

Archaeology in Leicestershire and Rutland 1980

by Peter Liddle

Norfolk Street Roman Villa, Leicester

In June, 1980, the west wing of the Norfolk Street Roman Villa, Leicester, was excavated, directed by John Lucas for the Leicestershire Museums Archaeological Field Unit. This wing had been excavated by the Victorians in 1851, but only to the extent of the limited practices of that period. That excavation consisted of a search for tessellated pavements, although the isolated pieces of surviving walls were recorded and interesting artifacts were saved. Unfortunately a great deal of other archaeological evidence was destroyed in the relentless search for pavements as the Victorians tended to dig deeper where no pavements were found. Further damage to the building was sustained by subsequent erection of terraced houses on the site. Additionally the Roman deposits were very close to the modern ground surface. Despite all these factors, the 1980 excavation was able to provide a more comprehensive picture of the west wing and to put it into the context of the rest of the villa as revealed in the two previous major excavations in 1975 and 1979 (*T.L.A.H.S.*, L (1974-5), 58; *T.L.A.H.S.*, LIV (1978-9) 68-70).

The tessellated pavements uncovered by the Victorians were seen to have been part of the latest identifiable period of the wing, of which six rooms and an adjoining corridor were located. The remains of two of the pavements found in 1851 were identified and additionally the massive hole dug in order to remove the Dolphin pavement, (now in the Jewry Wall Museum) was located. This had lain in an apsidal-ended room whose foundations, it was discovered, were faceted. The pavement in the main body of this room had been removed prior to 1851. These rooms were dated to the fourth century.

In one room and in the corridor, earlier floors of *opus signinum* were found below the tessellated pavements. The earlier floors were covered in earth and rubble so that the later floors were not built directly on top of them. This could suggest a period of dereliction then re-occupation of the wing but it does not exclude just a straightforward major refurbishment.

Below the main building there was evidence of earlier activity. A slight granite foundation indicated a building below the southern half of the main wing, but on a slightly different alignment. There was little evidence to date this structure but the material sealing it was of middle third to early fourth century date. Just to the north of this was a deep, almost well-like, pit that had been deliberately and very soundly backfilled as the wall to the later apsidal room ran directly over it.

As in the previous excavations traces of earlier industrial activity on the site were indicated by two hearths and a possible kiln or oven. In the very earliest period on the site, numbers of stake holes were found in such profusion that it was impossible to identify any coherent pattern.

John Lucas

Causeway Lane, Leicester

Between March and May 1980, excavations were carried out on Causeway Lane, Leicester, by Richard Buckley for the Leicestershire Museums Archaeological Field Unit. The site consisted

of a large area of undisturbed natural sand and gravel, surrounded by a series of twenty-one pits, together with a gully and a hearth. It was possible to distinguish two main phases of activity on the site: the first being represented by a series of eighteen circular rubbish pits, assignable to the late Roman period on the basis of the pottery. None of the pits in this phase attained depths in excess of one metre, and the lack of any silting or slippage in their fills suggests that they were dug specifically for domestic rubbish and were backfilled almost immediately.

The second phase consisted of three sub-rectangular pits, none of which was totally excavated due to the dangers of subsidence. However, one was emptied to a depth of four metres and probing indicated a probable minimum depth of five metres. All three contained large amounts of bone and pottery which initially dated them to the Roman period. However, Medieval pottery appeared in their lower levels including most of a splashed ware jug, datable to the twelfth century. This apparent example of 'inverted stratigraphy' is perhaps best explained by the deliberate backfilling of the pit quite some time after its initial excavation, during which period contemporary material could have accumulated. Further evidence of silting and slippage supports the idea that these pits remained open for some time. Unfortunately, their function remains elusive, though the presence of a wood-lining and a thick layer of silt in the lower levels, may suggest usage as a well.

Elsewhere on the site, three of the Roman pits were cut by a Medieval gully and a hearth. It is probable that the site was used for burying rubbish over a fairly long span of time during the Roman period, as many of the pits cut one another. Conversely the three Medieval pits cut only earlier features and not each other, perhaps suggesting that they were contemporary. Possibly the most interesting feature of the site is the fact that during both periods of activity a large area of ground was respected which could represent the site of a standing building, or at least the lines of a property boundary.

Richard Buckley

A possible Romano/British Tile Kiln Site: A Trial Excavation

The site lies to the north east of the village of Newbold Verdon in West Leicestershire, (SK 456041). It was first revealed in 1978 by field walking carried out by the Newbold and District Fieldwork Group working under the auspices of the Leicestershire Museums Archaeological Survey Team.

Field walking results showed a Roman pottery scatter to the south of the area, consisting mainly of grey ware with mortaria, colour coated and Samian wares also represented. This scatter is concentrated on the level area, above the subsequent excavation, on glacial sand and gravel deposits. Further field walking then revealed two distinct 'red areas' on the slope down to the north on Triassic Keuper Marl. In these 'red areas' were found many pieces of Roman brick and tile, some of which were overfired and of distorted form; also present were pieces of the tile, bonded together with clay, that had been in contact with high temperatures as they also were overfired and showed evidence of splitting. It was thought that we were possibly dealing with a Romano/British tile kiln site, none of which had previously been found in Leicestershire, the nearest being in North Warwickshire.

The next stage was to carry out a geophysical survey of the immediate area. This was done by Leicester University Archaeology students using a Proton Magnetometer, the results of which showed marked anomalies over the 'red areas' found by field walking. A trial excavation was then undertaken (fig.1) by the Newbold Verdon group with the aid and advice of the Atherstone Archaeological Society. A box approximately 4 metres by 2 metres was excavated on the northern of the two 'red areas'; immediately under the plough soil was an area of red clay covering most of the box and on the southern side was an area of sandy soil with charcoal and tile fragments included.

