number of scientifically excavated long barrows. It is surely special pleading to say that three of the number of sites within this latter category, because they presented no such features, must be considered a special case. The argument, like many a typological series, could be reversed. May I repeat once more too that my main doubts concerned the general acceptance of a pitched mortuary house tradition within British long barrows with the very important implications which this involved for the origin of some components of our Early and Middle Neolithic. The Fussell's Lodge report and its discussion appeared to represent a major turning point in such ideas which existed since Professor Piggott's 'Windmill Hill: East or West'. To me the evidence still appears insufficient to embrace these theories wholeheartedly.

Verulamium, 1966-8

PLATES VI *b* and VII *a*, *b*

Dr Ian Stead, of the Inspectorate of Ancient Monuments, Ministry of Public Building and Works, presents an interim report on the King Harry Lane Site at Verulamium (St Albans, Hertfordshire), and Mr Peter Curnow and Mr Richard Reece have added an appendix on the coins.

In 1965 the Inspectorate of Ancient Monuments, Ministry of Public Building and Works, was informed of proposals for a large housing development intended to cover some 80 acres outside the Silchester Gate of Verulamium. Archaeologically this area was little known, although it was obviously crossed by the Silchester Road, and the only previous excavations had established the course of a major Iron Age ditch [1]. But its archaeological potential was great, for there might well have been Roman development alongside the road, and Roman burials, and the area could also have been used for Iron Age settlement. Following trial trenching and a proton magnetometer survey in 1965, extensive excavations were carried out from 1966 to 1968. The results are sufficiently important to justify an interim report, but it must be emphasized that the material from these excavations has not been studied in detail—as yet few of the finds have been given more than a cursory examination in the field.*

ROMAN SETTLEMENT AND BURIALS

Predictably there were traces of ribbon development alongside the Silchester Road, but both its initial date and duration were of interest. Although the area excavated was between 200 and 500 yds. (182–457 m.) beyond the '1955 Ditch' [2] it was apparent that Flavian, if not earlier, occupation had lined the road as far south-west as Wheeler's Ditch (FIG. 1). The buildings had suffered from centuries of ploughing, which had also removed the metalling of the Roman road, and no house-plan was recovered.

Judging from the coin-list the occupation here lasted for about 200 years, ending some time in the middle of the 3rd century. It is difficult to be precise about the terminal date because of the general scarcity of coins minted early in the 3rd century, but the great rarity of coins of Gallienus and his successors is significant. The coin evidence may be illustrated by a histogram (FIG. 2), which compares the King Harry Lane site with other Verulamium excavations. The enormous rise in coins in the AD 259–75 bracket, which is a feature of the other sites, is absent from King Harry Lane, whose coin-list virtually stops at that point. The occupation of this site must have ended by *c.* AD 250–60, and its desertion must surely be linked with the construction of the Verulamium town wall, sometime in the middle of the 3rd century.† The wall excluded the King Harry Lane site, whose inhabitants were presumably rehoused within the town.

Roman burials, found in four separate areas (FIG. 1), were in the main poorly equipped. Cremations were invariably in urns, either alone or associated with a small beaker or flagon; the burials resemble those excavated at St Stephens,

* The writer is grateful to Professor S. S. Frere for criticizing the draft of this interim report.

† Professor Frere suggests a date before AD 250 [3].

