

AN ACCOUNT OF THE DISCOVERY OF
ROMAN REMAINS AT OLD NEWTON.

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In 1906 a patient, an Innkeeper at Stowmarket, presented me with a box full of broken glass, pottery, fragments of partially burnt bones (obviously human), &c., with the following history.

About 1875 stone was being raised in a low lying meadow belonging to Mr. Lankester, at Old Newton. Trenches were dug about 4 to 5 feet deep, and at one spot the workmen found that the ground had been previously disturbed. At the bottom of a narrow shaft, glass urns, and other articles were unearthed, the urns containing fragments of charred bones. Some of these articles were brought to the Inn, and my patient, the late Mr. Pope, obtained possession of them. He "examined them thoroughly" (so he stated), but found "nothing of any value." He preserved three glass beads and 10 "counters," the rest being thrown into a box in an outhouse, where they remained for many years. At the time of the discovery Mr. Pope visited the spot, and he described its position to me. He informed me that the urns were broken when he received them, but were held together by the damp ashes they contained. Although he gave little care to the relics in his possession, it is to his credit that he was the only person in the neighbourhood who took any interest in them at all.

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On sorting out the contents of the box I found the following articles :—

- 1 large glass urn (much broken),
- 1 smaller do. (not quite so badly broken),
- 1 glass flask (much broken),
- 1 glass "lachrymatory" (whole),
- 1 earthenware urn (broken),
- 3 beads,
- 1 bronze spear head,
- 2 bronze handles,
- 5 bronze rings,
- 10 glass "counters," and
- A large quantity of ashes and fragments of partially burnt human bones.

The large cinerary urn is of bluish-green glass, very thin; is 12 inches high, and has two double handles and a lid (plate A).

The smaller urn is of similar glass, but much thicker, is $8\frac{1}{2}$ inches high, has only one broad handle and no lid (plate B). It contains fragments of bones, as can be seen in the illustration. Amongst the ashes in this urn were found the 10 glass "counters." The beads, rings, spear head, and bronze handles were found loose in the soil close to the other urns.

The flask is of amber-coloured glass, is 7 inches high, with a wide ribbed handle, and the body is fluted (plate C).

The "lachrymatory" is of bluish-green glass, and 4 inches high (plate C).

The earthenware urn is of light brown ware, rough, 5 inches high, the only markings being two narrow lines just below the lip (plate D, fig. 1).

One of the beads is of the common Roman type, turquoise-coloured, and melon-shaped. Another is light green, and the third of dark blue glass, rather large, blotched with white, light blue and green.

The bronze spear head is incomplete, and is just over 3 inches long (plate E, fig. 1). In the sketch the dotted lines show the complete original form. (Vide



PLATE B: Roman Glass Cinerary Urn, containing charred fragments of human bones.

