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**The Anglo-Saxon Cemetery at Lower Farm, Bishop's Cleeve:**
*excavations directed by Kenneth Brown 1969*

by N. Holbrook

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The Anglo-Saxon Cemetery at Lower Farm, Bishop's Cleeve: excavations directed by Kenneth Brown 1969

By NEIL HOLBROOK

With contributions by B.A. Ford, Tony Waldron, G.T. Walker and Ann Woodward

INTRODUCTION

Circumstances of the Excavation

On 4 July 1969 several skeletons were exposed during topsoil stripping in preparation for sand quarrying at Lower Farm, Bishop’s Cleeve, Gloucestershire. Of the seven skeletons revealed three were destroyed immediately. The farmer, Mr. Blackwell, reported the finds to the police who visited the site with the local coroner. At that point the discoveries were notified to Kenneth Brown, assistant curator at Cheltenham Museum,* and a number of amber beads, an iron knife, and another iron object were put in his care. Mr. Brown showed the artefacts to Helen O’Neil, the Ministry of Works Correspondent for Gloucestershire, who identified them as Anglo-Saxon. The following day Mr. Brown and Mrs. O’Neil visited the site and saw the remaining four burials (Fig. 3, nos. 7–8, 15 and 18). Brown immediately organised the excavation of the four burials over the course of the weekend. Their disposition suggested a more extensive cemetery, which was confirmed when a further surface tract was stripped a week later. During following evenings and weekends Brown and volunteer assistants were able to keep pace with the contractors’ programme, and in all twenty-six burials were recorded, sixteen accompanied by grave goods. A small grant from the Ministry of Works was subsequently agreed to cover the excavation expenses.

Following a further site visit by Mrs. O’Neil, the Inspector of Ancient Monuments, Mr. John Hurst, requested that further examination in order to reveal the total extent of the cemetery be conducted under the direction of W.J. Ford. While Kenneth Brown concentrated on the exposed burials, Mr. Ford and his small team confined themselves to an examination of the peripheral area which had been stripped of topsoil in preparation for further sand extraction (Fig. 2). This area, which extended for a distance of between 30 and 50 m on all sides of the

*Kenneth Brown, a native of Middlesborough and a graduate of Leeds University, came to Cheltenham Museum as assistant curator in 1967. As the museum’s curator, Harold Fletcher, also held the post of librarian, many museum duties devolved to Kenneth. At the time most provincial museums had small staffs and much of the survey and excavation work prompted by the vigorous building development of the day was undertaken as chance offered by devoted amateurs often at short or no notice. The museums provided moral and, where they could, material support. Kenneth’s time in Cheltenham culminated in the exhibition ‘6000 Years of Man — An Exhibition of Local Archaeology’ held from 19 January to 23 February 1974. Later that year he moved to the Royal Pump Room Museum at Harrogate as curator. He died in 1991 (R.S).
Fig. 1. Location of the cemetery relative to previous work in Bishop's Cleeve.
exposed burials, was levelled, cleaned and investigated but no further inhumations or any other features were revealed.

Topsoil stripping on the site ceased for the winter and Brown arranged with Mr. M.J. Aitken of the Research Laboratory for Archaeology in Oxford for a metal-detector survey to be carried out over the remainder of the field prior to the resumption of work in the spring of 1970. It is not known if this survey ever took place: the absence of documentation suggests that if it did the results were negative.

Following completion of the salvage recording Brown undertook some subsequent work. The metalwork was conserved at the Ashmolean Museum, Oxford, and reports received on the brooches (draft comments by Mr. P.D.C. Brown), textile impressions (by Elisabeth Crowfoot) and the skeletons (by Dr. C. Oyler). Brief notes were published on the site in *Medieval Archaeology* and *Council for British Archaeology Review*.

In 1974 Kenneth Brown left Cheltenham Museum for employment in Yorkshire and took with him the artefacts (excluding the skeletons which were left in the museum) and site records in the expectation of producing a report at a later date. This never occurred and Mr. Brown died in the early 1990s. During this period it was assumed that the material had been lost or dispersed and discussion of the site in a number of general syntheses (e.g. Heighway 1987, 23–4) was based on the published notes and photographs of the metalwork taken by the Ashmolean Museum.

In September 1995 Cotswold Archaeological Trust (CAT) made contact with Mr. Brown's widow Lena in Yorkshire and established that she retained the finds and site archive. Mrs. Brown expressed her wish that CAT should take responsibility for the publication of the site and that the finds be deposited in Cheltenham Museum for long-term care. In 1995 CAT submitted a proposal for post-excavation assessment of the site to English Heritage and in 1997 funding was received for this task. The recommendations of the assessment were accepted by English Heritage in 1998 when they commissioned the analysis reported in the following pages.

**Nature of the Site Record**

The archive recovered from Lena Brown consists of the following elements: the artefacts, of which most had tags indicating their provenance; a scale plan of the graves, although the grave numbers are not marked on the plan; a set of brief notes describing the position of bodies and grave goods in the graves; the specialist reports mentioned above, including a short note and location plan from the limited work undertaken by W.J. Ford; and miscellaneous correspondence providing some further site details.

The skeletal remains of nineteen burials remained within the store of Cheltenham Museum. By 1995 some of these had lost their labels. It is clear that photographs were taken during the course of the excavation. These cannot now be traced. The only extant images examined are two slides in Cheltenham Museum, showing one of the burials exposed by the site strip, and four slides showing more of the initial four burials, taken by the late Bernard Rawes and kindly passed to the author. All the slides were taken during July 1969.

**Site Location, Topography, and Geology**

The cemetery was found in the field immediately north of the buildings of Lower Farm (O.S. Nat. Grid SO 94852708), 1.5 km south-west of the centre of Bishop's Cleeve village (Figs. 1 and 2). Prior to development the site had a generally flat topography at 45 m above O.D., the ground dropping gently westward towards the river Swilgate 2 km distant. A small tributary of the Dean Brook lay a short distance to the north. The underlying drift geology comprised
Fig. 2. Areas examined in 1969. A: approximate extent of cemetery excavated by Kenneth Brown. B: areas investigated by W.J. Ford.

deposits of well-drained sands and fan gravels derived from the Second Terrace of the river Avon. In 1969 the area was being developed as a quarry, which in the late 1990s was used for landfill.

EXCAVATION RESULTS

Prehistoric Activity

There are two small collections of pottery within the extant finds assemblage. One is marked 'rubbish pit' and is associated with a couple of pieces of animal bone. The other is marked 'blackened area' and contains 45 sherds of pottery and two flint flakes. Examination of the pottery indicates that both features were of prehistoric rather than Anglo-Saxon date (below, The Artefacts). The location of the features relative to the cemetery cannot now be ascertained, save for the note by the excavator that 'a few sherds, a loom-weight and a stone spindle-whorl were found nearby, but the excavation revealed no further traces of a settlement'. The loomweight cannot now be located.
The Cemetery

Kenneth Brown’s plan marks the position of twenty-two graves and the approximate position of another one plus the three that had been destroyed before they could be recorded (Fig. 3). His notes catalogue the burials and their associated grave goods by a sequence of Rows and Numbers which is not marked on the plan. For the sake of clarity the burials on the plan have been given new numbers during this programme of analysis; a concordance with the previous system is provided in the catalogue. As there appears to be a chronological progression from south to north in the cemetery the burials have been numbered in that order. Analysis of the plan allows fifteen graves in the catalogue entries to be securely identified (plus Burials 9–11 destroyed without record). Further independent support for these attributions is provided by notes made by Mrs. O’Neil when she saw the first four preserved burials, and by the photographs taken by Bernard Rawes. Of the others, Burials 16 and 17 are evidently Row 4, Numbers 1 and 2, although which is which is not entirely certain (the references in the notes to the skull of Number 1 being present suggests that this is best equated with Burial 16). Burial 26 is probably that recorded as Row II, Number 5, which only survived from the waist down. In this case it is to be assumed that Row II was numbered from west to east, with Burial 19 equating to Row II, Number 1. By elimination Burial 2 must be Row 6, Number 1.

All of the burials were in simple dug graves; no evidence was recorded of any coffins or other features, with the exception of a possible wooden head-rest in Burial 16. The burials were all aligned roughly N–S, with the head to the south.

Fig. 3. Plan of the cemetery. The dots indicate the position of the skulls.
The Grave Catalogue

Each entry begins with the orientation of the body (head end) relative to True North. This information is taken from Kenneth Brown's plan, and it must be recognised that an error of at least 5° is quite probable. Also given are details of the body length and position within the grave, a description of the skeleton by Tony Waldron, and finally details of the grave goods. The artefacts are reported by B.A. Ford and the textile impressions by Elisabeth Crowfoot. Mrs. Crowfoot's report was written in 1969 and no re-examination of the textile impressions has occurred as part of the current project.