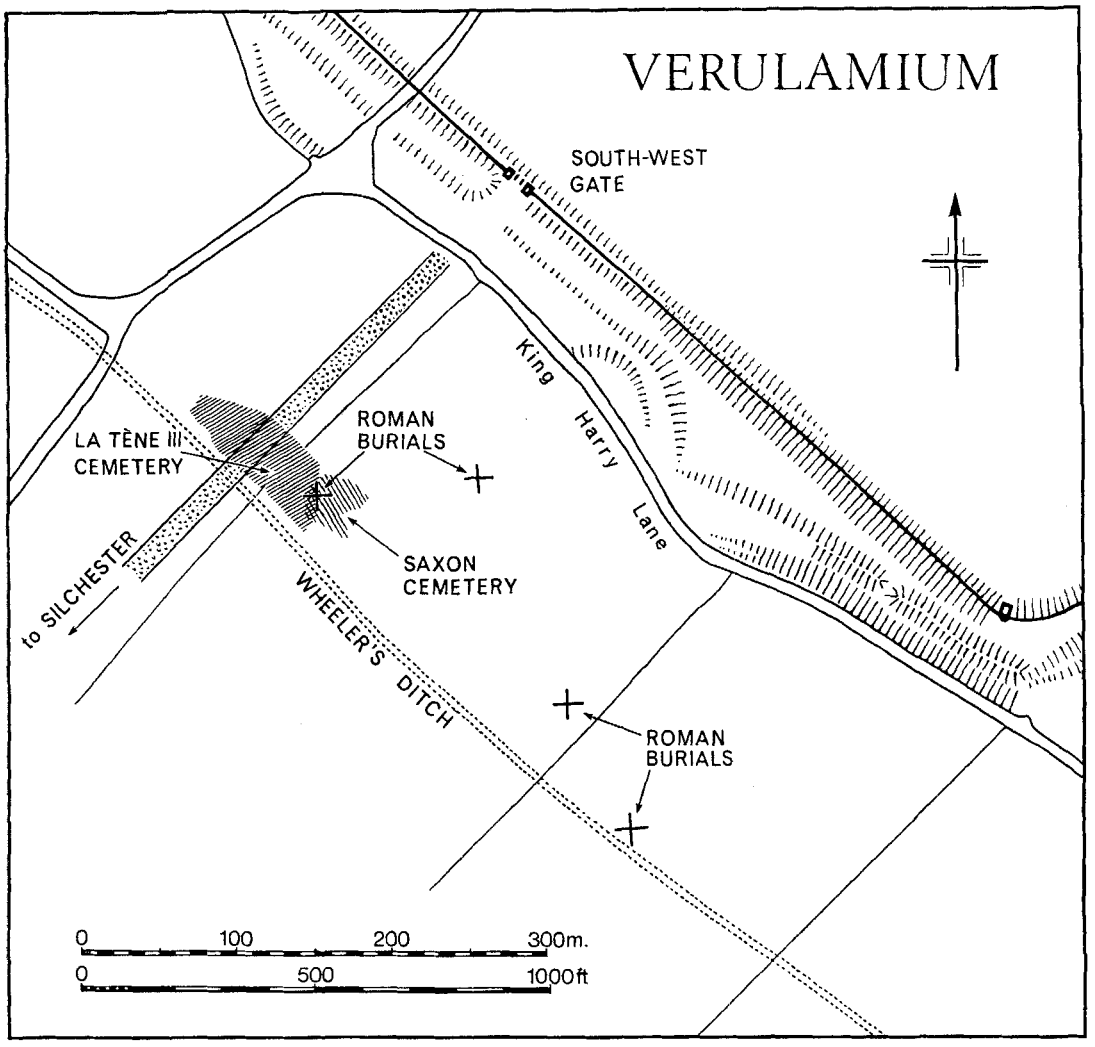


Fig. 1. The King Harry Lane site, showing the Silchester road, and positions of Iron Age, Roman and Saxon burials (Figs. 1–4 drawn by Miss G. D. Jones)

Verulamium, in 1932–5 [4]. One cremation was accompanied by a silver mirror, and another contained two bronze bracelets; otherwise the only grave-goods were collections of short iron nails, apparently from sandals or boots, found with two burials. Several inhumation graves were also excavated, including one with hob-nails from two sandals at one end of the grave. With one exception the Roman skeletons had not survived in the gravel, and the graves contained only the nails of wooden coffins and rarely a single pot.

