern part of the plateau, and probably in a relatively small area on the north side, east of the castle, except for possible early Roman structures such as that represented by a post-hole in T.H. 6. The burials are apparently concentrated around the 1918 building, as no human bones were found in holes 10, 10a or 10b. If the evidence of the coin in the grave is accepted, then one grave at least is Roman, and others found previously may be of similar date. Roman plaster, mortar, tile and stone rubble are concentrated round the

* Dr. A. J. Willis, of the Botany Department of the University of Bristol, has kindly examined this, and reports that it is "rather broken and of variable size, but most probably the grains are of Emmer (*Triticum dicoccum*) or of a bread wheat (*T. vulgare*)".

1918 building, but spreads as far as hole 10, where also is a possible Roman wall; but it is worth noting that more fragments of medieval roof-crest came from hole 10 than elsewhere, though it was also found near the 1918 building. It is remarkable that this spread of débris does not extend to the north edge of the hill at T.H. 17, which was virtually barren.

The castle has probably cut away part of the building complex, as suggested by the finds made in its construction; to the west the upper levels of T.H. 11 and 13 may be dump from its building; to the south of the Castle the white mortar could be medieval, or could be later, associated with the building of the Castle (1768), or a predecessor.

It is to be hoped that resources will one day be available for a large-scale excavation.

THE BRONZE BROOCHES

By

A. M. ApSimon

The first La Tène I brooch from Pit A (*Fig.* 36, No. 1, *Pl.* 11, No. 4) is a very fine example of Sir Cyril Fox's Type A. It is of golden bronze (after cleaning), the pin still works and the brooch appears almost unworn. The recurved foot carries a terminal disc with ring and central dot ornament, which meets the bow more than half-way up. The bow is high and arched

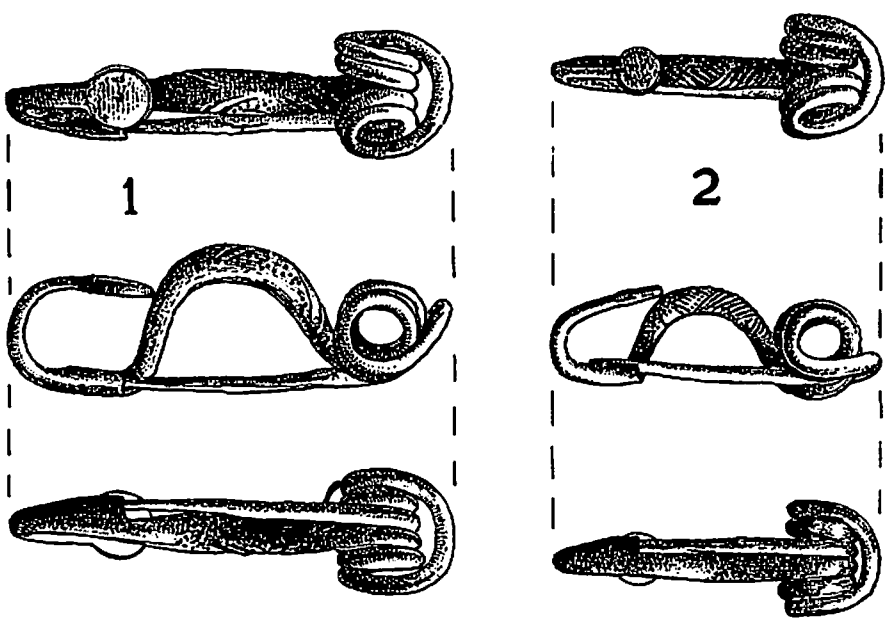

Fig. 36.—Bronze brooches from Blaise Castle Hill. Scale 1/1.

and swells out in its middle portion. It is decorated on sides and top with four groups of incised lines which come together near the mid-point. The interspaces are filled with irregularly disposed dots. The spring has four large coils and a D-shaped external chord which is free of the coils. There is no rivet in the spring opening. The brooch is 2·3 in. long, the bow ·75 in. high, and the width of the spring ·65 in.

