

## WEDLAKE PAPERS

### Priston

*[Notes for a talk given at Priston Village – date unknown]*

The small village of Priston lies principally in the valley which begins to the west of Farmborough and the small stream which passes through the village joins the Bath Avon after passing through Twerton. The valley is bounded on its south side by the Tunley ridge and on its north side by the Willmington ridge. The parish is an ancient one and is mentioned in both Domesday and the Saxon Charters.

There is also evidence of Prehistoric occupation on the hills surrounding the village at Tunley Camp, ?Duncam Hill and the Wall Mead Barrows, which are on a Roman roadway, formed the western boundary of the parish. Roman remains have also been noticed on the southern slopes of Priest Barrow, a low eminence to the west of the village. The Rev'd John Skinner in his Mss. also mentions Roman pottery having been found to the east of the Parish Church and he also mentions a stone coffin having been found at Edgill's Farm, Priston. You will also recall the interesting talk given by Mr. ... Rector of Priston at our last conference of the history of Priston. But the site with which we are concerned lies in a field known as "Great Barn Close", north of the church and on the east-side of the road which leads to Priston Mill. I had for many years been interested in this field since when, at the age of 14, I visited the site having been informed that a stone coffin had been found in the field by workmen while digging a trench for a water pipe. I well remember the crowds of people visiting the site on a Sunday afternoon. It is curious how the finding of human remains and a stone coffin has a fascinating attraction to the layman and it never fails to attract more people than any other archaeological find. It was many years later in 1953 when we were unable to excavate on our site at Camerton that an opportunity occurred to undertake some exploratory work in this field, due primarily to the kind co-operation of the farmer Mr. Lippiatt to whom we express our thanks. The field has a series of banks which vary in size and they traverse the field in several directions making no recognisable plan. The field has in recent years been ploughed and on visiting the site last year the lines of stony banks were plainly visible in the field. The excavation consisted of a trial cutting across each of the small earthworks. With the possible exception of one bank (no.7) they were all found to be of Roman construction.

*(insert here information concerning banks)*

In conclusion, the trial and excavation has proved most of the banks to be of Roman construction and they appear to form some sort of defensive enclosure. It is likely that the modern hedge on the east side of the field forms part of the ancient enclosure. There would appear to have been a roughly constructed stone building towards the north side of the enclosure and this building was served by a metalled roadway running in a north to south direction.

From the finds made in the ditches and the occupation level within the area we are able to determine that the Roman settlement on the site was made during the 2<sup>nd</sup> century A.D. The several sherds of Early Iron Age B + C pottery suggest that there may have been a pre Roman Farmstead on the site, but further extensive excavation is required before this can definitely be established. There must also have [been] some nearby occupation during the 16<sup>th</sup> – 18<sup>th</sup> century judging from the many sherds of various wares found on the site, especially in the bank against the road which leads to Priston Mill.

## WEDLAKE PAPERS

### Priston

[With notes for a talk given at Priston Village – date unknown]

- Bank 1  
Cutting IV Parallel with West hedge of field alongside Mill Lane.  
This bank had been raised in the 18<sup>th</sup> cent. By about 2 ft. A quantity of 18<sup>th</sup> cent, & 19<sup>th</sup> cent. pottery was found in this material. Below this there was on the inside of the bank a cobbled layer and below this a black layer which rested on natural clay. This black layer contained Roman pottery sherds of indeterminate date.
- Bank 2  
Cutting V Runs in an easterly direction from Bank 1 and terminates at its junction with Bank 6 against the west side of the cobbled roadway.  
This bank was about 4ft high on its south side but much less on its other northern side. The bank was composed of loose stones and it has a small revetment or wall on its north side. Beyond this there was a small ditch about 2ft in depth.  
The pottery recovered from the north side of this bank was all 1<sup>st</sup> & 2<sup>nd</sup> cent. A.D. dates.  
The filling of the ditch produced 1<sup>st</sup>-2<sup>nd</sup> cent. light grey ware and two rims one with a [?] rim and com[?] shoulder similar to the pottery from Camerton.  
A rim of a large mortarium and other rims of 1<sup>st</sup> & 2<sup>nd</sup> cent. date was recovered from the occupation level. There was also one fragment of Early Iron Age type pottery and a small sherd of 1<sup>st</sup> cent. brown glazed ware
- Bank 3  
Cutting VII This bank runs in an easterly direction parallel with Bank 2. It begins at the junction of Banks 1 & 4 and terminates on the west side of the cobbled roadway. Although it appears to be on the same line as Bank 5 on the east side of the roadway. It had no ditch on its north side as was found on Bank 5.  
The black layer in this cutting produced fragments of course [?coarse] ware and a double beaded rim and one fragment of a red ware base was found lying on the natural clay.
- Bank 4  
Cutting VI This small bank runs on a west-east direction and is parallel with the north boundary hedge of the field.  
There was a small well made ditch about 2'6" deep on the north side of the bank and the ditch was sealed with a cobbled layer of stones. Beneath the bank which was about 3ft high was a layer 1'6" thick yellow clay and this sealed a small stone pit filled with black earth.  
The pit was 1'6" in depth and 2'6" wide.  
Two small sherds of 1<sup>st</sup>-2<sup>nd</sup> cent. [?course/coarse] ware was found in the pit filling.

