

# A CORPUS OF ANGLO-SAXON WEAPONS AND KNIVES IN BUCKINGHAMSHIRE COUNTY MUSEUM

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*Fifty-six Anglo-Saxon weapons and knives in Buckinghamshire County Museum, not previously published, are catalogued and illustrated. None of the finds were recovered by archaeological excavation. All provenances are in Buckinghamshire and the finds date from the early fifth to the eleventh centuries A.D. A discussion of possible contexts and deposition processes is included.*

The museum has acquired a sizeable collection of Anglo-Saxon ironwork since about 1860; however, only those objects from excavated contexts have been published and illustrated as a matter of course. There is still an important body of material to be made known and this corpus is published to redress the problem. This project forms part of the programme of documenting the entire collections of the County Museum and of X-raying the more important metalwork. Most of the material in this study dates from the Early Saxon period.

The elusive nature of Anglo-Saxon sites is demonstrated by the way the finds were made: invariably by chance. Twenty were found by quarrying, nine by work on the land, seven by building work, four by dredging and one by a fisherman; four were metal detected. Nine finds are now unprovenanced. Most of the finds were made in the nineteenth and very early twentieth centuries and in no case was satisfactory archaeological recording possible.

Of the forty six provenanced finds from eighty-four sites, thirty-three are from definite burials, two are most likely so, nine are from running water and two are strays. Those from burials are all from cemeteries, with the exception of Nos. 40 & 42, which are isolated finds, but indicate a likely cemetery. The tantalisingly brief accounts of discoveries suggest a range of funerary practices. The majority are from extended inhumation cemeteries;

for example, bodies were placed north-south, Bishopstone, No. 1, (Lowndes 1867) east-west, Quainton, Nos. 45 & 46, (anon. 1858) and ESE-WNW, Ellesborough, No. 55, (Cocks 1909). However, the radial cemetery at Tickford, No. 2, (anon. 1900) is a rare plan, paralleled in the area only by Cuddesdon, Oxon, (Dickinson 1974). Paired graves are claimed to have been positioned either side of a small stone pit, whose use is not discussed, at Quainton, Nos. 45 & 46. A spearhead bearing traces of mineralised plant remains, High Wycombe, No. 12, may have come from a grave and hints at the practice of laying the corpse upon grass or flowers, also indicated by similar items from Bottle Dump Corner, Tattenhoe, (Parkhouse & Smith 1994). It is relevant to mention here two sixth-century brooches in the collection. A saucer brooch from Bishopstone (AYBCM 1880.19.1) has ferruginised fly pupae cases on its reverse and a small-long brooch from Woburn Sands (AYBCM 1994.79.1) has mineralised insect eggs on its reverse. Both indicate the practice of exposing dressed corpses for a period of time long enough for flies to take advantage of the custom.

Evidence of a funeral feast is claimed at Tickford, No. 2, (Smith 1905) and animal bones are associated with other sites. Possible horse bones were reputedly found at Upper Winchendon, No. 15, (BCM 1905), although whether or not they are contemporary with the cemetery will never be known. The Walton (Aylesbury) cemetery, Nos. 20

& 21, (anon. 1863 & Smyth 1863), yielded a stag's head, antlers of several stags and some boars' tusks, both being creatures of the chase and perhaps a suitable accompaniment for the spear-carrying inhabitants.

Grave goods range from the rich cemeteries of Bishopstone and Newport Pagnell with their high-status weapons, jewellery, glass beaker and Frankish 'bucket' or drinking cup, to the burials apparently only accompanied by knives, Nos. 45, 46 & 55. Personal keepsakes or amulets figured at Tythrop (coin of Hadrian) and Ellesborough (cowrie shell).

Deposition of valued possessions in significant places, such as water sources, is now recognized as a phenomenon that is both long-standing and geographically widespread (Bradley 1990). Nine of these finds came from river sites. Two spearheads, Nos. 11 & 23, a battle axe, No. 44, and a knife, No. 52, come from the Thames. Two spearheads, Nos. 17 & 32, and a scramasax, No. 54, come from the Thame and two spearheads, Nos. 24 & 34, from the Ouse. The findspot of the spearhead from Buckingham, No. 33, is uncertain, but its superb preservation suggests a watery (anaerobic) burial environment. The deposition of weapons at these 'liminal' sites, (i. e. sites which could be perceived as being on the threshold between this world and the next), could also have a protective intention; with the possible exception of No. 34 none of them had been ritually damaged before deposition, unless the missing shafts had been broken first.

An unusual leaf-shaped spearhead (already in print) was excavated with burial 125 at Bottle Dump Corner (Parkhouse & Smith 1994). Measuring 440mm x 65mm it is exceptionally large and ostentatious and X-rays revealed that it had no central strengthening core. It is suggested that it may have been forged as a ceremonial or a mortuary blade and is comparable with a longer one, 495mm, (Bradwell Abbey Field Centre collection 1975/25), also from the same parish of Shenley Brook End, but not from the same cemetery. This type of spearhead is not as yet known from anywhere else in Buckinghamshire.

Approximately 85% of the finds come from

north of the Icknield belt. This distribution could reflect a variety of factors, such as nearness to and willingness to donate to this museum, rather than any historical or topographical cause. Likewise, the cluster of burial sites in and just south of the Vale of Aylesbury, may reflect the intensity of development. A comprehensive discussion of early Anglo-Saxon cemetery evidence for the county as a whole, which presents a similar picture, can be found in Hunn, Lawson & Farley (1994).

The general condition of the ironwork is remarkable considering the absence of modern 'first-aid' conservation and the post-discovery history of most of these finds; a tribute to the original smiths, particularly sword No. 1 and the three pattern-welded spearheads, Nos. 32, 33 & 34. The remarkable manufacturing technique of the latter group was only revealed by X-rays. Iron is notoriously the most difficult of metals to preserve and subtle evidence of manufacture, use and burial is often preserved in the surface layer, which is quickly lost during corrosion and unskilled cleaning; the spearheads Nos. 25 & 26 are particularly well preserved. The peculiar preservative property of water and silts is responsible for the best specimens (as also with copper alloy) and unprovenanced material can sometimes be attributed to this burial environment because of its appearance.

It cannot be urged strongly enough that newly discovered metalwork should be brought to professional attention at the earliest possible moment. Lastly, it must be stressed that the accumulation of stray evidence at one official record centre provides the best opportunity to build up a picture of past events.