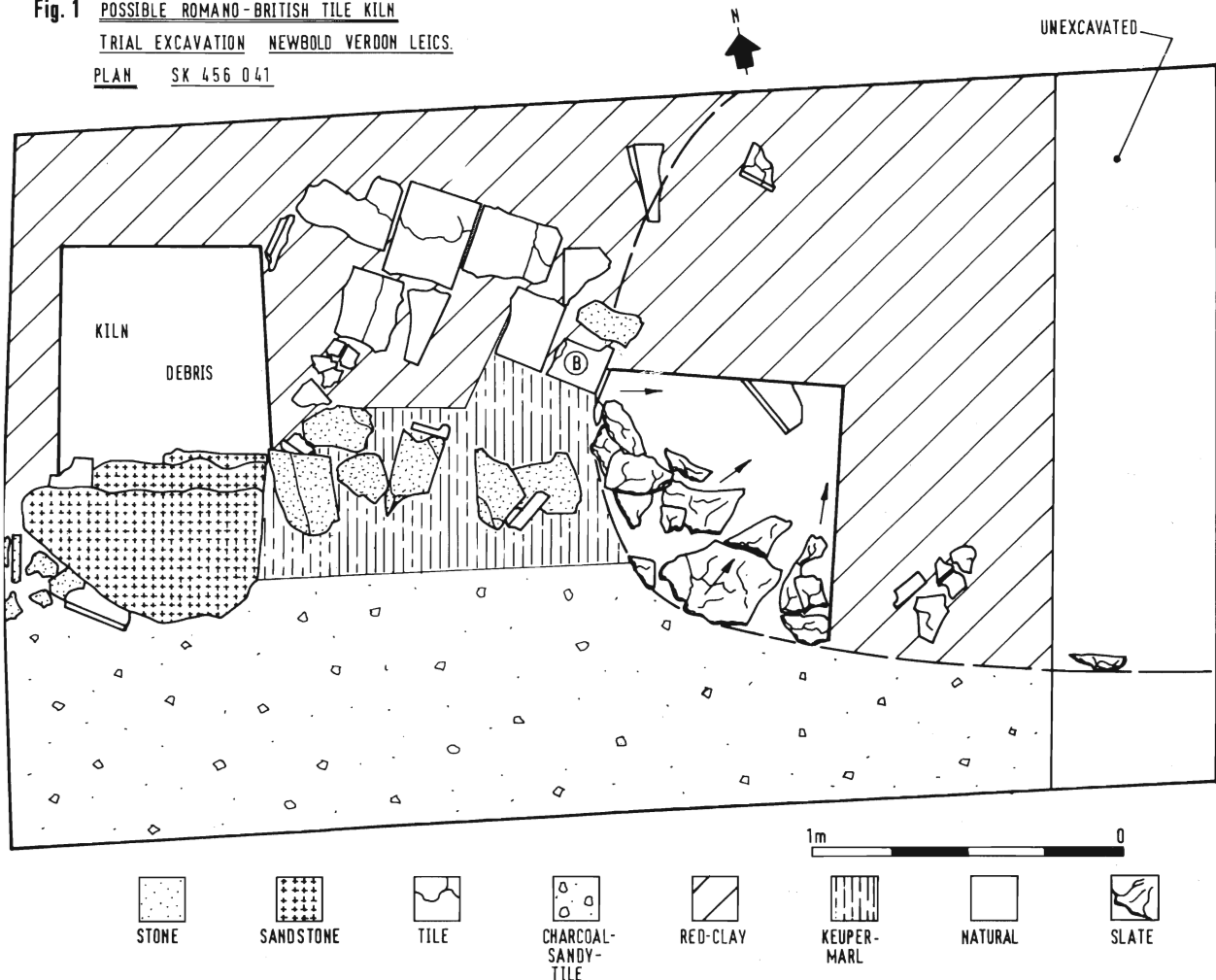
Immediately under the surface of the red clay were revealed several tiles laid flat consisting of plain tile and tegulae set into the red clay. Along the southern side of these tiles were several pieces of stone similar to the Charnwood Pre-Cambrian series and a large sandstone block, all set in Keuper Marl. The interface of the Keuper Marl and the red clay showed as a distinct edge and at 'B' on the plan the tile showed in the section formed by the pit as being at least four courses high. At this stage it was thought that we had located a cross wall of a kiln made of tiles and the kiln back wall built of stone. Cutting this phase of construction, but under the red clay, was a pit lined with Swithland slate, the possible projection of which is shown on the plan.

The only firm evidence for a kiln was found in a box taken out of the north of the sandstone block but this only consisted of small fragments of tile which were bonded together with clay. Several phases seem to be represented; the earliest being kiln debris, then stone blocks set in Keuper Marl, and then a slate lined pit, tiles set in red clay, and the sandy area to the south of the excavation containing charcoal flecks and tile fragments.

It is clear that the site needs further investigation; possibly a larger area needs opening up to elucidate the problems raised by the trial excavation. We are not dealing with a simple kiln site as we first hoped for but several phases of activity relating to the manufacture of Romano/British tiles.

Mick Harding

Fig. 1 POSSIBLE ROMANO-BRITISH TILE KILN
 TRIAL EXCAVATION NEWBOLD VERDON LEICS.
 PLAN SK 456 041



Castle Donington; Spital — An Interim Report

Excavations have been carried out by members of Castle Donington Local History Society on the northern side of a medieval hospital site in the Spital (SK 445278). The field lying to the north side of the site, believed to contain the hospital fishponds, has been surveyed. The land is the property of Castle Donington Parish Council and is scheduled for use as playing fields in the near future.

Excavations have revealed the foundations of stone buildings of medieval date. Associated artefacts include potsherds of 'Splashed ware', Midland Purple and Ticknall ware. A collapsed roof of Swithland slate was exposed together with green glaze ridge tiles. Animal bones, charcoal and floor tiles were also found. It is hoped to continue the work in 1981.

B. Townsend

The First Leicestershire Long Barrow?

Recent re-examination of aerial photographs of an area north east of Walcote in Misterton parish, on the advice of Jim Pickering, has led to the identification of what seems to be a long mortuary enclosure or a plough razed long barrow.