The second La Tène I brooch from Pit A (*Fig.* 36, No. 2) is a fragmentary example of the same type. It is made of bronze which is rather corroded. As found the pin and the spring were separate, and on cleaning the foot was also found to be detached. The foot is not so much recurved and therefore meets the bow higher up than in the first specimen. The decoration of the disc is the same. The arched bow is decorated with alternating groups of incised lines. The spring has four large coils and the chord is pressed closely against them. This brooch is smaller than the last but its proportions are very similar Length 1·7 in., height of bow ·5 in., width of spring ·6 in.

These brooches are further discussed in Appendix A, pp. 164–168.

IRON AGE POTTERY

By

A. M. ApSimon

The Iron Age Pottery (*Fig.* 37 and *Pl.* 11, No. 2) from Blaise Castle belongs, with the exception of a single sherd, to the Glastonbury or South-Western Iron Age B culture, and there is no evidence for Iron Age A occupation. All the pottery is hand-made without the use of the potter's wheel. No attempt will be made here to produce a strict classification of the pot fabrics because the distinctions between them are not sharp. Most of the pottery has calcite or other stone grit tempering. Though quite coarse grits may be used, there is nothing quite so large as the coarsest used at the Meare Lake Village (about ¾ in.). The most common fabric is dark grey, almost black in colour, often with a reddish slip applied to the surface. With rare exceptions this is fired on the outside to a dark brown colour, though the inner surfaces are more often reddish, probably due to the pots having been fired mouth upwards. The finer burnished wares used for "saucepans" and decorated pots are generally dark grey or black, with a black outer surface either matt or having a high burnish. Though often coarse in appearance, the pottery is heavier and more thoroughly fired than local Iron Age A fabrics and is often exceedingly hard. The comparison made below with the "A" pottery from Kings Weston Down Camp (Rahtz, 1957) shows that there is a very limited overlap of fabrics. It would be difficult to suppose that the two sites, which are very near to each other, were occupied at the same time.

Class	Kings Weston Down	Blaise Castle
A.	Haematite ware.	None.
B.	Dark, heavy gritted, with buff slip.	None. (Some buff surfaced fabrics, but harder and smoother.)
C.	Coarse dark brown with reddish buff slip, heavily gritted.	Only two or three similar but with less grit and harder.
D.	Black stone gritted.	None. (There is black ware at Blaise but none corky.)
E.	Dark, corky, slightly soapy.	None.
F.	Coarse, dark, stone gritted, smooth buff brown slip.	About 5 per cent similar at Blaise.

With a single exception all the pots figured are of shapes likely to belong to the Glastonbury culture. The necked bowls (*Fig.* 37, Nos. 9 and 10) and bowls with double and single beaded rim are typical of this group. Most of the other forms are adequately described in the schedule. The single pedestal base is difficult to match locally, pedestal bases from the Lake Villages are generally higher and provided with a central omphalos. There is no doubt that the fabric of the present example is of Glastonbury "B" type, while the shape can be matched further afield at Hengistbury Head (Bushe-Fox, 1915, *Pl.* xix, C.10) and among Iron Age B pottery from Sussex.

The absence of internally grooved rims is probably fortuitous. Countersunk perforated lugs are represented by the fragment mentioned under No. 18 of the schedule.

Decorated wares form a relatively small proportion of the whole, and almost all are illustrated here. Typical Glastonbury ware, represented by *Fig.* 37, Nos. 9, 14 and 15, requires little comment. The techniques employed include both shallow grooves and narrow incised lines. The *motifs* used, particularly the non-curvilinear pattern of No. 9, are quite characteristic of the northern province of the Glastonbury culture, both as represented in the Lake Villages, and at sites such as Wookey Hole and Read's Cavern.

Figure 37, No. 1, also belongs to the same Iron Age B group. This type of decoration seems likely to be related to that of the "linear decorated" ware from Bredon Hill (Gloucestershire) and Sutton Walls (Hereford). At Bredon Hill this pottery, which Mrs. Hencken thought (Hencken, 1938) to be related to local Iron Age A tradition, was found with Bristol Channel "B" ("Duck" stamped ware) in a hill fort probably occupied from about 100 B.C. until its destruction, most probably by the Roman armies about A.D. 43–47.