A few objects are excluded from the corpus: an iron socket from a spearhead and part of a knife, which were removed from Burne or Bourn Hill at Stone in 1849, are of uncertain date and of uncertain relationship to the other finds, (Cocks 1907). Other objects are already in print, for example, a knife, fragments of a possible scabbard and a spear from an adult male inhumation at Bledlow Cop, (Head 1940). A later X-ray of that knife shows that the 'rivet' described in the published report is only a corrosion tubercle. Walton, Aylesbury, (Farley 1978), produced three unstratified knives presumed to be early-middle Saxon on form, one knife

from a tenth-century feature, one derived knife in a twelfth or thirteenth-century feature and two arrowheads from an eleventh century 'midden'. Two knives and four spearheads from the seventh-century inhumation cemetery at Bottle Dump Corner, Tattenhoe, Milton Keynes, have been recently published, (Parkhouse & Smith 1994), while the report of the inhumation cemetery at Rislip Farm, Soulbury, (in preparation), includes two further knives. The finds from these sites are therefore not included here.

The objects in this corpus fall into five groups: 1. swords, 2. spearheads, 3. shield fittings, 4. axe, 5. knives. In three cases existing typologies have been used: spearheads (Swanton 1973), shield fittings (Dickinson & Härke 1992), knives (Evison 1987).

### ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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### CATALOGUE

*Buckinghamshire County Museum accession numbers are prefixed AYBCM.*

#### SWORDS

##### 5th – 6th centuries A. D.

1. Fig. 1. Flat blade, one sloping shoulder survives; tapering tang with bar-shaped pommel. The X-ray image shows a faintly crystalline structure which is not present in the other swords. Length 840mm × max width 50mm × max thickness 4.5mm × width pommel 30mm.

From an inhumation cemetery in 'Cursley' Field, Bishopstone, discovered in 1866 when workmen opened a sandpit. Most bodies lay full length in a N-S direction though a few were contracted. Artefacts dated typologically to the early 5th – early

6th centuries A. D. AYBCM 1880.1.1

*Related objects:* AYBCM 1880.2.1–1880.37.1 (shield bosses, spearheads, knives, jewellery, tweezers); 1880.60.1 (urn); 1992.101.1–2 (pair of saucer brooches).

Published refs.: *Recs. Bucks.*, 3 (1867), 164. *Recs. Bucks.*, 5 (1878), 23–25, pl. 1. *Recs. Bucks.*, 14 (1946), 314, 324–333. Baldwin Brown (1915), 637. Meany (1964), 56.

2. Fig. 1. Flat blade with shoulders sloping into tang; pommel missing. A blade fragment with no obvious join was marked at the time of acquisition as part of this sword. Length 745mm × length detached fragment 95mm × max width 47mm × max thickness blade 5mm.

From a radial inhumation cemetery at Tickford Park Estate, Newport Pagnell. Discovered in 1899 by workmen digging for gravel. The bodies were placed in an inner and an outer circle around a central internment, with the feet all pointing to the centre. There were probable remains of a funeral feast. Artefacts dated to about 500 A. D. AYBCM 1905.616.1.1 & AYBCM 1905.616.1.2

*Related objects:* 1905.3.1–1905.12.1 (glass beaker, 'bucket' or cup mounts, jewellery, spearhead, flints); 1905.614.1–1905.616.2 (human bones and sword, No. 3).

Published Refs: *Antiquary* 36 (1900), 97. *Berks. Bucks & Oxon. J.* 4 (1898–1899), 31. Baldwin Brown, 4 (1915), 636–637. *Recs. Bucks.*, 14 (1946), 316. Meany (1964), 58. Dickinson (1974), 19.

3. Fig. 1. Flat blade with one straight shoulder and part of tang surviving; pommel missing. The X-ray image shows remnants of the original handle grip on the tang and also faintly on the shoulders. Length 857mm × max width 52mm × max thickness blade 4mm. AYBCM 1905.616.2

Provenance as No. 2, Tickford Park, Newport Pagnell.

4. Fig. 1. Flat blade with semi-sloping shoulders; tapering tang with part of bar-shaped pommel. Length 900mm × max width 63mm × max thickness blade 3mm. AYBCM archt. 4

Unprovenanced.

#### SPEARHEADS

##### Swanton, Series B2, derivative form

##### 5th – early 6th centuries A. D.

5. Fig. 2. Annular socket; leaf-shaped blade widest in lower half; pronounced lozenge-shaped midrib extending full length; incomplete. Original sharpening marks near and on the tip, but extensive