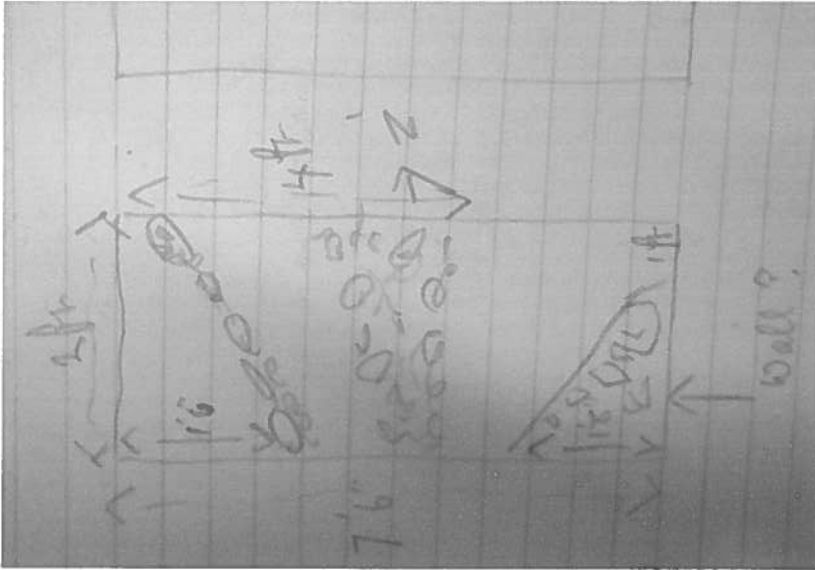
- Bank 5 This bank continues on the same line as Bank 3 from the east side of the cobbled roadway to the hedge at the east end of the field.
- Cutting 1 There is a well defined ditch on the north side of the bank
- “ 1A The top part of the filling of the ditch contained Roman pottery sherds, [?course] ware. A piece of mortarium and a [?Corvetto ?Cavetto] type rim. The lower part of the ditch filling contained several sherds of Samian ware, including a form 27 base with a potters mark ALBINUS. There was also a large part of a 1<sup>st</sup>-2<sup>nd</sup> cent. grey ware pot with an orange coloured slip. There was also half of a stone spindle whorl and a piece of iron clay, heavy [?cavetto] rims and a strip of bronze decorated with two lines at the end.
- “ 1X
- Bank 6 This bank runs in a north-south direction from the end of Bank 2 to the stone wall boundary of the field. The bank was about four feet high and was made in about four different layers. The top part of the bank was stony and below this there was a layer of black soil which varied in thickness from 6” to 1’6”. Below this there was a second layer of stones which sealed a second layer of black soil from 6” to 9” deep and this rested on natural yellow clay. The top stony layer contained sherds of [?course/coarse] ware, a [?Cavetto] type rim and a piece of baked clay. The second stony layer contained pieces of baked clay with slag, and the layer from below the second stones produced one sherd of amphora; coarse grey ware and several sherds of [?course/coarse] ware.
- Bank 7 This bank begins at the junction of Banks 2 & 6 and continues in a southerly direction to the south end of the field. There was no ditch in this cutting.
- Cutting III There were no recorder finds.
- Bank 8 This consists of two parallel ridges on either side of the cobbled roadway which appears to cross the field in a north to south direction.
- Cutting VIII The two cuttings were made across the cobbled roadway and Cutting VIII was extended eastwards beyond the roadway 16ft.
- Cutting X A black layer which rested on the natural clay produced Roman pottery which included rims of pie dish type; a piece of colander and one sherd of Early Iron Age pottery. There was also the bow of a 1<sup>st</sup>-2<sup>nd</sup> cent. type bronze fibula broach. Finds from the roadway included a fragment of Samian ware; coarse ware and a fragment of Rhenish ware. There was a mass of stones, some large to the east of the roadway and six feet east of the roadway there was the two bottom courses of a wall.
- Cutting XI This cutting was made to the south of Cutting X and a wall was found crossing this cutting. Six sherds of Samian, a number of pottery sherds of 1<sup>st</sup> & 2<sup>nd</sup> cent. type, and two pieces of iron slag was found.

A small cutting made in the interior space between Banks 2 & 3 produced fine sherds of Early Iron Age Pottery and two sherds of Roman Pottery.

