

Gazetteer - Swarling Belgic Cemetery, Kent

SWARLING (K)

TR 127 526 Zone 5

Unlike Aylesford, this cemetery kept its grave-associations intact (Bushe-Fox 1925) and the pottery is consistently grog-tempered. The site was found by gravel diggers and much was destroyed; despite difficult conditions 19 graves were excavated by C.L. Woolley, J.P. Bushe-Fox and T. May. What was received and registered at the BM, however, is not always as Bushe-Fox found or published it.

Grave 1 (using Birchall's numbering). This was found by gravel-diggers.

1 [1443] B1-3. B M 1923/11-8/1. Complete, grey grog, patchy grey smooth surfaces.

2 brooch.

Grave 2:

3 [1428] A3. B M 1923/7-13/27. Hard grey-brown grog, well made, grey inside, burnished dark reddish-brown outside. Bushe-Fox describes the lower body and base, but received as extant in the BM, according to the Register sketch and description. The grave was damaged by gravel diggers and the pots rescued in pieces.

4 [1145-6] A3. B M 1923/7-13/33 (rim), 3 2 (base). Never complete; Bushe-Fox thought these one vessel, found in

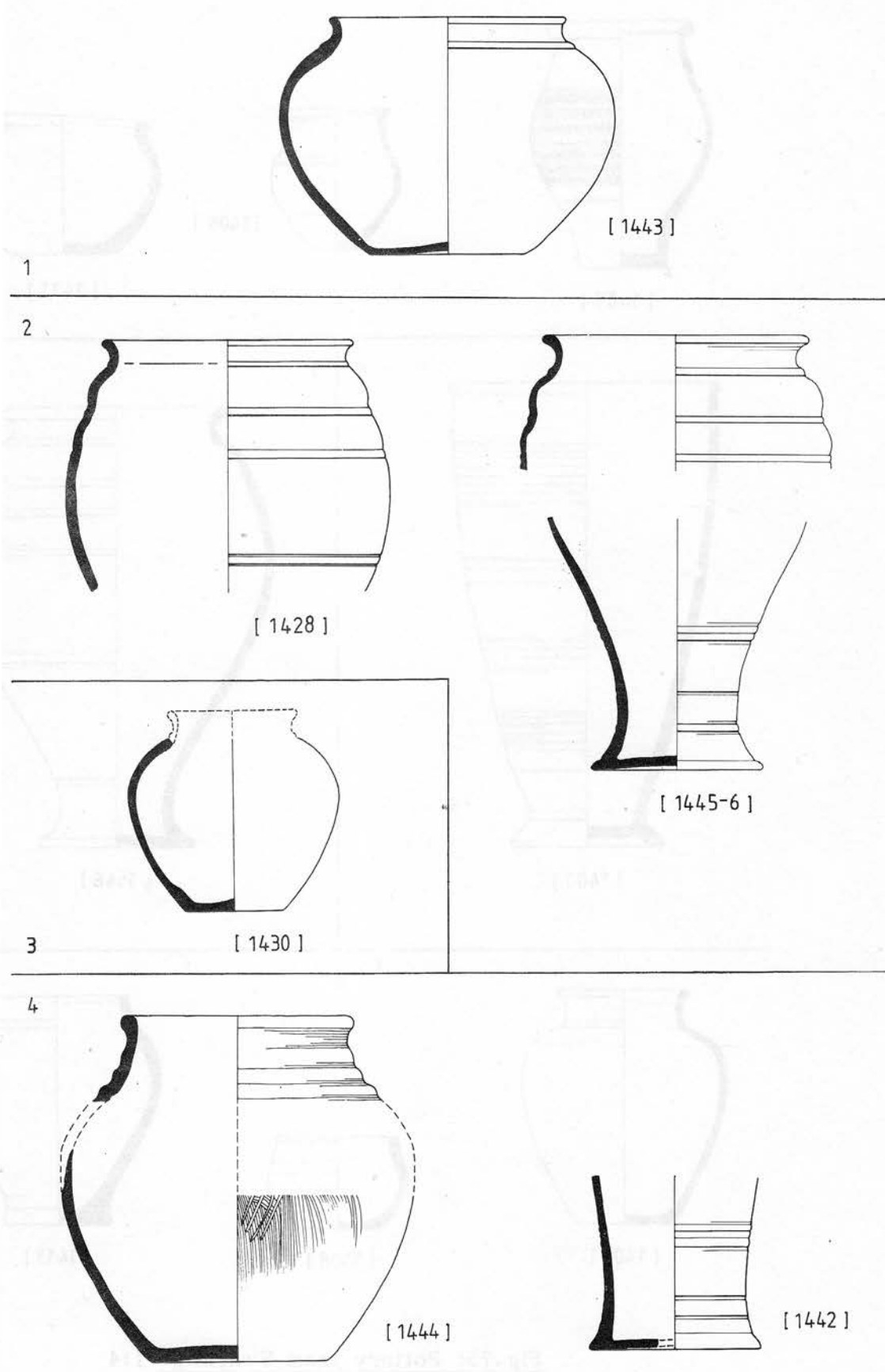
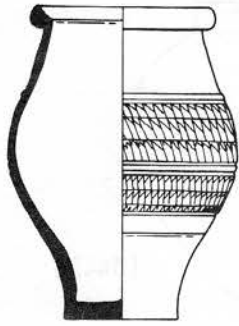
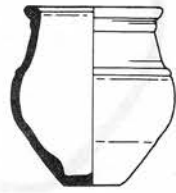


