

## Roman and Pre-Roman Discoveries at Newinn, Herts.

BY W. PERCIVAL WESTELL, F.L.S., F.S.A. Scot.

*Curator of Letchworth Museum.*

IT does not fall to the lot of many Archæologists to make such a remarkable discovery as that revealed by the late Dr. Arthur R. Waddell at Newinn, in the Parish of Hinxworth, Hertfordshire, and although the discovery was made in 1911, circumstances have prevented a Paper being written recording the "finds" until the present occasion.

The Map (Fig. 1) shows the "Site," the meadow in which the discoveries were made being at the western corner of Hinxworth Parish, off the Great North Road, or Roman Way, just beyond the fortieth milestone from London, and three miles north of Baldock. At the time of the discovery, Dr. and Mrs. Waddell resided at "Roseland," on the Great North Road, but they subsequently removed to Cambridge.

The author of this Paper understood from the late Dr. Waddell that, after consulting an ordnance survey map of the district, and having found a reference in Clutterbuck's "History and Antiquities of Hertfordshire" of discoveries of pottery, etc. having been made between Hinxworth and Newnham in the eighteenth century, he formed the opinion that, if fortune favoured him, and his deductions were accurate, some such discovery as it was proved he was to make, would be forthcoming. This fortunate prophecy was more than fulfilled, as events proved.

The root of the word "Newinn" is of great antiquity, and appears in many languages, and whilst it is not possible to follow this thesis here, it is suggested that something *sacred* can be read into the name of the meadow containing these secrets of the past.

The Site where the remains were discovered was a disused gravel pit, and the Diagram (Fig. 2) shows at a glance exactly how the remains were disposed. There

were three or four distinct zones of antiquities, which, as the diagrammatic illustration shows, had been used as a burial or other site for many centuries prior to the Roman Era.

Of the first known inhabitant of the Site (Fig. 3) it seems impossible, without any associated objects, to conjecture the period at which he lived, but it is suggested that copious floods from the melting ice during the last Ice Period, and torrential rains, formed a large river running right through the meadow, and separating out at this point to over half a mile wide, depositing masses of gravel known as river drift. On one of the still uncovered banks of gravel during one of the remains of the floods, somebody had taken up his residence—it may have been for the sake of the fish. At all events, when the 1911 excavations were taking place, several hearths, where fires had burned, were discovered, and lying close by and partly embedding itself in the gravel, was the skull shown in Fig. 3. The Site had apparently been overwhelmed at a later period by another flood which deposited several feet of soil above it. The skull lay face downwards, and this suggests that there had been no burial rites performed, indeed it seems probable that this ancient inhabitant may have been drowned by the flood which overwhelmed the Site.

The other seven skeletons were of a distinct character from those of the heavy-jawed person already referred to. Who they were and whence they came cannot be determined, but they had a ritual of burial as, although all seven bodies lay apart, in each instance the feet were directed in the same manner, *i.e.*, to the North. Of their very great antiquity no doubt remains, and it has been suggested that they may be tens of thousands of years old. If so, the antiquity of established religious ideas must stretch back a long way into the mighty past. They may have been killed sacrificially, and buried in a spot regarded as sacred.

The discoverer was of opinion that these seven men had not been buried until the bones were bare of flesh, and this is supported by the fact that no weapons or associated objects of any kind were found with them,

suggesting that they lived before the manufacture of pottery. An interesting point occurs, however, by the fact that one of the persons had received in his lifetime a wound traversing the front of the left arm, evidently made by an arrow-head fired with great velocity. There is a clean cut across the humerus, and the bone is splintered at the outer end of the curve, showing that the arrow came from his right side, possibly fired at him as he ran with his arm advanced.

Following the lowest zone upwards, there is a great chronological gap, even in the six inches of soil which separated the skeletons from the next super-imposed object, namely, a Bronze Age Food Vessel, used as a Cinerary Urn, dated Circa 1600 B.C.