Burial 1 (Row 0, Number 1). 170°. Height measured in grave 1.47 m. Incomplete adult skeleton. Skull fragments, part of humeral head, distal part of left humerus, distal left ulna, mid-shaft fragments of right radius and ulna, first proximal phalanx of hand, proximal fragments of both femora.

Saucer brooch (1) with leather fragments on the back at left shoulder; beads (3) on the left-hand side below neck.

1. Cast copper-alloy saucer brooch (Figs. 5 and 9). Front: gilt, central boss and ring, 'double-outline' five-point star surrounded by three plain rings, flange chipped. Back: pin holder and catch-plate cast in one with brooch and now broken, part of iron spring attached. Diameter 38 mm. Textile fragments on the back of the brooch: in spite of a suggestion here and there of a 'Z'-spun thread; these fragments are probably leather, though a textile may have been in contact with them.

2. Copper-alloy sheet (not illustrated). Fragment of a curved sheet with iron corrosion products attached. Length 12 mm, thickness 1 mm, width 9 mm.

3. Ninety-three amber beads (Fig. 5). Type A: twenty-three tubular-shaped, heights 5 mm, diameters 5–6 mm. Type B: twenty-one tubular-shaped, heights 6 mm, diameters 5–6 mm. Type C: thirteen tubular-shaped, heights 7 mm, diameters 6–7 mm. Type D: fourteen tubular-shaped, heights 8 mm, diameters 7–8 mm. Type E: five tubular-shaped, heights 9 mm, diameters 8–9 mm. Type F: five wedge-shaped, diameters 9–12 mm. Type G (not illustrated): fragments of approximately twelve beads.

Burial 2 (Row 6, Number 1). 196°. Height measured in the grave as 1.52 m. Incomplete juvenile with much post-mortem damage. Loose teeth, rib and scapular fragments, part of C2 and several unidentified fragments. Aged 5–8.

No grave goods.

Burial 3 (Row 1, Number 6). 199°. The skeleton only survived to shoulder height in the grave, with a height for the remaining parts of the body of 1.57 m. It seems probable, although not fully certain, that the skeleton in Box 8 which has lost its label should be ascribed to this grave. The only other alternative for Box 8 is Burial 26, but as that grave only survived from the mid-chest downwards the presence of a humerus and scapula in Box 8 favour this identification. The extant parts comprise an incomplete and badly damaged adult. Fragments of left humerus, left and right femurs, left tibia, scapula, ribs, pelvis, one metacarpal and left and right talus and calcaneus.

Iron knife (1) above left elbow; iron buckle (2) to the left at waist level.

1. Iron knife (Fig. 5). Bohner 1958 type A? Fragmentary worn blade and tang, very corroded. Length 102 mm, maximum blade width 18 mm.

2. Iron buckle (Fig. 5). Oval with circular cross-sectioned frame and pin. Fragmentary. Length 41 mm, width 34 mm, length of pin 35 mm.

3. Copper-alloy strip (Fig. 5). Two fragments of a bent strip now broken at both ends. Three rivet holes remain with traces of iron corrosion from iron rivets now missing. Length 11 mm, width 7 mm, thickness 1.5 mm.

Burial 4 (Row 1, Number 5). 197°. Height measured in grave 1.47 m, although plan indicates that bottom of grave-cut had been removed. Adult skull and maxillary fragments. RU 3, 5 and 6 in situ; sockets of RU 1 and 2. Sockets of LU 1–8 present. Aged 45+. Dental disease.

No grave goods.
Fig. 4. Demography of the cemetery. A: based on skeletal evidence only. B: based upon combination of skeletal evidence and assessment of associated grave goods.
Fig. 5. Burial 1, grave goods 1 and 3, scale 1:1. Burial 3, grave goods 1 and 2, scale 1:2; 3, scale 1:1. Burial 5, grave goods 1 and 2, scale 1:1.
Burial 5 (Row 1, Number 4). 197°. Height measured in grave 1.67 m. Female skeleton lacking all leg and foot bones, bones of left forearm and both hands. Much post-mortem damage. Aged 45+. Dental disease. Green staining both clavicles, right first rib, C6, C7 and T1 and right mandible. Pair of saucer brooches, no. 1 below left lower jaw, no. 2 above left shoulder.
1. Cast copper-alloy saucer brooch (Figs. 5 and 9). Front: gilded, central mount with glass setting and ring. Divided by single radial bars into three fields of almost equal size. Each contains a Salin style I animal surrounded by an outer ring, flange chipped. Back: pin holder and catch-plate cast in one with brooch, part of spring mechanism attached, pin shank missing. Diameter 48 mm. Textile fragments: these fragments look more like leather attached to the back of the brooch, though there are traces of textile threads pressed against them in places.
2. Cast copper-alloy saucer brooch (Figs. 5 and 9). Front: gilded, central mount with greenish yellow glass setting and ring. The top of the glass setting has broken off and is now missing. Divided by single radial bars into three fields of almost equal size. Each contains a Salin style I animal surrounded by an outer ring, flange chipped. Back: pin holder and catch-plate cast in one with the brooch, part of spring mechanism attached and fragmentary iron pin. Traces of leather attached to back of brooch. Diameter 47 mm.

Burial 6 (Row 1, Number 3). 195°. Height measured in grave 1.57 m. Laid prone, with skull facing the head of the grave. Substantial female skeleton with considerable post-mortem damage and lacking some small bones of the hands and feet, most thoracic vertebrae and both pubic bones. Aged 45+; height 1.52 ± 0.04 m (right tibia). Dental disease. Schmorl's node in 4th lumbar vertebra. No grave goods.

Burial 7 (Row 1, Number 2). 192°. Right arm crossed onto waist; left arm slightly bent. Height measured in grave 1.63 m. Incomplete female. Right humerus, radius and ulna, right femur and patella, right tibia and distal right fibula. Pelvic fragments. Mandible with both lower 6–8 present; maxilla with loose upper teeth. Height 1.58 ± 0.04 m (right femur). Buckle (now missing) on a level with left elbow; iron snaffle bit (1) and iron strip (2) beneath skeleton.
1. Iron snaffle bit (Fig. 6). A: ring, irregular cross-section, diameter 54 mm. B: ring, circular cross-section, diameter 53 mm. C: link, circular cross-section, looped terminals at 90 degrees to each other, diameter of looped terminals 24 mm. D: link, square cross-section, looped terminals in the same plane, cross-section of one terminal is rectangular, the other circular, length 77 mm, diameter of looped terminals 24 mm.
2. Iron horse-harness fitting (Fig. 6). Rectangular plate with two rivet holes thinning to a curved circular cross-sectioned ring now incomplete. Length 34 mm, width of plate 12 mm.

Burial 8 (Row 1, Number 1). 195°. Site records state that head missing; surviving height in grave of remaining parts 1.73 m. These records do not match the surviving remains, which comprise a fragment of adult mandible with RL 3 and five loose teeth. Iron knife (1), slipped into rib cage.
1. Iron knife (Fig. 6). Bohner 1958 type C? Fragmentary blade, complete tang with rectangular cross-section. Length 146 mm

Burials 9–11. Destroyed without record prior to commencement of excavation.

