

From the *Transactions* of the
Bristol and Gloucestershire Archaeological Society

**The Excavation of an Iron Age Hillfort on Bathampton Down,
Somerset**

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1967, Vol. 86, 42-59

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By G. J. WAINWRIGHT

THE SETTING

BATHAMPTON DOWN forms part of the southern outliers of the Cotswolds. The Down lies to the east of Bath in the suburbs of that city and consists of a broad, flat topped hill south of the River Avon in the elbow of a meander. From this point the Cotswolds extend north-east to the uplands of Northamptonshire 60 miles away.

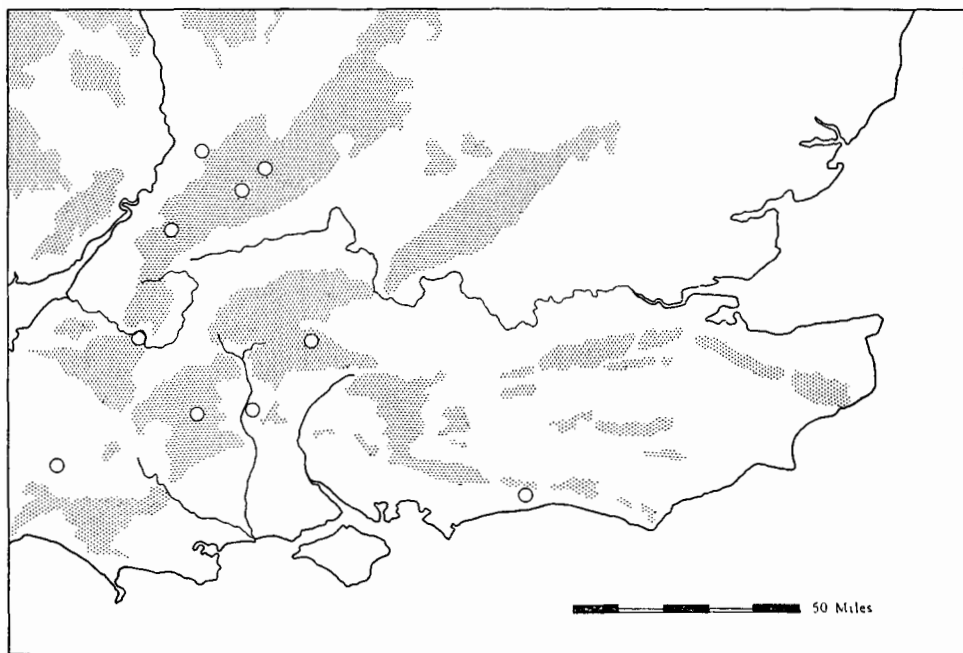
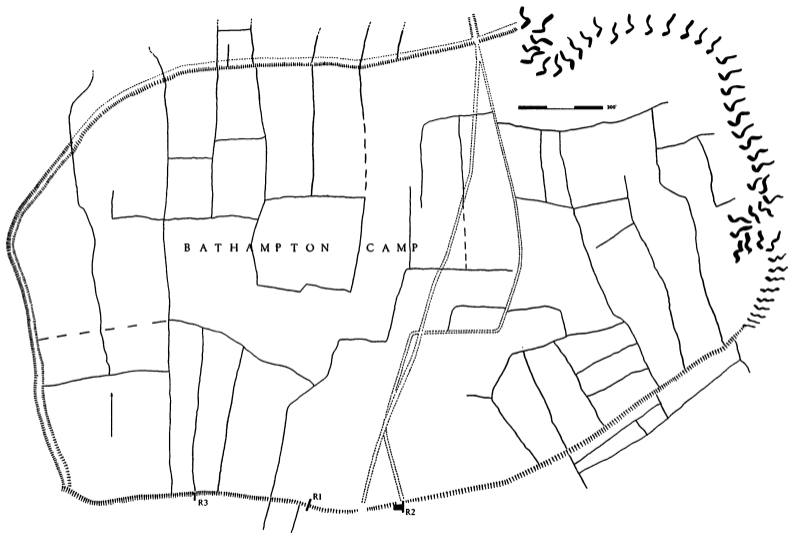


Fig. 1. Distribution of Early Iron Age univallate hill-forts exceeding 60 acres

The Ordnance Survey Map of South Britain in the Iron Age depicts the southern terminal of the Jurassic Way as resting on Bathampton Down and one can assume frequent travel along this route in pre-historic times (Grimes, 1951). The bedrock of the hill is a coarse, brown, flaggy limestone which overlies deposits of Bath Stone.



The top and flanks of the hill are seamed with the banks of an extensive field system and by the rampart of a large univallate fort, the east sector of which has been removed by quarrying for Bath stone. This single rampart now encloses an area of some 74 acres and the fort was probably at least 80 acres in extent prior to the quarrying (ST 775649).

The summit of the flat topped hill does not exceed 675 feet O.D. and the 600 feet contour falls well outside the perimeter of the fort rampart. From the fort the ground slopes away gradually to the south, west and north, the approaches being somewhat steeper to the east. The hilltop therefore offers no outstanding defensible feature.

The interior of the camp and the areas to the north and west of it are now occupied by an 18-hole golf course. Despite the landscaping entailed in the construction of a golf course, the low banks and ditches of an extensive field system are still visible both inside and outside the rampart. The eastern sector of the fort has been quarried away in order to obtain Bath stone. The rapid expansion of Bath in the 18th century led to extensive quarrying for this building stone and these quarries were further developed in the early 19th century to provide stone for the aqueducts and bridges of the Kennet and Avon canal. Were it not for this exploitation it seems probable that the fort would be some 80 acres in extent.

The area outside the southern rampart is divided between playing fields to the east and agricultural land to the west. These activities have largely obliterated the field system, save in a copse of trees which borders the rampart along part of its length.