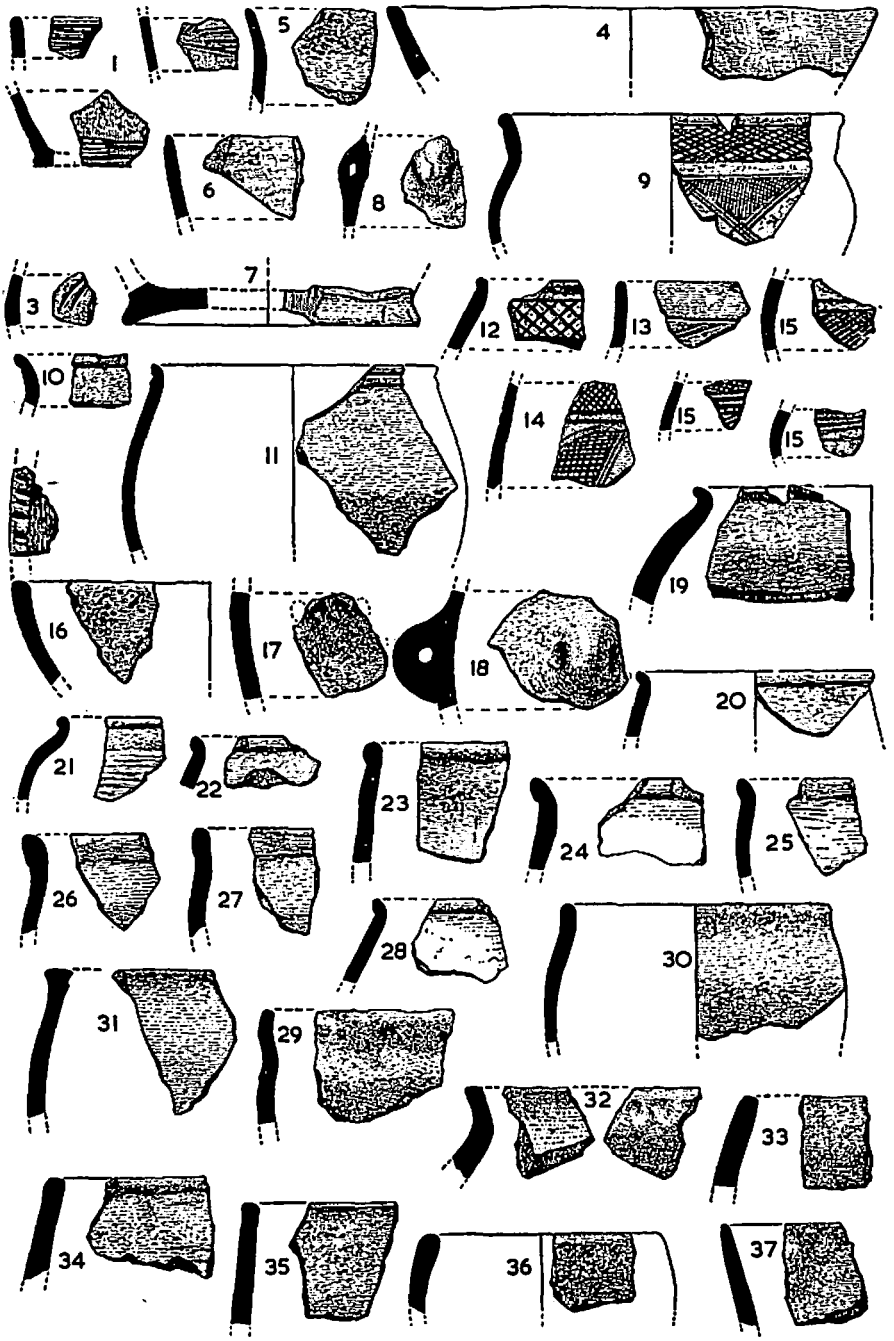

Fig. 37.—Iron Age Pottery from Blaise Castle Hill. Scale ½.

At Sutton Walls (Kenyon, 1953), this pottery looks definitely "B", and its appearance there (perhaps A.D. 50–75) may be due to refugees from the Cotswold region.

Mrs. Hencken's suggestion may still be right in that this linear decorated style may represent one of the Iron Age A contributions to "B" culture. (See also ApSimon, Rahtz and Harris, 1958, p. 101.) The finger-nail and dimple decorated ware (*Fig.* 37, Nos. 16, 17, 29) may also represent another "A" contribution.