Cutting IX  
Cont.

Cutting IX across Bank 5 was continued at intervals throughout the length of the field in a southerly direction.

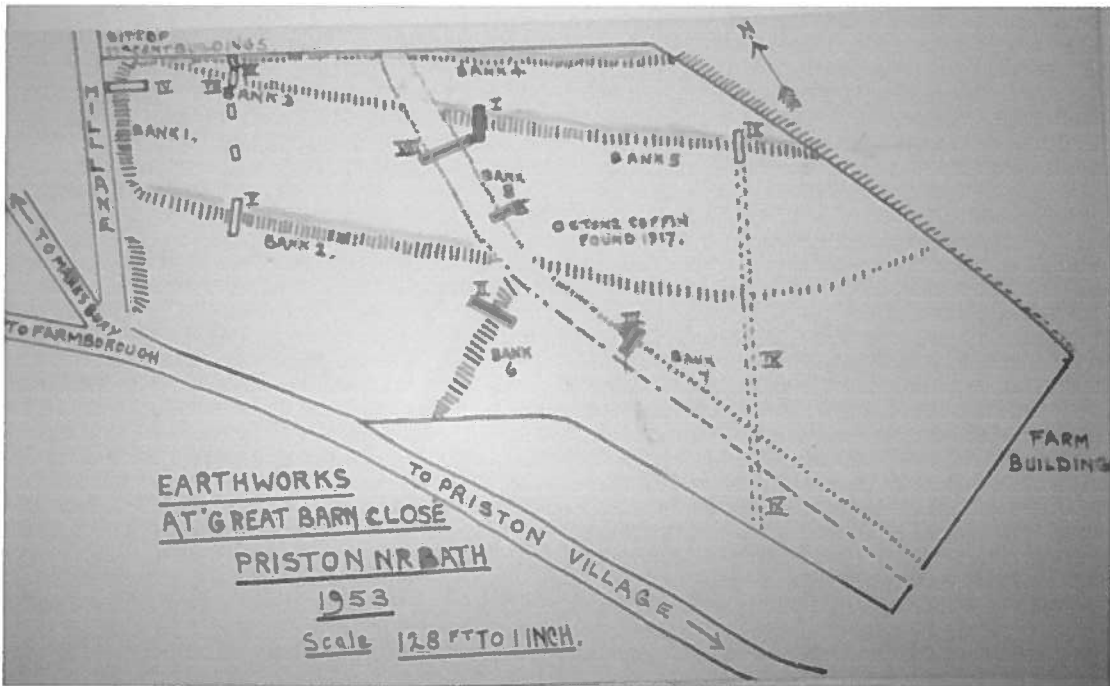
	Turf Line	Stones	Black Layer	Natural	
At 0	0"	at 1' 1'8"		Clay at 0 - 2'3"	
2'	4"	- 1'		" " 2 - 2'3"	
4'	8"	at 3' 1'5"	Black layer	" " 4 - 2'6"	
6'	1'	at 4' 1'9"	this under stones	" " 6 - 2'8"	
8'	1'1"		and is about 6" thick	" " 7 - 2'5"	
10'	1'4"				
12'	1'7"				12ft
Extension 4ft to south. Turf line runs level					16ft
			Black layer is not	Clay at 2' 2"	
			Quite so thick here	" " 4' 1'6"	
	Missed 12ft not dug				28ft
1	3ft dug			Natural at 1'2"	31ft
	Missed 12 ft not dug				
2	3ft dug			Natural at 1'2"	46ft
	Missed 12 ft not dug				58ft
3	3ft dug			Natural at 1'2"	61ft
	Missed 12 ft not dug				73ft
4	3 ft dug			Natural at 1'2"	76ft
5	to 10 repeated as 4	Nothing of interest			166ft
					181ft
11	repeated but two fragments of pottery including ?inverted rim				286ft
12	to 18 repeated				301ft
19		One fragment of pottery	Black soil to 1ft 6"		316ft
20	as 19 repeated				
21			" " 2ft		331ft
22			" " "		346ft
23		small sherd of pot in cutting	" " "	Brown loam to 5ft then oolite	361ft
24	50ft from 23 ft dug		" " "	small pottery sherds	416ft
25	50ft from 24 ft dug		some thick earth	Natural oolite at 1'6"	471ft
26	7ft back north from 25		result same as 25		



Cutting VIII

Black earth 3" above stones

“ “ runs up to stonework which is on the clay



BRISTOL MUSEUM. Box marked PRISTON 1956\* EXCAVATED BY  
WEDLAKE. FINDS (to be sorted).