Fig. 6. Burial 7, grave goods 1 and 2, scale 1:2. Burial 8, grave good 1, scale 1:2. Burial 13, grave goods 1–4, scale 1:1.
Copper-alloy disc (1) left of left jaw; cross-shaped brooch (2) below left jaw; copper-alloy pin (3) between 1 and 2. Five amber beads (4), one near the head and four below the left jaw.
1. Cast copper-alloy disc (Figs. 6 and 9). Front: gilded, single field with highly stylised Salin style I animals with triple strand bodies surrounded by a ring, heavily chipped flange. Back: at one side remains of a small copper-alloy plate riveted in place with part of the iron rivet in situ, second rivet hole alongside with traces of iron corrosion around its perimeter; at opposite side complete rivet hole with remains of a further two holes. Diameter 38 mm.
2. Cast copper-alloy cross-brooch (Fig. 6). Front: gilded, flat with central double outlined lozenge-shaped field filled with internal zoomorphic decoration, the four arms terminated in discoid lobe-like extensions outlined with punched-dot decoration. Reverse: two opposing terminals have small applied circular copper-alloy sheets soldered in place, the third terminal has a small circular rivet hole and the fourth is imbedded in a lump of iron corrosion products from the remains of the iron pin. Textile fragments. Front: a lump of layers of replaced textile, with a clear area measuring c. 15 × 80 mm overall. 'Z'-spinning both systems, plain weave, count 12 by 8 threads per cm (taken as 6 by 4 on 5 mm). The appearance perhaps suggests wool rather than flax. Reverse: round pin, layers of deteriorated textile, probably the same as on the front; on the back of the brooch traces of perhaps hide. Length 47 mm, width 43 mm.
3. Copper-alloy pin (Fig. 6). Very corroded. Broken across flattened pierced head. Circular cross-section. Length 59 mm.
4. Five amber beads (Fig. 6). Type A: one roughly-shaped, height 15 mm, diameter 13 mm. Type B: four roughly hexagonal faceted with flat sides, heights 10 mm, diameters 9 mm.
5. Textile fragments. Found with small pieces of copper alloy, examined in 1969 but disintegrated in conservation. Brown considered the copper alloy to probably be grave matrix stained by corrosion products of items 1–3 above. (i) Coarse 'Z'-spun threads, vegetable fibre (identified by the Woollen Industries Research Association), i.e. probably flax. Two areas, one 9 × 3 mm, the other 10 × 5 mm. The surface is poor, but the lie of the threads suggest a tablet weave, 6 twists to 5 mm. (ii) Similar 'Z'-threads.

Burial 14 (Row 2, Number 2). 197°. Height measured in grave 1.70 m. Adult skull fragments.
Iron spearhead (1) at left elbow; iron buckle (2) low down on the chest.
1. Iron spearhead (Fig. 7). Swanton 1973 type H2. Worn angular blade with lozenge-shaped cross-section, solid shank. Riveted through split socket at a height of 66 mm from the fragmentary socket end. Length 276 mm.
2. Iron buckle (Fig. 7). 'D'-shaped frame. Rectangular cross-sectioned pin bar, iron pin with circular cross-section. Diameter 30 mm.

Burial 15 (Row 2, Number 1). 192°. Burial placed on its side, with knees bent. Feet had been removed. Height measured in grave of remaining skeleton 1.47 m. Fragments of adult left mandible with LL 3–7 present. Aged 25–35. Contained within the grave, and almost certainly occurring incidentally and residually within the fill, was a single, fairly abraded, sherd of Romano-British greyware pottery with a red-brown core. The paste contains fragments of Malvernian rock. The sherd would fit into the Malvernian Severn Valley ware tradition dating to the 3rd or 4th century (identification by Jane Timby).
Iron spearhead (1) beneath skeleton.
1. Iron spearhead (Fig. 7). Swanton 1973 type C2. Fragmentary flat leaf-shaped blade with short neck between blade and socket, lentoid cross-section, cleft socket. Length 205 mm.

Burial 16 (Row 4, Number 13). 199°. Heavily disturbed upper part of body. A total length of 1.37 m of the body survived in the grave. A patch of charcoal lay 0.15 m below the level of the skull, possibly the remains of a wooden head-rest (below, General Discussion). Juvenile skull and maxillary fragments. Aged 8–10. No grave goods.
Fig. 7. Burial 14, grave goods 1 and 2, scale 1:2. Burial 15, grave good 1, scale 1:2. Burial 17, grave good 1, scale 1:1. Burial 18, grave goods 1 and 2, scale 1:2; grave goods 3, 4 and 5A, scale 1:1.
Burial 17 (Row 4, Number 22). 200°. Lower part of a heavily disturbed grave, of which 0.8 m survived. Fourteen loose adult teeth with little wear. Aged 25–35.

Position of amber beads not recorded.

1. Seven amber beads plus fragments (Fig. 7). Type A: one irregular-shaped, height 10 mm, diameter 10 mm. Type B: three irregular-shaped, heights 9 mm, diameters 9 mm. Type C: two irregular tubular-shaped, heights 6 mm, diameters 5–7 mm. Type D (not illustrated): one fragmentary bun-shaped, height 12 mm, diameter 8 mm.

Burial 18 (Row 3, Number 1). 192°. Supine burial with arms straight down by each side, but quite a distance from the body. Height measured in grave 1.57 m. The skeleton which had lost its label in Box 7 can probably, although not certainly, be equated with this grave. The remains comprise a partial female. Skull fragments, mandible and maxilla, left and right humerus, left radius, parts of left and right pelvic bones, left tibia. Dental disease. Fractured left humerus.

Copper-alloy suspension loop with iron object attached (3) at left shoulder; copper-alloy plated iron object (4) 200 mm below the skull resting on the spine; beads (5) on the breast.

1. Iron buckle (Fig. 7). Small 'D'-shaped frame with circular cross-sectioned pin, rectangular cross-sectioned pin bar. Diameter 27 mm.

2. Iron buckle-plates (Fig. 7). Three fragments. A: length 38 mm, width 18 mm, containing two rivet holes, broken off across second rivet hole. B: length 31 mm, width 19 mm, broken off across rivet hole. C: length 20 mm, width 18 mm, central rivet hole with remains of iron rivet in place.

3. Iron pin (Fig. 7). Heavily corroded fragmentary pin with copper-alloy suspension loop made from a piece of wire with overlapping ends. Circular in cross-section, broken at one end. Diameter of ring 18 mm, diameter of wire 1.5 mm, length of pin 29 mm.

4. Iron object (Fig. 7). Fragments of an iron object with copper-alloy plating and a central rivet hole. Length 30 mm.

5. Eighty four beads (Figs. 7 and 8). Type A: one small greenish/yellow glass bead, height 5 mm, diameter 4 mm. Type B: two clay beads inlaid with paste decoration, heights 11 mm, diameters 14 mm. Type C: large oval-shaped cylindrical amber bead, height 17 mm, diameter 22 mm. Type D: large irregular-shaped amber bead, height 16 mm, maximum diameter 23 mm. Type E: large irregular amber bead, height 13.5 mm, diameter 21 mm. Type F: four large irregular flattish amber beads, diameters 21–23 mm. Type G: irregular flattish amber bead, height 8 mm, diameter 15 mm. Type H: six small irregular flat amber beads, diameters 16–19 mm. Type I: nine faceted hexagonal amber beads, heights 13–14 mm, diameters 13 mm. Type J: nine faceted hexagonal amber beads, heights 12 mm, diameters 13 mm. Type K: six faceted hexagonal amber beads, heights 11 mm, diameters 11 mm. Type L: eleven irregular faceted amber beads, heights 10 mm, diameters 9 mm. Type M: twelve faceted hexagonal amber beads, heights 9 mm, diameters 10 mm. Type N: one tubular cylindrical-shaped amber bead, height 9 mm, diameter 10 mm. Type O: three triangular faceted amber beads, heights 11–12 mm, maximum diameters 10 mm. Type P: one elongated oval-shaped amber bead, height 10 mm, diameter 8 mm. Type Q: one irregular faceted amber bead, height 14 mm, diameter 10 mm. Type R: ten irregular flattish faceted amber beads, heights 12–14 mm, maximum diameters 13 mm. Type S (not illustrated): four fragmentary amber beads.

Burial 19 (Row II, Number 1?). Skeletal remains missing; excavator's notes show this burial to be a juvenile with a height measured in the grave of 0.84 m.

No grave goods.

Burial 20 (Row 5, Number 3). 215°. Skeleton survived from the waist down. Surviving height in grave of 1.32 m. Lower limbs, foot bones and pelvis of adult female. Much post-mortem damage with some attempt at repair. Height 1.63 ± 0.04 m (right femur and tibia). Intrusive juvenile proximal left humerus.

No grave goods.

Burials 21 and 22 (Row 5, Numbers 1 and 2). 192°. Double burial. Burial 21. Height measured in the grave of 1.37 m. Skull fragments of immature female adult; proximal fragments of left and right tibiae (unfused);

Position of amber beads not recorded.
1. Two amber beads (Fig. 8). Type A: hexagonal faceted, height 10 mm, diameter 11 mm. Type B (not illustrated): fragments of an amber bead.

Burial 23 (Row II, Number 2). 200°. Burial had been destroyed below the knee. Surviving body height of 1.29 m. The head and chest were lying on their left side. Partial adult female. Skull and fragments of cervical vertebrae, maxilla with LU 3–5 present and other loose teeth. Proximal left humerus, proximal left femur and part of left pelvis. Dental disease. Fragments of intrusive adult mandible.