The site (NGR SP 576849) lies at 130 metres O.D. on a level gravel terrace above the River Swift, at a point where it commands wide views of the surrounding countryside but is virtually invisible from the valley below. The feature, visible as a crop mark on Mr. Pickering's aerial photographs (NMR SP 5784/4-10), is a parallel-sided enclosure with convex terminals, perhaps best characterized as 'frankfurter shaped'. It is orientated north east/south west and has dimensions of c.15 metres by 80 metres. No certain break or entrance causeway is visible in the ditch which appears to be regular and no more than about 2 metres in width. There is nothing on the ground to mark the site today.

Its claim to be a long mortuary enclosure or long barrow rests upon its close similarity to a series of sites first identified by Atkinson at Dorchester (Atkinson et al, 1951) and increasingly being recognised in the river valleys of the Midlands and East Anglia. In addition to that at Dorchester, two other sites, sharing the same narrow, encircling ditch plan, have been tested by excavation — Charlecote, Warwickshire (Ford, 1969) and West Rudham, Norfolk (Hogg, 1941). Both are of proven Neolithic date but the ditch of the latter encircled a long barrow constructed entirely of stacked turves, which owes its survival to chance incorporation in common land. Unlike the wide quarry ditches familiar from chalkland long barrows, the function of the ditch in this case was simply to demarcate the edge of the mound and provide it with a thin capping of gravel. It seems certain that a mound also originally occupied the centre of the Charlecote site (which like Walcote had been subject to medieval cultivation) as excavation showed that plough furrows, which had scarred the surrounding subsoil, had failed to graze the area, enclosed by the ditch. This ditch, rather narrower than that at West Rudham, would seem then to have performed the same function, unless it be considered to have belonged to an earlier, free standing, long mortuary enclosure phase (Fig 1).

It is with the Charlecote site, and another at Norton, both in the valley of the Warwickshire Avon, that Walcote finds its closest parallel. As no comparable sites are known from the valleys of the Soar or Trent, it is probably best seen as an outlier of this group. Its relationship to the encircling *quarry* ditched long barrows of the Lincolnshire Wolds (Phillips, 1936; Simpson, D.D.A. personal comment) remains problematical.

