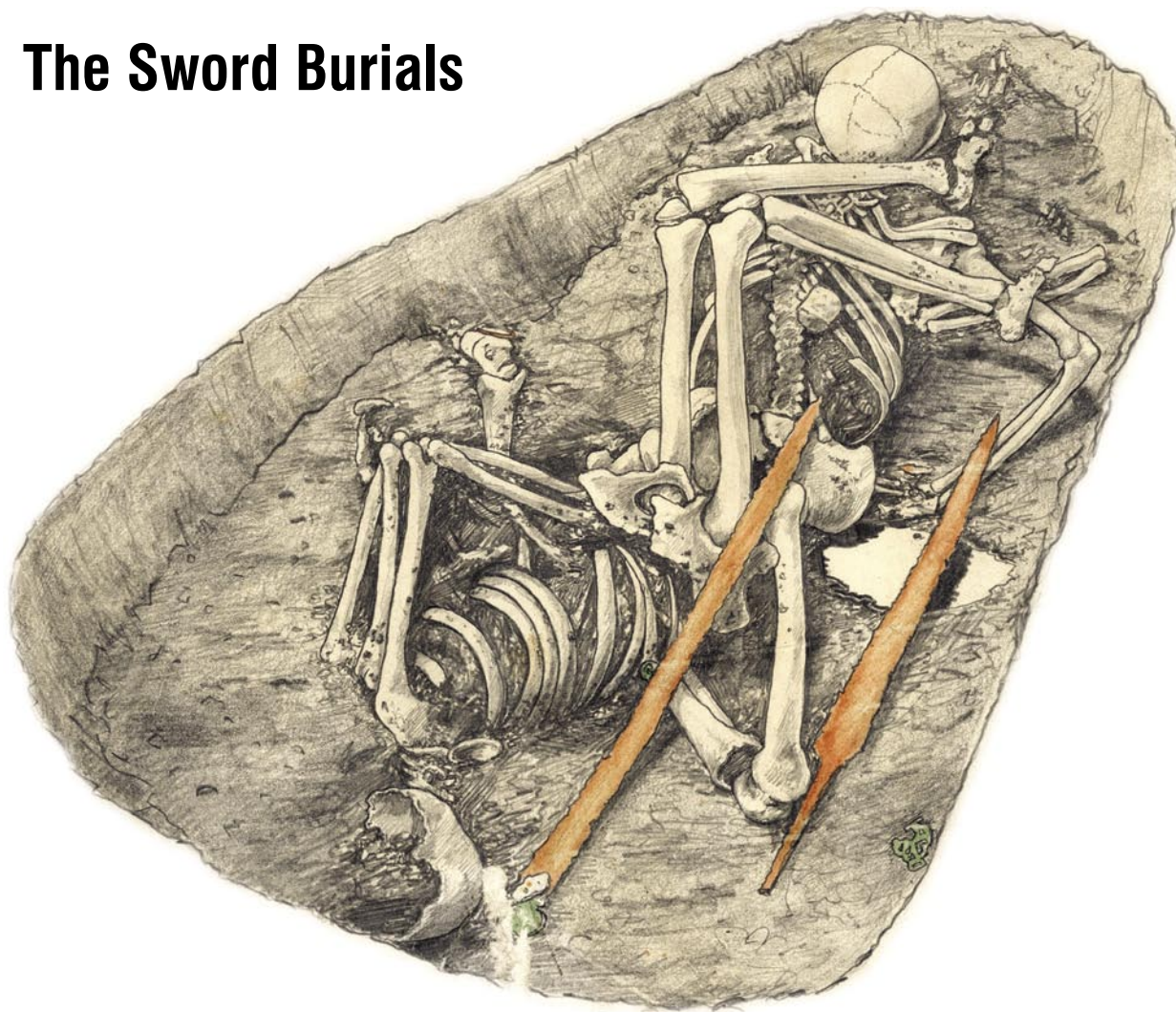
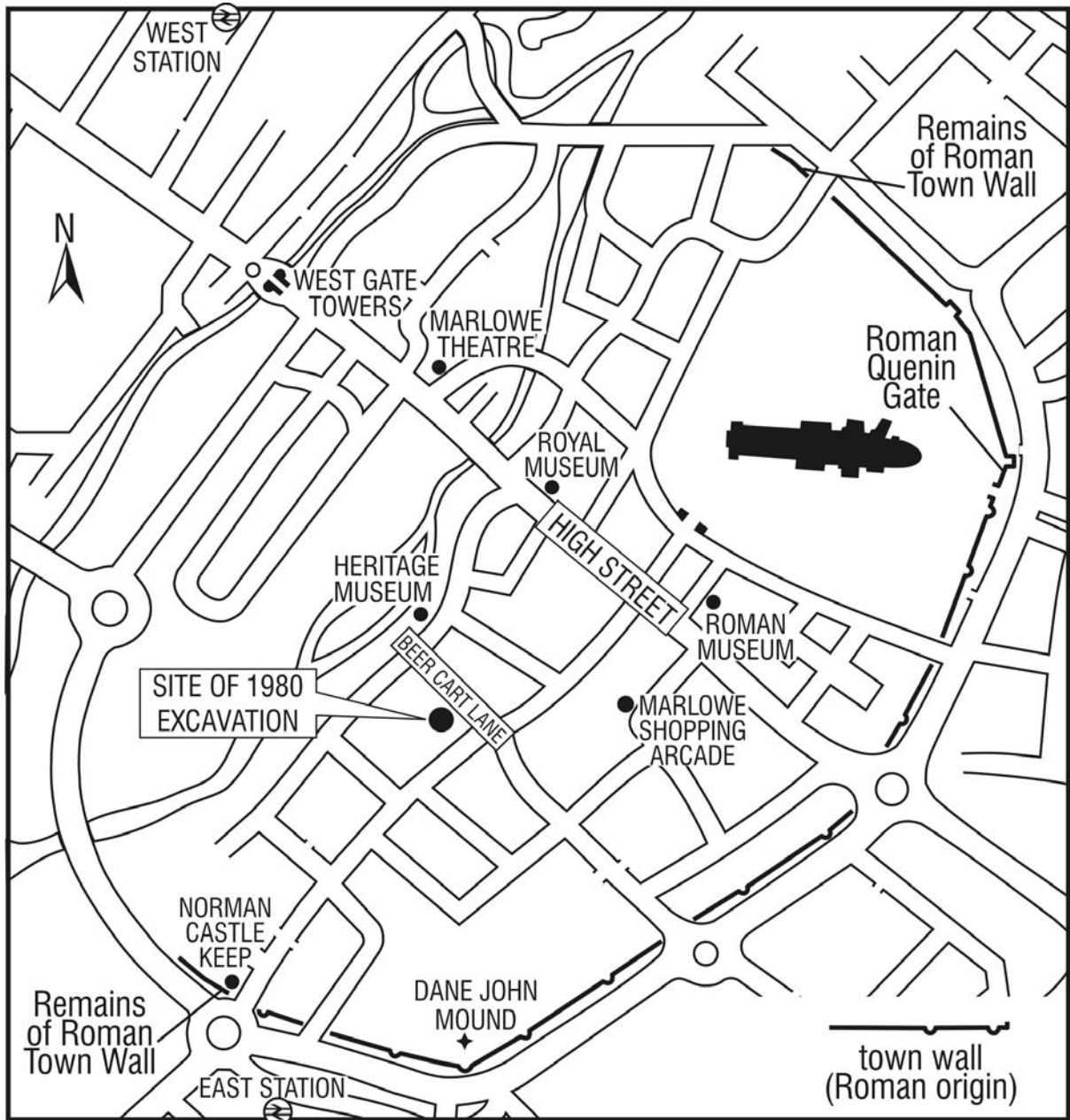