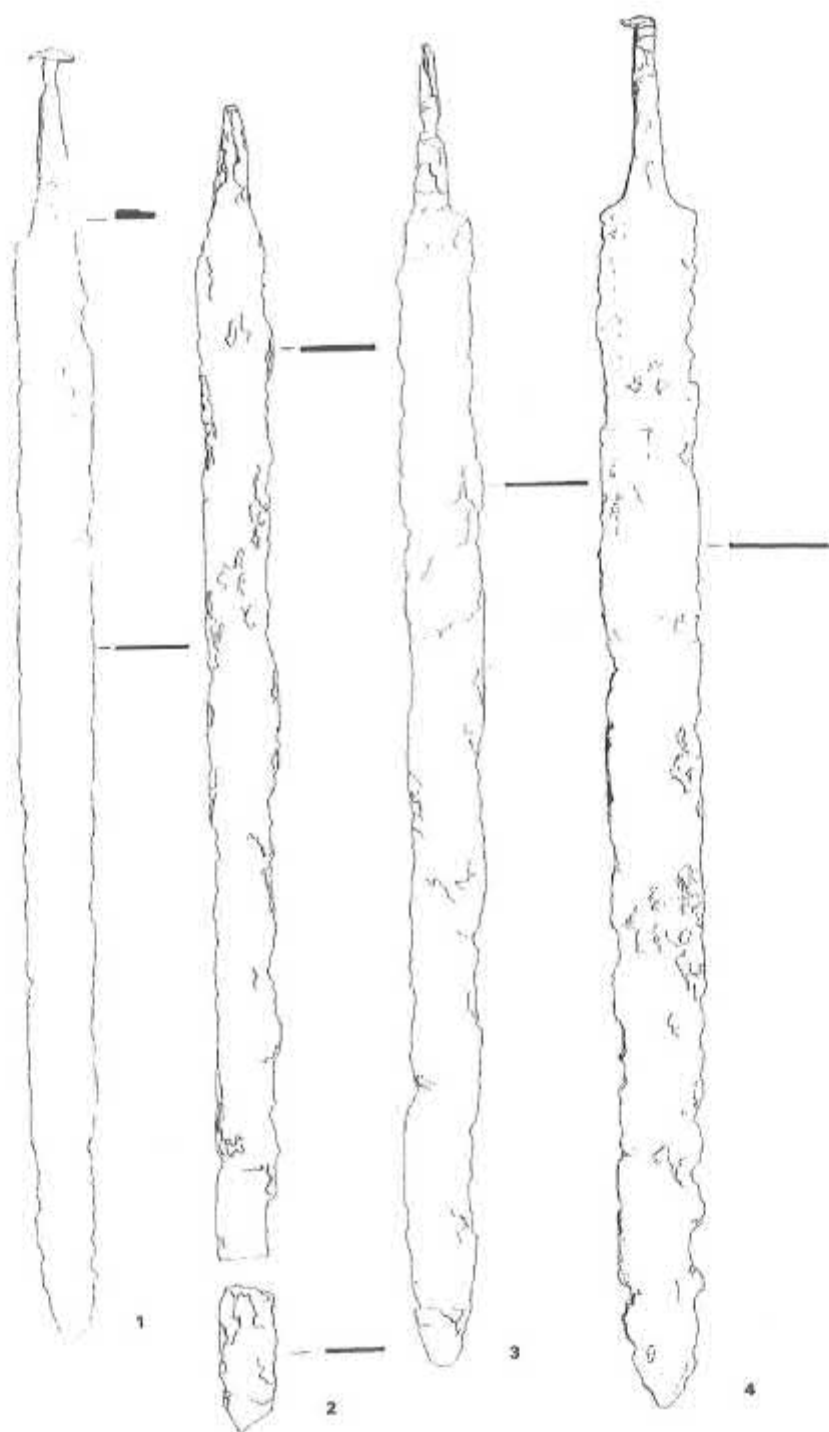


Fig. 1: Swords (1:5)

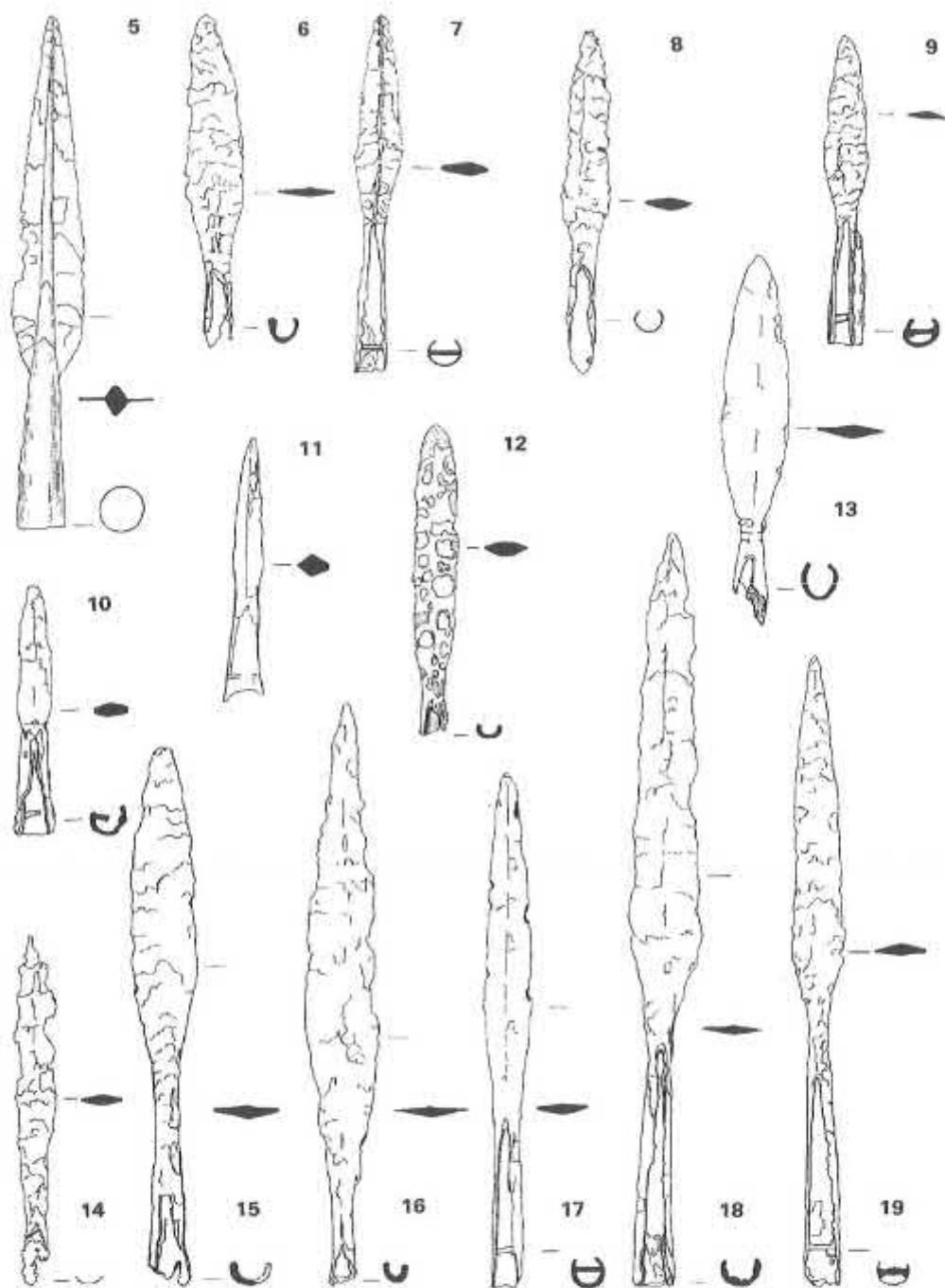


Fig. 2: Spearheads (1:4). Socket of No. 11 drawn from X-ray.

corrosion has removed the possibility of finding more. Length 280mm × max. width 38.5mm × max thickness blade 17mm × max diameter socket 24.5mm. *AYBCM A13.1*

Unprovenanced. In original museum collection, but noted in the register that information relating to this find was untraced at the time of transfer to the new museum premises in 1908.

# **Swanton, Series C1, leaf-shaped**

## **5th – late 6th centuries A. D.**

6. Fig. 2. Incomplete cleft socket. Traces of mineralised wood in the top of the socket. Length 180mm × max width 29.5mm × max thickness blade 5.5mm × max diameter socket 13mm. *AYBCM 1880.6.1*

Provenance as No. 1, Bishopstone.

7. Fig. 2. Cleft socket with well preserved rivet; incomplete. Traces of mineralised wood in the top of the socket. Length 194mm × max width 27mm × max thickness blade 8mm × max diameter socket 17.5mm. *AYBCM 1880.7.1*

Provenance as No. 1, Bishopstone.

8. Fig. 2. Cleft socket; incomplete. Length 186.5mm × max width 25.5mm × max thickness blade 7mm × max diameter socket 16mm. *AYBCM 1880.9.1*

Provenance as No. 1, Bishopstone.

9. Fig. 2. Cleft socket with rivet; incomplete. Mineralised wood midway inside the socket. Length 169mm × max width 23mm × max thickness blade 5mm × max diameter socket 18mm. *AYBCM 1880.10.1*

Provenance as No. 1, Bishopstone.

10. Fig. 2. Cleft socket with rivet; incomplete. Traces of mineralised wood within the length of the socket. Length 137mm × max width 19.5mm × max thickness blade 7mm × max diameter socket 20mm. *AYBCM 1880.11.1*

Provenance as No. 1, Bishopstone.

