

HALLSTATT POTTERY FROM WINCHESTER

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On the 15th July, 1921, I was informed that fragments of pottery and bones had been met with in digging a trench to lay the gas and water pipes from the main to house No. 67, Battery Hill, on the Stanmore Housing Site, Winchester. On arrival at the trench I found that the bottom, which was 4ft. from the surface, had been flooded with water from the main. Examining

PLATE I.

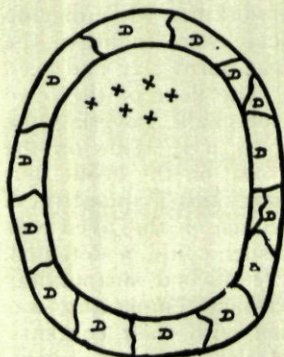


FIG. 1. PLAN OF OVEN.
X FRAGMENTS OF COOKING
POTS. D. DAUB.
SCALE: 1" = 1'.

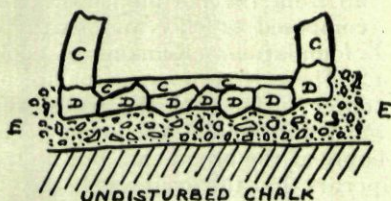


FIG. 2. SECTION OF OVEN.
C. CLAY. D. BLOCKS OF DAUB.
E. CHALK RUBBLE, EARTH AND
CHARCOAL.

SCALE: 1" = 1'.

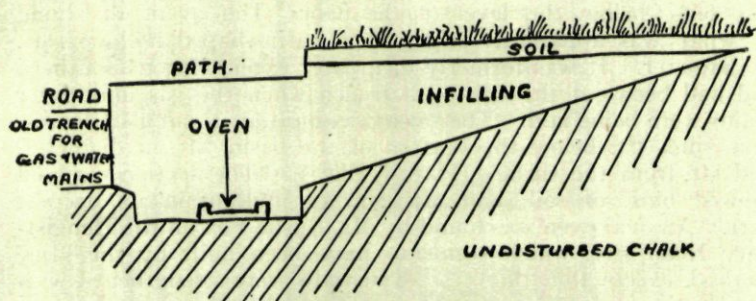


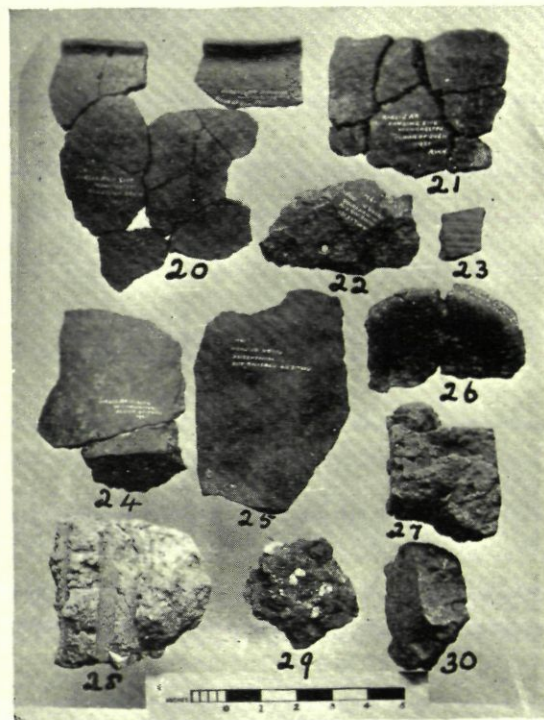
FIG. 3. SECTION OF THE PIT.
SCALE $\frac{1}{4}$ " = 1'.

the sides of the trench, I discovered pieces of pottery, and, on digging into the sides, found sherds of Hallstatt type. I excavated the sides of the trench until the undisturbed chalk was reached, and then proceeded with the bottom, and uncovered the floor and portions of the side of a small oval oven, 2ft. 7in. long and 2ft. broad (Plate I, Fig. 1). The foundation of the oven was