The pottery from Pit A might be thought to belong to a relatively early stage of the occupation of the site, possibly within the 2nd century B.C., whereas the developed Glastonbury ware from the site is probably not older than 100 B.C.

The exceptional vessel mentioned above is a high shouldered bead rim jar (*Fig.* 37, No. 21). This type belongs to a class of Iron Age C pottery known to occur on several sites in the North Somerset–Bristol area of which the distribution extends at least as far as Oxfordshire. This group probably belongs to the period A.D. 45–75. It may be significant that finds of Roman material indicate a probable Romano-British settlement at Blaise Castle in the second half of the 1st century A.D.

SCHEDULE

Pit A (*Fig.* 37, Nos. 1–8)

1. Shs.* burnished grey ware (A1, A1/59, A4), shallow grooved decoration.
2. Rim sh.; dark grey burnished ware. (A1/24). (Not illustrated.)
3. Sh.; dark brown ware, grey surfaces, shallow grooved decoration. (A1/34)
4. Rim sh., large bowl or dish; coarse, dark grey ware, form occurs at Glastonbury and Meare. (A4)
5. Rim sh., dark grey ware. (A1/75)
6. Rim sh., black ware. (A5)
7. Low pedestal base; grey to red ware, surfaces smooth but not burnished; fabric quite coarse with large stone grits. (A1/66)
8. Sh. with small perforated lug; grey ware with calcite grits; inner surface reddish brown, outside black. (A1/79)

Test-hole 10. (*Fig.* 37, No. 9)

9. (Also *Pl.* 11, No. 2.) Necked bowl of Glastonbury ware; dark brown, small white grits, surfaces black.

Pre-1957

10. Rim sh., of similar bowl; dark grey ware, highly burnished surface.
11. Bowl dark grey ware, "matt" black outer surface; double beading of the rim is not uncommon on Glastonbury ware. (U.B.S.S. Coll. K3.7/1) (Badger's hole, North rampart.) Cf. *Meare*, P127A, *Pl.* IV, p. 39.
12. Rim sh. of beaded rim bowl; black burnished ware, inner surface light brown. (Also *Pl.* 11, No. 2.)
13. Rim sh., brown ware, small stone grits, surfaces brown, smooth but not burnished. (Also *Pl.* 11, No. 2.)

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*Sh. Shs. = Sherd or Sherds.

14. Sh. decorated Glastonbury ware; hard grey fabric, inside brown, outer surface black. (Also *Pl.* 11, No. 2.) Cf. *Meare*, P188, *Pl.* XII, p. 49, and *Glastonbury*, P216, *Pl.* LXXXII, p. 538.
15. Shs. decorated Glastonbury ware. (Also *Pl.* 11) (One from U.B.S.S. Coll.)
16. Rim sh. bowl or dish; coarse grey ware with white stone grits, outer surface brown, inner surface red. This fabric is common among the coarse pottery from Pit A. Cf. *Meare*, P235, *Pl.* XIV.
17. Sh.; coarse brown, calcite gritted ware, decorated with row of finger-tip/nail impressions. This fabric is not far removed from some of the Iron Age "A" pottery from Kings Weston Down.
18. Perforated lug; hard, grey ware, reddish grey surfaces. This plain type of lug is quite common in Glastonbury ware groups (cf. *Meare*, P7, *Pl.* III, p. 23). Counter-sunk lugs are represented at Blaise by a broken example among the pre-1957 finds.
19. Bead-rimmed bowl; hard, dark brown ware, fine gravelly grit backing. This kind of fabric is not uncommon among the Meare Lake Village pottery examined.
20. Rim sh. bead-rimmed bowl; grey ware, dark red-brown surfaces; outer surface burnished.
21. Bead rimmed bowl with high shoulder; grey ware with dark grey surfaces; outer surface shows horizontal parings. This feature is very uncommon on Glastonbury ware, being entirely absent from about 2 cwt. of Meare pottery recently examined. It is however quite common on the late Iron Age pottery from the Chew Valley, among which the high shouldered bead-rim jar is strongly represented. This group includes some at least of the Iron Age pottery from Bury Hill Camp, Gloucestershire (Davies and Phillips, 1927, *Fig.* 9, 51 and 67).
22. Rim sh. bead-rimmed bowl; in black ware, small angular calcite grits.
23. Rim sh. bead-rim jar; grey ware, outside black, inside buff-brown.
24. Bead rim sh.; hard, grey ware, reddish brown surfaces. This fabric is often used for decorated vessels at Meare Lake Village.
25. Rim sh. with a slight bead; black ware, smooth outside.
26. Thickened rim sh.; brown ware with burnished exterior.
27. Similar rim sh.; grey ware, black burnished outside.
28. Rim sh. with squared bead; dark brown ware, smooth black outside.
29. Jar of dark grey ware, with slight shoulder; row of shallow circular depressions below the rim. Cf. *Glastonbury*, P267, *Pl.* LXXXV, p. 546.
30. Jar of black ware, with upright rim. This is a common cooking-pot type of the Glastonbury culture and there may be a complete gradation between this and the preceding type.
31. Rim of dark grey ware, with black burnished exterior. Flat topped rims such as this and the following examples are common in Glastonbury ware groups.
32. Rim of shouldered jar in coarse grey ware; roughly circular depressions below rim.
33, 34, 35. Simple flattened rims.
36, 37. Simple rounded rims. 37 has slight depressions below rim.