Pottery was at this date in common use. Stone, as a weapon, had given place to metal, and the inhabitants of this Hertfordshire meadow had made a great advance in civilization and in the evolution of their religious conceptions, compared with the people who left us nothing but their skeletons. This change not only affected the old world at large, but a study of this vessel (Fig. 4) shows how this change had a direct repercussion in this meadow. It was originally an ordinary Food Vessel. The added markings are not merely dabs or proddings made capriciously by the potter, but creative symbols intended to represent Mother Earth. It should be noted that this vessel is square-bottomed, and is said to be the oldest British Food Vessel of this texture yet found in Britain. It undoubtedly tells an extraordinary story, but it does not come within my province to interpret how the square bottom fixes the date of its construction.

The dots signifying Mother Earth were, Dr. Waddell suggested, intended to symbolize the impact of fertilizing rain-drops upon her bosom. When, somewhere in the remote past, man discovered the art of shaping his implements by polishing instead of chipping, he was enabled to use a tougher material than flint which he could employ for many more purposes. Agriculture accordingly received a great impulse. But success in that direction depended upon the productivity of beast and crop, and that, in turn, depended upon

the fertility of the soil, which was impossible without moisture. Hence the Deities of Water and Earth had to be appealed to and cajoled. So it comes that Moisture, symbolized by the Ocean, and Fertility, symbolized by raindrops on the breast of Mother Earth, are together the dominant notes of decoration on the pottery of this period.

A common sign for Water is the zig-zag line like the ripples on a river when it is stirred by the breeze, and for Mother Earth the dots shown on the vessel under review. This zig-zag is also the Phœnician sign for the word "Em," also meaning with them Water, and of the ancient Egyptian "N," applied in a similar connection.

In mountainous countries another sign for both has been recognized, *i.e.*, concentric arches over a cone. The cone is supposed to represent Mother Earth as symbolized by a mountain, and the clouds or moisture by the arches above it.

The Ocean, too, was supposed by the ancients to be a gigantic serpent surrounding the Earth; hence it is easy to understand how the idea of Serpent Worship could have grown out of the idea of the deification of water. This is shown by the picture of a Cretan Serpent Goddess of from 2000 to 3000 B.C.

The Serpent was also the symbol of Eternity, hence its association with the worship of wells of pure spring water which went on eternally, and in this connection recalling the holy wells and serpents of ancient Ireland.

Turning back at this point for further speculation on the origin of the name Newinn, could it have had anything to do with the invocation to the rain-bringing Heaven, and was it so named because these ancient people came here to cut themselves with stones, and perhaps offer human sacrifice in the hope of appeasing the angry Nature Gods? Who knows?

Above the three feet level, at a depth of 2 ft. 6 ins., there next came into view a few fragments of Bronze, Iron, and Pottery, apparently of the Early Iron Age, and above these at a depth of 2 ft., seven Cinerary Urns of Native British Ware, Circa A.D. 50, four of which are shown in Figure 5.

One foot above these, at a depth of the same measurement from the surface, there was discovered a collection of Romano-British Cinerary Urns, together with Jugs, Vases, Samian Ware, and miscellaneous Objects, a selection of which is shown in Figure 6.

As a description of all the objects discovered is set out hereafter, it is not necessary to refer to them in detail here, and it only remains for me to state that the whole of the objects discovered at Newinn were presented by the late Dr. Waddell to Letchworth Museum, where they may now be seen. Hertfordshire Archæology owes a tremendous debt of gratitude to Dr. and Mrs. Waddell in enabling us to record and possess for examination and further study such a unique series of discoveries, and this Paper will at least serve as a tribute to the memory of the great-hearted gentleman to whose insight, knowledge, and enthusiasm this remarkable discovery is due.

A list of the Objects in their respective zones is appended, the objects being chronicled in order of discovery.