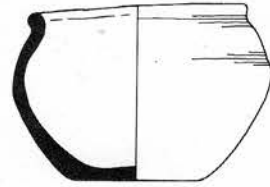
Fig.74: Pottery from Swarling. 1:4



[1407]

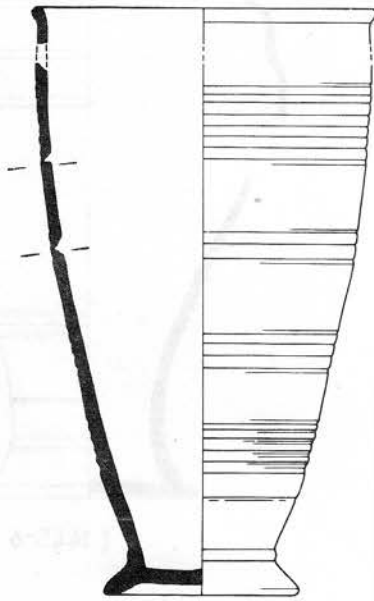


[1406]



[1411]

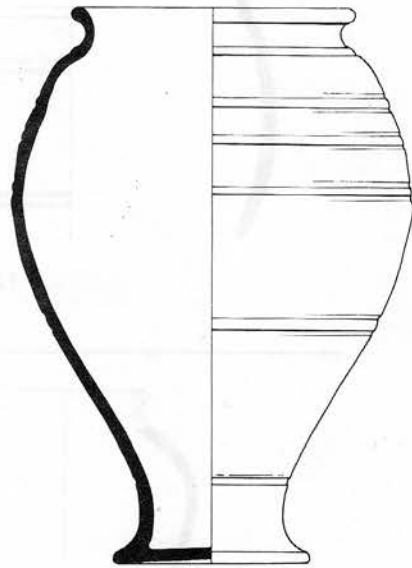
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[1401]

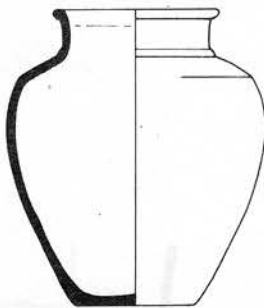
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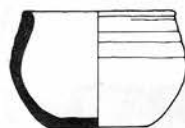


[1546]