*Published ref: Recs. Bucks., 5 (1878), pl. 1.*

11. Fig. 2. Spearhead with an extensive concretion formed during burial attached to and obscuring the base of the socket. The X-ray image shows a transverse rivet in the cleft socket. Traces of mineralised wood in the base of the socket. Incomplete. Length (excluding concretion) 144mm × max width 16.5mm × max thickness blade 13mm × max diameter socket (estimated from the X-ray image) 22mm. *AYBCM 1926.183.1*

Dredged from the River Thames near Marlow.

12. Fig. 2. Incomplete cleft socket with blade; poor condition. There are traces of mineralised straw or

grass on the blade. Length 169mm × max width 24mm × max thickness blade 6mm × max diameter socket 15mm. *AYBCM 1986.245.1*

Found at High Wycombe.

13. Fig. 2. Cleft socket, cordon at top of the neck; incomplete. Mineralised wood in the socket. Length 202mm × max width 37mm × max thickness blade 8mm × approx. diameter socket 15mm. *AYBCM 1987.339.1*

Bequeathed by a local collector and presumed to be from the Aylesbury – Ellesborough area.

# **Swanton, Series C2, leaf-shaped**

## **5th – 7th centuries A. D.**

14. Fig. 2. Fragment of blade and socket; poor condition. Possibly Series C2. Length 190mm × max width 23mm × max thickness blade 8mm. *AYBCM 1905.22.1*

Unprovenanced.

15. Fig. 2. Incomplete blade with fragmentary socket. There is a substantial amount of mineralised wood in the socket. Length 296mm × max width 35.5mm × max thickness blade 7.5mm × (remaining) socket diameter 10mm. *AYBCM 1905.42.1*

From an inhumation cemetery at Upper Winchendon discovered about 1899. Horse (?) bones reputedly associated.

*Related objects: AYBCM 1905.1.1, 1905.2.1 (shield bosses, Nos. 37 & 41); 1905.43.1 (spear-head, No. 16).*

*Published refs: Recs. Bucks., 8 (1903), 208. Recs. Bucks., 14 (1946), 313.*

16. Fig. 2. Incomplete blade with fragmentary socket; poor condition. Faint traces of mineralised wood in the base of the socket. Length 320mm × max width 40.5mm × max thickness blade 4.5mm × (remaining) socket diameter 8mm. *AYBCM 1905.43.1*

Provenance as No. 15, Upper Winchendon.

17. Fig. 2. Cleft socket with one rivet; incomplete. Both faces have multiple striations from original sharpening and use. The preservation of these marks is exceptional. There is a small fragment of mineralised wood in the top of the socket. The tip was blunted in antiquity and turned back on itself by about 3mm. Length 285mm × max width 27.5mm × max thickness blade 8mm × max diameter socket 27mm. *AYBCM 1932.110.1*

Found at Holman's Bridge, Aylesbury, on the boundary with Weedon.

*Published Refs: Recs. Bucks., 12 (1933), 427.*



**Swanton, Series C3, leaf-shaped**

**6th – 7th centuries A. D.**

18. Fig. 2. Cleft socket with trace of mineralised wood at the base of the socket. Incomplete. Length 416mm × max width 40mm × max thickness blade 5mm × max diameter socket 21mm. *AYBCM* 1880.5.1

Provenance as No. 1, Bishopstone.

19. Fig. 2. Cleft socket with rivet; incomplete. Length 348mm × max width 28mm × max thickness blade 7mm × max diameter socket 17.5mm. *AYBCM* 1911.108.1

Unprovenanced. Found in 1911 by Dr. T. G. Parrott in a house 'which he took in Aylesbury'. Presumed to come from the Aylesbury district.

*Related object:* *AYBCM* 1911.109.1 (spearhead, No. 22).

20. Fig. 3. Cleft socket; incomplete. Length 398mm × max width 51mm × max thickness blade 7mm × (remaining) socket diameter 13mm. *AYBCM* 1987.338.1

From a mixed inhumation / cremation cemetery discovered in 1921 in a newly consecrated portion of Aylesbury town cemetery. Human bones, pottery, two loomweights, two spearheads and a scramasax were also found. This cemetery is thought to be associated with the settlement at Walton, (Farley 1976).

*Related objects:* *AYBCM* 1860.223.1 (spearhead, No. 21), 1921.108.1 (scramasax, not located); 1921.147.1 (human bones).

Published ref: *Recs. Bucks.*, 20 (1976), 154.

**Swanton, Series C4, leaf-shaped**

**Late 6th – 7th centuries A. D.**

21. Fig. 3. Socket almost entirely missing. Javelin-like blade. Length 436mm (455mm when registered in 1908) × max width 20mm × max thickness blade 8mm.

Found by labourers in 1858 at a place called Benhill, a name now lost, but reasonably located between the Wendover and Tring roads in Aylesbury, (Farley 1976). At the same time were found 'a large number of human bones, the perfect head of a stag, parts of the antlers of several stags, some boar's tusks' and 'the neck of a terracotta vessel which has been painted black' and a 'fragment of what seemed to have been the handle of a coarse amphora', (perhaps a loomweight?). This appears to be part of the cemetery described under No. 20. *AYBCM* 1860.223.1

Published Refs: *Recs. Bucks.*, 2 (1863), 48, 98,

101–103. *Recs. Bucks.*, 20 (1976), 154–155, 220 fig. 27 No. 11.

22. Fig. 3. Part of socket missing. Length 347mm × max width 21mm × max thickness blade 11mm × (remaining) socket diameter 7mm. *AYBCM* 1911.109.1

Provenance as No. 19, Dr. Parrott's house, Aylesbury.

*Related object:* *AYBCM* 1911.108.1 (spearhead, No. 19).

23. Fig. 3. Socket almost entirely missing. Length 468mm (482mm when registered in 1926) × max width 28mm × max thickness blade 7mm × (remaining) socket diameter 16mm. *AYBCM* 1926.182.1

Dredged from the River Thames near Marlow.

24. Fig. 3. Incomplete and the cleft socket is bent slightly. Length 387mm × max. width 27mm × max thickness blade 10mm × (remaining) socket diameter 17mm. *AYBCM* 1979.384.1

Found on the north bank of the River Ouse at Wicken, Northants, close to the border with Buckinghamshire.

**Swanton, Series E2, angular**

**6th – 8th centuries A. D.**

25. Fig. 3. Socket almost complete. Traces of mineralised wood in the top of the socket. Length 188mm × max width 31mm × max thickness blade 7mm × (remaining) socket diameter 8mm. *AYBCM* 1860.4.1

A mixed inhumation/cremation cemetery was discovered in 1859 were being dug out rabbits alongside the Cuttle Brook, Tythrop Park, Kingsey. Objects included two urns containing bones and skulls, one of the urns having a coin of Hadrian, a saucer brooch, an iron javelin or arrowhead (*AYBCM* 1860.3.1), a shield boss and a knife. Artefacts dated 5th – 6th centuries A. D.