## I. ROMANO-BRITISH REMAINS.

### CINERARY URNS.

#### *Depth 1 foot.*

1684. ONE CINERARY URN. Sandy light grey ware.  
Thin. Circa A.D. 100.  
Height  $7\frac{1}{2}$  inches. Diameter  $8\frac{1}{2}$  inches.  
Mouth  $7\frac{1}{2}$  inches. Base 3 inches.  
Sharply everted rim at right angles to body.  
Channel in upper surface of rim.  
Deeply incised line round centre of body.
1685. ONE CINERARY URN. Black polished ware.  
Circa A.D. 90-150.  
Height 9 inches. Diameter  $7\frac{1}{2}$  inches.  
Mouth  $6\frac{1}{2}$  inches. Base 4 inches.  
Out-turned beaded rim. Lattice work pattern on entire body.  
Smooth polished belt below rim.
1686. ONE CINERARY URN. Sandy light buff ware, rather thick. Circa A.D. 100.  
Height  $5\frac{3}{4}$  inches. Diameter 7 inches.

Mouth  $6\frac{1}{8}$  inches. Slightly pedestalled foot  
 $2\frac{3}{8}$  inches.

Out-turned rim, double channel on upper  
edge.

Incised line  $\frac{1}{4}$  inch below junction of rim and  
body.

Two deeply incised lines round centre of body  
 $1\frac{1}{2}$  inches apart.

(See Fig. 6, Row 1, Nos. 1, 3 and 5.)

#### JUGS.

1701. ONE JUG. White ware, coarse and badly  
weathered. Circa A.D. 100.  
Height 7 inches. Diameter  $4\frac{1}{2}$  inches.  
Mouth  $1\frac{1}{2}$  inches. Foot ring  $1\frac{3}{4}$  inches.  
Three ill-defined rings round neck.  
Single reed handle.  
Half round lip to neck.
1706. ONE JUG. Coarse pinkish-buff ware, surface  
badly weathered. Circa A.D. 100.  
Height 7 inches. Diameter  $4\frac{1}{2}$  inches.  
Mouth 2 inches. Base  $1\frac{5}{8}$  inches.  
Half round lip with three ill-defined steps.  
Single reed handle.
1700. ONE JUG. Very fine white ware, with very  
smooth surface.  
Height 8 inches. Diameter  $4\frac{1}{4}$  inches.  
Mouth  $1\frac{3}{8}$  inches. Beaded base  $1\frac{1}{2}$  inches.  
Three very slightly defined rings.  
Plain flat handle.  
Graceful pear-shape model.
1715. ONE JUG. Very light grey ware with traces of  
darker coating. Handle missing. Circa  
A.D. 200-300.  
Height 6 inches. Diameter 4 inches.  
Mouth  $1\frac{1}{4}$  inches. Foot  $1\frac{3}{8}$  inches.  
Plain half round lip.
1695. ONE JUG. Fragment only. Dark smooth buff  
ware. Circa A.D. 100-200.  
Diameter  $4\frac{1}{2}$  inches. Base  $1\frac{7}{8}$  inches.  
This vessel accompanied a Cinerary Urn.
1707. ONE JUG. Fragment only. Red ware. A.D. 150.

1720. ONE JUG. Fragment only. Very thick white ware.  
(See Fig. 6, Row 3, Nos. 1, 3, 5 and 7.)

## SAMIAN WARE.

1719. ONE SAMIAN DISH. Drag 18/31. A.D. 100-150.  
Diameter  $7\frac{1}{4}$  inches. Depth  $1\frac{3}{4}$  inches.  
Potter's name—DAGOMARUS.
1698. ONE SAMIAN PLATE. Shallow form of Curle 23.  
Circa A.D. 150-200.  
Diameter 6 inches. Depth 1 inch.  
Quatre-foil palmate design in centre.
1717. ONE SAMIAN DISH. Curle 15. Late Second  
or Third Century A.D.  
Diameter 7 inches. Depth  $1\frac{1}{2}$  inches.
1716. ONE SAMIAN DISH. Drag 18/31. Circa A.D.  
120-150.  
Diameter  $7\frac{1}{8}$  inches. Depth  $1\frac{3}{4}$  inches.  
Potter's name—CINTUSSA.
1696. ONE SAMIAN CUP. Drag. 27. Circa A.D. 80-120.  
Diameter 4 inches. Depth  $1\frac{7}{8}$  inches.  
Potter's name—SABINUS.  
This cup contained ten bone counters having  
concentric rings.
1718. ONE SAMIAN DISH. Drag. 18/31. Circa A.D.  
120-150.  
Diameter  $7\frac{1}{4}$  inches. Depth  $1\frac{5}{8}$  inches.  
Potter's name—illegible.
1697. ONE SAMIAN CUP. Drag 33. Circa A.D. 100.  
Diameter  $5\frac{1}{2}$  inches. Depth  $2\frac{1}{2}$  inches.  
Potter's name—TAVRICI M.
1699. ONE SAMIAN CUP. Drag 33. Circa A.D. 100-150.  
Diameter 4 inches. Depth  $2\frac{1}{8}$  inches.  
Two lightly incised lines round body.  
The above Samian Vessels are shown in Row 2, and  
Nos. 2, 4 and 6 in Row 3, Fig. 6.