THE SAXON CEMETERY

On the south-east side of the Silchester Road, between Wheeler's Ditch and the walls of Verulamium, a Saxon inhumation cemetery was found (FIGS. 1 and 3). It seems likely that the 32 graves excavated formed the full extent of the cemetery. Very little bone survived, although in

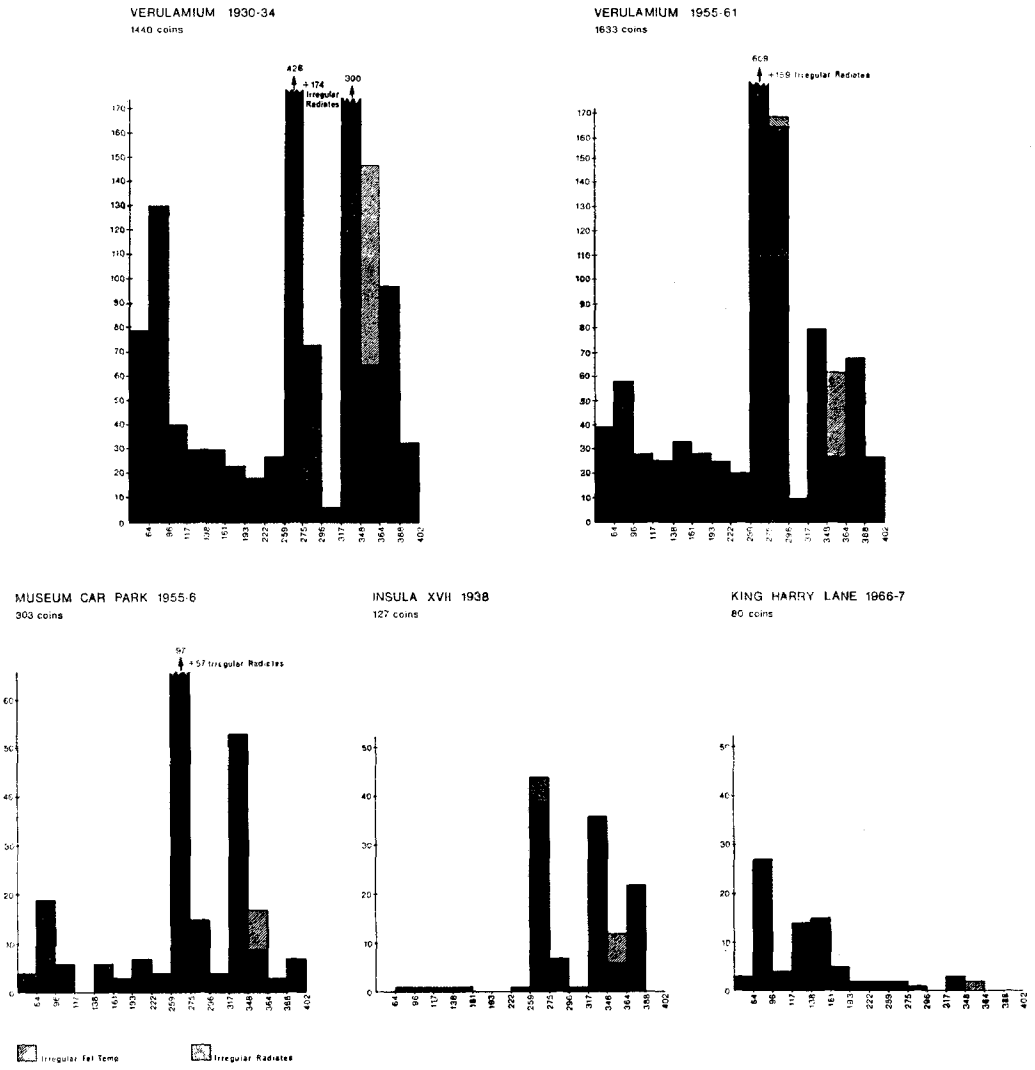


Fig. 2. Histogram, comparing coins from the King Harry Lane site with those from other Verulamium excavations. Prepared by P. E. Curnow; coin-lists from the 1955–61 excavations provided by S. S. Frere and Richard Reece

one grave there was sufficient to distinguish a triple burial—two adults and a child, side by side and buried at the same time. Grave-goods were poor, and brooches absent. Twenty bodies had been accompanied by knives, but otherwise there were two pots, four spear-heads, and a silver disc pendant and 12 glass beads, whilst two burials each had a chatelaine, bronze work-box, and Roman bronze trinkets. The cemetery appears to belong to the 7th century, or the end of the 6th century—probably later than the Battle of Bedcanford in AD 571. Thus, although it provides a new chapter in the archaeology of Verulamium–St Albans, it tells us nothing new about the end of the Romano-British town [5].