*Related objects:* *AYBCM* 1860.1.1 (saucer brooch); 1860.3.1 (Medieval arrowhead, originally registered as a 'Roman Spear Head'); 1860.34.1 & 1860.35.1 (urns), 1860.167.1 (bone handle, ? Anglo-Saxon).

Published Refs: *Recs. Bucks.*, 2 (1863), 166 & No. 2 in *illus. Recs. Bucks.*, 14 (1946), 313, 318–320.

26. Fig. 3. Cleft socket; incomplete. X-ray image shows position of rivet. Length 220mm × max width 30mm × max thickness blade 13mm × max diameter socket 25mm. *AYBCM* 1905.6.1

Provenance as No. 2, Tickford Park, Newport Pagnell.

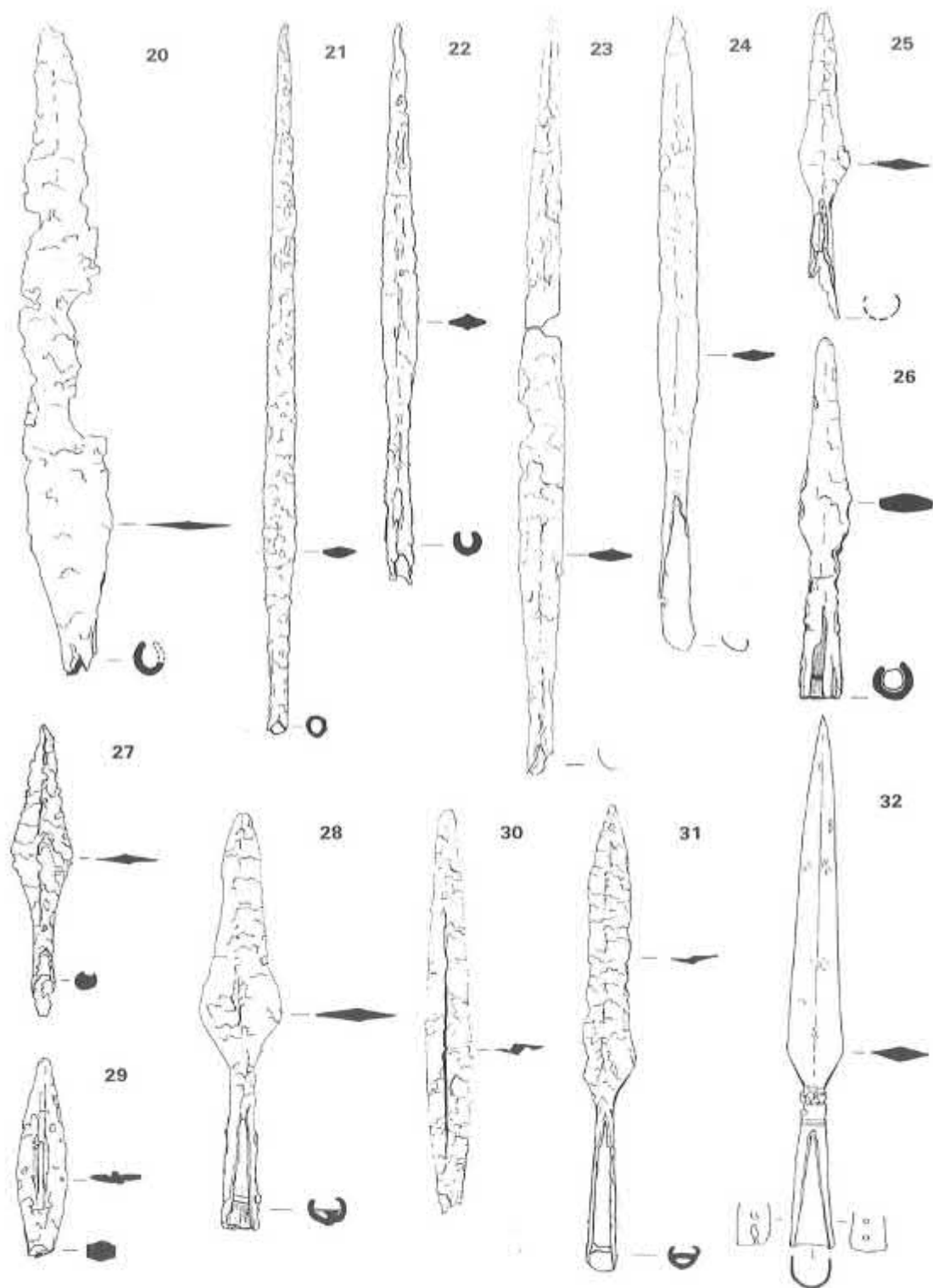
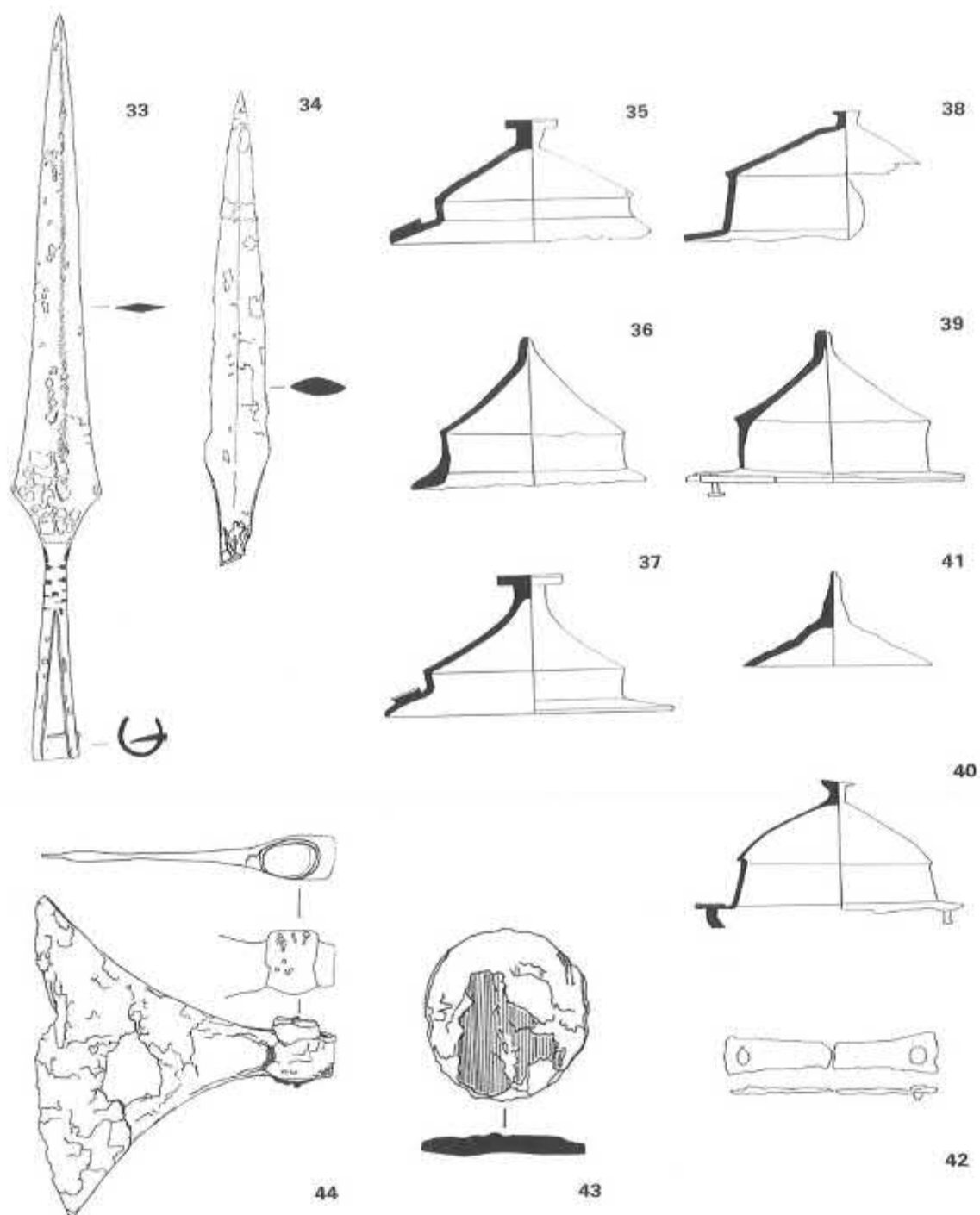