## MISCELLANEOUS OBJECTS.

2013. ONE BEAKER. Smooth fawn ware.  
Height 3 inches. Diameter  $2\frac{3}{8}$  inches.  
Mouth  $1\frac{7}{8}$  inches. Base  $1\frac{3}{8}$  inches.  
Channel at junction of body and rim.

2014. ONE CALYCFORM VASE. Very light grey ware, Black coated. (Fig. 6, Row 1, No. 4.) Height 3 inches. Diameter  $2\frac{1}{2}$  inches. Mouth  $2\frac{1}{4}$  inches. Base  $1\frac{1}{8}$  inches. Bobbin shape, with carinated edge  $\frac{5}{8}$  inch from base.
1711. Fragment of Castor ware Beaker.
1726. Fragment of thin Red Tile with Dog's footprint.
1710. Base of grey ware Beaker, red-coated.
1727. Fragment of Tile  $1\frac{1}{2}$  inches thick.
1702. Two fragments of a very thin Glass Vase.  
One Bronze Stylus. Ornamented. Length  $3\frac{1}{2}$  inches.  
Iron Key and three Nails.  
Half lip of red ware Jug.
1704. TOOTH OF HORSE.

## 2. BRITISH NATIVE WARE URNS.

Circa A.D. 50.

*Depth 2 feet.*

1689. ONE CINERARY URN. Coarse buff ware, with black surface.  
Height  $7\frac{1}{2}$  inches. Diameter  $7\frac{1}{2}$  inches.  
Mouth  $6\frac{1}{2}$  inches. Base  $3\frac{5}{8}$  inches.  
Upright rim. Deeply incised line at junction of rim and body.
1687. ONE CINERARY URN. Very coarse black ware with a mixture of flint; light buff ware surface.  
Height  $7\frac{1}{2}$  inches. Diameter  $6\frac{3}{4}$  inches.  
Mouth  $5\frac{5}{8}$  inches. Base  $3\frac{3}{8}$  inches.  
Upright rim.  
Upper surface flat, with incised line.  
On upper part of body fine longitudinal combing.
1690. ONE CINERARY URN. One third only.  
Thin dark ware with black surface.  
Diameter 8 inches. Base 3 inches.  
Base slightly beaded.
1693. ONE CINERARY URN. One third only.  
Rather coarse light brown ware, with large admixture of flint, burnt red outside.  
Diameter  $10\frac{1}{2}$  inches. Base 5 inches.



1692. ONE CINERARY URN. Half only.  
Coarse grey ware with black surface.  
Diameter 9 inches. Base  $4\frac{1}{2}$  inches.  
Combing round upper part of body.
1688. ONE CINERARY URN. Reddish-buff ware, with  
black surface.  
Height 8 inches. Diameter 8 inches  
Mouth  $6\frac{1}{4}$  inches. Base  $3\frac{1}{2}$  inches.  
Rim slightly everted.  
Upper surface of rim sloping inwards.  
Two incised lines round neck of rim.
1694. ONE CINERARY URN. Half only.  
Coarse greyish-buff ware.  
Diameter  $7\frac{3}{4}$  inches. Base  $3\frac{3}{4}$  inches.