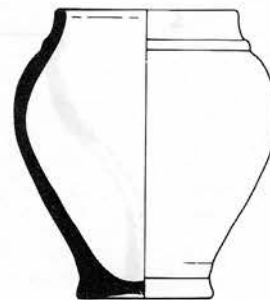
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[1409]

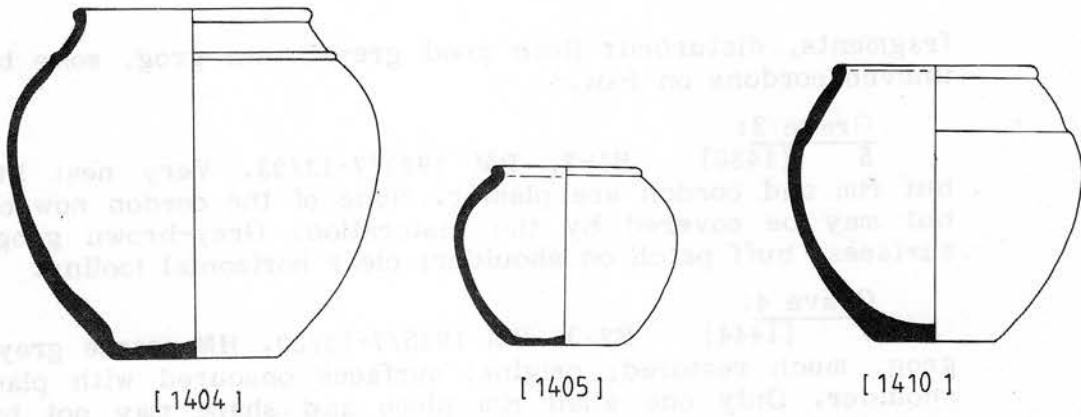


[1408]



[1413]

Fig.75: Pottery from Swarling. 1:4

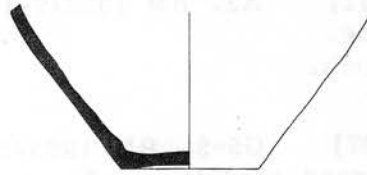


[1404]

[1405]

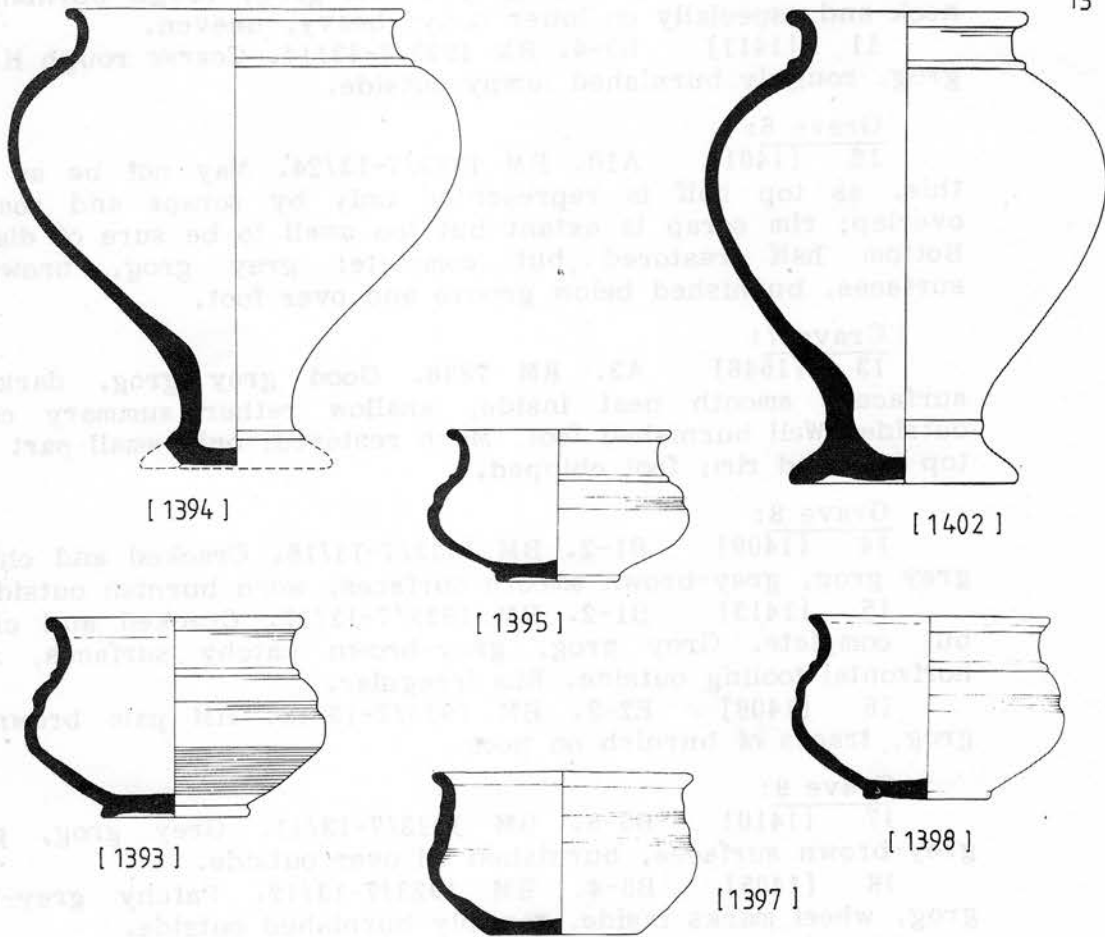
[1410 1]