The defences are best seen on the ground in their western sector where the external ditch is still visible. Elsewhere this ditch has been obliterated by ploughing. No obvious entrance can be located. A possible southern entrance (FIG. 2) was examined and found to be a later feature. The only other possible original entrance occurs in the northern sector but it was not possible to check this by excavation. It is possible that the original entrance gap has been quarried away.

In 1964 a proposal to build a college in the fields to the south of the fort entailed a rescue excavation, as the college precincts were to impinge on the rampart at several points. This excavation was conducted for four weeks in April 1965 under the direction of the author, on behalf of the Ministry of Public Building and Works. The areas examined were confined to those likely to be affected by the college building. Therefore, three trenches were excavated, designed to examine the nature of the defences, to obtain dating evidence for them and to examine their relationship to the field system. Owing to lack

of time and difficulties of access, only the R1 cutting was taken right through the rampart. In cutting R2 a pre-rampart occupation phase was established and the trench expanded to examine the structural remains. The excavations here were inhibited by a field wall running along the crest of the rampart and by the golf course to the north. Trench R3 was sited to confirm or refute the existence of an earlier entrance and the trench was expanded in an attempt to obtain dating evidence from the ditch. No excavation was undertaken in the interior.

PREVIOUS ARCHAEOLOGICAL HISTORY

The earthworks on Bathampton Down have received a great deal of attention, including a little excavation, from local antiquaries. In 1904 a trench was dug through the west rampart near its southern corner by T. S. Bushe and G. J. Grey, in anticipation of a visit by the Bath and District Branch of the Somerset Archaeological and Natural History Society. This visit was never made because of heavy rain but records appeared in the Proceedings of that Society (Winwood, 1904, A, B, C). Winwood published a schematic section of the trench which revealed a ditch 5 feet deep and part of the berm. However, the trench was not long enough to locate the front revetment of the rampart. Some scraps of pottery were obtained from the topsoil.

In the 19th century the Rev. H. D. Skrine excavated the courtyard of a masonry structure in an area to the south-east of the camp. The excavation produced pottery of unknown date, part of a quern and bones (Skrine, 1895). Chance finds of Roman pottery, coins and a pig of lead have also been made from time to time (Grey, 1904; Winwood, 1912).

The first serious study of the site appeared in 1928 by O. G. S. Crawford and A. Keiller in *Wessex from the Air* (pp. 144-147, FIG. 34, PLATE 23), where an air photograph of part of the site was published. The authors suggested that the rampart of the fort was later than the field system as it appeared to cut across the latter. However, in 1965 along the southern circuit of the rampart, field banks could be seen to overlie the buried ditch of the fort, therefore post-dating it.

In the City Museum Bristol and the County Museum at Taunton Castle, there are small but interesting collections of pottery from the Down. The smaller group is in Bristol and consists of five body sherds and a single rim sherd, all from the same pot. These sherds were presented to the Castle Museum, Norwich, by M. Mason in 1828 and are described as having been excavated in 1825 from a site on Hampton Down. They were presented to the Bristol Museum in 1958. The ware is thick, with a soapy texture and contains fine grits. The fabric

interior is grey/black in colour with a buff/orange exterior. The rim is that of an open bowl with simple everted lip, the top of which is undulating (FIG. 5, 6).

More details are available concerning the larger group of sherds from the Down. These were presented to the Castle Museum, Taunton, in 1954 by J. R. T. Colley and are described as coming from the area ST 766647 and from the garden of 'Nutley' on Bathampton Down. In a letter from the donor the stratigraphy of the find is given as 2 feet of humus resting on 4 inches of clay which in turn seals the pottery layer which was 35 inches thick. The find spot according to the N.G.R. lies outside and to the south-west of the camp and the pottery may therefore not be associated with it.

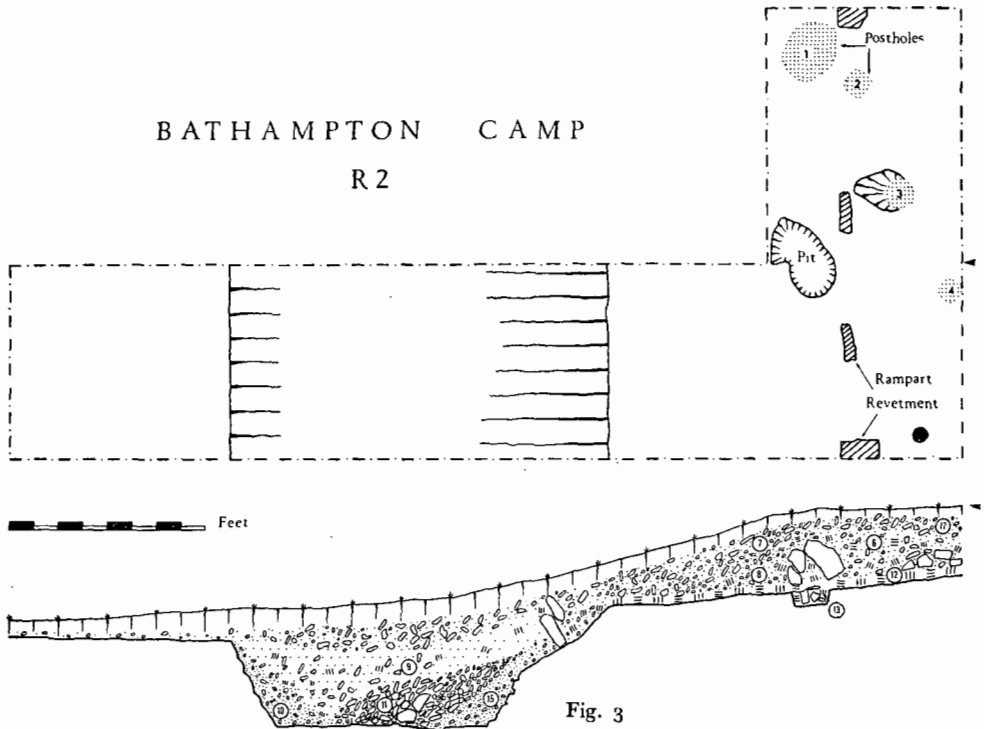
The pottery series consists of about 40 sherds in which the following groups can be distinguished.