Position of amber beads not recorded.
1. Five amber beads (Fig. 8). Type A: two irregularly-shaped slightly faceted, heights 12–14 mm, diameters 13 mm. Type B: one flat with hexagonal facets, height 10 mm, width 9 mm, thickness 4.5 mm. Type C (not illustrated): two irregular fragmentary, length 12 mm, diameter 12 mm.

Burial 24 (Row II, Number 3). 201°. A burial lying on its left side with arms flexed. Height measured in the grave as 1.62 m. Skeleton now lost. Dr. Oyler recorded in 1970 a fragment of mandible with some teeth. Third molar erupted, but virtually no attrition. He considered that the skeleton was not more than 25 years old.

Position of bead not recorded.
1. Bead (Fig. 8). Small tubular ironstone bead, height 8 mm, diameter 4.5 mm.

Burial 25 (Row II, Grave no. 4). 205°. Flexed burial lying on its left hand side. Hands clasped? Height measured in the grave as 1.52 m. Skeletal remains now missing. Dr. Oyler recorded in 1970 a mandible fragment, with the third molar not yet fully erupted. He therefore considered the specimen to be slightly younger than Burial 24.

Animal pendant (1) below the jaw.
1. Bone pendant (Fig. 8). Made from the right upper canine from a large dog. Condition of enamel suggests five years or more exposure before deposition. It has been pierced for suspension, broken across hole. Length 36 mm.

Burial 26 (Row II, Number 5). 204°. Skeleton destroyed from above the middle of the chest. Height of remaining body measured in grave 1.29 m. Skeletal remains now missing, unless they are those ascribed to Burial 3.

Buckle (1) above left hip.
1. Iron buckle (Fig. 8). Circular flat frame with indented pin-rest. Iron pin circular in cross-section. Maximum diameter of frame 42 mm, width of frame 10 mm, length of pin 48 mm.

Unprovenanced Finds
Row 3, Number 3. There are no records of this grave, save for Oyler's notes on a jaw fragment with teeth showing very little attrition. Oyler considered the age to be in the range 17–25.

Loose adult canine and one unidentified adult bone fragment. Context lost. Perhaps part of the lost assemblages from Burials 24 or 25.

Iron spearhead (Fig. 8). Swanton 1973, type C2. Heavily corroded leaf-shaped blade with lentoid cross-section. Part of blade missing. Short neck between blade and cleft socket. Length 201 mm. Label says Lower Farm 1930, presumably the year of discovery. How it came to be included with the 1969 collection is unclear. Cheltenham Museum has no record of the accession of this item.
THE HUMAN BONES by Tony Waldron

A preliminary report on the human bone from Lower Farm was prepared by Dr. C.R. Oyler and is available in typescript (Oyler 1970).

The bones from the site are contained in eight boxes and their condition has clearly deteriorated since they were originally excavated. A number have been treated with some kind of preservative which gives them a varnished appearance. There are many post-mortem breaks and in a few instances the bones have been poorly repaired with glue. Comparison with Oyler’s report shows that in some instances bones have been lost since he examined them. The most important loss affects the skeleton found in Burial 5. When Oyler examined it, it was almost complete, but now all the leg bones are missing and so are the bones of the left arm. Presumably these bones were stored separately from the rest of the skeleton and the box containing them has been misplaced or lost.

The bones in two of the boxes (7 and 8) have lost their context numbers but a study of the cemetery plan suggests that they are Burials 3 and 18. The excavator’s notes favour the identification of the contents of Box 8 with Burial 3. Another loose canine and a small unidentified fragment of bone with no context may be from Burial 24 or 25.

It is of note that the context numbers in Oyler’s report and those in this report do not correspond exactly. Thus, there is no mention of a skeleton from Burial 13 in Oyler’s report although it is present here; by contrast, Oyler mentions remains from Row 3, Number 3 (otherwise unrecorded) and from Burials 24 and 25 which are not among the assemblage here, unless Row 3, Number 3 is represented by the single canine mentioned in the previous paragraph. Finally, although human remains are shown on the cemetery plan in Burial 3 they are not recorded in Oyler’s report.

Methods

All the skeletons were examined in order, where possible, to assign a sex and age to each. This was done using standard anthropological methods which rely, for sexing, on the morphology of the pelvis and skull or, when these are not present, on measurements of, for example, the humeral or femoral heads, the glenoid fossa or the clavicle. The ageing of juveniles is based on the stage of dental eruption and on the degree to which teeth have been fully formed; in older children and immature adults, the stage of epiphyseal fusion is used. These methods are reasonably reliable and allow in most cases for ageing to within a few years. Once the epiphyses have been completely fused and all the teeth have erupted (at about the age of 25), ageing is more problematic and one then has to rely on less precise indicators such as the degree of tooth wear, on the morphology of the pubic symphysis, on the morphology of the rib ends and on the degree of fusion of the cranial sutures. By these methods it is seldom possible to age adults into anything less than ten-year age bands. An account of the methods used can be found in Workshop of European Anthropologists 1980. Detailed descriptions of individual skeletons are presented in the grave catalogue.

Standard measurements taken from the long bones were used to estimate height (Trotter 1970) and to calculate skeletal indices (Brothwell 1981). Finally any pathological changes on the bones were observed with reference to standard texts (for example, Resnick and Niwayama 1988; Rogers and Waldron 1995).

Green staining

One skeleton (Burial 5) had extensive green staining over both clavicles and on the posterior part of the right first rib, the right mandible, the 6th and 7th cervical vertebrae and the 1st
thoracic vertebra. Oyler remarked on this in his report (although he did not mention staining on the cervical vertebrae) and, in a hand written note on his typescript, commented that two brooches were found in the grave. This is confirmed by the description of the grave goods, which shows that a pair of gilded copper-alloy saucer brooches was present. They would account for the copper staining on the skeleton.

Demography

It seemed most likely that the remains represented twenty individuals (nineteen if the single tooth and adult bone which have lost their context are excluded) of whom five were juveniles or immature adults (that is, below the age of 25 at death) and fifteen were adults. The total of juveniles rises to eight if it includes Burials 19, 24 and 25, identified by either Oyler or the excavator, and the total of adults reduces to thirteen if the unstratified material and remains provisionally ascribed to Burial 8 are excluded. Only six of the adults could be assigned a sex and all were judged to be female; one of the immature skeletons was also most probably female (Fig. 4A).

By coincidence, only six of the adult skeletons could be aged; of these, three were between 25 and 35 at the time of death and the rest were judged to be at least 45 when they died (Table 1). Of the juveniles, two were probably aged between 5 and 8 years at death and the third was probably aged between 8 and 10 years.

Height

The poor condition of the bones made it impossible to take many post-cranial measurements and any cranial measurements at all. On this account, an estimate of height could be obtained for only three of the adults: Burial 6, 1.62 ± 0.04 m; Burial 7, 1.58 ± 0.04 m; Burial 20, 1.63 ± 0.04 m.

These heights may be compared with the mean height for females in the contemporary population which is 1.61 m. These Anglo-Saxon women were equal in height to their modern counterparts.

Table 1. Demography of the human remains from Lower Farm.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age at death (years)</th>
<th>5–9</th>
<th>10–14</th>
<th>15–24</th>
<th>25–34</th>
<th>35–44</th>
<th>45 and over</th>
<th>Adult</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Juvenile</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adult*</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Total No. Juveniles  5
Total No. Adults     15

*That is, no sex assigned.
1This number would be 8 if Burials 19, 24, and 25 identified by Oyler or the excavator are included.
2This number would be 13 if the unstratified material and remains provisionally ascribed to Burial 8 are excluded.
**Skeletal Indices**

It is conventional to calculate a number of indices from long bone measurements, the most common being the femoral and tibial indices which indicate the shape of the upper part of the shafts of the femur and tibia respectively. In the present sample, it was possible to measure the femoral index in only three cases and the tibial index in only two and so it is not possible to extract any useful information from the results. The femoral indices all fall within the platymeric range (< 85.0) while one of the tibial indices is within the mesocnemic range (63.0–69.9) and the other is in the eurycnemic range (μ 70.0). No particular significance may be attached to these observations.

**Pathology**

Apart from dental disease, evidence of pathology was confined to two skeletons. One (Burial 6) had a Schmorl's node in the fourth lumbar vertebra and the other (Burial 18) had a fractured humerus. Schmorl's nodes are very common and usually produce no symptoms during life unless they are placed very anteriorly so that they give rise to angulation of the spine leading to backache and, occasionally, neurological symptoms. There is no reason to suppose that the individual affected here would have been aware of the presence of this minor abnormality.