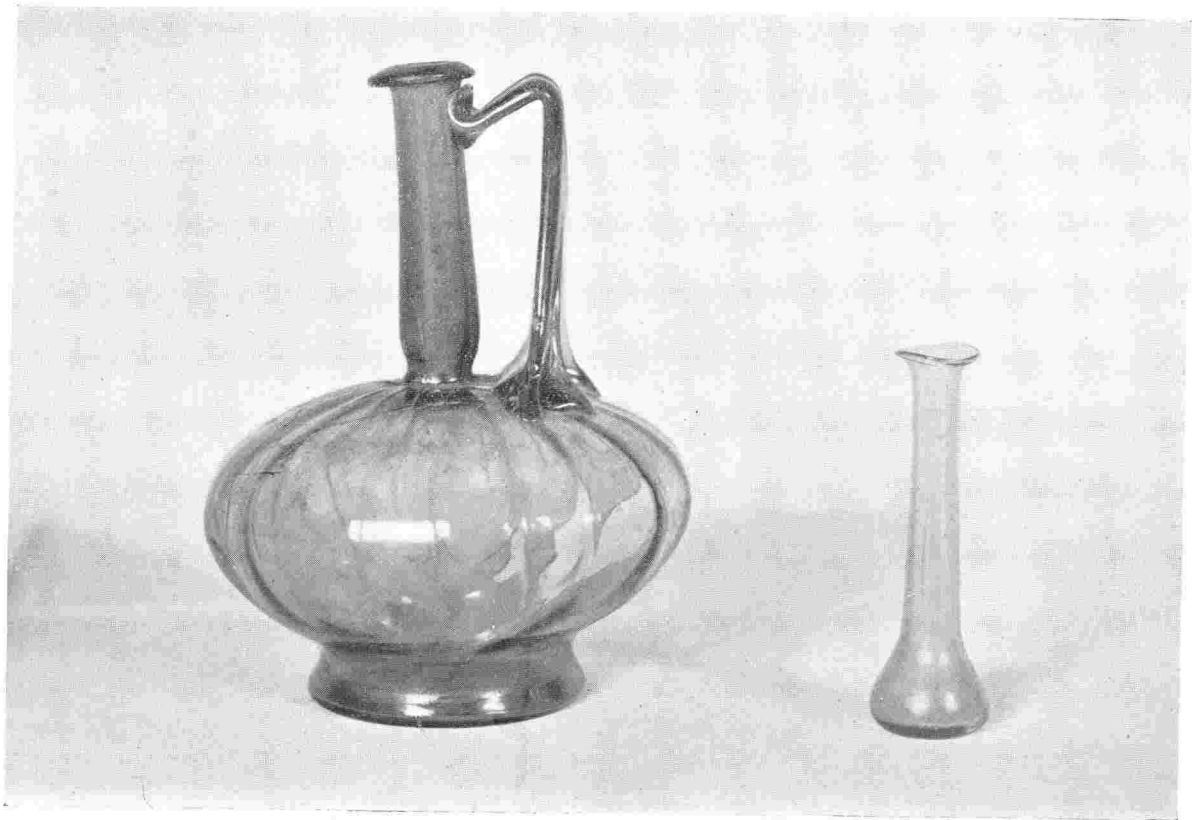


PLATE C: Roman Glass Flask and "Lachrymatory."



Fig. 1.
Roman Earthenware Cinerary Urn.



Fig. 2. Small Earthen Vessel.

PLATE D.

Sir John Evans' *Ancient Bronze Implements of Great Britain and Ireland*. London, 1881.)

The pair of bronze handles are $3\frac{1}{2}$ inches long, and have "serpent-head" ends (plate E, fig. 2).

The five bronze rings ($1\frac{1}{2}$ inches in diameter) are grooved, except on the inside; but I do not know their use.

The 10 glass "counters" are each $\frac{3}{8}$ inch in diameter; five are white and five black.

I submitted the smaller articles to Mr. Chas. H. Read, of the British Museum, and he kindly explained to me the complete shape of the spear head, and informed me that it and two of the beads belonged to the pre-Roman period (Bronze Age).

Besides the above articles there were found at the same time two earthenware Roman Lamps (stated to have passed into the possession of the late Dr. J. E. Taylor, of the Ipswich Museum), of which I can find no trace; a small earthenware vessel, 4 inches high (plate D, fig. 2), perfect, now in the possession of Mrs. Pretyman, of Haughley Park; and another vessel, probably a large one, taken away by one of the workmen, who kept it in his chicken-run till it was broken and thrown away.

I located the approximate site of the discoveries, which is shown on the accompanying diagram (plate F), by the aid of the present owner, Mr. J. A. Lankéster, of Old Newton, and the foreman in charge of the said excavations. The latter tried his best to persuade me not to waste time in digging over the meadow, "as they had gone right through the place, and there was nothing left worth keeping, only little old marbles and stones and broken glass." But last summer Mr. F. A. Badham, Mr. H. E. Wilkes, and I, with the pecuniary help of a few gentlemen in the neighbourhood who were interested, obtained permission for fresh excavations, and for three weeks trenches were dug in every direction right across the meadow down to the water level. We found that the whole meadow had

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been previously turned over for stone, and discovered only a fragment of amber-coloured glass and a very large quantity of broken pottery of a grey or reddish-brown colour and coarse grain. Some of the fragments have rough markings, as if made with a pointed stick, wavy or straight lines, single and double, just below the rim ; others are more finished, with bands outside. Altogether I have fragments of about 50 vessels of various sizes, some of which I have submitted to Mr. Read, and he is of opinion that most of them are probably Roman. Other pieces show some glazing (green), and are evidently of a later date.

I am indebted to Mr. H. E. Wilkes for the photographs and drawings.