9



[1427]

11



[1394]

[1395]

[1397]

[1398]

[1402]

13

Fig.76: Pottery from Swarling. 1:4

fragments, disturbed. Both good grey-brown grog, some burnish, uneven cordons on foot.

Grave 3:

5 [1430] B1-2. BM 1923/7-13/23. Very neat little pot but rim and cordon are plaster. None of the cordon now original, but may be covered by the restoration. Grey-brown grog, grey surfaces, buff patch on shoulder; clear horizontal tooling.

Grave 4:

6 [1444] B2-3. BM 1923/7-13/30. HM coarse grey-brown grog, much restored; original surfaces obscured with plaster on shoulder. Only one small rim piece and shape may not be quite correct, but seems reasonable. Fine shallow combing.

7 [1442] A2. BM 1923/7-13/31. Grey-brown grog, tooled grooves outside.

8 brooch.

Grave 5:

9 [1407] G5-5. BM 1923/7-13/15. Thin well made grey-brown grog, good rouletting, fine combing, burnish on lower body and neck.

10 [1406] G5-3. BM 1923/7-13/13. Cracked but only slight restoration, patchy grey-brown grog, rough burnishing on neck and especially on lower body; heavy, uneven.

11 [1411] E3-4. BM 1923/7-13/14. Coarse rough HM grey grog, roughly burnished lumpy outside.

Grave 6:

12 [1401] A10. BM 1923/7-13/24. May not be as tall as this, as top half is represented only by scraps and some may overlap; rim scrap is extant but too small to be sure of diameter. Bottom half restored but complete: grey grog, brown-grey surfaces, burnished below groove and over foot.

Grave 7:

13 [1546] A3. RM 7836. Good grey grog, dark grey surfaces, smooth neat inside, shallow rather summary cordons outside. Well burnished foot. Much restored; only small part left of top half and rim; foot chipped.

Grave 8:

14 [1409] B1-2. BM 1923/7-13/16. Cracked and chipped, grey grog, grey-brown smooth surfaces, worn burnish outside.

15 [1413] B1-2. BM 1923/7-13/17. Cracked and chipped but complete. Grey grog, grey-brown patchy surfaces, strong horizontal tooling outside. Rim irregular.