Contents:

Half a small unglazed pot from Cutting X ditch [in sep. box];

Pottery shards from: Cutting I; Cutting I ditch; Cutting IA; Cutting II layer I; Cutting  
II layer II; Cutting IV; Cutting V; Cutting VII; Cutting VIII  
level III; Cutting IX; Cutting XI; Samian Ware (poss. Priston);

Pot shard from: small cutting interior space; pot shard from: Cutting II stony;

Pottery – 1<sup>st</sup> cent. AD – no location; Other pottery – no location;

Metal from: Cutting IA; Cutting IX; Cutting X; Bronze object Cutting X; Metal Pin;

Flint from: Cutting X;

Slag from: Cutting I ditch; Cutting II stony; Cutting XI;

*\* This date is presumably incorrect*

**WEDLAKE PAPERS**  
**Priston**

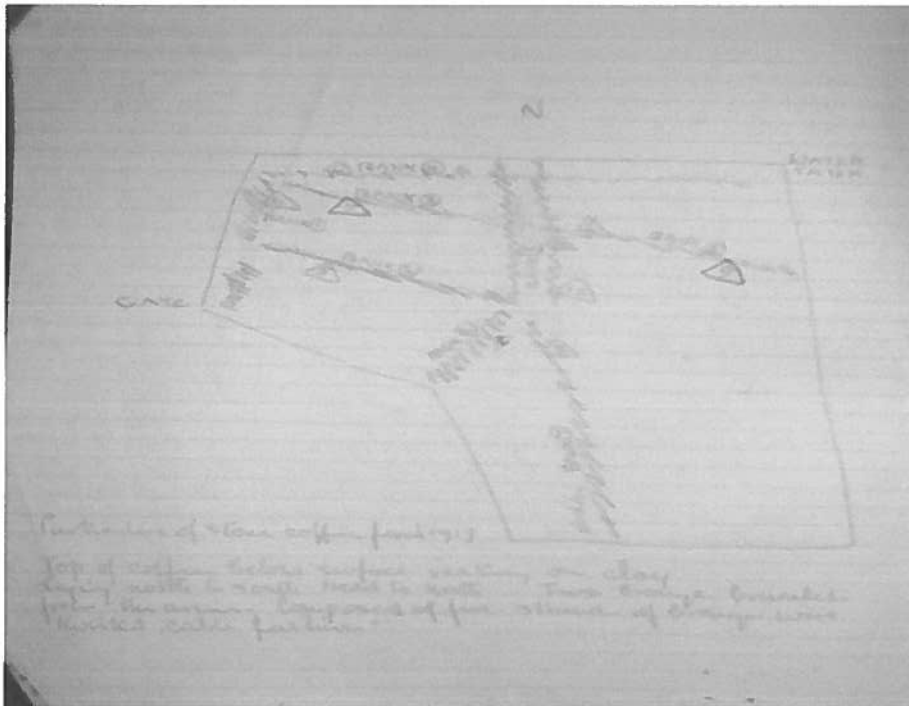
Notes of excavation:

Location at Museum: Box marked "Nettleton"  
incl. aerial photo & site  
photo. No slides marked  
'Priston'.

July 25<sup>th</sup>: Began work in Mr. Lippiatt's field to the north of his farm. Great Barn Close.

- Cutting I: A small cutting across Bank 5. see plan - Roman.
- Cutting II: A cutting across Bank 6 - post Roman.
- Cutting III: A cutting across Bank 7.
- Cutting IV: A cutting across Bank 1.
- Cutting V: A cutting across Bank 2 - Roman.
- Cutting VI: A cutting across Bank 4 - Roman.
- Cutting VII: A cutting across Bank 3.
- Cutting VIII: A cutting across Bank 8 - Roman.
- Cutting IX: A cutting across Bank 5.
- Cutting IX: A cutting across area between cutting X south to the farm.
- Cutting IA: Extension to East of Cutting I to expose Ditch?
- Cutting X: A cutting across Bank 8 south of Cutting VIII.
- Cutting XI: A cutting south of Cutting X running southward.

Particulars of stone coffin found 1917.



Top of coffin below surface resting on clay lying north to south. Head to north. Two bronze bracelets from the arms. Composed of five strands of bronze wire twisted cable fashion.

July 25<sup>th</sup> 1953.