1. Carinated bowls of All Cannings Cross type:—
 - A. Good thin fabric, well burnished and of variable colour from buff to black. The flared rim is plain but the body is decorated with six horizontal grooves. The base is missing (FIG. 5, 10).
 - B. Of thicker, coarser, red fabric, with sooty exterior and undecorated.
2. A rim fragment of a large biconical jar of thick buff fabric containing a few large grits. The rim is flat and undecorated with a 'wiped' exterior save for one random shallow groove on the outer face which does not appear to form part of a coherent decorative pattern (FIG. 5, 13).
3. A coarse, flat rimmed vessel of very loose, buff, sandy fabric. The rim is flat with a hollow neck. The one sherd representing this vessel is decorated on the under side of the rim with a triangular incision (FIG. 5, 7).
4. A well fired bowl of thin, hard fabric, buff/red in colour and with an upright concave neck. The square sectioned rim is decorated with lightly applied finger-tip ornament and the neck by four horizontal grooves (FIG. 5, 8).
5. Five decorated sherds which cannot be assigned to any of the pots described above. They all represent shoulder sherds from situlate jars and three probably came from the same pot.
 - A. Good hard, buff fabric decorated on the carination by a row of finger-tip ornament (FIG. 5, 12).
 - B. Three sherds of buff to red sandy fabric, decorated on the carination by a row of finger-nail impressions (FIG. 5, 9).
 - C. A small sherd of hard fabric with red exterior, decorated on the carination by a row of finger-nail incisions (FIG. 5, 11).

A discussion of the significance of these groups occurs at the end of this report. It should be made clear, however, that there is no certainty of their being connected with the occupation of the camp.

THE PRE-RAMPART OCCUPATION

A buried soil, in varying degrees of preservation, was located under the stones of the rampart in the three trenches (layer 12). This buried soil was best preserved in R2 where it extended in front of the rampart onto the berm. It consisted of a brown, stoneless, clayey soil and produced fragmentary pot-sherds, bone and charcoal, which had been trodden into its surface. The occupation refuse extended under the rampart where it was associated with four postholes and an

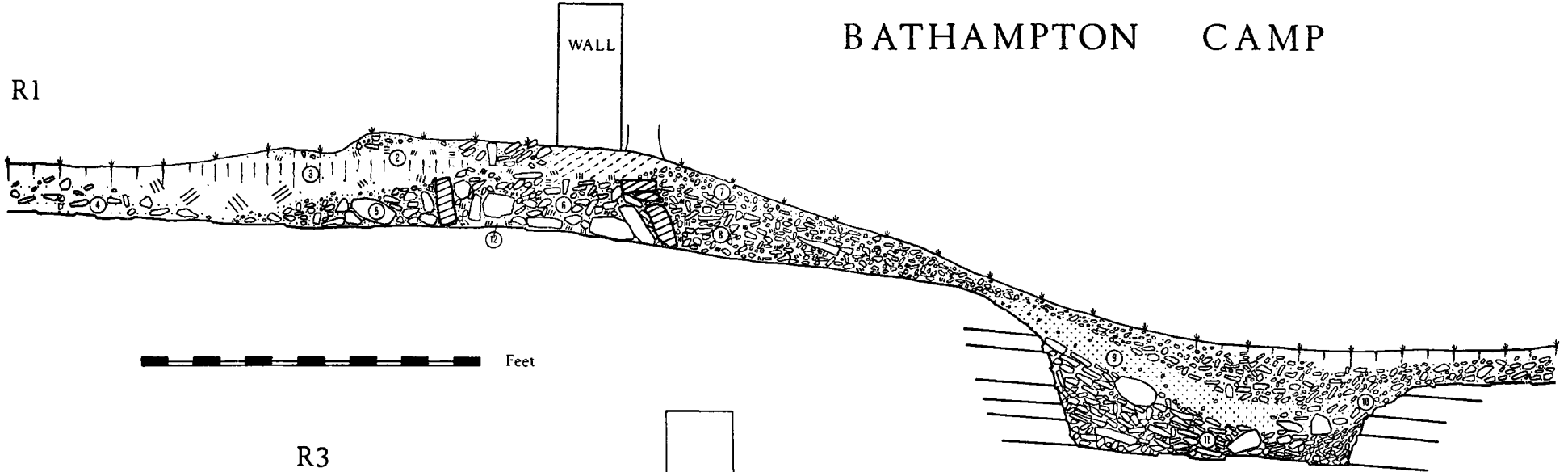


irregular shallow pit which clearly represented a pre-Rampart phase of occupation. The possibility was considered of the postholes representing an internal upright timber revetment, contemporary with the stone rampart. However, the plan of the postholes suggests the edge of a structure on a different alignment to the rampart, and in no case did the rampart structure suggest an internal timber revetment.