Fig. 3: Spearheads (1:4). Central portion of No. 23 and rivet of No. 26 drawn from X-rays.





**Fig. 4:** Spearheads, shield bosses, shield grip, shield board ornament and battle axe (1:4 except No. 43 (1:2). No 43 reverse shown. No 44 central drawing from X-ray image showing rivets.

**Swanton, Series H1, angular**

**Late 5th – mid 6th centuries A. D.**

27. Fig. 3. Cleft socket mostly missing. Length 178mm × max width 36.5mm × max thickness blade 6mm × (remaining) socket diameter 13mm. *AYBCM 1880.13.1*

Provenance as No. 1, Bishopstone.

**Swanton, Series H2, angular**

**Late 5th – early 7th centuries A. D.**

28. Fig. 3. Cleft socket with rivet and many slivers of mineralised wood; incomplete. Length 254.5mm × max width 50mm × max thickness blade 7.5mm × max diameter socket 22.5mm. *AYBCM 1880.12.1*

Provenance as No. 1, Bishopstone.

**Swanton, Series I, corrugated**

**Late 5th – early 6th centuries A. D.**

29. Fig. 3. Leaf-shaped blade only remains. Possibly a variant of this series. Length 122mm × max width 30mm × max thickness blade 11mm. *AYBCM 1905.21.1*

Unprovenanced.

**Swanton, Series K2, corrugated**

**Late 5th – mid 6th centuries A. D.**

30. Fig. 3. Leaf-shaped blade only remains. Length 247mm × max width 28mm × max thickness blade 9mm. *AYBCM 1905.20.1*

Unprovenanced.

**Swanton, Series L, corrugated**

**Late 5th – early 6th centuries A. D.**

31. Fig. 3. Cleft socket with rivet; several slivers of mineralised wood in the socket; incomplete. Length 286.5mm × max width 33mm × max thickness blade 6mm × max diameter socket 17.5mm. *AYBCM 1880.8.1*

Provenance as No. 1, Bishopstone.

**Pattern-welded spearheads**

**7th – 11th centuries A. D.**

X-rays showed three spearheads to be pattern-welded. All have a distinct spine and a laurel leaf-shaped zone of welding lines rising from the base of the blade to part of the way along it. No. 32 has a zone 75mm long of 'four-ply' diagonal welding lines. No. 33, the most accomplished of all the spears, has a zone 90mm long of herring bone welding lines. No. 34 has a zone 170mm long of slightly diagonal welding lines.

32. Fig. 3. Opposed pairs of rivet holes at socket base, rivets missing; two pairs of cordons around neck. Part of neck missing, otherwise in good condition.

Length 326mm × max. width 33.5mm × max thickness blade 10mm × max diameter socket 23.5mm. *AYBCM 1927.83.1*

Found about four feet below the bed of the River Thames when Stone Bridge was being rebuilt, at Quarrendon on the Bicester Road, Aylesbury, in 1927. Said to be below a stony layer, perhaps the bed of an old ford. Also found were a scramasax (*AYBCM 1927.77.1*, No. 51), an iron spearhead 'apparently copied from Bronze Age pattern' (early Iron Age?), (*AYBCM 1927.153.1*, not located) and an horseshoe. 'From what can be gathered from workman they were all found on actual site of bridge but not actually with one another'. Stone Bridge was a corporation boundary mark by the mid-16th century.

Related object: *AYBCM 1927.77.1* (scramasax, No. 54).

Published ref: *Recs. Bucks.*, 12 (1928), 91.

33. Fig. 4. Two opposed pairs of rivet holes at base of cleft socket. One partial rivet survives. Mineralised wood inside the socket. Three cordons around neck. Blade covered with original sharpening and polishing striations. Good condition. Length 450mm × max width 52mm × max thickness blade 6.5mm × max diameter socket 26.5mm. *AYBCM 1963.23.1*

Found 'whilst excavating for drainage in foundations near where the mount of the castle at Buckingham used to be in about 1896. It was found at the foot of Castle Hill'. Buckingham was a burh by the early 10th century.

Published ref: *Lewis (1992)*.

34. Fig. 4. Socket missing and blade complete. This is broken in an unusual place, the solid neck, therefore the possibility of deliberate breakage is suggested. Traces of mineralised wood in the socket. Multiple striations along the blade show that the direction of sharpening was from the edge of the blade towards the central rib. Length 286mm × max width 40mm × max thickness blade 14mm. *AYBCM 1992.60.2*

Found in a tributary of the River Ouse near Thornborough Bridge. The latter still forms the boundary between Thornborough and Buckingham parishes.

Published ref: *Lewis (1992)*.

**SHIELD FITTINGS**

**SHIELD BOSSES**

**Dickinson & Härke, Group 1**

**Mid-5th – 6th centuries A. D.**

35. Fig. 4. Straight cone profile with overhanging

carination and concave wall profile. Parts of the flange and part of the apex disc are missing. Traces of silver on apex disc. A detached half of an iron disc is assumed to belong to this boss. Two copper alloy and iron flange rivets approximately 20mm in diameter survive. The spacing on the flange would permit five rivets. Diameter (estimate) 174mm x height 75mm. *AYBCM* A2.1

Provenance probably as No. 15, Upper Winchendon. When the Archaeological Society's museum collection was transferred to its new premises at 9, Church Street, Aylesbury in 1908, the information associated with this boss was lost, but the donor, Mr. S. G. Payne, remembered that there were three bosses from Upper Winchendon and that this was probably one of them.

