

THE ARCHAEOLOGICAL COLLECTION OF E.B. NUNN

E.B. Nunn lived in Royston and was a typical nineteenth century antiquarian, excavating sites and retaining what he found. He did keep a diary of his activities and I would like to relate one day's activities:

"July 14th 1856. Opened No. 5 of the five hills on Royston Heath. At the depth of six feet came to a kind of grave, N.E. — S.W. (lined with large flints) about 4ft long and 2ft wide found it contained a heap of calcinated human bones also an urn at the North East end about 7 inches high, but it was very much compressed by the weight of the superincumbent earth".

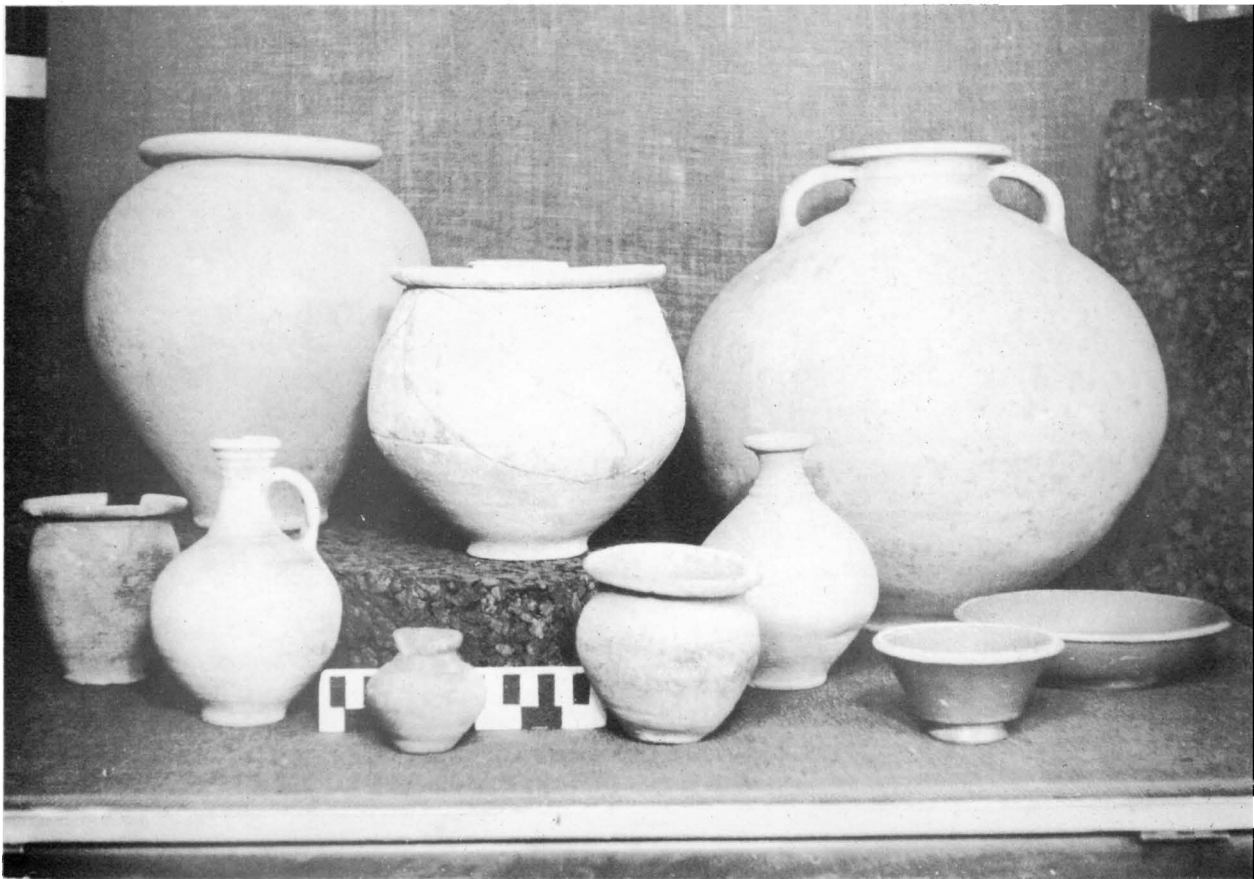
Apart from excavating the barrows on the Heath he also examined the 'Mile Ditches' and the 'Hop Skotch', other features of Royston Heath.

The items shown (facing page 13) are those at the Royston Museum and at the moment we only know, with any degree of certainty, where four of these items came from. The first two, the large globular storage jar (back, far right) and the ring necked flagon (front, second left) were found on the Heath where the cricket pitch is now situated. The second two, the samian cup, Drag. 33 (front, second right)

and the double shoulder-ring, handleless flagon (front, third right) were found 'in the lane' at Kelshall on February 12th 1878.

When Mr Nunn died, at the turn of the century, his collection was split between two Royston families and with subsequent sales and objects changing hands, they are now dispersed between museums in Hertfordshire and Cambridge. This is where I come in, with the aid of a grant from the Royston and District Local History Society, to retrace Nunn's footsteps, to rediscover his collection and to publish that part of Royston's history which until now has been almost lost.

Mark Stevenson



ROYSTON MUSEUM: part of the E.B.Nunn collection