Cutting I:

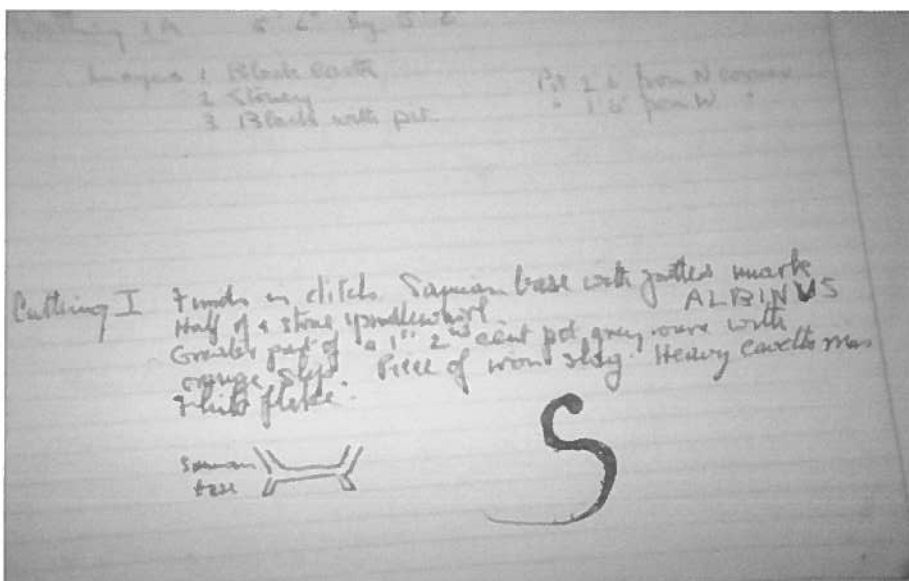
A cutting 2ft 6" wide across Bank 5 (see plan) to the north of the field and slightly to the east of the suspected entrance. This revealed a small ditch V shaped which had been cut into the marl clay to the north of the bank. A quantity of pottery (Roman) of much the same type as the Camerton material was found in the ditch.

A Samian potter mark ALBINUS (second cent.) and a half of a lias spindle whorl was found. The pottery included a fragment of fingerprint decoration. Much stonework was located to the south of the ditch. This was probably a wall. Beyond this rough cobbling continued to the end of the trench.

Cutting IA: 5'6" by 5'6".

Layers: 1. Black Earth  
2. Stony pit 2'6" from N. corner  
3. Black with pit " 1'6" from W. corner

Cutting I: Finds in ditch. Samian base with potters mark ALBINUS  
Half of a stone spindle whorl  
Greater part of 1<sup>st</sup>-2<sup>nd</sup> cent pot grey ware with orange slip.  
Piece of iron slag. Heavy [?Cavetto] Mus  
Flint flake.



Cutting II: Cutting across Bank 6.  
Section E to W. Section 44ft long. Cutting begins at 26'.

Turf line at	26'- 0	Stony layer 1'2"
" "	28'- 6"	" "
" "	30'- 1"	" " 1'10"
" "	32'-1'5"	
	34 - 2'	3'2"
	36 - 2'4"	
	38 - 2'8"	3' 9"



	40 - 2'11"	4' 3"	
	41		
	42 - 3"		
Bottom of Black layer at	26' - 2'6"		small Black layer below
" " "	28' - 2'6"		stones run continuously through cutting
" " "	30 - 2'8"		
" " "	31 - 2'7"		
Bottom of second stony layer	26 - 3'6"		
" " "	30 - 3'8"		
	ends at	33 - 3'6"	At zero of line datum.
Top of natural clay at	26 - 4'0"		Is 1ft above turf line.
" " "	30 - 4'3"		At 16' top of bank [?] datum.
" " "	34 - 4'9"		
" " "	38 - 4'9"		Water pipe at East end of trench
" " "	40 - 4'10"		at 1'10" depth from [?] line

This bank is post Roman.

Cutting III: Across Bank 7.  
South section.

Bottom of stone work -	at 0 - 1'9"
" " "	" 3 - 1'7"
" " "	" 5'6"- 1'1"
Bottom of black at	9' - 1'4"

End of cutting 10'6"

Undug to 13'9"

Dug to 18'6"

Measurement to black in extension 1'2"

Subsoil here is brown loam with Bastard limestone at 1'9" depth from surface.

No ditch in this cutting.

Cutting IV: across Bank across Bank 1

Turf line	0 - 2'	
" "	4 - 1'8"	
" "	8 - 1'5"	
" "	10 - 1'1"	
	12 - 1'1"	
	14 - 1'	
	16 - 9"	17 <sup>th</sup> & 18 <sup>th</sup> century wares
	18 - 6"	down to [?] cobbled
	20 - 5"	surface
	22 - 4"	
	26 - 8"	
	28 - 11"	
	30 - 1'3"	
	32 - 1'9"	
	34 - 2'1"	
	36 - 2'5"	

38 - 2'8"	
40 - 2'11"	at 1' cobbled floor 1'3"
42 - 3'2"	4 " " 1'3"
44 - 3'4"	8 " " 1'8"
46 - 3'7"	
48 - 3'9"	Natural Clay at
50 - 3'10"	2" at 2'8"
Bottom of black to clay	8 at 2'3"
at 8 - 2'4"	10 at 1'4"
10 - 2'3"	
12 - 2'3"	
14 - 2'4"	
16 - 2'4"	

Pottery fragments throughout (Roman)  
Natural yellow clay below.