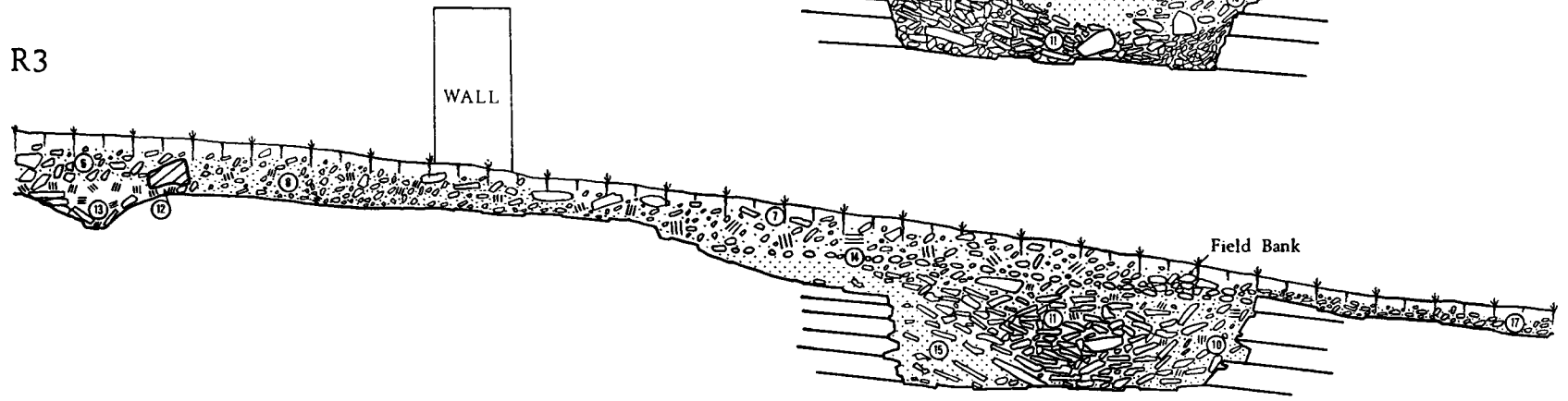
The four postholes were irregularly spaced in a straight line, running diagonally to the lie of the rampart. It is difficult to interpret the total structure, but the postholes appear to represent part of one side of a structure which could be of rectangular or square plan (FIG. 3).

BATHAMPTON CAMP

R1



R3



facing p. 47

Fig. 4

Posthole 1, on account of its superior size and depth, is a probable corner support, the remainder of the structure presumably lying under the field wall and the golf course to the north. It was these features, together with lack of time, which prevented the total exploration of the structure.

The buried soil was disturbed over the postholes, indicating that they had held upright timbers. The fill of the postholes was uniform and consisted of a brown clay with small packing stones, fragments of bone and flecks of charcoal (layer 13).

Posthole 1. A good posthole cut into the bed-rock, oval in plan 2 feet 6 inches by 2 feet and 20 inches deep, with straight vertical sides and a flat base. It contained brown clay, packing stones, bone, charcoal and a small fragment of pottery similar to that obtained from the surface of 12.

Posthole 2. A shallow socket some 3 inches deep and 11 inches square in plan. Filled with brown clay and small stones with a little charcoal.

Posthole 3. An irregular oval in plan 2 feet 6 inches by 1 foot 8 inches and 11 inches deep at its north end which is straight sided. It is approached from the south by a shallow scoop. Filled with brown clay and small stones with a little charcoal.

Posthole 4. A circular posthole 1 foot in diameter and 6 inches deep with straight sides filled with brown clay and a little charcoal.

Scoop. To the south of the posthole alignment occurred an irregular shallow scoop some 6 inches deep. It contained stones, brown clay, some bone and charcoal and a hazel-nut shell.

These features recorded in R2 demarcate a structure which is earlier than the rampart and which is associated with a spread of occupation refuse.

Further evidence for this pre-rampart phase was recorded from the other trenches. In R1 no structures were found but bone and charcoal came from a poorly preserved soil under the rampart as well as from the rock face of the berm. The latter may, however, be contemporary with the rampart.

The rampart had been much disturbed in the R3 cutting but traces of the buried soil were preserved together with an irregular shallow scoop (FIG. 4), similar to that recorded in R2. The filling was also similar and consisted of brown clay, small stones and flecks of charcoal (layer 13).

THE PRE-RAMPART POTTERY

Some 63 sherds were found, all very small and very friable. They were found partially on the old land surface on the berm (layer 12) and partially under the rampart on the same layer. One small sherd, however, was found at the bottom of posthole 1.

On the basis of fabric the sherds fall into three groups:—

1. Thick-walled black ware with a buff to red exterior which contains large grits of the local limestone as a filler. In some cases these grits have weathered out, giving a vesiculated appearance. These comprise 65 per cent of the sherd total.
2. A small group of thinner-walled sherds, fine gritted, with traces of a buff slip on both faces of the black fabric. This ware is most resistant to weathering and does not present the same vesiculated appearance as the larger group.