The fracture in the humerus was in the proximal end. It had healed well and a slight angulation of approximately 15° would not have interfered with normal function. The fact that the fracture has healed so well suggests that this woman had received some kind of treatment after she had sustained the injury. There is nothing to indicate how she might have received the injury.

**Dental disease**

Eleven of the immature and mature adults had teeth present, although the number of teeth varied considerably. Of these, four (Burials 4, 5, 18, 23) had dental disease. All had lost teeth during life and three (Burials 5, 18, 23) had dental caries (Table 2).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Context</th>
<th>Ante-mortem loss</th>
<th>Caries</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Burial 4</td>
<td>RU 4</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Burial 5</td>
<td>RU 4, 5; LU 8</td>
<td>RU 8, LU 7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Burial 18</td>
<td>RL 6, 7; LL 7, 8</td>
<td>LL 3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Burial 23</td>
<td></td>
<td>LU 7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

RU = right upper; RL = right lower; LU = left upper; LL = left lower

**Comment**

In a small group of skeletons such as this, the amount of information which can be gained about their health or way of life is very limited, and this is particularly the case when they are in a poor state of preservation. There are some features of the assemblage which are of interest, however. The first is the relatively small number of infants and juveniles, that is, individuals aged 15 years or less at the time of their death. Of the twenty individuals here, only three (15%)
were infants (four if we include Burial 19 of which the bones are now lost), a smaller proportion than is customarily found. In the much larger assemblage from the Anglo-Saxon site at Great Chesterford in Essex, almost half the 167 individuals present were aged 15 or less (Waldron 1994). The high proportion of infants and juveniles in archaeological bone assemblages is generally taken to indicate both poor obstetric care and high mortality from infectious diseases, most of which would probably have been enteric diseases spread through contaminated food and water causing diarrhoea and death from dehydration and electrolyte imbalance. The fact that there are relatively so few juveniles in the present assemblage is most likely to be a chance effect, and not too much significance should be drawn from it.

The second point of interest is that all seven skeletons which could be assigned a sex were female; this unusual sex ratio was also noted by Oyler who considered that nine of his nineteen individuals were female. The sex ratio of skeletons from most sites is close to unity, although where there is an excess it is usually of females. For example, at the Great Chesterford cemetery referred to above, the female to male ratio was 1.23:1 but even this is larger than expected. It is conceivable that the majority of the remaining skeletons at Bishop's Cleeve which could not be assigned a sex were males, and it is of note that the associated grave goods strongly suggest the presence of at least two males in the cemetery.

THE ARTEFACTS

GRAVE GOODS by B.A. Ford

Spears
Two spearheads were discovered in the cemetery in 1969 and an unstratified example was apparently found at Lower Farm in 1930. The spears have been classified using Swanton’s (1973) typology of Anglo-Saxon spears.

Two of the spears, that from Burial 15 and the unstratified example, have leaf-shaped blades with lentoid cross-sections. They can be assigned to Swanton’s C class. The Burial 15 example is within the size range of Swanton’s C2 spears which have the commonest type of leaf-shaped blade found in Anglo-Saxon times and which have a fairly widespread distribution (Swanton 1973, 10). The example found in 1930 is 201 mm in length and is on the borderline between types C1 and C2. The two examples are very similar with a short solid neck separating the blade from a broadly cleft socket. Spears of type C2 have a very broad date range from the earliest settlements to the end of the 7th century, but they are generally regarded as later Anglo-Saxon in date.

The spear from Burial 14 is an angular blade of Swanton’s type H2. Again these have a fairly wide distribution, but they are a type confined to the 5th and 6th centuries (Swanton 1973, 20).

Weapon Deposition
The weapon graves at Bishop’s Cleeve are simple inhumations with single spears. There is a total absence of either swords or shields. The two burials which contained weapons are adults, one of which was aged between 25 and 35. Harke (1992, 156), in his studies of weapon deposition in 291 Anglo-Saxon graves, has shown that there is a marked relationship between age and weapon type. Although spears could accompany males of any age, 83% of spear burials were with adults aged 20–40 years. The spear in Burial 15 was deposited beneath the body and that in Burial 14 was found by the left elbow. Most spears are found to the right or left of the head, although spears positioned beneath the body or at the right or left elbow are not uncommon. Harke (1995, 69) has suggested that spear deposition is related to handedness, with most spears
deposited on the side of the strong hand. A position at the left elbow may suggest that the shaft was broken before deposition.

There are twenty-six burials from the site but only two of the burials were weapon graves, representing less than 8\% of the total burials. Only Burial 14 was associated with any other grave goods and that only a single buckle. This is in sharp contrast to other Anglo-Saxon cemeteries. In the Avon valley at Stretton-on-Fosse (Warks.) 33\% of the graves were weapon graves, at Alveston (Warks.) 34\% (W.J. Ford pers. comm.), and at Beckford A (Worcs.) 35\% of the 28 burials had weapons and at Beckford B 26\% (Evison and Hill 1996). In the Upper Thames region at Berinsfield (Oxon.) 25\% of the inhumations had weapons (Harke 1995, 67), and at Butler's Field, Lechlade, the proportion is smaller, only 15\% (Harke forthcoming). The small proportion of weapon burials at Bishop's Cleeve seems unusual. It could be a result of a lack of male burials at the site. However, due to poor bone preservation it has not been possible to sex the majority of the skeletons. Harke (1992, 160) has shown that weapon burials were at their peak in the mid 6th century after which they declined. The lack of weapon deposition at Bishop's Cleeve would seem to support this, showing a move away from ostentatious burial towards burial with no grave goods.

**Snaffle Bit**

Snaffle bits are the simplest form of horse bit. They consist of a mouthpiece of plain or jointed links, with freely moving cheek pieces in the form of a ring to which the reins would be attached. Five iron fittings were found beneath the skeleton in Burial 7. They consisted of two rings, two links, and a riveted fitting. The loops of one link are set in the same plane whilst on the other they are at right angles to each other. These links are distinctive of those used in snaffle bits.

Snaffle bits were used in the British and Continental Iron Age and the double linked snaffle was the commonest form in the Roman period (Manning 1985, 66–7). Complete examples are rare in Anglo-Saxon contexts. The majority of Anglo-Saxon examples have been listed by Vierck (1971) and he illustrates an example from Marston St. Lawrence, Northamptonshire (Dryden 1885, 331–2), recovered from the jaws of a horse and very similar to the one from Bishop's Cleeve. The reins attached to the Marston St. Lawrence example would have been riveted to small rings with flat shanks which were linked to the larger cheek rings. The horse harness fitting found with the bit from Bishop's Cleeve could therefore be an attachment for the reins. A further example of a snaffle bit, of similar construction to that from Bishop's Cleeve Burial 7, came from a late 6th-century male burial at Rhenen, Holland (Ypey 1973, 304, Abb 10B, grave 516). It is noteworthy that Burial 7 has been identified as an adult female.

**Saucer Brooches**

Three saucer brooches were found at the site, one from Burial 1 and a pair from Burial 5. Cast saucer brooches are the most characteristic type of brooch from the Upper Thames region, with over 200 examples, and at least 86 examples come from the Avon valley (Dickinson 1976, 31, table 1; Ford 1996, 85). The brooches have been classified using Tania Dickinson's typology, which described the cast saucer brooches from the Upper Thames region in eighteen groups, but also takes into account the three stylistic chronological criteria she is using as guidelines in her work on the national corpus of Anglo-Saxon cast saucer brooches (Dickinson 1976; idem forthcoming; idem in preparation).

The brooch from Burial 1 was located on the left shoulder and was found in association with a large string of amber beads. One of the brooches from Burial 5 was located on the left shoulder, the other was found below the left jaw. However, the bone report states that the skeleton in this grave had extensive staining on both clavicles and it is possible that one of the brooches had
slipped from the right shoulder. Brooches positioned on the clavicles would usually suggest they were for fastening a dress or cloak at the shoulder; Dickinson (forthcoming) has argued that body position or decomposition can lead to a body slumping and the slippage of a loose necked garment and that this might explain a brooch found positioned under the jaw.