THE LA TÈNE III CEMETERY

The outstanding discovery is that of a large La

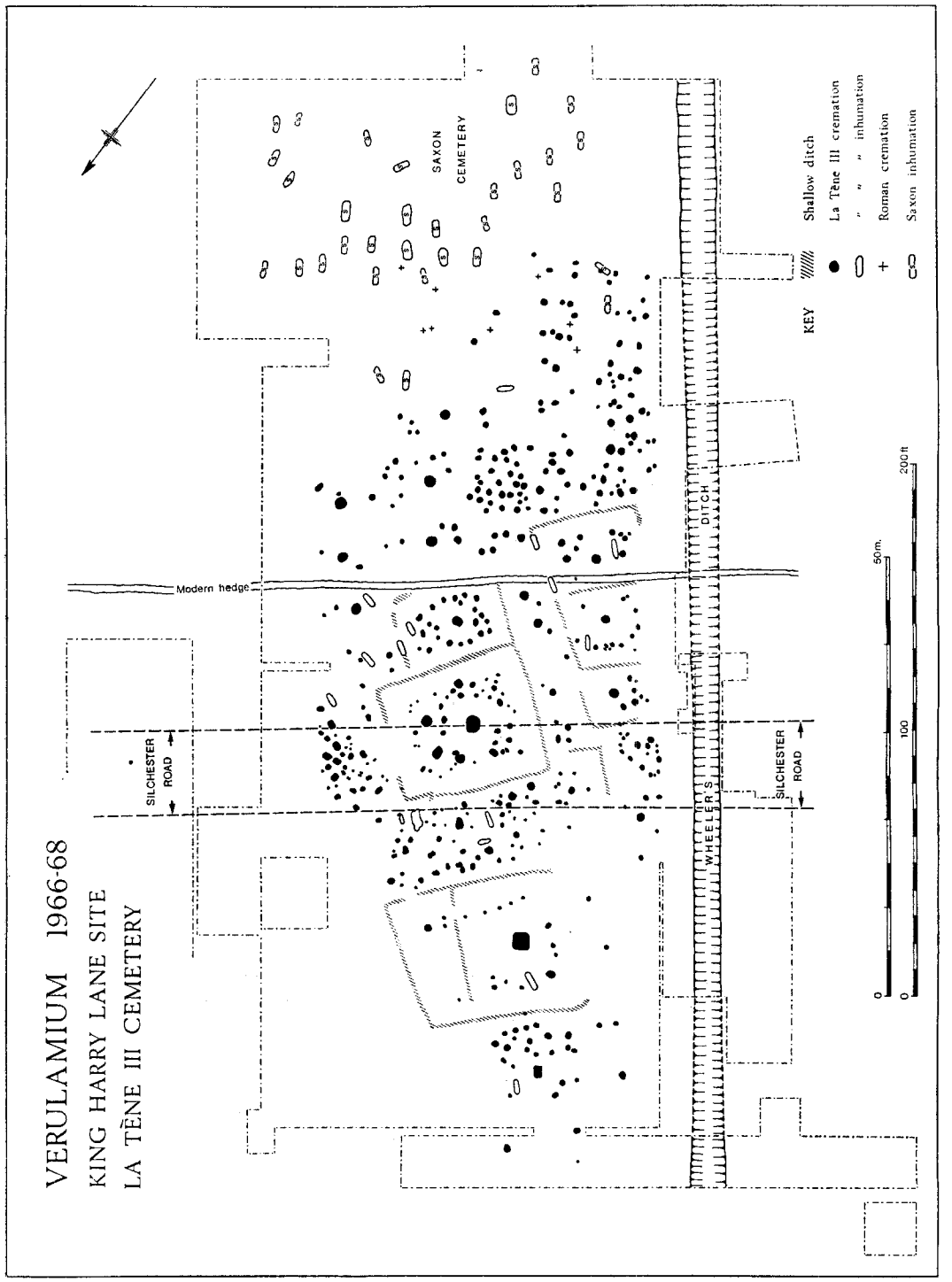


Fig. 3. Distribution of La Tène and Saxon burials

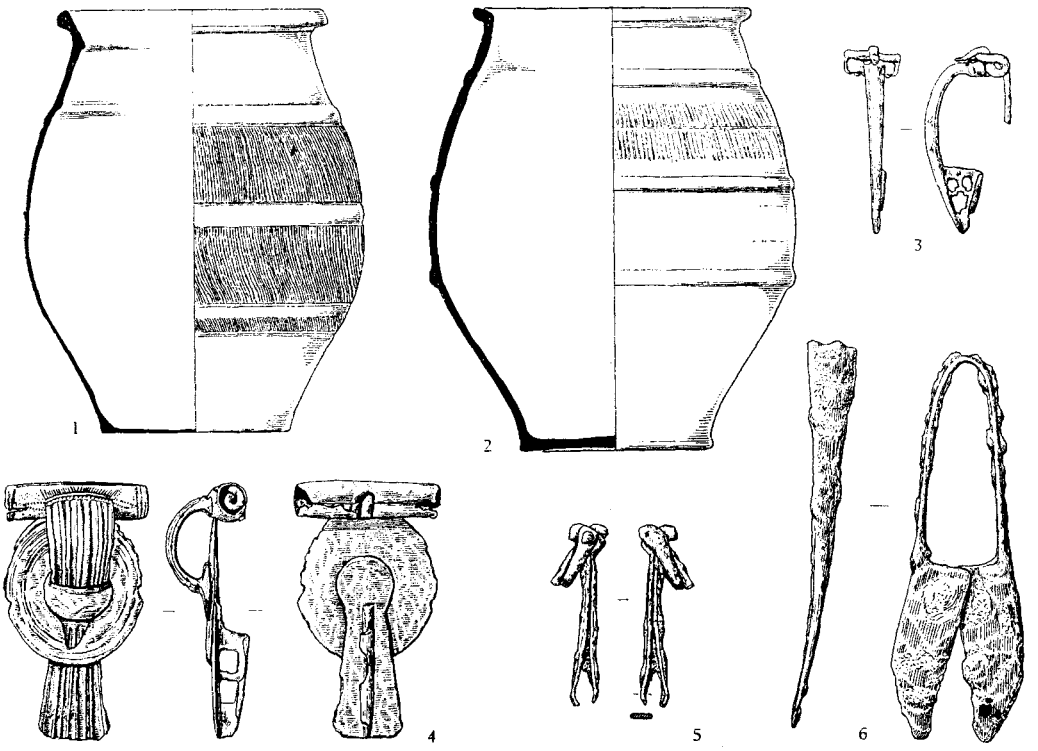


Fig. 4. Typical La Tène III grave-group: 1, butt beaker (accessory); 2, cordonned beaker, which held the cremated bones and objects 3–6; 3, bronze Colchester brooch; 4, bronze thistle brooch; 5, iron toilet-set (a pair of tweezers and parts of two other pieces); 6, pair of iron shears. Pottery (¼), *other pieces* (½)

Tène III cemetery, found when exposing the line of the Silchester Road to the north-east of Wheeler's Ditch. In four seasons 463 burials have been found, and the limits of the entire cemetery have been firmly established. The pattern of burials is still not quite complete, because ploughing and soil erosion have removed several shallow graves, particularly in the area south-east of the modern hedge (FIG. 3). There is a drop of 3 ft. in the hedge-line, and whereas burials immediately to the north-west have been well preserved, some of those south-east of the hedge must have been completely removed.