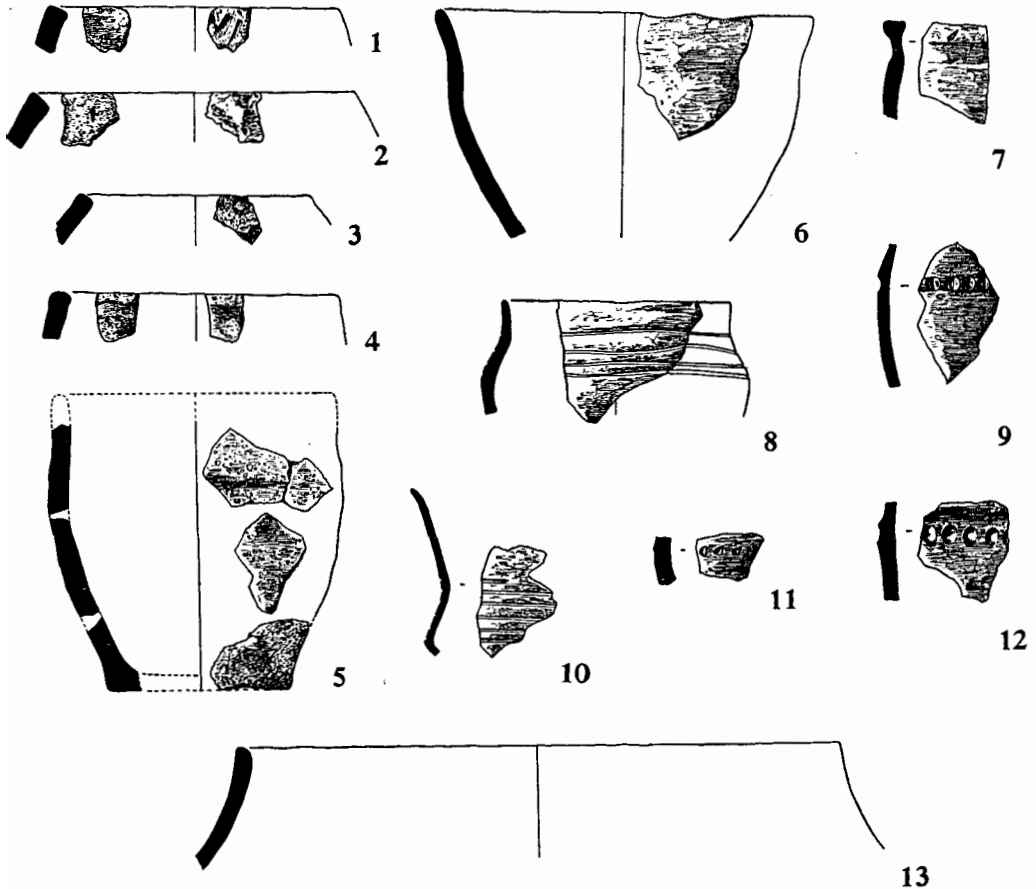


Fig. 5. Bathampton pottery (Scale 1:4)

3. Three rim sherds from the same pot with walls of medium thickness, small grits and of a uniform black colour. Owing to the small size of the sherds, the forms and angles of the rims are difficult to determine. Seven rim sherds were found which came from three separate pots.

FIG. 5, 1. Two rim sherds of fabric 2, of simple form with a flat, slightly thickened lip. There are signs of oblique incised decoration below the lip on the external face. This pot is probably of upright rim type.

FIG. 5, 2. Three sherds of fabric 3 with a thickened, flat topped, internally bevelled rim. The shape of the pot is unknown.

FIG. 5, 3. A simple upright rim sherd of fabric 2 with flat, slightly thickened rim.

FIG. 5, 4. No rim sherds were found which could be assigned to fabric 1. However, a base sherd and a few larger than normal body fragments suggest a pot with a flat base, with walls rising to a slight shoulder and an upright neck.

In ploughsoil overlying the ruins of the stone rampart (layer 17) were found two dozen sherds of indeterminate Romano-British origin. This group, however, included a rim, two base fragments, and eight body sherds. These were identical with the pre-rampart material and had presumably been derived from this level to the north of the rampart by agricultural operations. The rim is identical to those of fabric 2 illustrated in FIG. 5, 1. The base sherds are of fabric 1, one of them being decorated with finger-nail impressions around the foot.

The sherds are too fragmentary and the rim forms too generalised to be able to arrive at any firm conclusion as to their cultural context. Their possible affiliations are discussed below.

THE HILL-FORT

Along the southern perimeter of the fort where the three rampart sections were dug, no ditch is apparent on the ground. However, along the west perimeter the ditch is indicated quite clearly. The three rampart cuttings were made at intervals of 400 feet and 500 feet (FIG. 2) and revealed similar structural details in each case.

The purpose of R₃ was to determine whether an original entrance occurred in the defences at this point. Such an entrance was suggested by the occurrence of an apparent gap in the rampart which was aligned with a sunken track running across the site from south to north. In fact, excavation showed the ditch of the fort as running straight across this gap and the gateway is therefore not original. Moreover, a blocking was found in the field-wall at this point, indicating the presence of a relatively modern gate now in disuse. It is with this gateway that the sunken track leading across the interior of the site is presumably to be associated.

Trench R₃ was expanded from the normal 8-foot width to examine as much ditch deposit as possible (FIG. 2). Unfortunately no ceramic finds were made in the primary deposits.

The most complete rampart section was preserved in R₁ which was sited in the middle of a copse. The construction was that of

rampart—berm—ditch and this was repeated in R2 and R3. In R1 the rampart was 9 feet 6 inches wide at the base and preserved to a height of 2 feet 6 inches—a slightly battered front face reduced the width at this height to 8 feet 6 inches. The rear revetment consisted of heavy slabs of limestone, set on edge and inclined slightly outwards from the body of the rampart. The average width of the stones was 18 inches. The front revetment consisted of a double row of similar slabs 6–9 inches thick, inclined inwards at the top to give a slightly battered face to the rampart. The revetment slabs were not set into the bedrock but held in place by their own weight and stabilised by smaller stones in the interstices. Immediately inside the revetments were set large stones but the interior or core of the rampart (layer 6) was composed of much smaller material mixed with a good deal of clay.

It was, therefore, a narrow structure, built with care. Its original height is unknown but it could never have been very high owing to its lack of width and the batter of its outer face. There was no sign of a timber revetment, either in the rampart structure or in the sub-soil beneath it. The crest of the rampart was admittedly disturbed by the building of the modern field wall (layer 2) and some evidence may have been lost.

The berm, 11–12 feet wide, sloped down slightly towards the inner lip of the ditch owing to the lie of the ground. Some bone was found lying directly on the rock surface of the berm close to the rampart.