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Roy Loveday

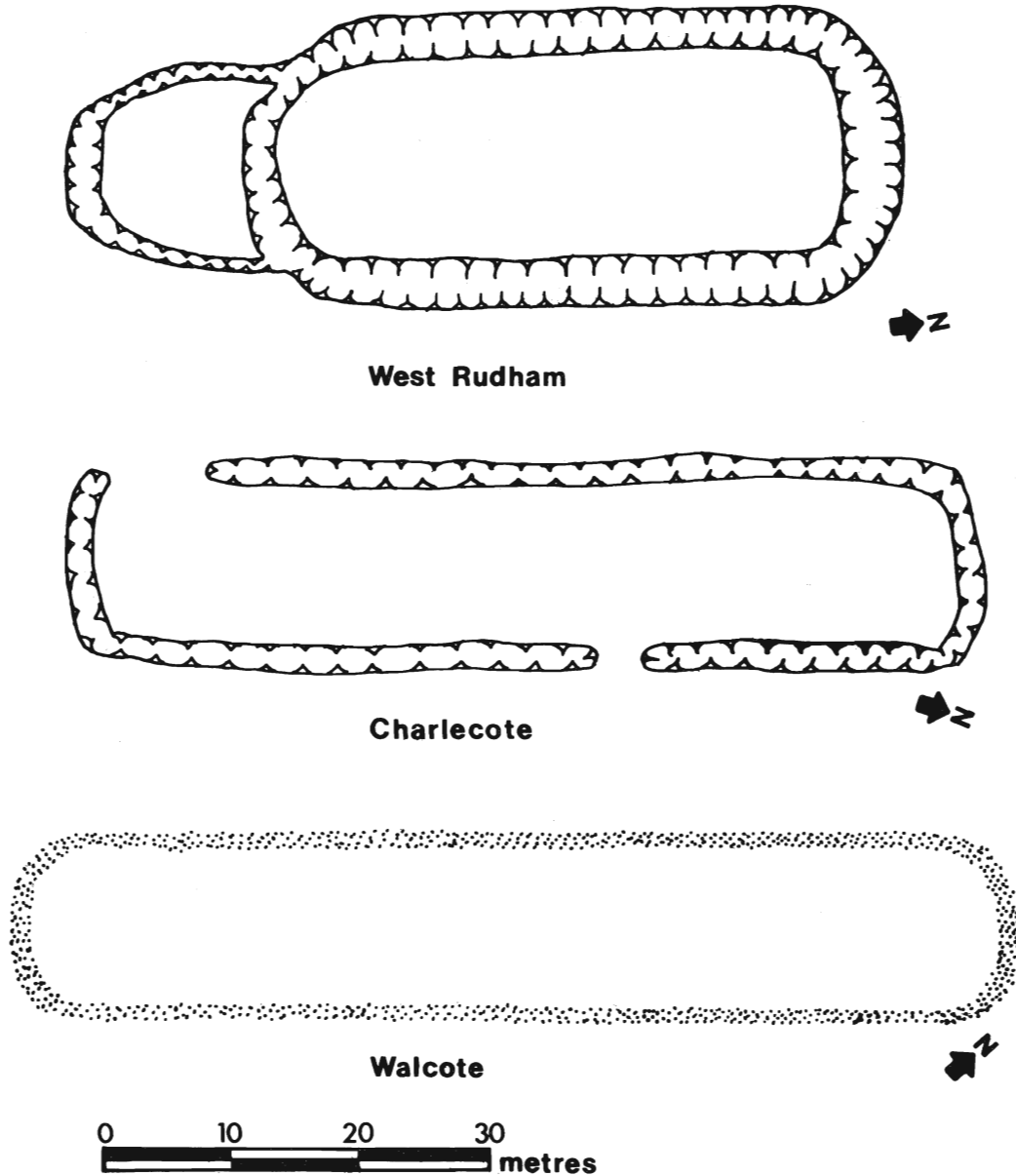


Fig. 1 Long barrows at West Rudham, Charlecote and Walcote

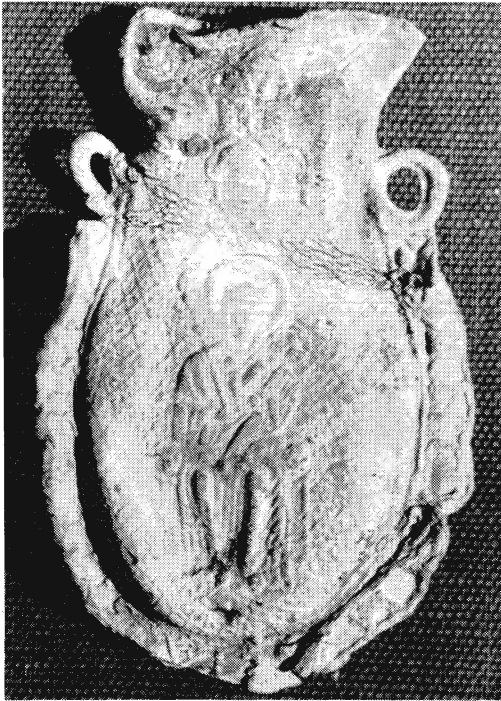


Plate 1
Leaden Ampulla from Old Dalby (front)

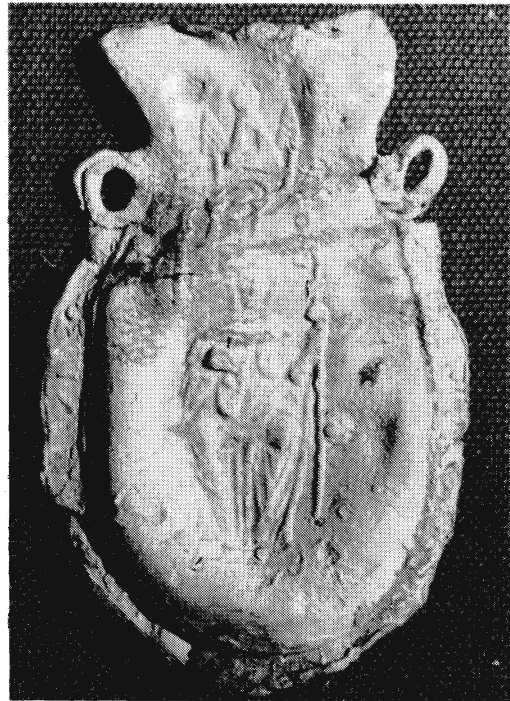


Plate 2
Leaden Ampulla from Old Dalby (reverse)

Two Leaden Ampullae from Leicestershire

A leaden ampulla found in 1979 at Old Dalby is one of the earliest pilgrim souvenirs to have survived in England. Made at the beginning of the 13th century, it was designed to hold a drop of the miracle-working water that was evidently dispensed to pilgrims at the Benedictine abbey of St. Mary and St. Modwenna, Burton-on-Trent, Staffs. The owner of the ampulla would doubtless have worn it, both as a memento and talisman, suspended from a cord round his neck and, following common practice, may eventually have hung it up at home or in his parish church to be handy for the neighbourhood should urgent need arise for a thaumaturgic remedy.

On one side of the ampulla, probably the front (Plate 1) is depicted on a diapered ground the figure of Our Lady seated on a cushioned, backless throne. She wears a low crown and holds a sceptre fleur-de-lis over her right shoulder and supports a rather stiff figure of the Holy Child on her left arm. Above them is a building or canopy comprising two round-headed arches topped by towers with roofs or pinnacles. Surrounding the flask and running from one handle to the other is a band inscribed *SANCTA MARIA SIT NOBIS PIA* (St. Mary be kind to us).

On the reverse (Plate 2), similarly enthroned, is the figure of Modwenna, an obscure 7th-century saint who lived for a time as an anchorite at Andressy near Burton-on-Trent and was eventually buried within the abbey church at Burton. The ampulla, however, shows her as an abbess, with veil and wimple, book and crosier, reinforcing one tradition which also regarded her as the founder of a nunnery at Trensall, Staffs. The canopy above her has three arches surmounted by a roof with a ball-finial and (following the conventions of contemporary seals) a pair of turrets roofed with shingles. On this side the encircling inscription reads *IMAGO*

SANTE MODVEN VIRG (The image of St. Modwenna the Virgin). Presumably it was this image which still had its devotees in 1536 when the Reformers removed it from the well-chapel, defaced its canopy and took away the crutches, shirts and other votive offerings left by those who had been cured.¹

A somewhat fuller version of the same inscription occurs on a very similar, perhaps slightly earlier, ampulla found at Pickwell, Leics. (Leicester Mus. No. 40.1890), the obverse of which, however, is inscribed IMAGO SANCTE MARIE VIRGINIS BVRTONIE (The image of St. Mary the Virgin of Burton). It is thus perfectly clear that the figure of the Virgin Mary on the front of the ampulla from Old Dalby specifically commemorates the wonder-working statue of Our Lady Of Burton.

Ampullae of the same general form as the Old Dalby specimen, but associated with pilgrimages to other Benedictine shrines at Evesham and Canterbury also appear from internal evidence to belong to the opening of the 13th century.² A third ampulla from Burton, found in Friar Lane, Leicester (Leicester Mus. No.155.1855) fits in with fashions as they are thought to have developed in the second quarter of the 13th century.³

Comparatively large ampullae, their iconography often supported by inscriptions, continued to be the typical English travel souvenir for the rest of the 13th century. Thereafter pilgrim badges quickly took over the pictorial role of the ampullae, which then diminished to become more functional flasks, small enough to be stitched to the wearer's hat. A leaden ampulla (Fig. 1) found in 1980 at Kirby Bellars is a good example of one of these later medieval specimens. The decoration on it, a Maltese cross, is characteristically simple, too cryptic to convey any certain meaning to us now.

Notes

1. Thomas Wright ed. *Letters relating to the Suppression of Monasteries* (London, 1843), 143
2. Brian Spencer 'An ampulla of St. Egwin and St. Edwin' in *Antiquaries Journal* 51, (1971) 316-318; and 'The ampullae from Cuckoo Lane' in Colin Platt and Richard Coleman-Smith eds. *Excavations in Medieval Southampton 1953-1969* (Leicester, 1975), 245-6
3. *Ibid.* 246 and Brian Spencer 'Pilgrim Souvenirs' in report on the excavations at Trig Lane, London (*London & Middlesex Archaeological Society's Special Paper No.5*, forthcoming).