### 3. IRON AGE OBJECTS.

*Depth 2 feet, 6 inches.*

1712. ONE LARGE OLLA. Fragment only.  
Light buff ware, highly polished.  
Upright bead rim.
1730. ONE URN. Fragment only.  
Coarse reddish-buff ware, blackened with  
smoke, and with large admixture of sand  
and flint.
1721. ONE URN. Base only.  
Light brown ware. Outer surface burnt very  
light reddish-buff.  
Inner surface bright red.
1713. BASE OF VESSEL. Very heavy coarse thick ware.
1732. BRONZE EAR-RING. Plain, round wire.  
External diameter  $\frac{3}{4}$  inch.
- RIM FRAGMENT OF VESSEL. Black ware, with  
reddish-buff surface. Upper edge of rim  
quite flat, decorated with diagonal scratch-  
ings.
- FRAGMENT OF SQUARE BELT ORNAMENT, with  
traces of red enamel (?); with holes for  
attachment.
- FRAGMENT OF THIN BRONZE PLATE. ? Part of  
Shield.

4. BRONZE AGE OBJECT.

*Depth 3 feet.*

1705. ONE BRONZE AGE FOOD VESSEL used as a Cinerary Urn. Circa 1600 B.C.

Rather smooth light brown ware.

Height  $4\frac{5}{8}$  inches. Diameter  $5\frac{1}{2}$  inches.

Mouth  $4\frac{7}{8}$  inches. Flat base  $2\frac{1}{8}$  inches.

Doubly carinated. First carination  $\frac{3}{4}$  inch from rim, second carination  $2\frac{1}{4}$  inches from rim. Roughly decorated with proddings, very irregularly disposed, one row along angle of upper carination; a row on either side of angle of lower carination, and a very irregular double row in space between angles.

Rim upright and thin.

5. PREHISTORIC HUMAN REMAINS UNCLASSIFIED.

*Depth 3 feet, 6 inches.*

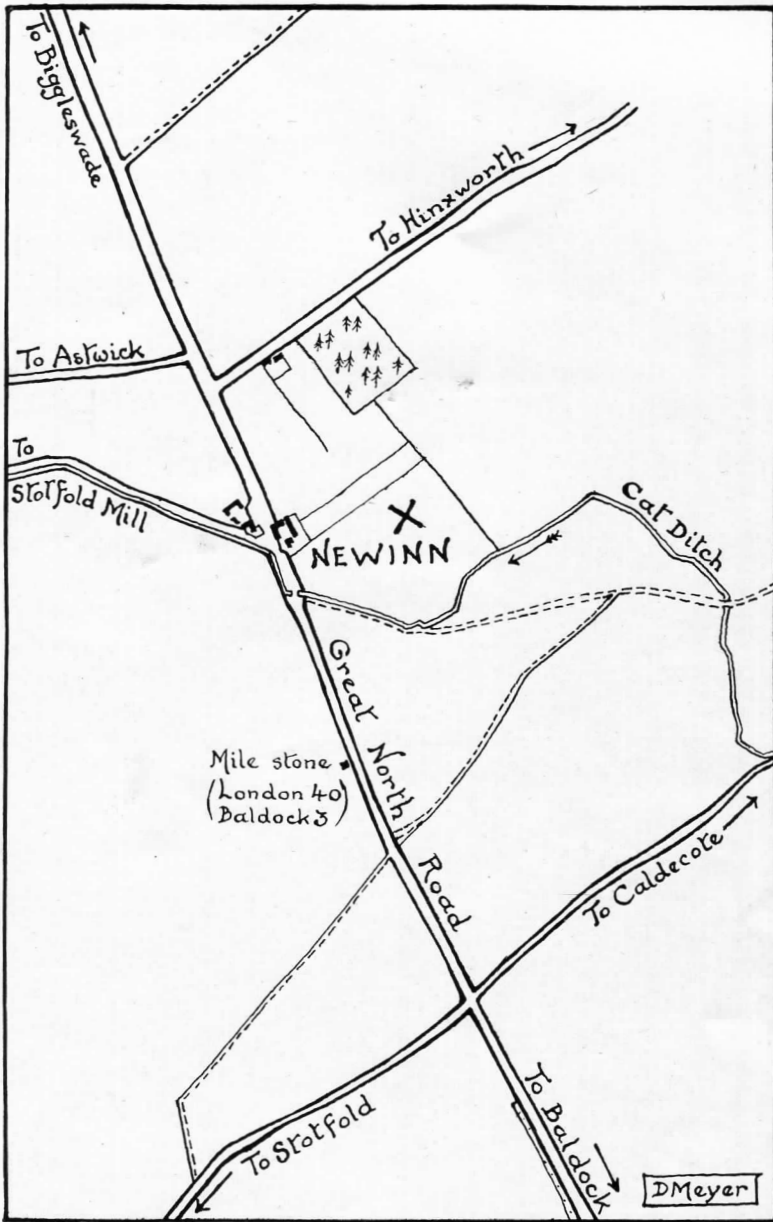
ONE SKULL AND ONE BONE OF VERY EARLY AGE, also SEVEN SKELETONS of later date.