The ditch was steep-sided and flat-bottomed with its shape governed largely by the nature of the bedrock. It was 18 feet wide from lip to lip, with its inner face on the upper side of the natural slope angled at 45° for a height of 2 feet, before plunging at an almost vertical angle to make a total depth of 6 feet from the level of the berm. The rock surface at the outer edge of the ditch lies some 3 feet lower, but the profile is similar with a total depth of 3 feet for the ditch floor from the natural rock surface. The floor of the ditch was 10 feet 6 inches wide, slightly inclined from north to south owing to the strike of the limestone.

The filling of the ditch is simple and consists chiefly of a collapse of limestone flags from the rampart and the sides of the ditch (layer 11). There is no primary silt as such. Overlying this are the secondary silts (layers 7, 9 and 10).

A quantity of bone and charcoal but no pottery was found on the floor of the ditch or in layer 11. However, at a depth of 13 inches from the ground surface in the centre of the ditch were found three sherds of pottery which can be assigned to the late 13th or early 14th

century A.D.¹ It also proved possible to identify the soil which covered the rampart at the time of the construction of the modern field wall (layer 3). A thin veneer of this soil survived over the whole of the Iron Age rampart. It produced a few fragments of bone and a few abraded sherds of pottery of Romano-British fabric. Bone was also recovered from the spill of the rampart to the rear (layer 5).

There is, therefore, no direct evidence for the dating of the defences in the R₁ cutting. Nor was any evidence forthcoming from the R₂ and R₃ cuttings. From layer 17 overlying the rampart in R₂ came sherds of indeterminate Romano-British type, along with the pre-rampart pottery described above. Owing to extensive ploughing in this field the pottery may well be derived from elsewhere. Bone and charcoal were recorded from the ditch bottoms in R₂ and R₃ but no pottery.

Structurally the cuttings added no further information. The berm in R₃ was unusually broad—15 feet to the inner edge of the ditch. This ditch was 21 feet wide if one includes a shallow angled ledge leading into its inner face. However, 10 feet west of the drawn section the ledge was absent and the inner face of the ditch descended vertically to give an average width of 13 feet.

The ditch filling of R₂ and R₃ differed from R₁ in that in each case there was a primary silt of fine material (layer 15) resting against the inner face. Possibly the collapse of the rampart took place more quickly in the area of R₁. A large number of bones, including the complete skull of an ox, were found at the bottom of the ditch in the R₃ cutting.

LATER DEVELOPMENTS

In their discussion of the earthworks on Bathampton Down, Crawford and Keiller made the point that the rampart of the fort appeared to be later than the field system as it cut through field banks in several places. Excavations along the southern perimeter of the fort demonstrated the existence of a ditch outside the rampart and also that field banks overlay the ditch at several points (FIG. 2).

The R₃ cutting showed that one field bank at least post-dated the fort by an appreciable margin. Over the fill of the ditch had been laid a cobbled surface (layer 14) of rounded river pebbles. The date of this cobbled track is unknown but a few sherds of late 18th century pottery were found on its surface and it may have led to the quarry. It is clear, however, that this track was only laid long after the fort had been abandoned.

¹ I am indebted to my colleague Mr J. K. Knight for his comments on these sherds.

On top of this cobbled surface was built a low field bank (FIG. 4) running parallel to the Iron Age rampart. This feature cannot be observed from the surface but it clearly post-dates the cobbled surface.

It would seem, therefore, that the field system to the south of the fort post-dates the rampart by a considerable margin. Nevertheless, this conclusion need not hold true for the system inside the fort and to the north of it.

One reason for the siting of R₃ was to determine whether or not the apparent gap in the rampart denoted an original entrance. It was proved that this gap was not original but represented a more recent gateway. The date of the use of this gap could not be established. It had, however, been blocked by a length of stone walling at a time which was also unknown. Nevertheless, the important fact is that the gateway post-dates the fort and that therefore the sunken trackway associated with it also post-dates the fort.

The fact that this track in several instances appears to be an integral part of the field system in the interior of the fort, is sufficient evidence to suggest that in part the former is later than the latter.

Outside the north rampart the situation is less than clear. A rectangular field system is visible on the northern slopes of the hill but its relationship with the rampart is not clearly defined. However, one is left with the impression that certain of the field banks do overlie the ditch of the fort and are therefore later than it. That certain of the field banks outside the rampart are aligned with others in the interior of the fort, seems to emphasise the contemporaneity of the two systems and not that the rampart cuts across a pre-existing single system.

The northern terminal of the hollow way referred to above coincides with a break in the rampart. Only excavation can determine whether or not this break is original and this relates to the question of the date of this hollow way, in its northern sector at least. On the basis of the available evidence from the southern terminal of the track one must assume that it post-dates the fort.

ECONOMY

Animal bones were obtained from the pre-rampart level as well as from the ditch bottoms. These were identified by Mr P. F. Bird whose detailed report is appended. There are clearly too few bones available for general conclusions to be drawn.

Only 13 identifiable bones were obtained from the occupation level under the rampart in R₂. They include remains of cow, pig and

one tooth of sheep/goat/deer. The bones are too few to lend themselves to detailed analyses.

From the ditch bottoms the bones were in good condition. Remains of the Celtic Ox predominate and other bones indicate the presence of sheep or goat, pig and possibly deer. The horse is represented by a single tooth.

DISCUSSION

1. *The Pre-rampart Occupation Phase*

It is not unusual to find evidence of undefended settlements, of Iron Age date or earlier, underlying ramparts of Iron Age hill-forts. Examples are not hard to find and include Chalbury in Dorset (Whitley, 1943), Salmonsbury Camp, Glos. (Dunning, 1931) and Dinorben in North Wales (Gardner and Savory, 1964).