APPENDIX A

Notes on the Hammersmith type of La Tène I Brooch

By

A. M. ApSimon

The two La Tène I bronze brooches found in Pit A in 1957 have been described above (p. 159). The list of similar brooches given below is based on that made by Sir Cyril Fox (Fox 1927), with such additions as are known to me. I have not had the opportunity to search museums or literature for further examples, and this list does not pretend to be exhaustive.

Both the Blaise brooches belong to Fox's Phase A, the examples listed below are of Phases A and B indifferently. This group is characterised by

brooches "having the spring and foot of about the same length and the bow an almost semicircular arch between them". The spring has four large diameter coils with an external chord. The foot returns squarely to meet the bow about two-thirds of the way up, and bears a circular disc, which in two cases is hollowed out for a coral inlay (7, 13), and in eight is either plain or decorated with incised ring-and-dot ornament (1, 2, 3, 4, 8, 10, 11, 14). The central dot is in some cases (e.g. 2) large enough to suggest that it originally held a rivet securing an inlay or setting.

This group of brooches was first recognized by Fox (1927, p. 85), who listed six examples and suggested, in effect, that their distribution in England was to be explained with reference to the NNE. to SSW. corridor of the Jurassic Way (*see* Grimes, 1951), while the Hammersmith brooch (7) suggested to him that:—

> "the Thames may have been the portal of entry, but the evidence is insufficient to permit of any definite conclusions."—(Fox 1927, p. 85).

G. C. Dunning in discussing the brooches from Lydney (in Wheeler 1932, p. 70) included brooches of this type (2, 7, 8, 9, 10, 12, 13 of present list) among imports to Britain from the Marnian La Tène culture of North-east France. The proportions of these brooches are remarkably alike, and with the exception of the Woodeaton brooch (10), which is only about two-thirds as big as the others, they are all of much the same size. Though Mr. Dunning has kindly informed me that he doubts whether the "Marnian import" idea can now be sustained, it does seem possible that the Rhine–Thames waterway may explain the *occurrence* of these brooches in Britain, for there is nothing to link them with any particular group of Iron Age settlers and their shape is readily paralleled among La Tène material from Switzerland, although a knobbed foot as on the Icklingham brooch (15) seems more common (e.g., brooches from Zürich and Muttenz (Bale), *Viollier* (1908), *Figs.* 208, 214). The disc foot does however occur, notably on brooches from an Early La Tène grave in Austria (Hallein Dürrnberg (Salzburg), Grave 12; *Pittioni* (1954), Abb. 462, 6, 11). There seems to be adequate evidence that the differentiation of these two brooch types is apparent in the North Alpine region.

Finally the curvilinear decoration on a La Tène Ib-c brooch from the frequently cited grave 49 in the Münsingen (Canton Bern) cemetery (Wiedmer-Stern 1908, Taf. 5, No. 11) could well be the source from which the S-spiral decoration of the bow of the Box brooch (13) was derived. A further stage leads to the decoration of the first Hunsbury brooch (8).