6. MISCELLANEOUS.

1708 and 1709. PIECES OF BEECHWOOD and Oak found below the gravel in the gault.

NOTE:—For assistance in the description of the objects I am indebted to Mr. W. H. Lane and Mr. E. S. Applebaum.

FIG. 1.



SITE (marked thus X)  
of Roman and Pre-Roman Antiquities ~  
at NEWINN.

FIG. 2.

Disused Gravel-pit

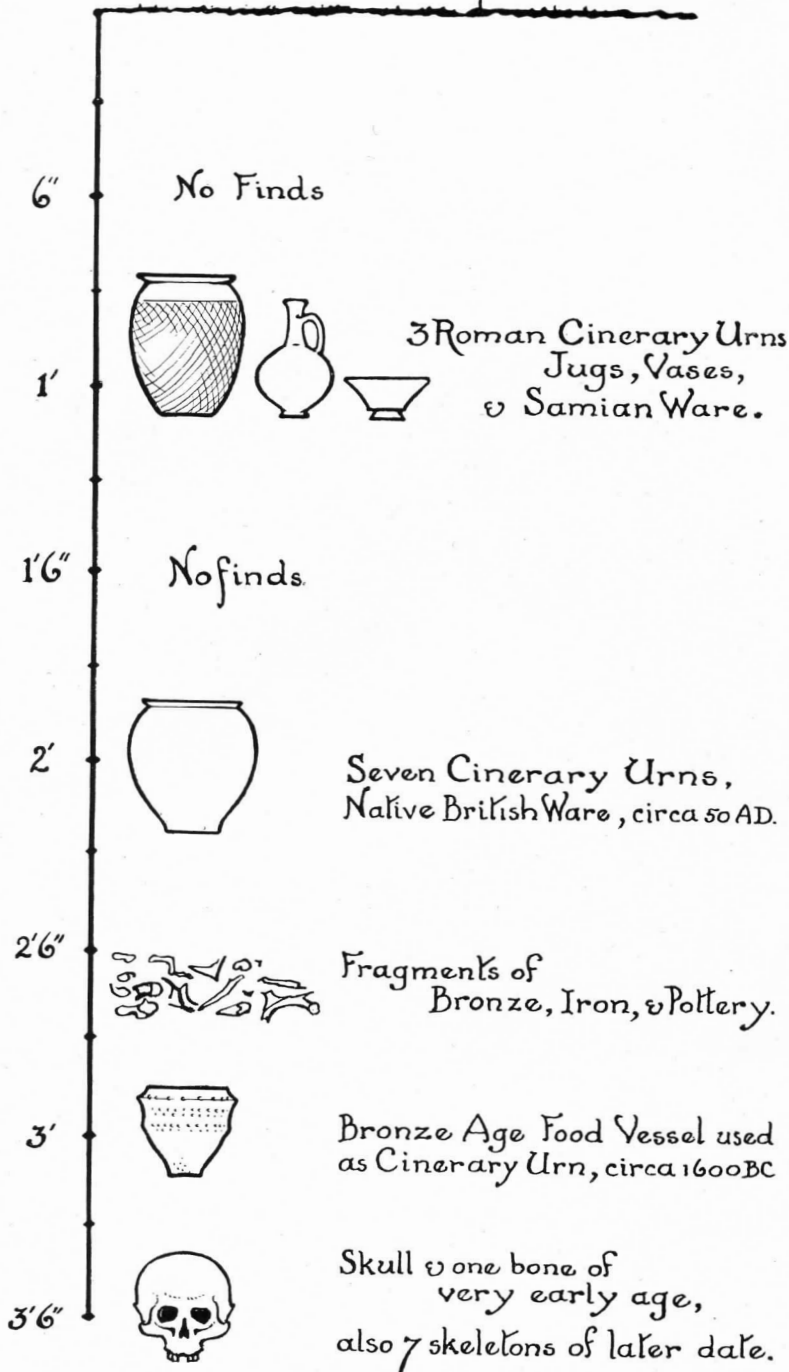
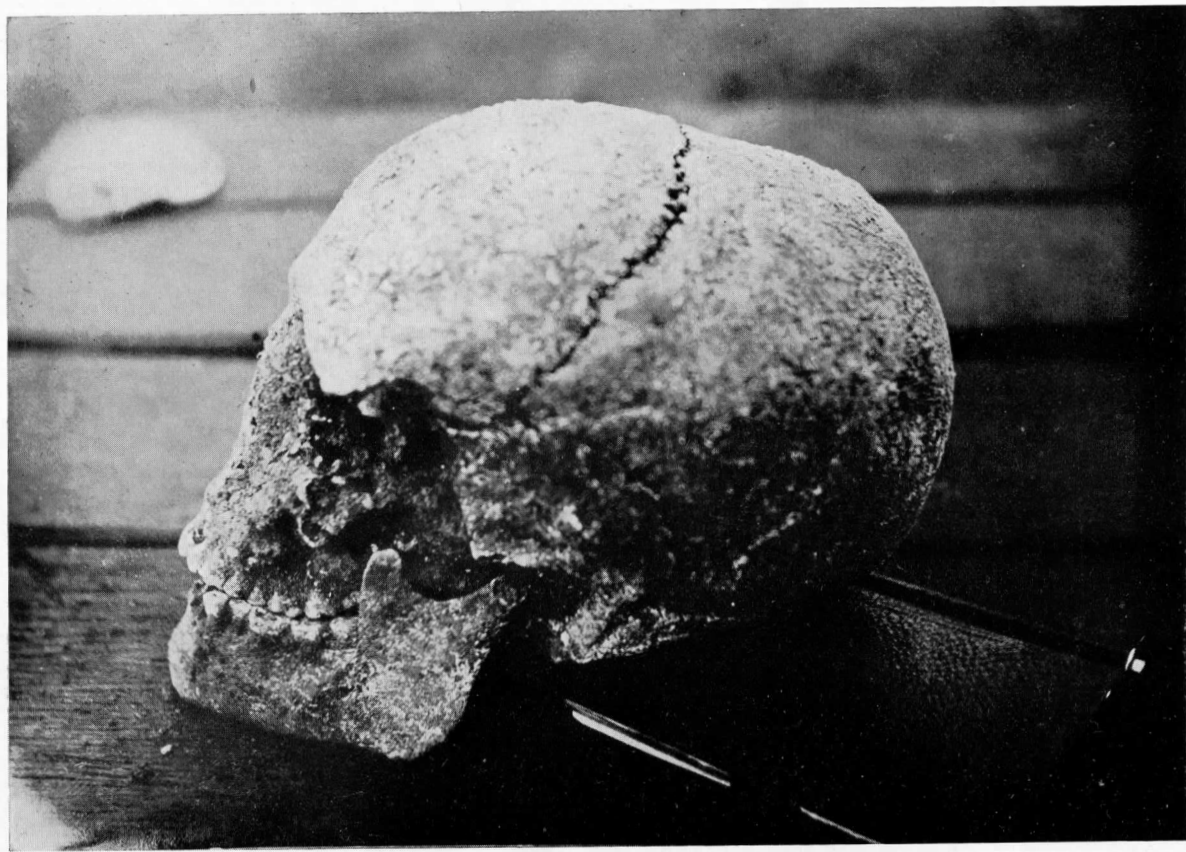


DIAGRAM OF ROMAN AND PRE-ROMAN DISCOVERIES AT NEWINN,  
HINXWORTH.