It is difficult to suggest parallels for the pre-rampart pottery at Bathampton because it is so nondescript. However, good parallels occur in the pre-rampart phase at Chalbury (Whitley, 1943, FIG. 3). The Chalbury material also includes the rim of a biconical urn decorated with wavy line ornament, very similar to the urn from Bathampton, together with sherds ornamented with cordons and applied finger-tip ornament. The excavator suggests a late Bronze Age date for the Chalbury group but none of it would be out of place in a very early Iron Age context. The associations of the Bathampton biconical urn are unknown but it may be that the pre-rampart phase at this site also belongs to a very early Iron Age. In the Bristol Museum are a few sherds from Stantonbury hill-fort which closely parallel fabrics 1 and 2 from Bathampton. Unfortunately, the sherds are chance finds.

2. *The Hill-Fort*

Although no pottery was recorded in direct association with the hill-fort there are three factors concerning the site which merit discussion:—

- A. The pottery from the Bristol and Taunton Museums.
- B. The distinctive character of the defences.
- C. The size of the hill-fort.

A. With the exception of the carinated bowls, the Iron Age pottery from Bathampton can be paralleled on many hill-forts in Somerset. Solisbury Hill, Ham Hill and Cadbury Camp have all produced similar pottery—none of it in a stratified context. Further south, finger-printed sherds from Chalbury (Whitley, 1943) closely parallel those from Bathampton. Such finger-printing on the carination

is generally regarded as an early feature on Iron Age pottery as at Scarborough (Smith, 1927) and Micklemore Hill, Norfolk (Clark and Fell, 1953). Similar pottery was found at Maiden Castle (Wheeler, 1943, FIG. 56, 1-3), Bindon Hill (Wheeler, 1953) and Poundbury (Richardson, 1940), all in Dorset.

Furrowed carinated bowls were not recorded from any of these sites but comparative specimens to those from Bathampton, as well as for the finger-printed wares have been found at Pagans Hill, Glos. (ApSimon, Rahtz and Harris, 1958). These furrowed bowls are of high quality and like the finger-printed jars are probably early in the local ceramic sequence.

North of the Cotswolds there is a little evidence of a similar ceramic tradition. Pottery from the Marcher hill-forts is notoriously poor, but there is a sherd of a furrowed, haematite coated, carinated bowl from Old Oswestry (Varley, 1949, p. 56), which may represent an extension of this early Iron Age group in the Cotswolds.

North-east of the Cotswolds along the Jurassic Way the pottery is equally poor and closely resembles that from the Welsh Marches. There are some furrowed bowls around the head-waters of the Thames, but these may well have arrived via that waterway. In the limestone region one exception is Chastleton Camp—a univallate fort which has produced situlate jars with finger-tip dimpling on top of the rim and spaced finger-tip ornament on the shoulder (Leeds, 1931).

B. It is known that the early Iron Age peoples of southern England built univallate hill-forts, defended by 'box' ramparts of earth and rubble which were revetted back and front by rows of vertical posts behind a berm and ditch. The 'box' type of rampart has its analogies on the continent, more specifically at Preist in the Rhineland which possessed an inner and outer revetment of vertical posts tied together with transverse timbers (Cotton, 1954). In southern England, a classic example of this type of structure occurs at Hollingbury, Sussex—a univallate fort of 9 acres, which has the inner and outer timber revetments 6 feet apart and separated by a 10-foot berm from a flat bottomed ditch 7 feet deep (Curwen, 1954, p. 242).

Such defences are common in Dorset at sites which have ceramic affiliations with Bathampton. At Maiden Castle and Bindon Hill, the early Iron Age 'box' ramparts were 12 feet wide but an important anomaly occurs at Chalbury Hill-fort, two miles from Weymouth harbour (Whitley 1943). This fort is univallate, encloses some 10 acres and is sited on limestone. The rampart is supported by stone revetments 20 feet apart instead of the usual timber uprights. The ceramic evidence indicates that Chalbury is as early as Bindon and

Maiden Castle I and the excavations also demonstrate that the character of the 'box' rampart technique is governed by the geology of the site and that factors of environment outweigh those of tradition in certain cases.

As at Chalbury, so Bathampton Camp appears to be an example of a univallate early Iron Age fort, with the timber revetments of the 'box' rampart translated into stone. The width of the rampart, 9-10 feet, accords well with the narrow ramparts of Hollingbury, Maiden Castle I and Bindon. Little Solisbury Hill camp, which faces Bathampton on the north side of the Avon, also has a stone revetted rampart (Dowdon, 1957).

North-east of Bathampton in the Cotswolds little is known of internal rampart structures, until one moves along the Jurassic Way into the limestone region of Oxfordshire. In this area there are a group of small univallate forts which have produced crude Iron Age pottery. Of these, Lyneham Camp has a stone revetted box rampart faced by a narrow berm and ditch (Bayne, 1957). Chastleton has produced pottery similar to that from Bathampton and has a rampart of limestone blocks. If one follows the Jurassic Way into Northamptonshire the sequence of hill-forts ends at Hunsbury with its timber revetted box rampart. It is clear that along this route there are close parallels for Bathampton.

To the north of Bathampton in the Welsh Marches there are a series of forts with timber revetted box ramparts—Caynham Camp, Shropshire (Gelling, 1964), Titterstone Clee, Shropshire (Thomas, 1960, p. 174), Castle Ditches, Eddisbury, Cheshire (Varley and Jackson, 1940, p. 64), Breedon-on-the-Hill, Leics. (Wacher, 1964) up to Almondbury in the West Riding of Yorkshire (Varley, 1948). Of these, only the last named began with a stone revetted box rampart. The timber uprights of Titterstone Clee and Eddisbury were replaced by stone revetments and those at Breedon-on-the-Hill by turf. In this area bordering Wales and England one seems to have a strong tradition of building in timber—strong enough to outweigh the natural local advantages of building in stone. This provides a strong contrast to Chalbury, Bathampton and Solisbury Hill. A similar adherence to the timber building tradition was observed by Mr Alcock in the Llyn Peninsula, Caernarvonshire (Alcock, 1960). This use of timber in an environment more suited to the use of stone was employed by Mr Alcock as evidence for foreign infiltrators and the same argument can be applied to the Welsh Marches. This emphasises the unusual character of Chalbury, Bathampton and Solisbury, but does not alter the fact that occasionally tradition was discarded.