The relatively smaller Woodeaton brooch (10) is probably later than these, for the decoration of its bow seems to be a disintegrated version of a running S-spiral, related to the double running S-spirals of the second Hunsbury brooch (9).

The Blaise brooches might be regarded as providing a fixed end point to our series. In both the arch of the bow is more "open" than on "earlier" brooches. Both were in good condition when lost or thrown away, perhaps on an enforced change of fashion; the type does not occur among the many La Tène brooches found at Meare and Glastonbury; and there is no reason to believe that they were in any sense antiques at the time. Quite possibly they were originally worn by the late Iron Age A dwellers in Kings Weston Down Camp, having been made perhaps not long before 100 B.C.

In support of an even later dating it may be noted that the punched dot background to the decoration of the first brooch (the incised lines were perhaps meant to intersect, it seems possible that the pattern should be read that way), while admittedly occurring on a brooch from Woodeaton, which Jacobsthal (Hawkes and Jacobsthal 1945, *Pl.* xi, 6–8) assigned to the earliest phase of Celtic art in Britain in the 3rd century B.C., is to be found quite commonly on La Tène metalwork in South-west England. Examples noted (by no means exhaustively) include a terret* from the Polden Hills hoard (Harford 1803, *Pl.* 19, 2), the Birdlip brooch (Smith 1909), a bronze shield mount (?) from St. Mawgan in Pyder (Murray Threipland 1957) and on bronze bowl handles from Launceston (Smith 1926) and Ham Hill (Taunton Mus., unpublished). Many of these finds belong to the 1st century A.D. and none is likely to be older than the middle of the 1st century B.C.

In this light the resemblance between the hatched pattern on the bow of the second Blaise brooch, and the "basket" pattern on the foot of a La Tène II brooch from the Meare Lake Village (Bulleid and Gray, 1953, *Pl.* 14, EE14) may be seen as more than superficial.

The Cowlam brooch (14) remains unique among the brooches of the Arras culture. Its shape is very like those of the Blaise brooches, and its occurrence in Yorkshire could well be explained by trade northward along the Jurassic Way. The majority of the graves of the Arras culture probably belong to the 1st century B.C.

Despite the fact that the ridiculously high bow of the Sutton Walls brooch (5) can be exactly paralleled among La Tène I brooches from the Côte-d'Or, the site from which it comes does not seem to have been occupied before the 1st century B.C. and the brooch may well be little older than that.

The Maiden Castle brooch (1) may be either as Wheeler suggested (Wheeler, 1943, pp. 252–254), a treasured heirloom of the first Iron Age A settlers in Dorset, or an instance of the rare penetration of Iron Age A Wessex by outside influences. This example as well as that from Woodcuts (Ia) serve to emphasize by their very isolation the intrusive character of this type of brooch in the Wessex–Sussex area.

* I am indebted to E. M. Jope Esq. for a photograph of this terret showing this to me (to be published in *Celtic Art in the British Isles*).

Judged by the criteria used in this note the Worth brooch (6) with its perfunctory decoration is unlikely to be an early member of the group—it is in fact the smallest—and might as well be linked with the Belgic occupation of the site as with the 3rd century B.C. Marnian occupation.

Of the brooches here discussed, one (1a) is from a site possibly not occupied before the 1st century A.D., three (3, 4, 5) may belong to the 1st century B.C. and two more (6, 14) seem unlikely to be older. Of the other brooches only that from Maiden Castle (1) has any direct associations, although the Merthyr Mawr, Hunsbury and Woodeaton sites have all produced Iron Age A pottery. Despite the late associations of several of the brooches of this type there is no evidence that would permit us to evade the conclusion suggested by the continental evidence that the prototypes of the group of early-looking brooches must have been brought to Britain not later than the period of transition from La Tène I to II round about 250 B.C. This would leave the same hiatus between the dating of the early and late groups as in the dating of examples of Celtic art in Britain; most probably the later brooches and much Iron Age B material have been dated too late.

The Icklingham brooch must be excluded from this present type by reason of its knobbed foot and slightly longer bow with dot decoration, which place it at the head of Mrs. Fowler's Wessex type Ia brooches (Fowler 1953). It is nevertheless a close collateral relative of the Hammersmith brooch type.