Cutting V: across Bank 2

1<sup>st</sup>-2<sup>nd</sup> cent. grey ware – 2 rims  
Two fragments of light brown ware

Occupational level: Rim of large mortarium  
?Course/coarse ware One fragment of Early Iron Age pottery  
and one fragment of brown glazed ware.

Cutting VI: across Bank 4

Aug 5<sup>th</sup>.  
Section

From datum to turf line

at 0 - 0"
" 4 - 5"
" 6 - 10"
" 8 - 1'
" 10 - 1'4"
" 12 - 1'6"
" 14 - 1'9"

From datum to natural

at 0 -	1'6"
" 2'	edge of hole 1'6"
" 2'6"	centre of hole 2'2"
" 3'6"	edge of hole 1'7"
" 5'	1'9"
" 8'	2'1"
" 9'6"	2'3" edge of ditch
" 10'	3'1" bottom of ditch
" 10'6"	3'3" bottom of ditch
" 11'6"	3'2" bottom of ditch
" 12'	2'5" edge of ditch
" 14'	2'4"

Top of stone layer Trackway

at 9' - 2'
" 10' - 2'
" 11' - 2'2"
" 12' - 2'3"
" 14' - 2'3"

Top of Black Hole

at 2' -	1'5"
" 2'8"	- 1'5"
" 3'6"	- 1'5"

Black hole is sealed by a layer of yellow clay which runs down to stones (trackway?).

Cutting VII: across Bank 3

Turf line at 0 - 0  
" " " 5 - 6"  
" " " 7 - 8"  
" " " 9 - 10"  
" " " 11 - 1'2"  
" " " 11'6" - 1'3"

To natural at 5' - 2'  
" 7' - 2'  
" 9' - 2'  
" 11'6" - 2'  
No sign of ditch

Cutting VIII: across Bank 8

Turf line	0 - 2'	Road level at	7' - 3'3"
" "	2 - 2'2"		10' - 2'10"
" "	4 - 2'3"		14 - 2'11"
" "	6 - 2'5"		19 - 2'11"
" "	8 - 2'5"		
" "	10 - 2'6"	Bottom of road at	7' - 3'7"
" "	12 -		10 - 3'5"
" "	14		13 - 3'5"
" "	16		17 - 3'4"
" "	18		
" "	20	Bottom of Black Layer at	0 - 4'2"
" "	22		2 - 4'2"
" "	24		4 - 4'4"
" "	26		8 - 4'1"
			12 - 4'

Heavy stone work begins

at 22' - 2'6" end  
with large stone on edge

Clay wad at 0 - 3'5" and ends  
at 3 - 3'3"

Missed 2ft - dug 10ft.

Aug 17<sup>th</sup> 1953

Missed 2 ft Dug 10ft.

At end of trench to natural 1'3"  
4ft large stone at 1'6"  
5'6" end of stone at 1'6"

Black layers at east end of trench is about 4" thick and at 8ft is about 6"

Line of wall at 10ft

Fallen stones at 8ft

Depth at wall 2ft

Depth to top of wall 6".

**WEDLAKE PAPERS**  
**Priston July-Aug 1953**

In the year 1917 the writer then 14 years of age was told that a Roman coffin had been found in a field at Priston, Somerset. On visiting the site it was found that the workmen had discovered the coffin while digging a trench for a water pipe in the field known as "Great Barn Close" north of the Lippiatt Farm. The coffin which is now in the porch of Priston Church was orientated north to south, quite shallow and rested on the natural clay. The skeleton had two bronze bracelets on the arms and these were formed with five strands of bronze wire twisted cable fashion.

There is also mention of a Roman stone coffin having been found in the Skinner Mss at Priston at "Edgills Farm" and this is possibly the same field.

In 1953 an opportunity occurred to examine the field and to make exploratory excavations by kind permission of Mr. Lippiatt. The field "Great Barn Close" had a series of banks varying in size but on first acquaintance the banks did not appear to conform to a set plan. It was there upon decided to make a series of trenches across the banks and possible ditches.