The diameters of the Bishop's Cleeve brooches (38–48 mm) fall within the general range for saucer brooches (24.6–82.5 mm). The pin lugs on the brooches, when viewed from the back, are turned to the left as are those on the brooches from Lechlade (Dickinson forthcoming). None of the brooches has its pin in place, but the corrosion products around the hinge mechanism suggest that each of the brooches had an iron pin. All three brooches have traces of gilding on the front, although no analysis has been undertaken of the metal composition.
The single brooch from Burial 1 is decorated with a simple double-outlined five-pointed star. The unevenly drawn star makes it an inferior example of this brooch type. It belongs to a category of brooches with late Roman motifs or motifs derived from them. In her original work on saucer brooches from the Upper Thames region Dickinson identified brooches with star motifs as her group 4. She also (forthcoming) notes a distinctly Midlands sub-group, with two outer rings surrounding the inner star, which she compares to her group 4.1. Dickinson (pers. comm.) suggests a date range from the second quarter through to the middle decades of the 6th century.

The pair of brooches from Burial 5 are from Dickinson’s (1976, 89) category of brooches with Salin style I ornamentation and they fall within her sub-group 13.1, which she describes as a specifically western Upper Thames/Cotswolds group. The brooches are decorated with three quadrupeds facing in an anticlockwise direction and separated by radial bars around a central glass setting. They are very similar to a pair of brooches from Fairford, which have the same design but with a button-like mask in the centre, and to a lost pair from Oddington (Dickinson pers. comm.). This makes a very tight geographical group in the south-west Cotswolds western Upper Thames. Brooches with chasing animals and dividing bars have been dated by Vierck (1970, 357) to the second half of the 6th century. The Bishop’s Cleeve brooches have close links with a pair with double radial bars from Lechlade (grave 50). Dickinson (forthcoming) has described the Lechlade pair as a roughly cast version of a brooch from Sleaford, Lincolnshire (Thomas 1887, Grave 194), and dates it to the second quarter of the 6th century. She suggests the distribution is mostly Upper Thames/Wessex, but with some distant outliers, and detects in origin a broadly Kentish influence.

A circular gilded cast copper-alloy disc was found in Burial 13. The edge of the disc is broken. It is decorated with two animals with triple strand ribbon-bodies (highly stylised Salin style I). The disc is perforated with five rivet holes through one of which is an iron rivet fixing a small copper-alloy plate to the back of the disc. Although the disc has been cast, the pin attachments are not part of that casting. The perforations may have been part of a fixing for a pin which is now missing. The rivet holes may also have been used for suspension or for rivets for fixing the disc to a garment. However, whether this object is a brooch or not remains uncertain. A possible brooch of similar construction comes from grave 65 at Alveston Manor (W.J. Ford in preparation). It is also described as a gilded flat disc but only has two rivet holes. A saucer brooch from Duston, Northamptonshire, also has an identical design (Dickinson pers. comm.). The style I decoration would place this disc in the first half of the 6th century. However, its association with a cross-shaped brooch, and the obvious longevity of use, points to deposition during the years c. 625–75.

Cross-Brooch

An unusual gilt copper-alloy cross-shaped brooch was found in Burial 13. The four arms of the brooch terminate in plain disc-like projections, one of which is pierced. The brooch bears a distinct resemblance in shape to the lower part of E.T. Leeds A4 great square-headed brooches dated to the second half of the 6th century (Leeds 1949, 30–3). These have been reclassified by Hines (1997, 153–40; 1984, 158) to his group XVII, part of his phase 3 with a date range of c. A.D. 530–70. The central lozenge-shape contains four leg elements. Lozenge shapes are often seen on the foot plates of small square-headed brooches and on Leeds type A3 great square-headed brooches, Hines group XV (Leeds 1949, 17–29; Hines 1997). The central ornamentation within the lozenge is similar to that seen on a pair of brooches from Niederbreisig, Germany, which is part of a group broadly dated to Bohner’s style III, i.e. after A.D. 525 (Haseloff 1981,
497–507; Hines 1997, 229, pl. 108). A pair of cross-shaped brooches from Wallingford, Oxfordshire (MacGregor and Bolick 1993, 152), is of similar form, but the zoomorphic heads at the four terminals are comparable rather to the terminals on the more advanced cruciform brooches than to those on great square-headed brooches. They are dated to the mid to late 6th century (Dickinson 1976, I, 190).

**Pins**

Two pins were recovered. One, from Burial 13, is of copper alloy. The head is damaged but the perforation is clearly visible in the flattened spatulate-like head. The pin is cast and tapers towards the tip. Pins of this type have been dated by Ross (1991, type XVII, 195–6) to the late 5th–early 6th century. However this date would seem somewhat early for the Bishop's Cleeve pin which was found with a decorated gilded disc and a cross-shaped brooch dated to the mid to later 6th century. The second pin, from Burial 18, is of iron and is heavily corroded. It is pierced by a copper-alloy suspension loop made from a thin piece of wire and it is possible that it may have been a toilet implement. One of the pins was located below the left jaw, the other on the left shoulder. Pins found on the upper chest and around the neck may have been used to fasten a garment such as a cloak or head covering. Alternatively as both pins were found in association with beads they may have been used to fasten the end of a string.

**Beads**

There are a total of 196 beads from six graves. Two of the graves have been identified as female, one a mature adult and the other an immature female buried with a juvenile; three are unsexed adults; and one is unidentified.

The beads from the site are amber with only three exceptions. One is a monochrome drawn globular bead of translucent green-yellow glass, a type common in Anglo-Saxon cemeteries. Drawn globular beads found at Dover occurred in phases which are dated from A.D. 475–625 (Everson 1987, 62). There are two ceramic beads in a reddish fabric with calcareous inclusions. These beads are both inlaid with yellow and green paste decorated in an alternating pattern around the circumference. Ceramic beads are more unusual from Anglo-Saxon sites. Three of baked clay were recovered from Milton I, Huggins Fields, Kent (Meaney 1981, 32). Two long strings of beads from Rothwell, Northamptonshire, also included pottery beads (Meaney 1964, 195). Clay beads have been also found at West Stow Heath, Suffolk (ibid. 74). A further eight examples come from four graves at the Anglo-Saxon cemetery at Alveston Manor. Six of the beads were plain but two were inlaid, one with trails and the other with a plain band. Both these beads came from graves dated to the late 6th century (W.J. Ford pers. comm.).

The remaining 193 beads found at Bishop's Cleeve are all amber. There is a variety of shapes including wedges, cylinders, faceted, and irregular forms. Most beads (174) came from two long strings. These strings varied remarkably. One, from Burial 1, consisted of 93 beads. Eighty-eight of the beads are all of very similar cylindrical shapes which graduated in height from 5 mm to 9 mm. The remaining five are wedge-shaped. The beads were located below the neck and were found in association with a saucer brooch dated from the second quarter to the middle decades of the 6th century.

The second long string, from Burial 18, consisted of 84 beads of which 81 were amber. There is much more variation in the size and shape of the beads in this string. It contains several very large beads up to 18 mm in height and 23 mm in diameter. There are no beads less than 9 mm in height, the size of the largest beads in the string from Burial 1. Many of the beads are irregular or flat but most are hexagonal-faceted. This is an unusual shape for amber beads, although one bead from Berinsfield has been described as six-faceted (Boyle et al. 1995, 91). Burial 18 also
contained the only non-amber beads from the site. As with beads from two graves from Alton, Hampshire (Evison 1988, 18, graves 33 and 39), the string was found not in association with any brooches, but with a pin. At Dover a pin was found among the beads in nineteen graves. These pins may have had an associated function such as fastening one end of the necklace (Evison 1987, 66).

The remaining beads came from four graves. In Burial 13 there were five beads: one was found on its own by the head where it could have been suspended around the neck or used as a toggle. The remaining four beads were found below the left jaw in association with a cruciform brooch and copper-alloy pin; it could have been suspended from either of them. Two other graves contained small groups of beads: Burial 17 contained seven beads and Burial 23 five beads. The remaining two beads came from a double burial of an immature female and a juvenile (Burials 21 and 22). As well as being from small necklaces these small groups of beads could have been worn as bracelets, kept in a purse or pocket or sewn onto clothing.

Dickinson (1976, 202–6) has stated that amber beads were in use from the mid 5th to the early 7th century, with the majority coming from 6th-century contexts where the longer strings are clearly associated with 6th-century graves. Meaney (1981, 67) has observed that there are larger quantities of amber beads in the second half of the 6th century, when large necklaces were placed in graves, and Hugget (1988, 64) that, although amber is found in early 6th-century contexts, the greatest quantities occur in mid–late 6th-century graves. At Sewerby, Yorkshire amber also seems to date to the second half of the 6th century (Hirst 1985, 75).