The Sword Burials

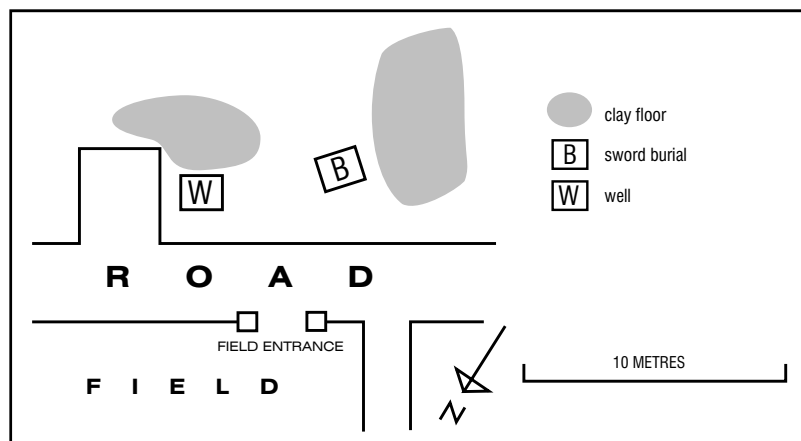


Between 1975 and 1977 archaeologists were excavating a site near Canterbury's Norman Castle. Some clay floors and a road had been found and several Roman objects had been uncovered. It was then that they discovered two skeletons in a shallow pit...