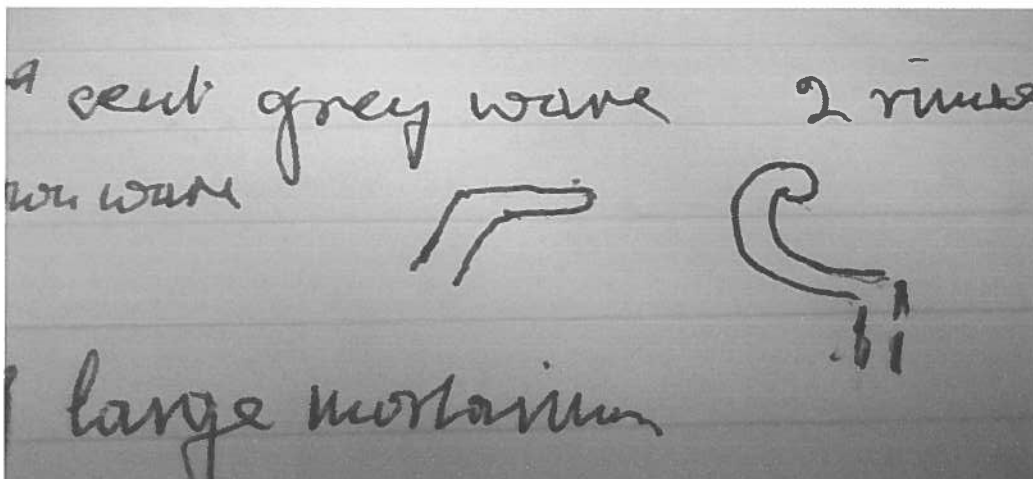
Cutting I Bank 5 on a plan to the north of the field and slightly to the east of a suspected entrance into a settlement? was found to be of Roman construction. The bank was composed of a quantity of stones which probably had formed a wall. To the north of the bank a small V ditch was found cut into the marl clay. The ditch was filled with dark earth and this contained a quantity of pottery sherds of 1<sup>st</sup> & 2<sup>nd</sup> cent. A.D. dates. There was also a sherd of Samian ware with the potters mark ALBINUS a second century A.D. potter, half of a spindle whorl made from the local lias limestone and a piece of pottery with fingertip decoration. To the south of the stone bank was a roughly cobbled square.

Cutting V c. ext ditch

1<sup>st</sup> 2<sup>nd</sup> cent. grey ware 2 rims [?]

Bank 2

2 fragments of light brown ware



Cutting V    Occupational level.      Rim of large mortarium

Bank 2

1<sup>st</sup> & 2<sup>nd</sup> cent. wares.

Cutting I

Flint flake. Late. Type ?Roman with thumb impressions  
Mixed material

Cutting IV Layer 2

Bank 1

17<sup>th</sup> & 18<sup>th</sup> cent. wares Nigger brown, metal button, circular bronze [?]

Bank 1 Cutting IV Layer 1

mixed material

Bank 6 Cutting II Layer 1

Baked clay. [?Cavetto] rim. Course[?coarse] ware

Bank 5 Cutting I

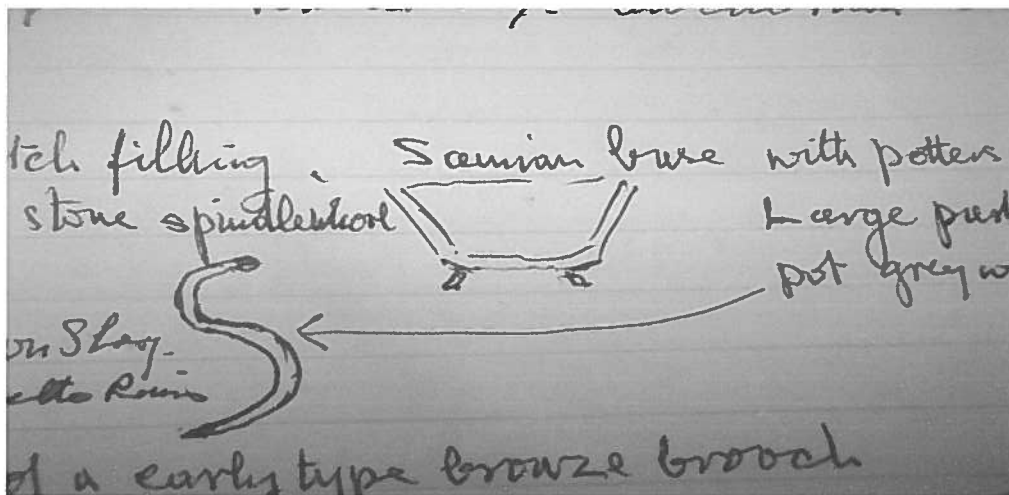
Ditch filling

Samian base with potters mark ALBINOS

Half of stone spindle whorl

Large part of 1<sup>st</sup>-2<sup>nd</sup> cent.