A. La Tène I brooches of "Hammersmith" type from Britain.
(Only bronze brooches have been listed)

1. *Maiden Castle, Dorset.*	Wheeler (1943), *Fig.* 81, 1: with "A" pottery in derived filling of storage pit.
1a. *Woodcuts, Handley, Dorset.*	Pitt Rivers (1887), *Pl.* 14, 2, p. 49. Unstratified find in farmstead site with Iron Age B(?) and C occupation.
2. *Merthyr Mawr, Glamorgan.*	Fox (1929): Sand-hill find; area produced "A2" and S.W. "B" pottery.
3. *Blaise Castle Camp, Gloucestershire.*	Present paper, *Fig.* 36, 1: Storage pit with Glastonbury pottery.
4. *Blaise Castle Camp, Gloucestershire.*	*Ibid.*, *Fig.* 36, 2: With No. 3.
5. *Sutton Walls, Hereford.*	Kenyon (1953), p. 59, *Fig.* 23, 1: Quarry find in hill fort with "Bristol Channel B" occupation.
6. *Worth, Kent.*	Hawkes (1940): With "Marnian" and Belgic pottery under Romano-British temple.
7. *Hammersmith, (R. Thames at) Middlesex.*	Fox (1927), No. 51: *Type.*
8. *Hunsbury, Northants.*	*Ibid.*, No. 32: Casual find, hill fort with Iron Age A and B occupation.
9. *Hunsbury, Northants.*	*Ibid.*, No. 33: As 8.
10. *Woodeaton, Oxford.*	*Ibid.*, No. 22: Stray find, site produces early "A" pottery (Goodchild and Kirk, 1955).
11. *North-west Suffolk* (probably).	Rainbird Clarke (1940), *Fig.* 6, 4.
12. *Syon Reach (Kew), (Thames at), Surrey.*	Smith(?) (1931).
13. *Box (near), Wiltshire.*	Fox (1927), No. 10: Stray find.

14. *Cowlam, barrow* 50, *Yorkshire.* Fox (1927), No. 34: Female burial of Arras culture, with bronze bracelet and glass beads.

B. Addendum. Brooch of related long-bowed and knob-footed type.
Icklingham, Suffolk. Rainbird Clarke (1940) *Fig.* 6, 7.

APPENDIX B

THE ROMAN COINS FROM THE 1957 EXCAVATIONS AT BLAISE CASTLE

By

GEORGE C. BOON, B.A., F.S.A.

1. DOMITIAN, *As*, very much worn (*c.* 81–96). T.H. 9, 9 in.

2. CONSTANTINE I, VRBS-ROMA, Arles, $\frac{\text{P}}{\text{PCONst}}$ (*c.* 335–7); sl. worn. TH. 10, grave soil.

3. VALENS, SECVRITAS-REIPVBLICAE, Arles, $\frac{\text{I}}{\text{PCON}}$ (*Roman Imperial Coinage*, this mint nos. 17b/19a, *c.* 367–78); worn. T.H. 10b, 6 in.

4. VALENS, GLORIARO-MANORVM, Rome, $\frac{\text{I}}{\text{SMØRT}}$ (*RIC*, 23b/27a, *c.* 367–78); sl. worn. T.H. 11, 22 in.

5–6. GRATIAN, GLORIANO-VISAECVLI, Arles, $\frac{\text{OF}\vert\text{II}}{\text{TCON}}$, CON* (*RIC* 15, *c.* 367–75); worn. 5. Soil over Pit D, 7 in. 6. T.H. 15, 12 in.

7. 4th century, *Fel temp reparatio* (fallen horseman) type; imitation, 11 mm., small flan for dies; worn. T.H. 9, base of grave below skull.

APPENDIX C

AN ANGLO-SAXON BRONZE STRAP-END FROM BLAISE CASTLE HILL

By

L. V. GRINSELL, F.S.A.

According to the records in the City Museum, Bristol, the bronze strap-end from Blaise Castle Hill was found in 1819, and was eventually acquired by John E. Pritchard, F.S.A., of Bristol, who gave it to the Bristol City Museum in 1931. The register number is F1938.