16 [1408] E2-3. BM 1923/7-13/18. HM pale brown-grey grog, traces of burnish on neck.

Grave 9:

17 [1410] B5-5. BM 1923/7-13/11. Grey grog, patchy grey-brown surfaces, burnished all over outside.

18 [1405] B5-4. BM 1923/7-13/12. Patchy grey-brown grog, wheel marks inside, *roughly burnished outside*.

19 [1404] B1-3. BM 1923/7-13/10. Only 2 rim scraps; grey grog, grey-brown surfaces, darker burnish outside.

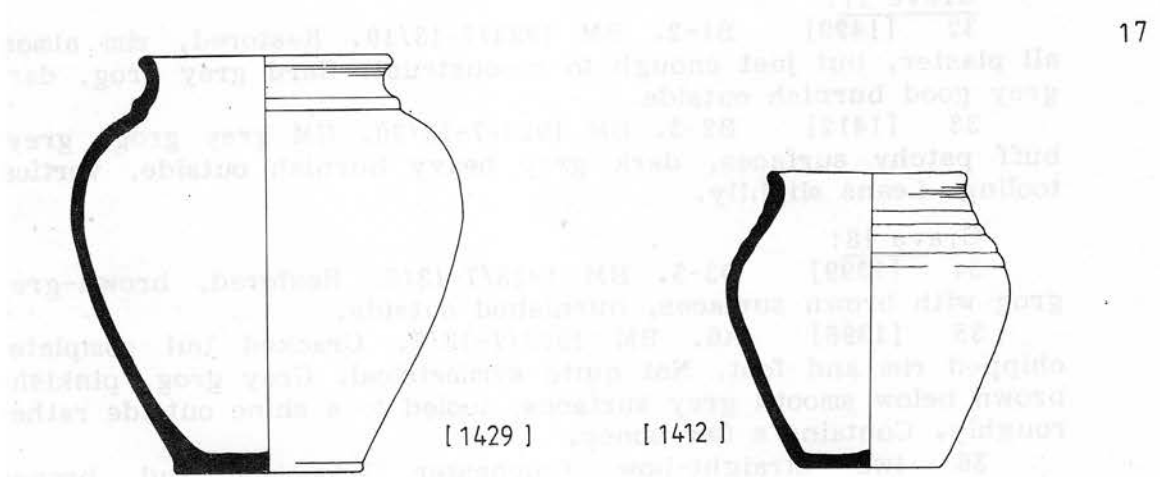
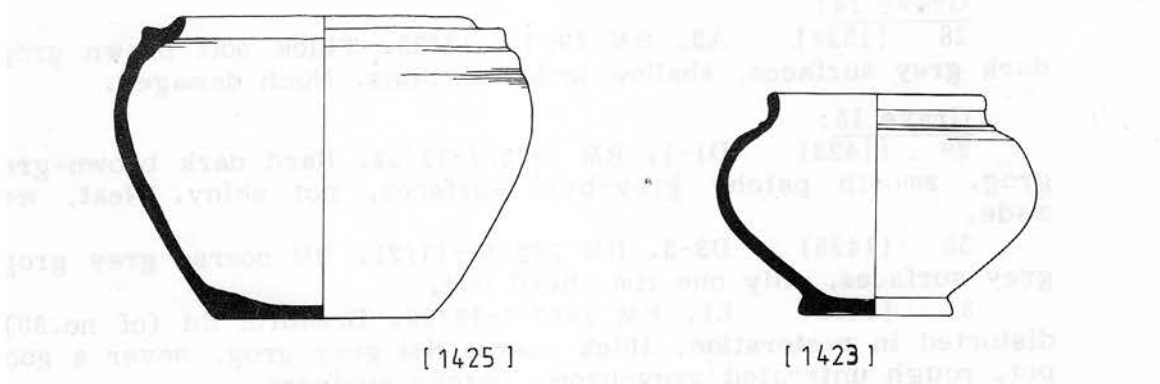
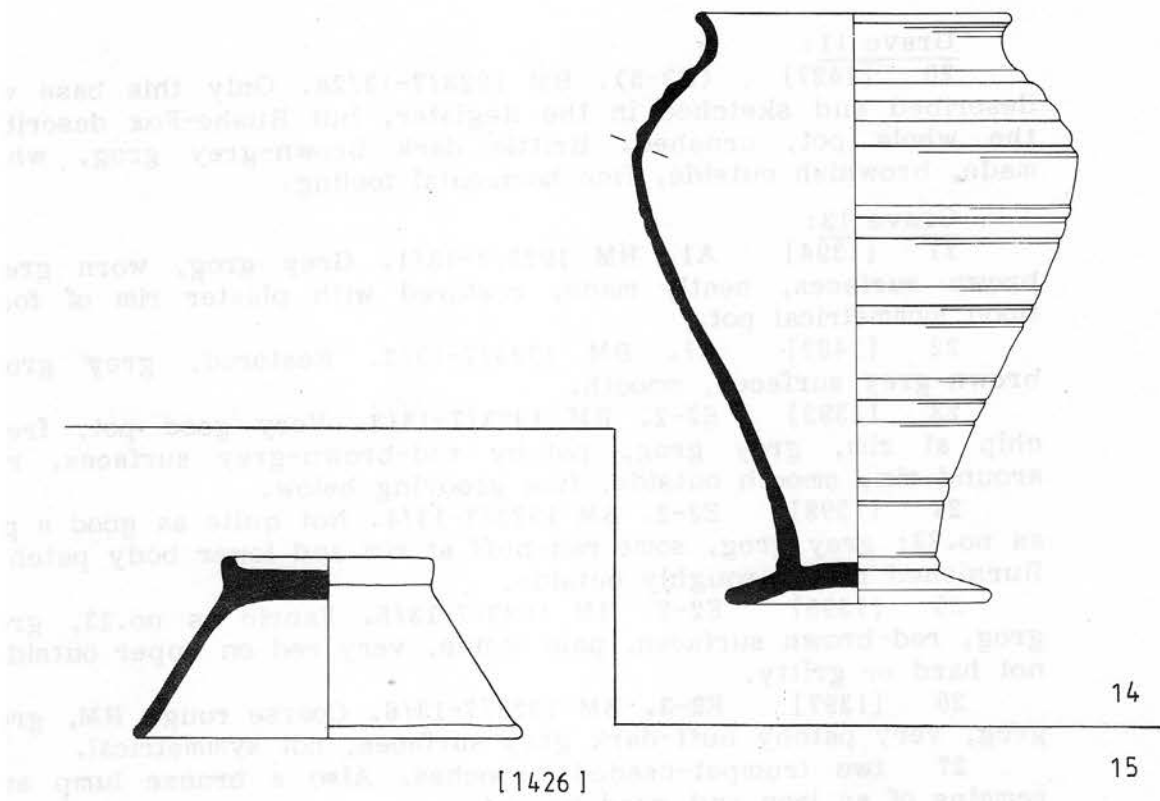