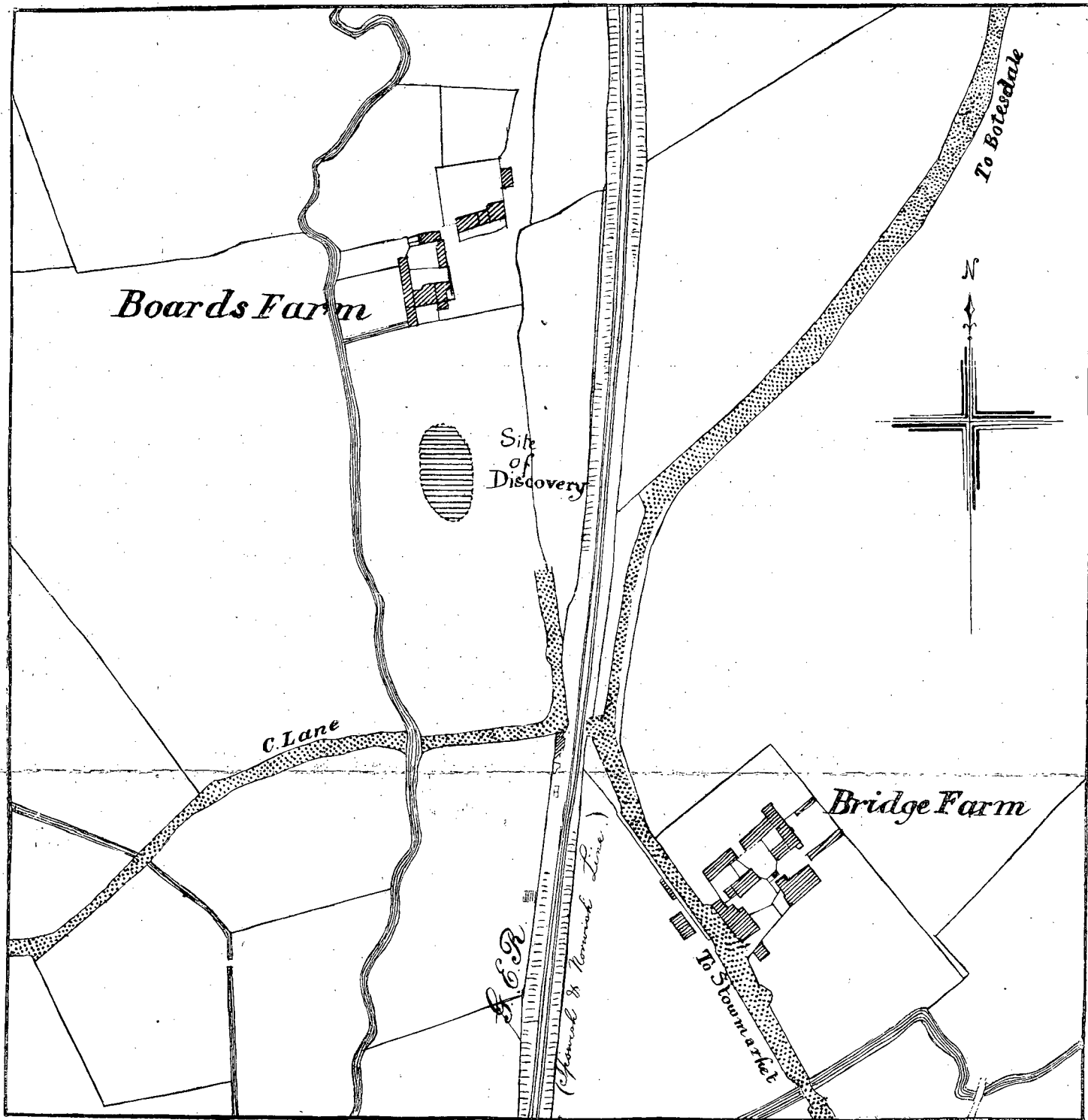


PLATE F: Site of Discovery.

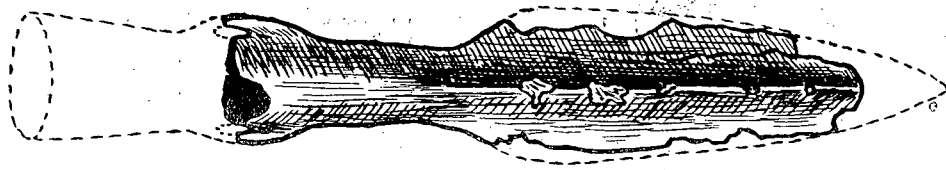


FIG. 1.

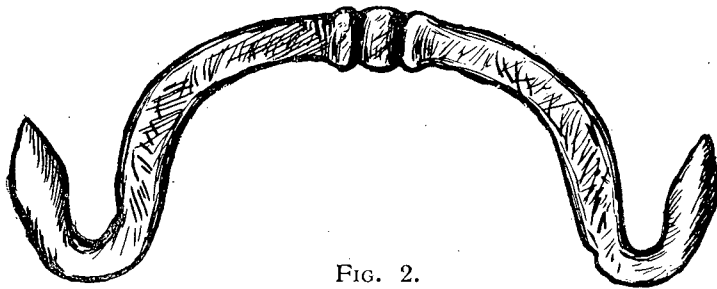


FIG. 2.

PLATE E: Fig. 1—British Bronze Spear-head.

Fig. 2—One of pair of Roman Bronze Handles.