Who were they? What happened to them? When had they died? Try to solve the mystery!

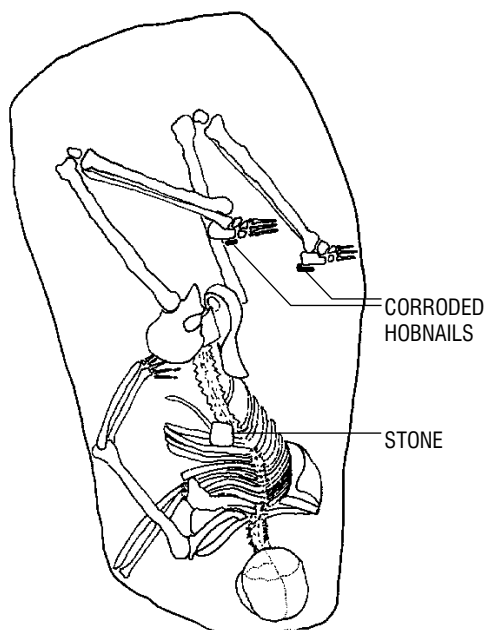
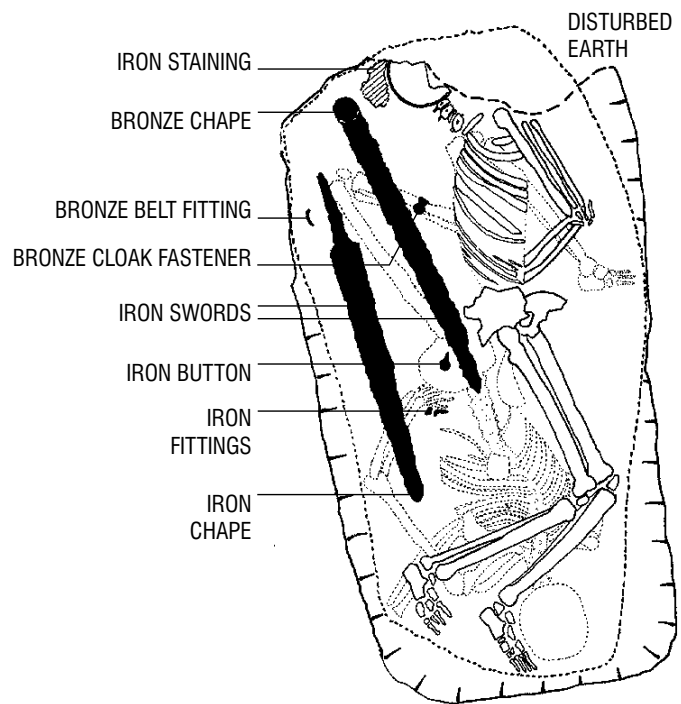


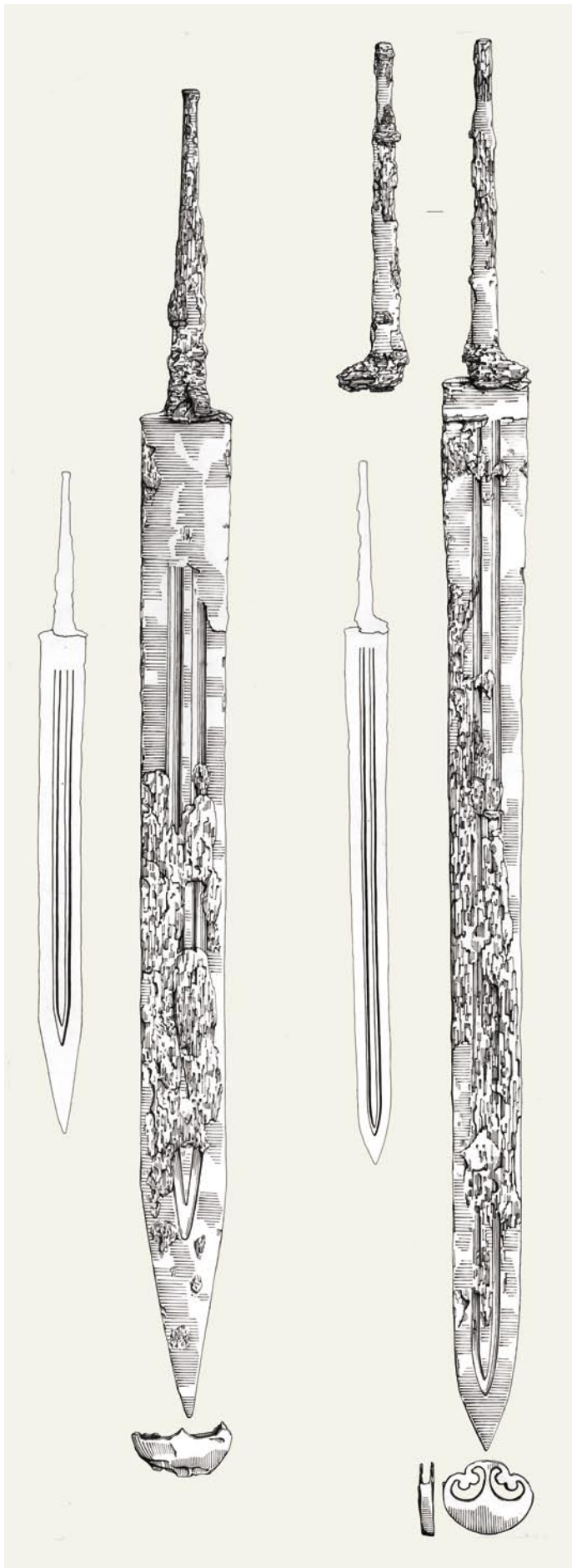
Take a look at all the evidence that the archaeologists uncovered. Here is a sketch plan of the evidence the archaeologists found on site. The skeletons were found beneath the clay floor of a building.