made of broken blocks of daub, some showing wattle marks (Plate II, No. 28). The interstices between the blocks were filled with clay, burnt bright red by the heat (Plate II, No. 29). The walls were of puddled clay, 3ins. thick. The highest portion of the wall still standing was 6ins. above the floor. Both the inner and outer surfaces of the walls were smooth and burnt into brick, the inner being concave and the outer convex (Plate II, Nos. 27 and 30). The whole appearance suggested that the oven was covered with a dome-like roof, which is supported by the curve of the inner and outer surfaces of the walls (Plate I, Fig. 2). The dome was evidently destroyed by the workmen while digging the trench, for pieces of the red marly clay were found in the upthrow, and the foreman informed me that burnt clay had been dug up from the bottom of the trench. The floor of the oven was composed of clay and small pieces of chalk, covering the daub foundation. Remains of cooking pots were lying on the floor. There were no signs of fire or charcoal on the inside, but the outer surfaces of the walls were sooty, and a quantity of charcoal surrounded the oven. The opening of the oven was probably at the broad end, but no trace of such could be detected. It appears that the oven was heated by a fire of wood, surrounding and covering it until such time as the necessary temperature was obtained, and the cooking vessels inserted with their contents, and cooked after the manner of some of the African primitive races of to-day. An attempt was made to remove the floor whole, but it was found impossible, owing to its sodden and friable condition. No flints were used in the building of the oven, and no "pot-boilers" were seen in or near it. The undisturbed chalk was 6ins. below the level of the floor. The oven was lying in what was apparently originally a basin-shaped hollow, 19ft. in diameter. It was formerly of greater extent, for its southern end had been cut through by a trench when the gas and water mains were being laid. The oven was built in a circular depression, sunk 1ft. below the bottom of the basin, 5ft. in diameter, and 5ft. from the surface (Plate I, Fig. 3). The section exposed showed 6ins. of soil, and 4ft. 6in. of infilling in its deepest part. An oval oven was found by Mr. Bushe Fox on the Hengistbury Head site, which seems to have been built by the same method, except that there the oven walls were strengthened with pottery instead of daub. The date of the Hengistbury oven must be later by some centuries than the Winchester oven, for the pottery found on the former site dates from "the latter part of the last century B.C."¹ Mrs. Cunningham, in a paper read before the Wiltshire Archæological Association, the 27th July, 1921, and reported in the *Wiltshire Gazette*, July 28th, 1921, says: "That two of these [pits] were almost certainly not storage pits, but fireplaces or ovens. The bottom of one of these latter was

¹ *Excavations at Hengistbury Head*, p. 45.

PLATE II.



covered with a layer of charcoal, the other with puddled clay, hardened by fire."

THE POTTERY.

Many of the sherds found were of the same type as the All Cannings Cross pottery.

Portion of the rim and shoulder of a small hand-made pot of coarse black clay, containing particles of crushed flint, some small and a few very large; exterior surface a rough brown. The rim is straight, the neck slightly concave, with a feebly convex shoulder, bearing a girth band of finger-tip impressions closely following one another (Plate II, No. 1).

Portion of the rim and shoulder of a hand-made pot of black paste with flint particles, faced on the exterior with red hæmatite; and on the interior with brown hæmatite, the difference in colour probably being due to the closer contact to the fire of the outside surface in the process of baking. The rim is straight, and immediately below it, on the slightly convex shoulder, are girth bands of finger-tip impressions, separated by longer intervals than in No. 1 pot. The surfaces, both inside and out, are much striated by some material used in finishing the shape of the vessel (Plate II, No. 2). A sherd of sandy paste with mica, and a few flint particles. The exterior is brown and the interior black. On the outside surface are two finger-tip impressions, evidently forming part of a girth band of this ornamentation (Plate II, No. 3). Nos. 1 to 3 belong to vessels of the same type as Figs. 9 to 11, in Mrs. M. E. Cunningham's paper, on "A Village Site of the Hallstatt Period in Wiltshire."¹

A piece of the neck and shoulder of a pot. The ware contains black grit, flint particles, and large quartz grains. The exterior surface is brown and the interior black. The shoulder is incised with deep and wide girth grooves. Below the lowest groove are two incised lines, drawn obliquely one to the other (Plate II, No. 4).

A small piece of the shoulder of a pot faced with red hæmatite, showing a series of parallel girth-flutings. The ware is made of a brown clay mixed with sand, and fine flint particles (Plate II, No. 5).

A fragment of the rim of a similar pot, showing a characteristic black patch (Plate II, No. 6).

A fragment of the rim of a cordoned urn of a tan-coloured paste and surface. It is similar in section to Fig. 26, Plate XVII, *Excavations at Hengistbury Head*. The paste is hard, contains no sand, and is almost devoid of flint particles. The accurate form and finish of this specimen are remarkable for a hand-made vessel (Plate II, No. 7).

¹ *The Antiquaries' Journal*, vol. ii, January, 1922, No. 1, p. 16.

Parts of a small hand-made bowl of black paste with crushed flint. One fragment is a portion of the rim, and the other of the base. The rim is well moulded and out-turned, the shoulder high and strongly out-bulged. The bowl evidently tapered quickly to the base, which, in the small area preserved, is flat (Plate II, Nos. 8 and 9). Fragment of the base of a pot faced with red hæmatite (Plate II, No. 10).

Portion of rim of a large hand-made pot with out-turned, rounded rim, the paste of clay with fine flint particles. It is coated with a leather-coloured slip. An incised chevron-pattern of four parallel lines, bordered above and below by girth grooves, occurs on the shoulder (Plate II, No. 11); cf. Plate IV, Fig. 3, *Antiquaries' Journal*, Vol. II, January, 1922; and Plate X, Fig. 8, *Excavations at Hengistbury Head*, 1911-12.

Fragments of pots faced with red hæmatite (Plate II, Nos. 12 and 13).