Concerning this strap-end, Mr. D. M. Wilson (British Museum Department of British and Medieval Antiquities) writes as follows:

> "The strap-end is of a type common in the Late Saxon period. The central date for this type of object is the ninth century and the example is quite typical of that period. The sub-triangular field between the two rivet-holes usually contains a formalized leaf ornament, and the finial is usually a formalized animal head in low relief seen from above. Strap-ends are of uncommon occurrence in the Bristol area. One was found at Stratton near Cirencester, Gloucestershire (B.M. *Anglo-Saxon Guide*, p. 107, *Fig.* 131, 3) and another, of silver, came from Lansdown near Bath, Somerset, and is in private possession (*A.N.L.*, Vol. 5, p. 252).

Otherwise you have to go to Wiltshire or Cornwall for examples in the south-west of England."

To this account might be added a bronze example from Kingsholm near Gloucester found in 1909 and presented to the Bristol City Museum, by whom it was passed to the Gloucester City Museum in 1954. Mr. H. J. Case informs me that an example from Souldern, Oxon., is on loan to the Ashmolean Museum, and examples from Burford and Woodeaton (both Oxon.) are in their permanent collection. It is perhaps unnecessary to add that these strap-ends occur in various other parts of Britain.

APPENDIX D.

THE HUMAN BONES FROM THE 1957 EXCAVATION

By
H. TAYLOR, M.B., Ch.B.

This collection seems to have been derived from the grave of a child about six years of age, in ground which had been used repeatedly for burial purposes. Parts of at least five other individuals provide about two-thirds of the bones.

The child's skeleton is reasonably complete. The teeth (all free from caries) are but slightly abraded, in contrast with local Roman and prehistoric specimens, so a more recent date may be suspected. The skull is broken and slightly distorted, but clearly brachycephalic (cephalic index about 83) owing to the great width between the parietal eminences (about 143 mm.); the frontal region is relatively narrow (88 mm.). The presence of an epiphysis for either end of some of the metacarpals and metatarsals and of supernumerary lower milk incisors are anomalies which are worthy of record.

Most of the other bones are incomplete. They include parts of a tall, big-boned, muscular adult not less than 21 years of age; another scarcely less strongly built between 18 and 20, about 5 ft. 10⅛ in. in height as estimated from the radius—probably both these were male; an adult of average size of whom only two or three weathered fragments are present; a small, slender-boned, much less muscular person, probably female and at least 25 (perhaps over 35 if a cranial fragment be hers); a child of about 2 years represented by two weathered fragments. A few bones of domestic animals are present.

"Rheumatic" (periostitic) changes are visible on the vertebral ends of two large ribs. Adolescent rickets may have caused the flatness and other abnormalities of a pelvis which can scarcely be other than female despite its very large acetabula, deep narrow rounded sciatic notches and other usually reliable male features; the sacrum is tilted markedly backwards, its ventral surface is almost plane.

A list of the bones has been deposited with the finds in the Bristol City Museum.

APPENDIX E

The Animal Bones from Pit A

By

P. F. Bird, B.Sc.

The species represented are as follows:

Ovis/Capra (Sheep or Goat). 39 bones, of which 22 are certainly not remains of *Cervidæ* (Deer), while 17 are unlikely to be from *Cervidæ*. There is no evidence for the presence of Deer at this site, so the 39 bones are taken as *Ovis/Capra* in the remarks below. None of the remains were suitable for distinguishing *Ovis* from *Capra*. Seven half-mandibles of *Ovis/Capra* are present, representing 1 individual more than 2 years old, 3 of 6 months, 2 under 4 months, and 1 much under 4 months. The other bones also proved the presence of both immature and mature individuals of *Ovis/Capra*. Three lumbar vertebræ had been cut sagittally.

Sus scrofa L. (Pig). Eleven bones, of which 3 represent immature individuals and 1 a mature one. Two cervical vertebræ had been cut sagittally.

Bos taurus longifrons (Ox, Celtic race). Seven bones. A further 3 bones of *Bos* perhaps belong to this species and race.

Equus sp. (Horse or Ass). One canine.

The general picture is that of a rubbish-heap composed of the bones of animals eaten by people in whose diet sheep or goats were of prime importance, while pigs (wild or domesticated) and domesticated oxen were quite important. The sheep or goats were often eaten at 6 months or less. The cut vertebræ show that the carcasses of sheep or goats and of pigs were halved lengthways as in modern butchery.

Considerable help in the identification of the bones was given by Dr. R. J. G. Savage.

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