C. Originally, the single rampart at Bathampton appears to have encompassed some 80 acres. This is unusually large for a hill-fort. Very few univallate forts are larger than 60 acres and none of these have produced evidence for internal buildings. The general tendency for hill-fort development on the same site is from smaller to larger and from univallate to multivallate, as at Yarnbury Castle and Maiden Castle. Therefore the large size of these univallate hill-forts and the lack of buildings inside them, raises the question as to whether they served a particular purpose. Finally, very little dating evidence has ever been obtained from this group of hill-forts (FIG. 1).

It is unwise to attribute large univallate forts wholly to the early Iron Age as a few are much later. These have been isolated and are represented by Oldbury, Kent of 123 acres (Ward-Perkins, 1944) and Casterly Camp, Wilts. of 68 acres (Cunnington, 1913). The extensive earthworks at Stanwick, Yorkshire are a special case.

The only two early Iron Age univallate hill-forts in excess of 60 acres in south-east England are Cissbury, Sussex, of 60 acres (Curwen, 1954, p. 242), and Walbury, Berkshire, of 87 acres (Thomas, 1960, p. 43). In Wiltshire, Stockton (V.C.H. Wiltshire, Vol. 1, p. 269), and Ogbury Camp (Crawford and Keiller, 1928, pp. 150-152) are of 60 acres and 62 acres respectively. It should perhaps be noted here that both Cissbury and Ogbury are covered with Celtic fields of similar type to those on Bathampton Down. These fields are considered to be later than the forts. At Ogbury, crude early Iron Age sherds were obtained from rabbit scrapes.

In Somerset, Ham Hill encloses an area of 210 acres but it is uncertain how much of this was enclosed in the early Iron Age (Seaby, 1950). There is a concentration of forts of this type in the Cotswolds—Bathampton is the most southerly of the group. The others, all in Gloucestershire, are Nottingham Hill, of 120 acres (Burrow, 1919, p. 171), Norbury Camp, Northleach, of 80 acres, Icombe Hill (The Drum), of 100 acres and Minchinhampton (The Bulwarks), which encloses a spur of some 600 acres. Of these, Minchinhampton has a 16-foot wide stone revetted rampart, separated by a berm from a flat bottomed ditch. Early Iron Age pottery was found underneath the rampart, but only bones in the primary ditch silting. There is therefore no conclusive evidence for the date of the earthwork (see Clifford, 1937 for a different interpretation).

To the north-east in Oxfordshire is Dyke Hills—a univallate fort enclosing 114 acres.

A few sites of this category may have escaped notice but they probably do not affect the main grouping. One must not ignore the

IRON AGE HILLFORT ON BATHAMPTON DOWN, SOMERSET

group of univallate forts in north Oxfordshire—Lyneham, Chastleton and Tadmarton, which although of small size make little use of natural features in defence and have produced no indication of interior buildings.

The huge size of the forts of this group and the lack of internal buildings would seem to suggest their use as stock enclosures. The pottery and the techniques of rampart construction both suggest an early Iron Age date. Their distribution, together with that of the finger-printed situlate jars and the furrowed carinated bowls, suggests a movement from the Cotswolds along the Jurassic Way, perhaps ultimately into Northamptonshire. There are no closely comparable sites in the Welsh Marches, though the ceramic evidence and the distribution of the timbered 'box' rampart indicates settlement in this area. This is perhaps not surprising, for the Jurassic Way would be the more frequented route as Professor Grimes pointed out in 1951, and the movement of stock would have formed part of such traffic.

REPORT ON THE BONES FROM BATHAMPTON CAMP, SOMERSET

By P. F. BIRD

Locality	<i>Bos</i>	<i>Sus</i>	<i>Ovis/Capra</i> <i>Cervid</i>	<i>Equus</i>	<i>Cervid</i>
R II. Layer No. 12	4	3	1	—	—
R I. Primary silt of ditch	13	—	10	1	?3
R I. Layer No. 5	12	1	1	?1	?1
R III. Primary silt of ditch	40	4	27	—	—
Totals	69	7	39	?2	?4

General Comments:—

Bos (ox) is the predominant species. The individuals were small, indicating *Bos taurus longifrons*. *Ovis* (sheep) and/or *Capra* (goat) and/or a *Cervid* (deer) together with *Sus* (pig) are also present. *Equus* (horse) is represented by a single tooth. One or more calves are represented in the primary silt of R III. There is no evidence of the methods used for slaughtering or butchering. There are not enough specimens to show evidence of seasonal slaughtering.¹

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¹ The totals quoted above are of single bones, not individuals.

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Thanks are due to the Bath Corporation and the Bath Golf Club for permission to excavate and to Robert Matthew, Johnson-Marshall and Partners, architects on the site, for their co-operation. Mr M. Owen gave assistance during the excavations and Dr I. F. Smith and Mr B. Cunliffe assisted the author with information whilst writing the report. Thanks are also due to the curators of the City Museum, Bristol and the County Museum, Taunton, for permission to examine the material in their care. The drawings of the pottery were made by Miss C. Ketteridge.

(Published with the aid of a subvention from the Ministry of Public Building and Works.—Ed.)