The vast majority of the burials were cremations, usually with the bones inside an urn, although occasionally, and invariably in the richer groups, there was a heap of bones on the floor of the grave. About half the cremations were accompanied by a single vessel, but several had from two to four pots (FIG. 4), and there were 10 in the largest grave-group (PL. VI*b*). Gallo-Belgic wares were common, but surprisingly there were only five samian vessels in the total of more than 700 pots from the cemetery. The most remarkable pot, pedestalled and in the shape of a bird (PL. VII*a*), belongs to a select group of vessels from La Tène contexts on the continent [6]. Brooches, especially Colchester, Langton Down, and thistle brooches, were frequent (222 specimens) and the most outstanding piece had decoration in two panels—a pair of facing birds (? fighting cocks) in the one, and a kneeling warrior in the other (PL. VII*b*) [7]. Otherwise grave-goods included 10 British coins (in the one grave), six silver mirrors, four triangular knives [8], six other knives, two pairs of iron shears, two keys, two bracelets,

two spoons, some game pieces, and items from toilet sets.

As well as the cremations there were 18 inhumations, whose grave-goods were limited to four pots in one grave and five glass beads and a bronze ring in another. Despite the absence of grave-goods it was apparent that the other 16 inhumations were La Tène III, both from their position in the cemetery and from the absence of Roman sherds in their graves—rubbish from the Roman occupation was frequent in the Saxon inhumation graves.

One of the most interesting features of the cemetery is the grouping of the burials, with several instances of a richer central grave surrounded by a ring of satellite-burials. Some of these groups were within square or rectangular plots outlined by shallow ditches—a practice which occurs elsewhere in La Tène provinces, both in this country [9] and on the continent: Wederath provides a good example [10].

In the south-east part of the cemetery were eight Roman cremations of the 2nd century. These later burials were not directly related to the La Tène III cemetery for there is no evidence of continuity through the second half of the 1st century. The cemetery went out of use about the time of the Roman conquest, and its end may have resulted from the construction of the Silchester Road which was driven through the middle and covered a number of graves. The earliest burial is unlikely to have taken place before the introduction of Gallo-Belgic pottery (*c.* 15–10 BC), so the cemetery was probably used for about half a century.

IRON AGE SETTLEMENT

Wheeler's Ditch, completely levelled in these fields, was located at several points along the line plotted by the earlier excavators. The excavation of the junction with the Silchester Road showed that the Roman route had not utilized an original causeway—this part of the ditch had been filled and a compact gravel surface of the road had subsided over the filling. No useful dating evidence was recovered from several ditch sections, and the rarity of pre-Roman pottery suggests that there was little settlement in the immediate vicinity.

Although clearly a boundary of some kind, the precise purpose of Wheeler's Ditch remains obscure. There was no trace of a palisade, or rampart revetment, and judging from the silting of the ditch the excavated material could have been distributed equally on each side. In parts of Prae Wood there were other contemporary features near the south-west edge of the ditch, so Wheeler postulated a bank on the north-east side [11]. But at the King Harry Lane site La Tène III burials were found within 10 ft. of the north-east lip of the ditch. There could have been only a small bank on the north-east side there—and the distribution of burials suggests that such a bank formed a boundary to the cemetery. But the orientation of Wheeler's Ditch is quite different from that of the cemetery, so perhaps the cemetery was established shortly before the ditch was cut.

The case for this ditch forming a boundary for the pre-Roman settlement is now less convincing, for recent discoveries have suggested that the occupied area was more extensive than the site in Prae Wood. La Tène III mint debris has been found on the site of the Roman town [12], and there is a second cremation cemetery of that period outside the London Gate of Verulamium [13], as well as occupation material and further burials under Insula XXVIII [14]. Frere has drawn attention to the very small area excavated within the walls of the Roman town—only 20 out of 200 acres [15]—and very little of that has been taken down to the earliest levels. It may well be that Prae Wood was one of several settlements in the vicinity.