pot grey ware with orange slip

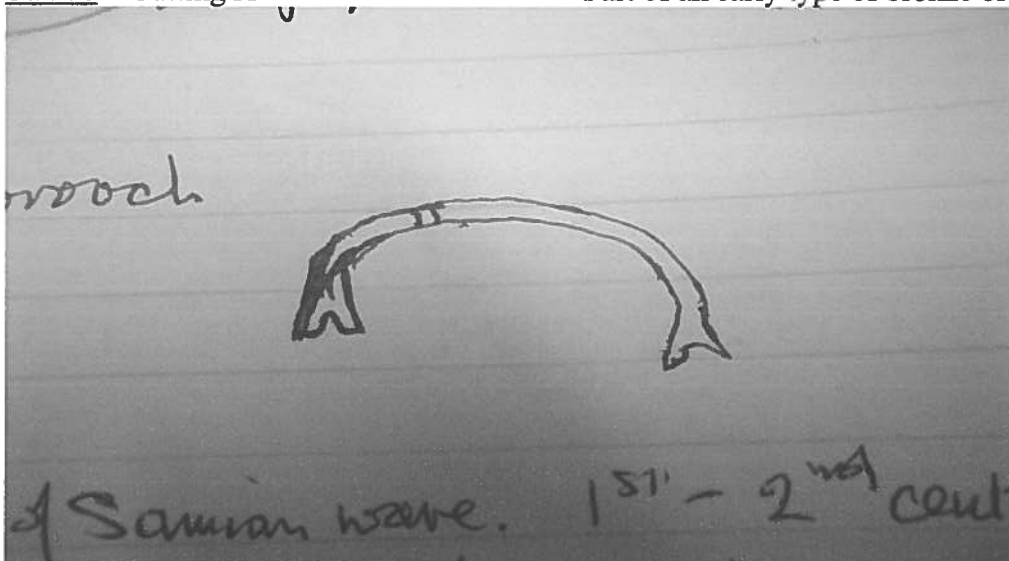


Piece of Iron [?S]

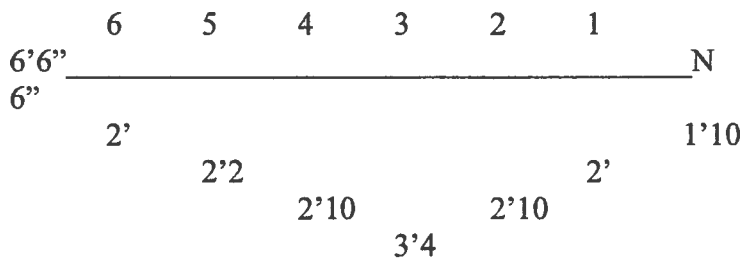
Heavy Cavetto [?corvetto] Rims

Bank 8 Cutting X

Part of an early type of bronze brooch



<u>Bank 5</u>	Cutting IX		Black layer. Fragment of Samian ware. 1 <sup>st</sup> -2 <sup>nd</sup> cent. pottery forms..Strip of bronze decorated with two lines at end.
<u>Bank 6</u>	Cutting II	Stoney	Baked clay with slag.
<u>Bank 4</u>	Cutting VI		Black hole on bank. Two sherds of [?course] ware. Roman
<u>Bank 3</u>	Cutting VII	Layer 3	Black earth west of cutting 8 sherds of [?course/coarse] ware
<u>Bank 3</u>	Cutting VII	Layer above clay	One fragment of a red [b?]
<u>Bank 5</u>	Cutting I	Ditch	Heavy cavetto rims. One piece of [?course/coarse] grey ware
<u>South of Cutting X</u>	Cutting XI		Six fragments of plain samian 1 <sup>st</sup> -2 <sup>nd</sup> cent. Two pieces of iron slag. Number of Sherds 1 <sup>st</sup> -2 <sup>nd</sup> cent.
<u>Bank 2</u>	Cutting V		[?Course] ware. One frag. Of Early Iron Age Pottery. I fragment of brown glazed 1 <sup>st</sup> cent. ware.
<u>Small cutting</u>		Interior space	Five fragments of Early Iron Age Pottery. 2 sherds of Roman?
<u>Bank 5</u>	Cutting IA		[?Course] ware. Piece of mortarium. [?Cavetto] rim.
<u>Bank 5</u>	Cutting IA	Layer 1 (down to stony)	Pieces of flint. 3 pottery sherds Roman.
<u>Bank 5</u>	Cutting IA	Layer 2 & Pit	Four sherds of Samian. [?Course] grey ware. 1 <sup>st</sup> -2 <sup>nd</sup> cent black ware. Rims
<u>Bank 6</u>	Cutting II	Layer 4 ?loam under stones.	1 sherd of amphora. [?Course] grey ware. Several sherds of coarse ware.
<u>Bank 8</u>	Cutting X		Large piece of flint. Fragment of Samian [?Course] ware. Frag. of Rhenish ware?
<u>Bank 8</u>	Roadway	Cutting VIII Extensions to east of wall.	Black layer 2 pie dish rims. One frag Early Iron Age pottery. One piece of colander.



Top of stony layer at 1' - 1'  
 " " " 6" - 1'4"  
 Top of black at 3' - 1'9"  
 Top of final stones at 3' - 2'3"

Most of pottery occurred in black layer between stone layers  
 Pottery in top layer very fragmentary & weathered.