Brian Spencer

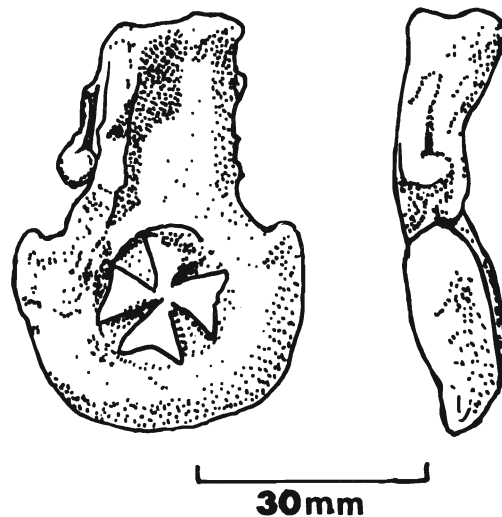


Fig. 1. Leaden Ampulla found in 1980 at Kirby Bellars

A Transverse Flint Arrowhead from Drayton, Leicestershire, with Extensive Secondary Flaking

SUMMARY

The arrowhead here illustrated (Fig. 1) is noteworthy in offering a further possibility of extending Clark's typology (Clark 1934) to include examples with extensive secondary flaking. This has already been the case with 'lopsided' or 'oblique' arrowheads (Clark types H to I), and can now be done with respect to his type D, the 'halberd' or 'chisel-ended' arrowhead.

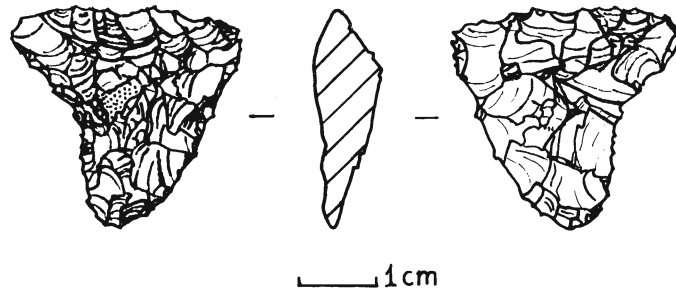


Fig 1. Drayton Flint Arrowhead

DISCOVERY

The arrowhead was found by Mrs Kay Gowland whilst fieldwalking with the Leicestershire Museums Archaeological Survey Team on the Roman site in the Welland valley at Drayton which has already produced some prehistoric pottery (*T.L.A.H.S.*, LII [1976-7] 98; LIII [1977-8] 88; acc. no 2, 1978). This season's finds include flint cores, debitage, flakes, and a small serrated snapped blade, in addition to the present arrowhead. Grateful thanks are due to Mr W. Brooke Clarke of Upper Leighs Farm, Drayton, for granting access to the land.

DESCRIPTION

The arrowhead is complete, with the possible exception of a slight nick in one corner (see Fig. 1) which however does seem to be the result of the original flaking process. It is in good condition, with no cortication.

The flint is almost transparent, light brown in colour, with two thin veins of dark brown colour-banding in the top right and bottom corners respectively of the dorsal face (left in Fig. 1). The ventral face exhibits in approximately one quarter of its area towards the top edge a milky-white colouration within the flint itself.

In form the arrowhead is sub-triangular with rounded corner angles. Two edges are very slightly convex, the third concave. The thickness of the implement (see Table 1) seems slightly excessive in relation to its overall slender form and otherwise fine workmanship, as discussed below, and has been caused by a failure to remove part of the base of the cortex on a small central area of the dorsal face, which thus projects beyond the plane of the rest of that face (see section, Fig.1). There is extensive shallow secondary flaking over the whole of both faces with the single exception mentioned above. Steep retouch is confined to the two side edges of the dorsal face, leaving the upper edge in the illustration un-retouched, and sharp from the secondary flaking.

DISCUSSION

The existence of one sharp flake edge lacking the steep retouch of the other two sides makes this arrowhead reminiscent of the 'petit-tranchet derivative' transverse arrowheads defined by Clark (1934), even though his typology set out to include only those arrowheads making use of one edge at least of the original flake un-retouched, with little or no secondary surface flaking. However, even his own illustrations include some of the 'oblique' type with more extensive retouch, and Stevenson (1947) has pointed out further examples with extensive secondary flaking, which otherwise fit into Clark's typology. Another example of this 'lopsided' or single-barbed arrowhead type with secondary flaking over a large proportion of its area is published by Grimes (1960), in which the whole of the illustrated face has been shaped by flaking.

It further seems admissible to apply Clark's typology to the present example on metrical grounds. The arrowhead is very similar in overall proportions and in the marked concavity of one edge to examples of his type D, especially Nos. 22, 24 and 26 of his figures 6-8, and Table 1 of the present note shows that the dimensions of the Drayton arrowhead accord well with Green's detailed study of the morphology of chisel-ended arrowheads (1980, 30-44).

TABLE 1

Dimensions of the Drayton Arrowhead Compared with those of other chisel-ended arrowheads

<i>Dimension</i>	<i>Drayton Arrowhead</i>	<i>Majority of Chisel Arrowheads (after Green 1980)</i>
Length from centre of 'cutting' edge (Green's dimension r)	29mm	27-39mm
Breadth across 'cutting' edge (Green's dimension t)	31mm	21-42mm
Maximum thickness	8mm	4-7mm
Ratio of Length to Breadth	c.1:1	c.1:1

An arrowhead from Amotherby near Malton, almost identical to the Drayton example in size and shape, is illustrated by Evans (1897, 391 and fig. 330). He places it in his triangular class, but describes it as a 'broader and less distinctly barbed form' of this class, with secondary flaking 'over both faces'. The extent of steep edge retouch if any is not indicated, but this specimen from Amotherby would seem to be a possible further candidate for inclusion in Clark's type D applied to chisel arrowheads with secondary flaking.