The assemblage from Bishop’s Cleeve is unusual in that it includes only one glass bead. The preference for amber may have been because it was very attractive to look at or, as Meaney (1981, 67–9) has argued, that it was thought to have curative and amuletic properties. Another possibility could be as Hirst (1985, 75) has postulated that more value was attached to amber beads than to glass. However, it may also be that the Bishop’s Cleeve burials took place after the start of the trend away from strings of predominantly glass beads towards the strings of amber beads in the later 6th century. This would link in with the evidence from Stretton-on-Fosse and Alveston where amber was the predominant material from A.D. 550 onwards (W.J. Ford pers. comm.).

**Pendant**

Burial 25 had a single grave good, a perforated upper canine from a large dog, located below the jaw. It is difficult to distinguish between the teeth of dogs and wolves. Meaney (1981, 135) lists nine examples of dog or wolf teeth from Anglo-Saxon graves, including two perforated teeth from a necklace from a 6th-century grave at Wheatley, Oxfordshire; a tooth from a large dog from a probable female grave at Abingdon; and two dogs’ teeth with metal tips from a 7th-century grave at Milton-next-Sittingbourne, Kent. A perforated canine tooth from grave 78 at Lechlade was also located near to the neck (Boyle et al. forthcoming).

Perforated animal teeth have been found worn as part of a necklace or singly. Meaney (1981, 135) in her study of amulets has uncovered documentary evidence that teeth from dogs, wolves, and foxes have all been used as amulets with a variety of uses from keeping away childish terrors to preventing toothache.

**Knives**

Two inhumations were buried with knives. The knife from Burial 8 was the sole grave good and had slipped into the ribcage. In Burial 3 the knife was positioned above the left elbow and was found with a buckle and a copper-alloy fitting. At Berinsfield the most common position for a knife was at the left arm/waist and Harke (1995, 74) postulates that this is because the
preferred way of carrying the knife was in a sheath suspended from the belt at the left waist. The blade found in the ribcage would have been placed on the chest.

The knives from the site are both poorly preserved. An attempt has been made to classify them using Bohner’s (1958, 214–15) typology of Frankish knives from the Trier region although they could not be classed with any certainty. The knife from Burial 3 has been classified as possibly Bohner’s type A (point in centre line of blade) and that from Burial 8 as possibly Bohner’s type C (straight edge with curved or angled back). Type A knives occur mainly in the 5th and 6th centuries though they are not unknown from early 7th-century graves. Type C knives are predominately late, mostly coming from 7th- and 8th-century graves (Harke 1995, 73). Harke (1989) has studied the knives from 925 Anglo-Saxon graves and grouped them according to length. Both knives from Bishop’s Cleeve fall into his group 2 (blade length 100–129 mm) which accounted for 25% of all the knives he studied. The scarcity of burials with knives at Bishop’s Cleeve is again unusual, Harke (1989, 144) having stated that 45–50% of 5th–7th-century burials in England have knives. This again reflects the marked trend at the site towards burial without grave goods.

**Buckles**

Four buckles were recovered from the site: all are of iron. Two have simple ‘D’-shaped frames (from Burials 14 and 18); one an oval frame (from Burial 3) and one a circular frame (from Burial 26). None of the buckles have buckle-plates although one of the ‘D’-shaped buckles was found in association with a series of iron belt-fittings, probably strap mounts for strengthening the belt. Two of the buckles were located at the waist and a third low down on the chest; they were probably used for belts around the waist. The ‘D’-shaped buckles are smaller in size and were for narrower belts about 15 mm wide. One was from a spear grave. The other came from a grave which contained a large amber necklace. Dickinson (1976, 252–3) has suggested that ‘D’-shaped buckles are of 6th-century date. The two remaining buckles, one with an oval frame and the other circular, were for straps between 20 to 25 mm in width. Harke (pers. comm.) considers that ‘D’-shaped and oval-shaped buckles were common throughout the 6th century, while smaller versions were more typical of the 7th century.

**OTHER FINDS by B.A. Ford**

An oolitic limestone spindle whorl (Fig. 10, no. 4). Diameter 37 mm, thickness 16 mm, diameter of hole 10 mm, weight 29 gm. It is presumably this artefact which is recorded as being found ‘nearby’ to the cemetery. It may be prehistoric rather than Anglo-Saxon.

**PREHISTORIC POTTERY by Ann Woodward**

Two separate groups of prehistoric pottery were recovered. A ‘rubbish pit’ contained six sherds which came from a minimum of three vessels of Early Bronze-Age date, while a ‘blackened area’ contained 45 sherds of Iron-Age date. Full fabric descriptions, prepared by Jane Timby, are available in the archive.

‘**Rubbish Pit**’

Six fairly large sherds, of average sherd weight 18 gm, were found. Most of them were moderately abraded.

(i) Simple rim and three wall sherds, two of which probably join, from a fairly large plain urn (Fig. 10, no. 1). Fabric: limestone and grog inclusions, but mainly vesicular.

(ii) Flattened rim sherd from a small urn (Fig. 10, no. 2). Fabric: grog.

(iii) Single wall sherd from a thick-walled vessel. Fabric: sparse shell and limestone. This sherd is very abraded.
The grog and grog mixture fabrics, predominantly of soapy feel, and the rim forms of vessels (i) and (ii), indicate an Early Bronze-Age date for this material. Plain urns of this style are known from Farmington and Lower Slaughter (Longworth 1984, pl. 160f and pl. 75d) and both urns from Lower Slaughter (ibid. pl. 75d and pl. 13e) display flattened rims similar to that of vessel (ii). In general terms, vessel (ii) is similar to the small urn from Burn Ground, Hampnett, also of Early Bronze-Age date, which is illustrated by Darvill (1987, 107, fig. B). In terms of their fabric the Bishop's Cleeve vessels may be compared to the grog and fossil shell mixtures recorded for a series of collared urns from Holt, Worcestershire (Hunt et al. 1986, 36, fabric 4). In Gloucestershire simple biconical profiles continue well into the Middle Bronze Age. However, the fabrics of the Middle Bronze Age urns from Bevan's Quarry, Temple Guiting, which include dense quantities of limestone (O'Neil 1967), and the crushed shell inclusions of the Middle Bronze Age secondaries from Shornclote Quarry, Somerford Keynes (Barclay and Glass 1995) are quite different from the soapy grogged fabrics at Bishop's Cleeve, where an Early Bronze-Age date seems much more likely.

All these parallels are from funerary contexts, but a group of Early Bronze-Age ceramics from a series of pits recently excavated by the Avon Archaeological Unit at Mangotsfield, South Gloucestershire, may indicate domestic collared urn deposits (Woodward in preparation). The Bishop's Cleeve pit group may have been a similar occurrence.

Blackened Area
A group of 45 small sherds, average sherd weight 2 gm and moderately abraded, was found. Two individual vessels were represented.

(iv) One possible neck fragment and 41 wall sherds from a thin-walled vessel. Fabric: shell and limestone, but mainly vesicular.
(v) One simple rim sherd (Fig. 10, no. 3) and two wall fragments from an ovoid jar. Fabric: dense sand.
FLINTS by G.T. Walker

Two flints survived in the collection, both from the ‘blackened area’. One was a secondary flake, patinated, possibly utilised on the right hand side, and one a tertiary flake, unpatinated grey flint, utilised on the right hand side. The latter is very abraded.

GENERAL DISCUSSION by B.A. Ford and Neil Holbrook

Context of the Cemetery

The small collection of Early Bronze-Age and Iron-Age pottery indicates that there was prehistoric activity in the vicinity of the site later adopted for the cemetery. Little can be made of this evidence, but it has been noted that a field to the north-west is called Burrow's Piece on the 1841 tithe apportionment, a name suggestive of the former presence of a barrow (Fig. 1). There is no visible evidence on the ground or in aerial photography of the area for a barrow. Iron-Age occupation is known from the centre of Bishop’s Cleeve village, 1.5 km distant, where it was superseded by a Roman settlement (Parry 1999). At present the character of this occupation is not fully understood, although a stone building (possibly a villa) has been partly investigated at Cleeve Hall and other excavations have revealed an associated agricultural landscape. Later Roman inhumation burials have been excavated at two locations. Through the work of the late Bernard and Barbara Rawes, scatters of Romano-British pottery have been recorded beyond the main focus of the Romano-British occupation, and they may mark the sites of farmsteads. Cropmarks are known 600 m to the west of the cemetery, where a ditched trackway aligned N–S and possible small associated enclosures are visible on aerial photographs held in the National Monuments Record (Ref: 10531/341). Morphologically a later prehistoric or Romano-British date seems most probable for this site. There was therefore extensive Romano-British occupation in the vicinity of the later cemetery, and so the sherd of residual Romano-British pottery from the grave filling of Burial 15 need occasion no surprise.