*Related objects:* *AYBCM* 1905.1.1, 1905.2.1 (shield bosses, Nos. 37 & 41); 1905.42.1, 1905.43.1 (spearheads, Nos. 15 & 16).

36. Fig. 4. Concave cone profile with overhanging carination and concave wall profile. Parts of the flange and all of the rivets are missing. Rod-type apex. Diameter 139mm x height 89mm. *AYBCM* 1880.4.1

Provenance as No. 1, Bishopstone.

37. Fig. 4. Concave cone profile with overhanging carination and concave wall profile. Parts of the apex disc, parts of the flange and two of the original five rivets are missing. The iron rivets are 20mm in diameter and each is covered with a silver disc. The apex rod terminates in an iron disc covered with a silver disc 45mm in diameter. Diameter (estimate) 182mm x height 84mm. *AYBCM* 1905.1.1

Provenance as No. 15, Upper Winchendon.

*Related objects:* *AYBCM* A2.1., 1905.2.1 (shield bosses, Nos. 35 & 41).

#### Dickinson & Härke, Group 2

##### 6th century A. D.

38. Fig. 4. Convex cone profile with overhanging carination and straight wall profile. Most of the flange, all of the rivets and a third of the wall and cone are missing. A rod survives on the apex, but its disc is missing. Diameter (estimate) 196mm x height 81mm. *AYBCM* 1880.2.1

Provenance as No. 1, Bishopstone.

Published Refs: *Recs. Bucks.*, 3 (1867), 164. *Recs. Bucks.*, 5 (1878), 23-25, pl. 1.

39. Fig. 4. Straight-cone profile with overhanging carination and straight wall profile. Parts of the cone, wall and flange are missing and only one copper alloy rivet with a washer survives. Diam-

eter (restored) 155mm x height 96mm x rivet head diameter 21.5mm x shank length 14mm x shank diameter 4mm. *AYBCM* 1880.3.1

Provenance as No. 1, Bishopstone.

#### Dickinson & Härke, Group 3

##### 6th - 7th centuries A. D.

40. Fig. 4. Slightly convex-cone profile with overhanging carination and sloping wall profile. The X-ray shows that this is a one-piece forging. Parts of the flange and cone are missing and the disc apex is damaged. Four of five rivets are present on the flange. There is mineralised wood around the rivets and on the underside of the flange. Diameter 159mm x height 89mm. Rivet head diameter 17mm. Shank length 14mm x diameter 6mm. The shield board is estimated at 11mm thick. *AYBCM* 1976.257.1

From Saunderton.

*Related object:* *AYBCM* 1976.257.2 (shield grip, No. 42).

#### Dickinson & Härke, Group 4

##### 5th - 6th centuries A. D.

41. Fig. 4. Part of a slightly concave-profile cone with a spike apex. Possibly Group 4. *AYBCM* 1905.2.1

Provenance as No. 15, Upper Winchendon.

#### Unattributed

There is also a fragment of cone with a trace of carination (*AYBCM* 1997.89.1, not illustrated), which does not fit any of the bosses catalogued above and must represent an eighth shield boss. The fragment's general appearance is akin to those from the Bishopstone cemetery, but it is, unfortunately, not possible to assign a definite provenance. 100mm x (c)2mm x 60mm.

#### SHIELD GRIP

##### Dickinson & Härke, Type I. a.1

42. Fig. 4. Flat iron strip in two parts, 2mm thick x 127mm long. The expanded terminals, 26mm wide, are each pierced by one iron rivet, their heads approximately 13mm diameter and with square-sectioned shanks. *AYBCM* 1976.257.2

From Saunderton.

*Related object:* *AYBCM* 1976.257.1 (shield boss, No. 40).

#### SHIELD BOARD FITTING

43. Fig. 4. Disc with one heavily corroded surface and traces of mineralised wood on the other surface. The apparent decoration seen in the centre of the

disc X-ray is only a corrosion product, but faint traces of a central rivet can be seen. Diameter approx. 50mm x thickness approx. 5mm. Originally registered as 'a Fibula', but the presence of wood suggests affixation to a board. A set of four similar iron discs were found *in situ* in Grave 98 in the Dover (Buckland) cemetery rivetted in pairs either side of a shield. (Evison 1987, figs. 47 & 77). Another specimen, described as 'imperfect' was registered as 1880.37.1, also from the same source, but it cannot be traced. *AYBCM 1880.36.1*

Attributed to the Bishopstone cemetery found in 1866.

## BATTLE AXE

### 9th – 11th centuries A. D.

44. Fig. 4. Flaring blade, the centre of which is completely mineralised and partly missing. The socket encloses a fragment of wooden shaft inside a copper alloy ferrule. The X-ray image reveals the presence of twelve copper alloy rivets securing the ferrule to the shaft, six laterally and six from the end, the intention being to protect the shaft both when striking severe blows and if struck by another weapon. max length 193mm x max width 180mm x min. – Max. thickness of blade 3.5mm – 24mm. *AYBCM 1905.37.1*
- From Boulter's Lock, River Thames, Taplow, Bucks – Maidenhead, Berks.

## KNIVES

### 5th – 8th centuries A. D.

With the exception of No. 54, the knives are in a fragmentary condition and the original outlines are dubious. Types according to Evison's Dover classification (Evison 1987) are suggested where possible, but are not definitive.

45. Fig. 5. Fragment of a large object, possibly a knife. Length 304mm x width 16mm x max thickness 7mm. *AYBCM 1860.2.1*
- 'Found on the right side of a human skeleton, on top of Hogshaw Hill (Quainton). . . . Four skeletons were discovered here in the spring of the present year (1858); two on one side of a small stone pit, and two on the other side, about eight or nine feet apart. They appeared to be buried in pairs, with about eighteen inches between them of undisturbed ground, as if a separate grave had been made for each. All the skeletons were found with their feet towards the east.'
- Related object: AYBCM 1860.2.2 (knife fragment, No. 46)*

Published ref: *Recs. Bucks.*, 2 (1858), 50.