During the 1966–8 excavations a little La Tène III domestic material was found on both sides of Wheeler's Ditch in the neighbourhood of the cemetery, but much more was excavated from a ditch some 500 yards south-west of here. This ditch was found when the contractors were constructing a road, and time did not allow for extensive excavations. The King Harry Lane site also produced slight evidence—sherds of two different ceramic traditions—for Early Iron Age phases considerably older than the La Tène III cemetery. This constitutes the earliest Iron Age material to have been found at

Verulamium, and probably represents occupation on part of the site on two previous occasions.

The area threatened by housing development has been only sampled, and work has been concentrated on the three fields—50 acres—adjoining the Roman town. Some clues were provided by geophysical surveys, but otherwise discoveries resulted from stripping selected areas with a Drott Tractorshovel. Other features of archaeological interest will remain undetected, and will be destroyed as housing development gradually encircles the Roman town. However, the results do justify the Ministry's decision to tackle this unknown site on as large a scale as slender resources allow. Apart from the complete excavation of the La Tène III cemetery, the excavations have uncovered an interesting pattern of Roman settlement, and added both an introduction, in the Early Iron Age sherds, and a postscript, in the Saxon burials, to the archaeology of Verulamium.

APPENDIX

Note on the histograms. It is arguable that the simple quantitative illustrations (FIG. 2) are not true histograms. It is felt, however, that here the evidence should merely be placed on record and any element of interpretation avoided. Thus percentages, weighted figures and the like could be additional or left to archaeologists or numismatists requiring illustrations of particular trends or aspects or dealing with particular classes of sites (see A. Ravetz, *Num. Chron.*, 7th ser., IV, 1964; B. H. St. J. O'Neil, *Arch. Journ.*, XCII, 1935).

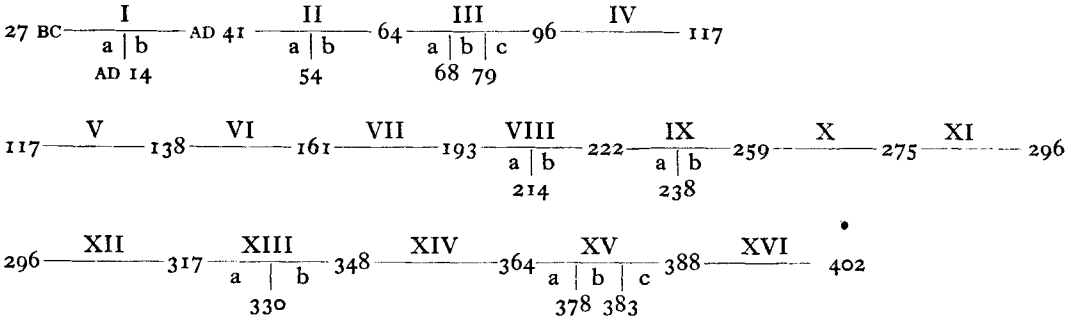
These histograms act as an instant guide to the coin list, but their principal importance is a comparative one. They can sometimes be helpful even on sites yielding relatively few coins—under 100—by making archaeologically valid points in a clear and striking manner; as, for example, at King Harry Lane discussed above.

The dangers of interpreting coin evidence are well known, but it is worth emphasising the peril attending a too facile interpretation of this evidence on the basis of a histogram. Further, on many sites coin histograms or charts will be meaningless—or worse, positively misleading.

There is nothing new in the form of illustration but it is hoped that a uniform simple system will be increasingly used.

Chronological divisions of the coinage. While trying to compare coins found in the several Verulamium excavations and in other Roman towns we found ourselves using two independent systems of periods for dividing the coinage. This note describes an agreed compromise between the two systems which, it is felt, selects the best of both using as far as possible criteria which are numismatically sound and archaeologically significant. These periods will be used by the writers in future reports and they would be interested to hear of any suggestions which could assist toward the formation of a fully accepted standard.