Sherds, Nos. 4, 5, 6, 10, 12, and 13, are characteristic All Cannings Cross types, and belong to bowls of the form seen in Fig. 2, Plate III *op. cit.* They are also similar to those found at Hengistbury Head by Mr. J. P. Bushe Fox.¹

Parts of a hand-made pot well finished. The paste is tan colour, and is composed of clay, sand, and finely-powdered flint. The rim is well moulded and out-turned; from this the body springs with a bold curve. Near the rim is a hole, pierced after the baking of the pot. Immediately below the rim is a girth band of faintly incised chevrons, bordered above and beneath by girth grooves. A punctured dot occurs at each angle of the chevrons (Plate II, Nos. 14 and 15).

Portion of rim and shoulder of a large hand-made pot with out-turned, rounded rim. Similar to No. 11 (Plate II, No. 16).

Portion of the rim and body of a large hand-made bowl, with thick and slightly out-turned rim of black paste, with flint particles. The neck is deep, and the shoulder strongly out-bulged. The surfaces of the bowl are dark grey, but here and there appears what seems to be the remains of a reddish-brown slip (Plate II, No. 17).

Fragment of the rim of a large cooking-pot. The rim is heavy, and formed by doubling over the clay on to the outer surface. The paste is black, and full of quartz grains and powdered flint. The exterior surface is light brown, and the interior black (Plate II, No. 18).

Nearly the half, from the rim to the base, of a very finely-made, high-shouldered pot. Height $5\frac{1}{4}$ in. Width of rim $7\frac{7}{8}$ in. Width at shoulder $8\frac{3}{8}$ in. Width at base $3\frac{7}{8}$ in. The paste is

¹ *Excavations at Hengistbury Head*, 1911-12, Plate X, Fig. 9, and Plate XVI, Figs. 1-3.

full of minute flint particles. Both inside and outside surfaces have been beautifully finished and polished. The colour of the interior paste is black. The pot is faced with hæmatite, burnt a bright, rich tan, like leather, and in other areas are black patches, giving a most pleasing appearance. The outer and inner surfaces are slightly striated with faintly impressed, vertical tool marks. This pot or beaker evidently belongs to the same type as the "high-shouldered and straight-sided examples" found at Hengistbury, the prototype of which Mr. J. P. Bushe Fox¹ thinks "is undoubtedly the high-shouldered Hallstatt bronze bucket" (Plate II, No. 19).

Portions of a large, and apparently tall, hand-made cooking-pot, found on the floor of the oven. The interior paste of black clay, with powdered flint, is coated inside and out with a light reddish-brown slip. The rim is beaded, the shoulder well rounded, and the sides straight. The vessel is pierced with a hole near the rim, made subsequent to the firing (Plate II, No. 20).

Fragment of side of a large cooking-pot, similar to Nos. 24, 25, and 26 (Plate II, No. 21).

Part of the body of a cooking-pot, also found on the floor of the oven. Its centre is pierced with a well-drilled hole. The black interior paste, with flint particles, is coated inside and out with a reddish-brown slip (Plate II, No. 22).

Fragment of a vessel similar in colour and paste to No. 7. Its outer surface is impressed with shallow, parallel girth grooves (Plate II, No. 23).

Fragments of the sides and bases of large, high, straight-sided cooking-pots found on the floor of the oven. The paste contains finely-crushed flint particles, and the colour of the exterior surface is light reddish brown, of a leather-like appearance, with a soapy feeling. The bases are flat (Plate II, Nos. 24, 25, and 26).

It is evident that we have here pottery of the same type and class as that found at All Cannings Cross, Hengistbury Head, and elsewhere. It belongs in the main to the Hallstatt Period, but some may be of the La Tène period. The pottery on the floor of the oven and the surrounding infilling would seem to date the oven as about 500 B.C., and therefore in the Hallstatt Period. It is apparently the earliest recorded oven in this county. Fragments of late La Tène pottery occurred near the surface in the infilling, and in the humus a piece of Samian ware. No glass, metal, or bone object was found.

The site of the pit is on high ground, 335ft. O.D., on the brow of the hill. The area beyond is arable down land, the sub-soil chalk. It embraces the head of a dry valley, with a natural embayment facing east, a very likely place for a dwelling

¹ *Excavations at Hengistbury Head*, p. 39.

site. In 1922, with the help of Mr. Geo. A. Weeks, the whole of this area was tapped with a ram, and bored with a special boring-tool, which readily reached the chalk. There was only one spot where the probe passed beneath the general soil level of 6in. to 9in. Here a depth of soil, 3ft. deep, was found. On excavating with the spade, an opening, 4ft. 4in. long, 2ft. 7in. wide, and 3ft. deep, was made without finding any sherds or other objects. The earth was a natural deposit. The result of the search for pits or ditches did not justify the labour of trenching. It does not seem likely that this oven-pit was the only pit on the site, and the inference is that others are now covered by the houses erected under the Winchester Housing Scheme. This inference is borne out in one particular, for an enquiry of the tenants of the cottages near by elicited the fact that in one instance pieces of pottery had been found while trenching in the garden.

N.B.—The objects illustrated are now in the City Museum, Winchester.