46. Fig. 5. Fragment, possibly a knife. Length 110mm (116mm when originally registered) x width 12mm x max thickness 5mm. *AYBCM 1860.2.2*
- Provenance as No. 45, Quainton.
- Related object: AYBCM 1860.2.1 (knife fragment, No. 45)*
47. Fig. 5. Sloping shoulders and tapering blade. Length 154mm x max width 21.5mm x max thickness 5mm. Evison, Type 2 (?). *AYBCM 1880.14.1*
- Provenance as No. 1, Bishopstone.
48. Fig. 5. Blade has pronounced shoulders. Length 157mm x max width 18mm x max thickness 5mm. Evison, Type 2 (?). *AYBCM 1880.15.1*
- Provenance as No. 1, Bishopstone.
49. Fig. 5. Part of blade only. Length 145.5mm x max width 23.5mm x max thickness 3.5mm. *AYBCM 1880.16.1*
- Provenance as No. 1, Bishopstone.
50. Fig. 5. Blade has a pronounced shoulder and a straight back. Length 207mm x max width 28mm x max thickness 3mm. Evison, Type 2 (?). *AYBCM 1880.17.1*
- Provenance as No. 1, Bishopstone.
51. Fig. 5. Blade has a sloping shoulder on the back and a pronounced shoulder on the cutting blade. Length 117mm x max width 17mm x max thickness 3.5mm. Evison, Type 1 (?). *AYBCM 1880.18.1*
- Provenance as No. 1, Bishopstone.
52. Fig. 5. Partial tang and blade with sloping shoulder and curved back. Length 348mm (originally registered as 380mm) x max width 38mm x max thickness 4.5mm. Evison, Type 3 (?). *AYBCM 1905.38.1*
- From the River Thames at Maidenhead Bridge.
53. Fig. 5. Blade with curved back; tip, part of the blade and all of the tang are missing. Slight chamfer to the back. Length 76mm x max width 14mm x max thickness 4mm. Evison, Type 1 (?). *AYBCM 1925.128.1*
- 'Found in 1912 with nearly complete skeleton of a boy at the Warren, Bledlow'.
54. Fig. 5. Almost complete scramasax. Blade has angled back and curved cutting edge. Length 310mm x max width 43mm x max thickness 5mm. Evison, Type 3. *AYBCM 1927.77.1*
- Provenance as No. 32, Stone Bridge, Aylesbury / Quarrendon.
55. Fig. 5. Blade has slightly curved back and straight

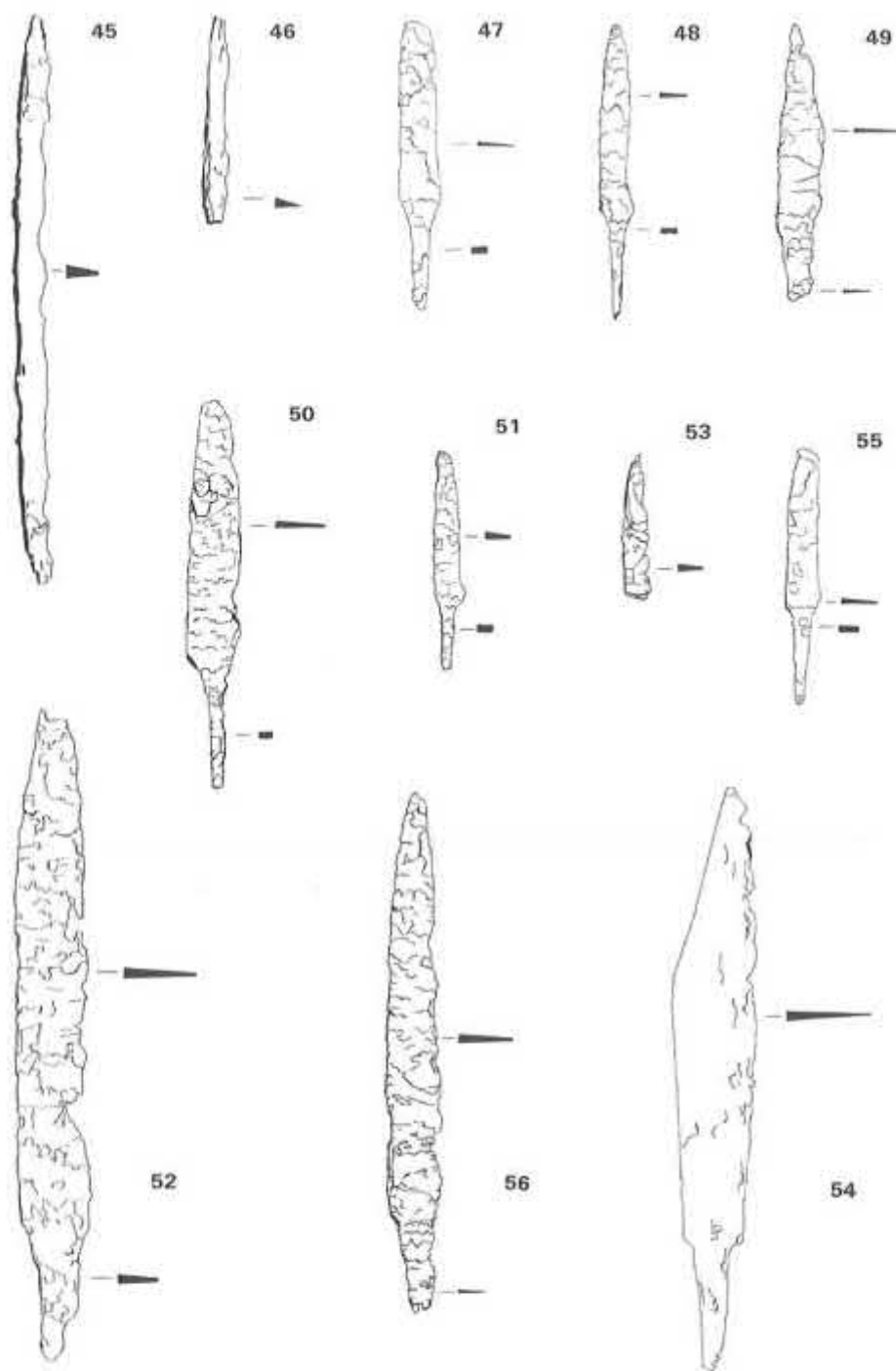


Fig. 5: Knives (1:4)

cutting edge. A line is visible at the tang/blade junction and there are traces of the original scabbard on both faces. The tip is missing; poor condition. Length 136mm x max width 17mm x max thickness 3mm. Evison, Type 4 (?). *AYBCM* 1979.180.1

From an inhumation cemetery discovered in 1908 when a new bunker was dug at Ellesborough golf course. One adult male skeleton lay ESE – WNW, possibly in a contracted position, accompanied by this knife. The relative position of the knife was not noted. A second adult male skeleton was found with a small iron buckle and 'a small piece of iron, which may have been a portion of a knife

with a rounded end.' The third skeleton, of a young man, was buried with a double-toothed comb and a Panther Cowrie shell.

*Related objects:* *AYBCM* 1908.226.1 (comb), 1973.146.1 (shell), 1973.326.1,2 (two human skulls).

Published refs: *Recs. Bucks.*, 9 (1909), 425–430.

56. Fig. 5. Slightly curving back; cutting edge fragmentary, partial tang. Length 275mm x max width 27mm x max thickness 4.5mm. Evison, Type 4 (?). *AYBCM archt.* 45

Unprovenanced.

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