The brown tone of the Drayton implement calls to mind Stevenson's (1947) remarks on the darker tones of flint seemingly chosen by the makers of certain types of transverse arrowhead in Scotland, in which he follows up Callander (1928). The source of the flint for the Drayton arrowhead is unknown, but Bamford (1966) has pointed out the coincidence of distribution pattern, in Scotland at any rate, of transverse arrowheads and polished discoidal knives, and drawn attention to the possibility of long-distance trade suggested by Atkinson. In this country the distribution of the chisel-ended transverse arrowheads is generally similar to that of other arrowhead types (Green 1980, 103-5). They are sparse in the Midlands, although there is a concentration in the South Pennines area, which Green links with the other presumed-pastoral areas of Wessex, the Breckland and the Yorkshire Wolds.

Search has revealed no published associations or dating evidence for the Drayton type of secondarily-flaked chisel arrowhead, but the associations of the standard chisel arrowhead are markedly non-sepulchral, in contrast with the high proportions of leaf-shaped and barbed and tanged arrowheads found in burial contexts (Green 1980, 76). They are found in Neolithic and early Beaker contexts, transverse arrowheads being particularly associated with Rinyo-Clacton settlement sites. The chisel-ended variety has earlier origins than the oblique type, being associated for example with the Woodlands rather than the Durrington Walls sub-style of the Rinyo-Clacton. Earliest radio-carbon dates for chisel types (from Llandegai henge and Town-

leyhall settlement beneath the passage grave) lie in the late fourth and early third millennia B.C. They are also associated with chamber tombs, especially passage graves; with henge monuments; with flint mines; and with other major engineering projects perhaps carried out by the Rinyo-Clacton 'people' (Green 1980, 108-110). Peterborough ware and other late Neolithic ceramics also occur in association, as do the early Beakers of Steps 1 and 2, the latest certain dates being around 1850 B.C. Chisel arrowheads apparently did not survive into the Early Bronze Age proper, becoming obsolescent at the close of the Southern Beaker period around 1500 B.C. (Green 1980, 110-4), thus anticipating the decline in flint arrowheads and archery in general at the end of the second millennium B.C., with the full advent of a bronze weaponry.

If it can be agreed that the Drayton arrowhead belongs to the chisel-ended group on the grounds given, it may be that its extensive flaking represents a typologically later development of the simple form, and that it may thus occur in the latter part of the period discussed above.

Experiment has shown (Radley 1966) that this 'halberd' or chisel form of arrowhead is a 'well-balanced and successful aerodynamic shape'. No microwear analysis has yet taken place to determine uses to which these artefacts were put (Green 1980, 8), and transverse arrowheads would seem to be prime candidates for study in this respect. It is usually assumed that the chisel types were hafted with the cutting edge at right angles to the shaft of the arrow, by insertion into a cleft in the shaft, perhaps with the assistance of a resinous or bituminous glue, and binding of cord or animal sinew (Green 1980, 7-8 and 170-183). The use normally suggested is in hunting, especially of birds and small mammals, although pictographic examples from ancient Egypt illustrate their use against bulls and ostriches. They would possibly cause a hamstring injury or other serious damage, but would certainly leave a wide, bleeding wound which would both result in a trail of blood easy to follow, and eventually cause the animal to weaken and drop through loss of blood (Green 1980, 146).

A case has however more recently been made out for interpreting the primary function of flint arrowheads as weapons, not so much for hunting as for warfare, perhaps between the users of different types of arrowhead, and perhaps as a seasonal occupation in otherwise stable Neolithic populations. Certainly examples of the 'petit-tranchet derivative' types have been found embedded in the vertebrae of human skeletons, both in a rock-cut tomb in France and in the ditch at Stonehenge (Green 1980, 170-9).

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I am grateful to Mr J. Martin, Keeper of Earth Sciences, Leicestershire Museums Service, for valuable comment on the flint, and to Mr R.A. Rutland, Keeper of Antiquities, Leicestershire Museums Service and Mr Derek Simpson of Leicester University Department of Archaeology, who read the text.

Anne Cookson

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Leicestershire Archaeological Field Unit
Annual Report: 1980

Although this has been a difficult year in many respects and progress has been steady rather than spectacular nevertheless members of the Unit have once again been involved in a wide variety of activities. During the year the Unit welcomed two new members of staff; Richard Buckley, who replaced Clare Allin as Field Officer, and Helen Clamp, who took up a new post as Roman Pottery Assistant.

The most frustrating aspect of the year's activities concerned the proposed excavation on the site of the projected High Street development. Negotiations concerning this site first began in 1975 but soon ran into difficulties. However in June 1980 with a new approach from the City Council and the Co-op the prospect of excavation appeared imminent only to recede over the following months until it now seems as far away as ever. This experience was a most unsettling one as much time was given to preliminary organization for a major excavation and in consequence progress on other projects has been slowed down.

Three fairly small-scale excavations were undertaken in the City during the year, one on Causeway Lane and two separate sites on the Norfolk Street villa. The Causeway Lane excavation directed by Richard Buckley in the north-east quarter of the town was in an area which has seen little archaeological investigation so far. Occupation on the site was represented during both the Roman and medieval periods mainly by a number of pits containing domestic rubbish though no trace was found of contemporary structures of either period. Perhaps the most interesting feature of the site was the fact that during both periods of activity a large area of ground was respected by the pits perhaps indicating the site of a building.

Between May and July the site of the west wing of the Norfolk Street villa, first explored in 1881, was re-excavated. Two of the tessellated pavements recorded in 1851 were re-located and lifted by Theodore Sturge. This procedure was accomplished without disturbing the underlying levels in contrast to the method employed to lift the apsidal Dolphin mosaic from the same site in 1852 which had involved digging a hole about a metre deep below the mosaic and disturbing a considerable area around it.

Once again there were indications of earlier activity on the site before the construction of the west range and also for at least two phases of occupation of the building itself.