FIG. 3.



SKULL OF PREHISTORIC MAN FROM NEWINN, HINXWORTH.

FIG. 4.



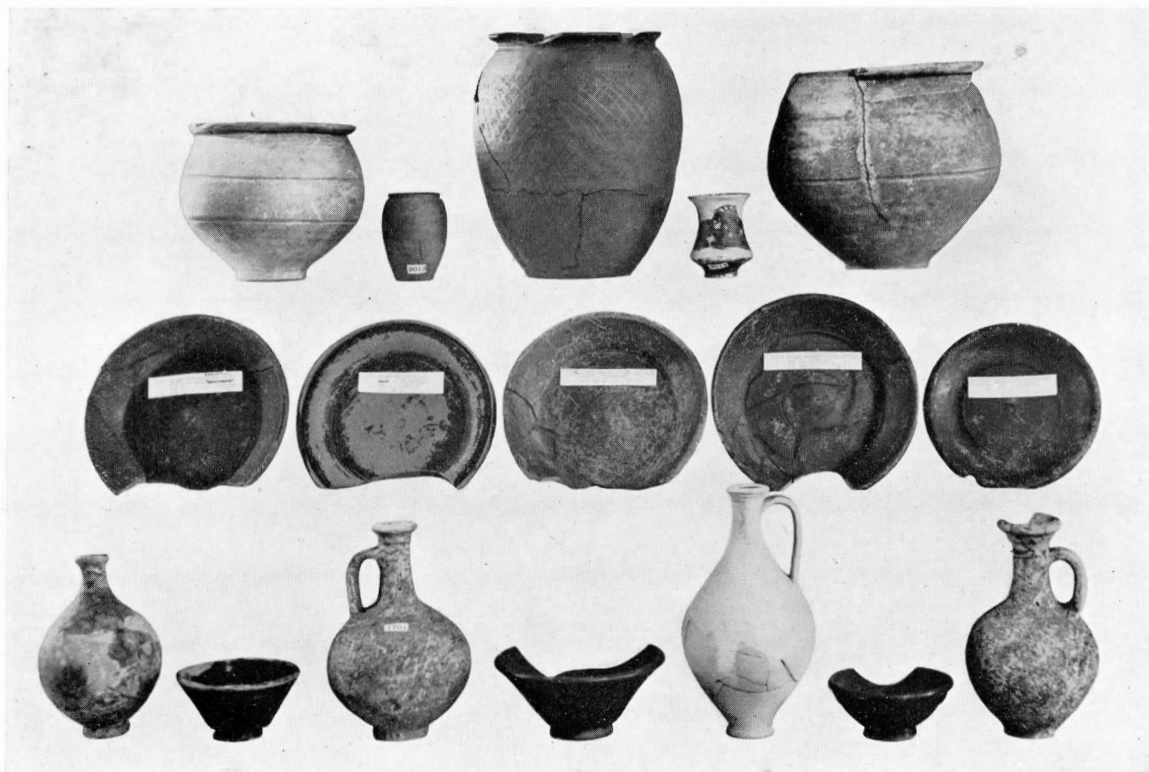
BRONZE AGE FOOD VESSEL USED AS A CINERARY  
URN FROM NEWINN, HINXWORTH.  
Circa 1600 B.C.

FIG. 5.



BRITISH NATIVE WARE URNS FROM NEWINN, HINXWORTH.  
Circa A.D. 50.

FIG. 6.



ROMANO-BRITISH POTTERY FROM NEWINN, HINXWORTH.