On smaller sites only the main divisions will be needed (Roman numerals) whereas for larger sites the subdivisions may be meaningful. This



system will doubtless need modification, but it is hoped that a detailed study of the 56,000 coins from Richborough now in progress will suggest a final form of periods and subdivisions and so present a sound basis for national and international comparisons.

PETER CURNOW and RICHARD REECE

[1] R. E. M. and T. V. Wheeler, *Verulamium* (1936), 42, pl. cxviii.
[2] ANTIQUITY, 1964, 104 and fig. 2.
[3] S. S. Frere, *Britannia* (1967), 253.
[4] *St Albans and Herts. Arch. and Arch. Soc. Trans.*, 1935, 243.
[5] ANTIQUITY, 1964, 111.
[6] e.g. P-M. Favret, *Note sur un vase zoomorphique* (1909); J. Déchelette, *Manuel d'Archéologie* (1914), Vol. III, 3, 1467, and fig. 662.
[7] For a drawing of this brooch see *Antiq. Journ.*, XLVII, 1967, 290; Mr M. R. Hull has drawn my attention to an extremely close parallel from the Magdalensberg, Austria: *Carinthia I*, 142, 1942, 154 and fig. 1.
[8] cf. *Archaeologia.*, CI, 1967, 38, and fig. 23.
[9] *Antiq. Journ.*, XLI, 1961, 44.
[10] *Germania*, XXXIX, 1961, 196.
[11] See [1], 41.
[12] *Antiq. Journ.*, XXXVII, 1957, 6; ibid., XXXVIII, 1958, 13; ibid., XLI, 1961, 75, n. 6.
[13] *JRS*, LIV, 1964, 166.
[14] *Antiq. Journ.*, XLI, 1961, 75, and fig. 2.
[15] ANTIQUITY, 1964, 103.

Tree-felling by Fire

PLATE VI*a*

The following note has been sent to us by Thurstan Shaw, Research Professor of Archaeology in the Institute of African Studies, University of Ibadan, Nigeria.

The part that fire has played as an instrument in the clearance of forested areas for purposes of early agriculture has long been recognized, but doubt has sometimes been expressed about its capacity to deal with large forest trees. Readers of ANTIQUITY may therefore be interested in a photograph which shows a large tree in the rain forest of West Africa being felled by fire (PL. VI*a*). The tree had previously been killed by the removal of the bark from the lower part of the trunk, but a man attempting to fell it with a modern steel axe made very little impression upon it after a whole day's work. Accordingly a fire was set around the base of the trunk, and was kept burning continuously for 60 hours, at the end of which period, as a result of the regulation of the fire, the tree fell in precisely the desired spot. I measured the tree after its fall as having been 44 m. high. I estimated the total expenditure of labour, consisting of bark-stripping, collecting firewood and tending the fire, as 6 hours.

South Cadbury Excavations, 1968

In 1968, six sites were excavated, four in the interior, one across the inner rampart, and one at the south-west gate. The great variety of structures and objects recovered is best dealt with by concentrating on the highlights of each period.

For the Early Neolithic, the greatest surprise was the discovery of a vigorous culture beneath the first Iron Age rampart. There, sealed by the old land surface, were pits rich in flint flakes and pottery; a scatter of charcoal; and a suggestion of a bank of roughly piled stones. In the rampart cutting on the south side of the hill, this Neolithic bank stood at the point where the relatively gentle slope of the Cadbury hilltop plunges steeply to the valley—the most effective line, that is, for defensive purposes, and the one chosen therefore by the Iron Age defenders. This siting looks so deliberate that one is tempted to predict that a similar Neolithic bank may be found in a comparable position all round the hill; and if this is so, then Neolithic Cadbury would have been an embanked settlement of about 20 acres (*c.* 8 hectares). A provisional date for the settlement is provided by the thermoluminescence technique. Measurements at the Oxford Research Laboratory for Archaeology give the following dates for two Neolithic sherds recovered in 1967: 3300 ± 800 BC and 3350 ± 800 BC.

Thereafter the hilltop was abandoned for two millennia or longer, until early in the 1st