In October John Lucas and Richard Buckley returned to the Norfolk Street villa to excavate a further area east of Buckingham Street and of the 1979 excavation. The villa buildings proved to be still continuing down the hill and the excavation of this site is not yet completed. The Unit also recorded evidence from a massive Roman building, within the area of the Roman town, on Bath Lane. In this connection we must record our gratitude to Messrs. Hardings Ltd. who were redeveloping the site and who not only permitted members of staff to maintain a watching brief but also allowed the Unit to do more detailed recording and clearing up of the area over the Easter weekend. Although the site was badly disturbed and excavation was limited to defining major features in plan and clearing sections nevertheless there was evidence for a fairly major building here in the Roman period, with an apse, hypocaust and a colonnade.

Some time during the year was spent in checking the proofs of the Austin Friars report. Patrick Clay has completed the reports on the excavation of the barrows at Eaton and Sproxtton, and, with Ann Stirland has contributed a further note on the Beaker burials at Smeeton Westerby. John Lucas has continued to study the building materials from the excavations at the Norfolk Street villa. Several tons of roofing tile, flue-tile and flat tiles have already been recovered from this site and its analysis will provide a sound basis for the study of this material from other sites in the area. Richard Buckley has been studying the coin loss in Roman Leicester which again provides a useful background against which the coin evidence from individual sites can be seen. Helen Clamp and Deborah Sawday have continued work on the

Roman and medieval pottery from two sites on St. Nicholas Circle. Again much time has been spent on establishing a framework for this study and devising a recording system. In addition Deborah Sawday and Ann Rainsbury (Student Assistant, Archaeology) have devoted much time and effort to the documentation project which is concerned with the computerisation of accession records for the whole Museum service in Leicestershire. We hope to be able to use the computer for research on archaeological material, to generate indices and thus facilitate the retrieval of information which at present has to be sorted manually. Both Miss Sawday and Miss Rainsbury deserve our heartfelt gratitude and congratulations for the way in which they have got to grips with the unfamiliar concepts of computerisation.

During the year we have also welcomed Mrs. Rosemary Woodland again. Mrs. Woodland worked on the medieval pottery from the Austin Friars and returned to us in 1980 to study the medieval pottery from the Rutland Field Research Group's excavation at Nether Hambleton. Theodore Sturge has continued reconstruction of the Roman wall-paintings from the Norfolk Street villa. This has been a long and painstaking task but is at last nearing completion. The final panel will be c.3 metres high and 5 metres long and the entire decorative scheme from floor to ceiling is represented. Mr. Sturge has also begun work on the wall-painting from the other side of the clay-brick wall which is much less complete; nevertheless it seems likely that it will be possible to reconstruct the general design. In September Mr. Sturge and Miss Mellor reported on the discovery and conservation of the Norfolk Street material to an international seminar held at Cambridge. Later in the year Miss Mellor and Mr. Pearce contributed a paper on the Austin Friars to a conference on Urban Friaries at York.

Members of staff from the Field Unit and the Survey Team again co-operated to present aspects of current research as a series of evening classes at Vaughan College and at Birstall. Both courses evoked a popular response and were enjoyed by both speakers and classes. Reports on the excavations of the Sproxton barrow and the Norfolk Street villa were presented to the Society during the year and members of staff also addressed a number of smaller local groups and societies. Helen Clamp and Terry Pearce conducted a Saturday school on pottery identifications for members of the Museums Fieldwork Group.

Mr. Pearce also organized two coach trips for the Fieldwork Group both of which proved extremely popular. The first of these, in July, visited the excavation of the medieval village at Wharram Percy and also the excavations at Coppergate in York. In October the expedition had a Roman bias, visiting the Lunt reconstructed Roman fort, the museum and amphitheatre at Cirencester and the Chedworth Roman villa and also seized the opportunity to visit the excavation of a long barrow at Hazleton nearby.

Courses and conferences attended by members of staff this year seem to have had a distinctly Roman bias including Roman towns and urban defences, villas and mosaics, though conferences on Iron Age pottery and on ceramic petrology were also attended. Miss Mellor and Mr. Pearce continued to attend the East Midlands Committee of Field Archaeologists whose programme this year included a seminar on medieval rural settlement in the area and also a discussion on documentation.

In conclusion, at the end of a difficult year, it is still a pleasure to acknowledge the support and loyalty of the Unit staff, the help we have received from other sections within the Museum and the interest shown in all aspects of our work by both professional and amateur colleagues

Jean Mellor

Fieldwork in Leicestershire 1980

The Leicestershire Museums Archaeological Survey Team, now comprising Pete Liddle, Fred Hartley and Anne Cookson, has continued to co-ordinate the work of the community-based archaeological fieldwork groups and to set up new groups. Sixteen groups are now in existence

and the fruits of some of their work is contained in the notes below. The Survey Team has also continued its own programme of fieldwork. Fred Hartley has continued to fly with Jim Pickering and to process the results of aerial archaeology. He has also continued the programme of earthwork recording with surveys at Frisby (Ashby Pastures), Leicester (Bird's Nest and Evington), Quorn, Ullesthorpe, Newbold Saucey, Owston (several sites), Allexton, Gaulby, Kings Norton, Cold Newton and Stoughton.

Fieldwalking by Pete Liddle and Anne Cookson has been concentrated on following up aerial photographs and beginning an area survey of the Medbourne district.

P. Liddle

Reports of Fieldwork 1980

BARLESTONE (SK 426054)

During land clearance for a housing estate a series of medieval and post-medieval pottery sherds were picked up from the immediate area of the manor-house.

BURTON-ON-THE-WOLDS (SK 587212)

A Neolithic flint axe has been picked up on a building site by Mr. N.G. Hackett. It is flaked but not ground. Maximum dimensions are 16.4 cms by 6.5 cms. It remains in Mr. Hackett's possession.

COLD NEWTON

A rectangular site was photographed from the air by James Pickering in 1976 and, since 1977, members of the LAHS fieldwork group under the direction of V. and M.P. Williams have been carrying out resistivity surveying at the site. Although initially it was suggested that the site may have been the monastic grange known to have existed in the parish, drainage work in 1980 brought to the surface Roman pottery and tile and building stone and slate. The pottery has been dated by Helen Clamp of LMAFU to the second to fourth centuries. The site, then, is Roman with a rectangular boundary about 65 metres by 75 metres enclosing at least two buildings. The boundary is of stone, up to 1 metre wide in places. There may be an outer enclosure also.