Fig.77: Pottery from Swarling. 1:4

Grave 11:

20 [1427] (B3-5). BM 1923/7-13/28. Only this base was described and sketched in the Register, but Bushe-Fox describes the whole pot, crushed. Brittle dark brown-grey grog, wheel made, brownish outside, fine horizontal tooling.

Grave 13:

21 [1394] A1. BM 1923/7-13/1. Grey grog, worn grey-brown surfaces, neatly made, restored with plaster rim of foot. Good symmetrical pot.

22 [1402] A1. BM 1923/7-13/2. Restored, grey grog, brown-grey surfaces, smooth.

23 [1393] E2-2. BM 1923/7-13/3. Very good pot, fresh chip at rim, grey grog, patchy red-brown-grey surfaces, red around rim, smooth outside, fine grooving below.

24 [1398] E2-2. BM 1923/7-13/4. Not quite as good a pot as no.23; grey grog, some red-buff at rim and lower body patchy. Burnished rather roughly outside.

25 [1395] E2-2. BM 1923/7-13/5. Fabric as no.23, grey grog, red-brown surfaces, pale inside, very red on upper outside; not hard or gritty.

26 [1397] " E2-3. BM 1923/7-13/6. Coarse rough HM, grey grog, very patchy buff-dark grey surfaces, not symmetrical.

27 two trumpet-headed brooches. Also a bronze lump and remains of an iron and wood bucket.

Grave 14:

28 [1524] A3. BM 1923/7-13/25. Thick soft brown grog, dark grey surfaces, shallow tooled cordons. Much damaged.

Grave 15:

29 [1423] D1-1. BM 1923/7-13/22. Hard dark brown-grey grog, smooth patchy grey-buff surfaces, not shiny. Neat, well made.

30 [1425] D3-3. BM 1923/7-13/21 . HM coarse grey grog, grey surfaces, only one rim sherd left.

31 [1426] L1. BM 1923/7-13/29. Dreadful lid (of no.30), distorted in restoration, thick coarse HM grey grog, never a good pot, rough untreated grey-brown patchy surfaces.

Grave 17:

32 [1429] B1-2. BM 1923/7-13/19. Restored, rim almost all plaster, but just enough to reconstruct. Hard grey grog, dark grey good burnish outside.

33 [1412] B2-3. BM 1923/7-13/20. HM grey grog, grey-buff patchy surfaces, dark grey heavy burnish outside, vertical tooling. Leans slightly.

Grave 18:

34 [1399] D3-5. BM 1923/7-13/8. Restored, brown-grey grog with brown surfaces, burnished outside.

35 [1396] A6. BM 1923/7-13/7. Cracked but complete, chipped rim and foot. Not quite symmetrical. Grey grog, pinkish-brown below smooth grey surfaces, tooled to a shine outside rather roughly. Contains a few bones.

36 two straight-bow Colchester brooches and bronze fragment.

37 [1400] E2-1. BM 1923/7-13/9. Complete, grey grog, patchy surfaces, horizontal tooling. Cordons not quite symmetrical.

Grave 19:

38 [1424] A3. BM 1923/7-13/26. Much damaged and restored, one rim sherd only. Thick hard grey-brown grog, dark grey outside, patchy grey inside worn to orange. Foot restored so cannot see exact shape. Burnished cordons and below lowest cordon; shallow horizontal rilled lines between. Rim seems top-heavy; possible alternative rim = [1537].

