

EARLY IRON AGE PITS AT BLEDLOW

In such times as the present it is perhaps more than usually desirable to record new archaeological discoveries in our area, and it is with this thought that I make a preliminary reference to a series of shallow pits discovered in the chalk subsoil of the lower N.W. slopes of Lodge Hall, Saunderton.* The site lies actually some 650 yards above the Upper Icknield Way, within the parish of Bledlow, on its eastern edge; and is situated 61 yards from the Bledlow-Saunderton parish boundary on either side of a hedgerow which runs in a south-easterly direction from the aforesaid parish boundary.

An excavation of the site was completed by the writer prior to the War, and it is hoped to offer a full account of the excavation and its results at a more favourable opportunity. For the time being it must suffice to say that much of the pottery recovered, characterised as it is by incised rectilinear decoration, indented finger print ornament and highly polished surface, appears to indicate an important, and hitherto unrecognised, north-easterly extension of the Early Iron Age (more specifically known as Iron Age A) culture of the Thames Valley.—This culture seems to have persisted in the Upper Thames basin almost unchanged right down to Iron Age C (or Belgic) times, with little or no influence from the more westerly Iron Age B. A site at Ellesborough, reported in the *Records*, Vol. IX, p. 349, and similarly situated beside the Upper Icknield Way, has yielded almost identical pottery; and in order to cover fully the Early Iron Age in South Bucks it will no doubt prove desirable to consider the two sites together in the forthcoming report. A few sherds from the Bledlow excavation may possibly prove to be later, and a twisted iron hook, rather of the Welwyn

* Latitude 51° 41' 52" N. Longitude 0° 51½ W.

firedog type, recovered from one of the pits, may well go with them. Among the finds was a ring-headed and shouldered bronze pin recovered from an occupation level just below the brim of the pits, and several bone implements, some bearing a sawmarked pattern as observed on similar objects from the All Cannings (Wiltshire) type station, were found about the margin of the pits.

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