It is intended to continue the survey in 1981 and thanks are due to the farmer for his continuing help and interest.

DESFORD (SK 487022)

A Neolithic flint-axe with polished blade has been found by Mr. B.H. Neep. The blade had been damaged in antiquity.

DRAYTON

The site of Drayton II Roman villa was fieldwalked and Prehistoric and Roman pottery, Roman tile, tesserae and building-stone was again seen. Struck and worked flint was also recovered, including a chisel type transverse arrowhead (see note). Mr. Brooke Clarke recovered a Roman column capital/base from a trench in the same field.

GROBY (SK 531078)

Groby Archaeology Society have surveyed a dam running north-east to south-west, some 58 metres long by 17 metres wide at the base and between 1 metre and 1.8 metres high. It is interpreted as a mill or fishpond dam.

KILBY (SP 604953)

The site of the northern section of Foston deserted village was ploughed for the first time and subsequently fieldwalked. A scatter of medieval and later pottery was located.

LEICESTER (SK 587048)

Building work between Mansfield Street and Belgrave Gate revealed a Roman well lined with Charnwood stone. Material was discovered by F.I. Glen, including pottery, building material and ironwork, and deposited at Leicestershire Museums. On the same site a skeleton, much disturbed by previous building, was encountered. It lay approximately north to south and Roman pottery was in the grave.

LUBBESTHORPE (SK 548014)

Fieldwalking revealed a small amount of Roman pottery in association with a distinct red patch in the plough soil.

MEDBOURNE

Fieldwalking of fields bounded by the Slawston Road, the Hallaton road and the disused railway has revealed Roman pottery in some quantity, especially centred on SP 793938 and SP 791935. Superficial examination suggests a predominantly first to second century date for both scatters but with more later material from the second, which is associated with large amounts of slag.

MELTON (SK 724211)

Fieldwork by Melton Archaeological Fieldwork Group near to Welby deserted village has produced two pieces of tile and a scatter of Roman pottery. The pottery included grey and colour-coated wares and hammer-headed mortaria. Mixed with these were possible Iron Age and Medieval sherds including Midland Purple, Cistercian and Sandy wares.

NEWBOLD VERDON (SK 445031)

A rectangular crop-mark discovered from the air by Jim Pickering was fieldwalked by the Newbold Verdon and District Fieldwork Group and produced Roman pottery in small quantities. A preliminary resistivity survey proved inconclusive due to the effects of ridge and furrow.

NEWBOLD VERDON (SK 440034)

To the south of the present Hall and moat is a series of earthworks associated with this manorial complex. The Newbold Verdon and District Fieldwork Group have now surveyed these and suggest landscape gardening and drainage as their function. Fishponds and a dam are probably medieval.

OSBASTON (SK 427046)

Fieldwalking by Newbold Verdon and District Fieldwork Group produced a scatter of flint immediately below the crest of a promontory. Scraper, blades, flakes and cores were all found. The form of the cores suggest a Mesolithic component, while the presence of thumb-nail scrapers suggest Bronze Age activity, although the majority of the material is not closely dateable.

PEATLING MAGNA (SP 599924)

Mr. John Rawlings recovered Roman pottery during the stripping of top-soil for a pipe-line dug

in connection with sewerage work. Subsequent rescue work by Leicestershire Museums recorded and partially excavated gulleys, pits, ovens, post holes and other Roman features. The most substantial structure was a T-shaped oven. In the fill of this were many fragments of box-flue tile indicating a substantial building nearby.

QUORN (SK 555156)

Dr William Newnham has found a small moated site on the land of Mill Farm. It appears to be within the bounds of Buddon Park and may mark the site of the park-lodge.

QUORN (SK 565157)

Mr. Jim Boswell has recovered more prehistoric material from an area newly cleared of trees adjacent to Buddon Wood Quarry. This includes Late Bronze Age/Early Iron Age pottery, flint flakes and cores and utilised pebbles.

RIDLINGTON (SK 833018)

Aerial photographs show a ring-ditch and probably geological features. Ground-checking revealed a flint scatter, the limits of which were established on three sides. The northern limits have not been found but the area covers at least fourteen hectares. Full analysis of the flint has not yet taken place but superficial analysis suggests that the bulk may well be Mesolithic although Bronze Age material is also present.

SCALFORD (SK 782256)

The Roman site reported in *T.L.A.H.S.*, LIII has produced further sherds of Samian, colour-coated and grey wares, many tesserae, tile and slate. The shape of the scatter suggests a villa of courtyard or winged corridor type. A Bronze Age arrowhead was also found in the same field. All work has been undertaken by Melton Archaeological Fieldwork Group.

SHEEPY (SK 352008)

A scatter of medieval and later pottery was collected from the garden of Ushers Cottage, Main Street, Sibson by Mr. Dave Preston of the Newbold Verdon and District Fieldwork Group.

SILEBY (SK 616164)

A quern base-stone of 35 cms diameter of millstone grit found with trace of iron centre pin in the bank of the brook. Roman potsherds, including part of an amphora, have been found downstream of this point. A quern fragment has also been found 'about two hundred yards upstream'. All the finds have been by Mr. Owen Freer.

SWANNINGTON (SK 422167)

Fieldwalking near Red Hill Farm, Swannington by Stephen and Paul Saunders of the North-West Leicestershire Fieldwork Group has located a scatter of Roman pottery, including Derbyshire Ware and grey ware.

SWEPSTONE (SK 379107)

The topstone of a beehive quern in hard brown sandstone was found by Arthur Hurst of North-West Leicestershire Fieldwork Group.

WESTRILL AND STARMORE (SP 585802)

Several sherds of early Roman pottery were found weathered out of the north face of one of the disused quarries on Gravel Hill in the area where similar material had been found by Jack Lucas.

P. Liddle