Excavated sites in the centre of Bishop’s Cleeve have produced late 4th-century pottery, and the upper fills of the silted ditches at the Home Farm site contained a few sherds of grass-tempered pottery broadly datable to the 5th-8th centuries (Barber and Walker 1998). The fabric has also been found at Stoke Road, associated with a small circular structure, and at Oldacres Mill (Parry 1999, 102). It is therefore probable that occupation in some form continued on the site of the former Roman settlement, although unfortunately the pottery does not permit any closer dating of it than to a broad 5th- to 8th-century span. This evidence might suggest a community at Cleeve in the post-Roman period which carried on farming the surrounding lands, and indeed might help explain the location of the Lower Farm cemetery. Perhaps the latter is the burial ground of a small group of immigrants (from either further up the Avon valley or the Cotswolds/Upper Thames valley) or of a group which chose to adopt the new fashions then prevalent in those areas. The spreads of fan gravels around Bishop’s Cleeve, which generated better drained and easier worked soils than those derived from the heavy Lias clays of the surrounding Severn Vale, would have been just as attractive for agricultural settlement then as previously. If there was already an established community farming the lands around the former Roman villa, the new group may have been obliged to found their settlement and associated
cemetery beyond those limits. Perhaps a prehistoric barrow served as a convenient landmark for the cemetery?

The cemetery went out of use by the early 7th century at the latest, by which time the sub-
kingdom of the Hwicce is known to history. In the mid 7th century the bishopric of Worcester
was established to serve the Hwicce and by charter of 768–79 Offa, king of Mercia, granted an
estate at Cleeve (then called Timbingctun) to a monastery there (Elrington 1968, 2). No remains
of the monastery have been found, but it is reasonable to suppose that it lies close to the present
parish church.

Cemetery Chronology

The earliest grave would seem to be Grave 1 at the southernmost edge of the cemetery. This
was a female buried with a saucer brooch bearing a star motif which indicates a date range of c.
A.D. 525–70. However, the brooch has some wear on the rim and may have been in use for
some considerable time before deposition. Although few of the graves contain datable artefacts,
those that do suggest that the graves fan away from the primary grave and become progressively
later to the north, continuing through the last quarter of the 6th and probably into the early
7th century. Several of the grave goods show signs of longevity and reuse. Two possible brooches
accompanying Burial 13 (a cross-shaped fitting and a flat disc which may have had later adap-
tations to make them into brooches) suggest that they were heirlooms and that they had been
in use for some considerable time before burial. Their deposition might therefore have been
later than their assigned date of c. A.D. 525–75. Overall the cemetery may have been in use for
as little as 50 years, 75 at the most.

Organisation and Layout

Given that an area around the burials was investigated by W.J. Ford without result, it is reason-
able to assume that the whole cemetery has been located. The only slight doubt is the spearhead
said to have been recovered from Lower Farm in 1930. Whether this indicates that burials
nearby have been destroyed without record must remain open to question. The recorded cem-
eteries consisted of fourteen adults, four immature adults under the age of 25, four juveniles and
four individuals of unknown age. All of the burials were oriented approximately N–S. The six
adults that could be sexed were all females. Of the remaining eight unsexed adults associated
grave goods suggest that three are female and two male (Fig. 4B). The low male component of
the population is quite marked, although it is possible that the remaining unidentified graves
could be males. Two of the skeletons had been buried with knives and although Anglo-Saxon
women are often buried with knives there are no identifiable females with knives at Bishop’s
Cleeve. At Lechlade there was also a high proportion of females to males but there it has been
suggested that the excavated area of the cemetery does not provide a true representation of the
population (Boyle et al. 1998, 44). At Bishop’s Cleeve, however, there is good reason to believe
that the cemetery is complete.

Of the four immature adults, one from a double burial can be identified as a female, the
remaining three were either buried with no grave goods or a single bead or pendant. The four
juveniles consist of two children aged 5–8 and one child aged 8–10; the remaining juvenile was
identified by the excavator but the bones are now missing. Only 15% of the burials were juven-
iles, a low percentage compared with other Anglo-Saxon cemeteries such as Beckford A and B
(27% and 33% respectively; Evison and Hill 1996); Dover (20%; Evison 1987) and Great
Chesterford, Essex (42%; Evison 1994). There were no infant burials at Bishop’s Cleeve and, as
at many other Anglo-Saxon cemeteries, arrangements must have been made for the burial of infants elsewhere. That none of the juveniles had been buried with any grave goods too is unusual as at other cemeteries juveniles have been found buried with comparable finds to adults, although a similar picture can be seen at Empingham II, Rutland (Timby 1996, 93).

The burial of immature adults and juveniles was confined to the northern and western peripheries of the cemetery. Amongst these burials were those of three adult females each with only a few beads or no grave goods at all. These burials seem to have been kept away from the males and females buried with grave goods in the south and east of the cemetery. At Beckford juveniles were also confined to the outskirts of the cemetery (Evans and Hill 1996). It is not possible to tell whether the burials with grave goods are contemporary with those without, or whether such burials are chronologically distinct reflecting changing beliefs and fashions. Some have suggested that lack of grave goods reflects a lower status or position, or a decline in resources (Arnold 1980; 1982; Shepherd 1979). Others consider that the lack of grave goods is a result of the onset of Christianity (Hyslop 1963, 189–93; Meaney and Hawkes 1970, 45–6).

There are a number of contemporary Anglo-Saxon cemeteries on the periphery of the Anglo-Saxon kingdoms where the majority of burials are without grave goods. At Milfield South, Northumberland, 38 inhumations were uncovered which yielded only a single knife and ring (Miket 1980). Twenty-eight burials at nearby Yeavering produced two iron knives and some belt-fittings (Hope-Taylor 1977). The cemetery at Burton Dassett, Warwickshire, contained 35 inhumations but grave goods were almost totally absent (Westacote 1924, 58–9). At Bishop’s Cleeve, however, we have a group of people interred in the same cemetery following different burial practices.

The total of graves indicates that the cemetery served a small community. Assuming four generations per century, and constant population and mortality rates, then the total would be consistent with a hypothetical community of thirteen burying over 50 years or nine over 75 years. These figures are obviously conjectural, but they do serve to demonstrate that it is possible that the cemetery served as the burial ground of a single family.

**Burial Rites**

Little information was recorded on burial postures, although in a number of graves at least the bodies were laid either on their sides or with legs flexed. Burial 6 was laid in a prone position: it may be significant that this female aged over 45 was not accompanied by any grave goods (cf. the general discussion of this rite in Anglo-Saxon cemeteries in Hirst 1985). Burial 16, a juvenile aged 8–10, had a charcoal deposit under the skull. At Stretton-on-Fosse in grave 102 (dated to the second half of the 6th century) there was a charcoal spread under the skull which was interpreted as a deteriorated head-rest. At Alveston grave F12 (thought to be dated to the late 6th or 7th century) had no grave goods but contained similar remains of a head-rest (W.J. Ford pers. comm.).

**Trading Links**

The cemetery at Bishop’s Cleeve lies at the extreme south-western end of the known distribution of Anglo-Saxon cemeteries in the Avon valley (Ford 1996, fig. 1). No such cemeteries are known lower down the Severn Vale, which may indicate that the area lay beyond Saxon influence until the later 6th century (Heighway 1984, 231). Anglo-Saxon cemeteries, however, do occur across the Cotswolds where they undoubtedly spread from the communities in the Upper Thames valley (Heighway 1987, 20–30). The range of grave goods from the Bishop’s Cleeve cemetery
is very limited. Diagnostically the saucer brooches provide the best clues to the trading links of the population. The distribution of these brooches in the Avon valley has been plotted and discussed by W.J. Ford (1996, 84–8). He follows Dickinson in concluding that they spread into the Lower Avon valley from a manufacturing centre in the Upper Thames valley. The brooches clearly owe their influence to the Saxon-influenced groups of the Thames valley, and similar brooches have been found at the Beckford cemeteries, 10 km to the north, and beyond. No grave goods have been found at Bishop’s Cleeve with characteristically Anglian affinities indicative of trading links with the kingdoms to the east. This is not surprising given the date of the Bishop’s Cleeve cemetery because Anglian types such as cruciform, small-long, and annular brooches probably did not continue in use much beyond the mid 6th century (see Ford 1996, 74–7, for discussion of distribution and chronology). That Anglian types did reach the area, however, is demonstrated by their presence in the Beckford cemeteries which are dated c. A.D. 475–550 (Evison and Hill 1996, 36–8).

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