

POSSIBLE EARLY IRON AGE SITE AT LAINSTON

DURING the great westerly gale of January 1930 several large lime trees in the famous Lainston Avenue were uprooted. The Avenue meets the main Winchester—Stockbridge Road at the second milestone from Winchester, and about a quarter of a mile further on towards Stockbridge the Sparsholt Road leaves the main road and cuts diagonally through the Avenue. A public footpath runs along the south side of the Avenue, forming the base of a triangle, with the main road and the Sparsholt Road as the other two sides.

In the autumn of 1932 John Baker, of 31 S. Paul's Hill, Winchester, a schoolboy from Danemark School, was walking along the Lainston Avenue footpath with his father. In the chalk hole made by a fallen tree, 90 yards south of the Sparsholt Road, he saw a lump, which proved to be a bone fragment, and looking about him found other bone fragments and a few flint flakes or scrapers. He took what he found to the Winchester City Museum (Hon. Curator, Mrs. R. W. Hooley).

The bones are considerably mineralized and brownish in colour. One bone is an ox-metacarpal, which seems to have been sawn off with a metal saw, to form the handle of some tool; the handle, 2' in. in length, has two holes on its flat end, presumably sockets for the tool, each $\frac{3}{8}$ in. deep. The other fragments are split bones $3\frac{1}{4}$ in. and $3\frac{3}{4}$ in. long, one pointed like a gouge and the other with an obtuse-angled point. Mr. C. F. C. Hawkes of the British Museum gave a guarded opinion that the metacarpal bone was such as one would expect to find on an Early Iron Age site, *e.g.* the Glastonbury Lake Village. Winchester City Museum possesses a similar ox-metacarpal bone from the late Mr. R. W. Hooley's excavations of an Early Iron Age site on Worthy Down.

It is doubtful whether a small excavation on the site would be of much value. The site must have been disturbed when the lime tree avenue was planted, perhaps early in the 18th century. The chalk soil to a depth of several feet was torn up and fell back into the hole when the tree was uprooted. When the writer visited the spot in December 1932, the hole had been filled up with sawdust and refuse deposited by woodmen who had been cutting up the fallen trees. One fragment of a pot-boiler was picked up on the surface about twenty yards from the fallen tree.

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