The two skeletons

They were found at the bottom of the pit, one above the other. The upper skeleton was lying on its left side. It was of a man 1.73m tall and at least 30 years of age when he died. The fractures to the bones of the left arm were probably caused by modern disturbance of the ground. The lower skeleton was found facing downwards with its legs twisted around. It was of a man 1.82m tall and about 20 years old when he died. Again, the fractures of the bones were probably caused by modern disturbances of the ground. There was no evidence for cause of death on either skeleton.





Objects found in the pit

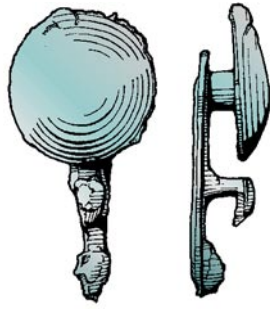
(look up any unfamiliar words in a dictionary or reference book)

- Corroded hobnails were found near the feet of the lower skeleton.
- Two iron swords were found on top of the skeletons. One sword was 69cm long with a bronze chape. The other sword was 65.5cm long and seems to have had an iron chape. Fragments of wood found on both swords showed that they were in their scabbards when they were buried. The swords were similar to a type used in Roman times, around AD 200.

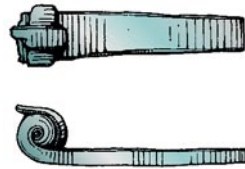
Archaeologists have identified different types of swords used in Roman times.

The Roman cavalry used a long sword called a *spatha* which a soldier wore on the right side. It hung from a belt or strap that went over the left shoulder. The blade of the cavalry sword varied in length from 65–80 cm. The Roman infantry used a sword which was shorter with a straight edge. The blade of this type of sword varied in length from 40–50 cm.

Some other metal objects were also found with the skeletons.



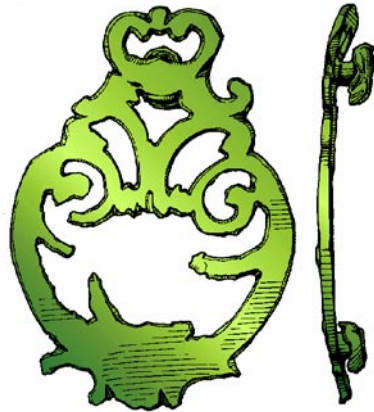
An iron button (probably once attached to a leather strap or garment).



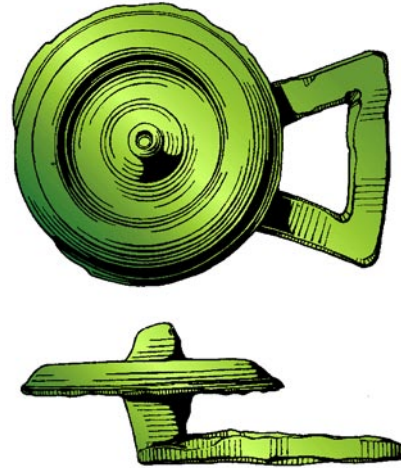
An iron belt fitting? (a type used in the late second century AD).



An iron chape fitting?



A bronze belt fitting (a type used from around AD 120 - 200).



A bronze cloak fastener (a type used in the early second century AD).

What do you think happened to these men? Use all of the evidence here to try and solve the mystery.

**Email marion.green@canterburytrust.co.uk with your ideas!
Perhaps you could send a story**