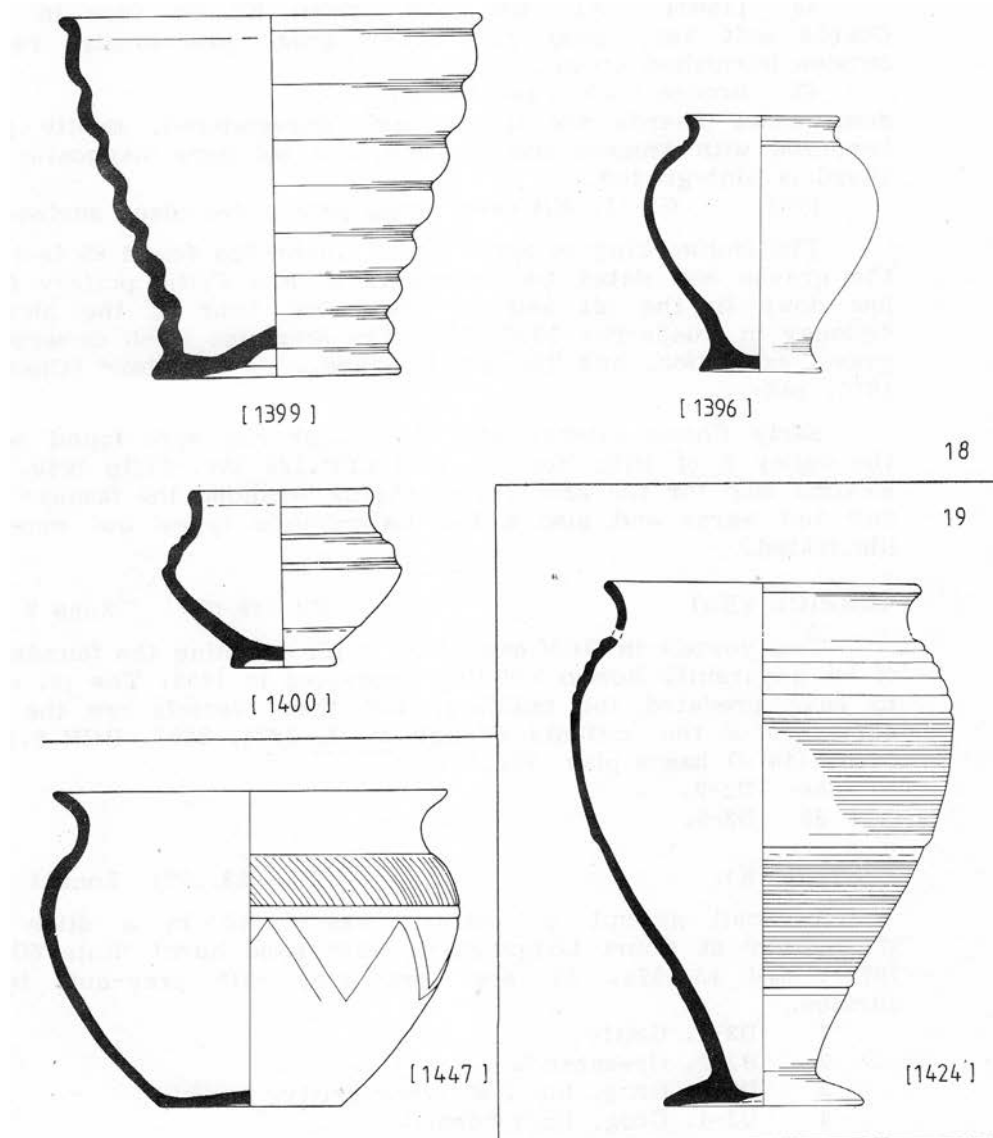


Fig.78: Pottery from Swarling. 1:4.



[1537] B2-1. 'BM 1923/7-13/26', but not the same rim as now on [1424]. Grey-brown, grog, tooled outside. Bushe-Fox has the plain rim; it is possible that this rim belongs to 'another pedestal urn of similar type' found in the same grave.

39 brooches.

40 brooch.

Unassociated:

41 [1447] not in series. BM 1923/11-8/2. Roman grey gritty ware, sandy, brown-grey patchy surfaces, faint tooled decoration.

42[1545] Al. RM 6926, given by Dr Ince in 1921. Coarse soft very good grey-brown grog, pale inside, reddish outside burnished brown.

43 bronze bucket-escutcheon.

Some extra sherds are in the BM, unregistered, mostly grog-tempered with grooves and rippling, but not very diagnostic. One sherd is flint-gritted.

[70] G1-11. HM grey grog, patchy red-black surfaces.

The ironworking evidence which Bushe-Fox found 85 feet E of the graves was dated by 'fragments of late Celtic pottery found low down in the pit and on the burnt floor of the platform' (Woolley in Bushe-Fox 1925, 52). The area was much damaged by gravel extraction, and 'the exact nature... is not clear' (Champion 1976, 146-7).

Early Roman ditches with 'Belgic' sherds were found across the valley S of Iffin Wood in 1959 (TR 135 534; Philp 1960, with location map for the area). The sherds 'included the familiar grey and red wares and also a few Gallo-Belgic types' but were not illustrated.