

Chapter III

The later prehistoric period

III.A Later Bronze Age occupation

III.A.1 Description of the features

Plan: Fig. 7

Nine features, all of them pits, were dated by pottery to this period. They were widely distributed across the site east of the Lechlade-Burford road. Other features which contained only flints may also have been contemporary but the flintworking is not sufficiently diagnostic to isolate it from Late Neolithic assemblages, which were also present on the site. Some of these features, however, clustered around known Bronze Age pits, and are mentioned below.

The pits are described from west to east.

Pit 879 was circular with sloping sides, except on the north, where it was apparently undercut more than 0.6 m (Figs. 21 and Fig. 119 on Fiche 1#19). This may have been a tree hole (see Moore & Jennings forthcoming). Alternatively the undercut may have been caused by animal burrowing, especially as an early Roman sherd was found halfway down the fill. The top fill of 879, which is described as 'old topsoil', probably indicates a slow humic build-up in the open dry conditions suggested by molluscs from the pit (see Ch. III.A.6).

Several other features in the vicinity may also have been of this period. 885 (Fiche 4#71), 897 (Fiche 4#73) and 881 (Fiche 4#72) all contained flints, bone and burnt limestones. The clay into which 897 was cut was burnt brick red, so it was presumably a hearth.

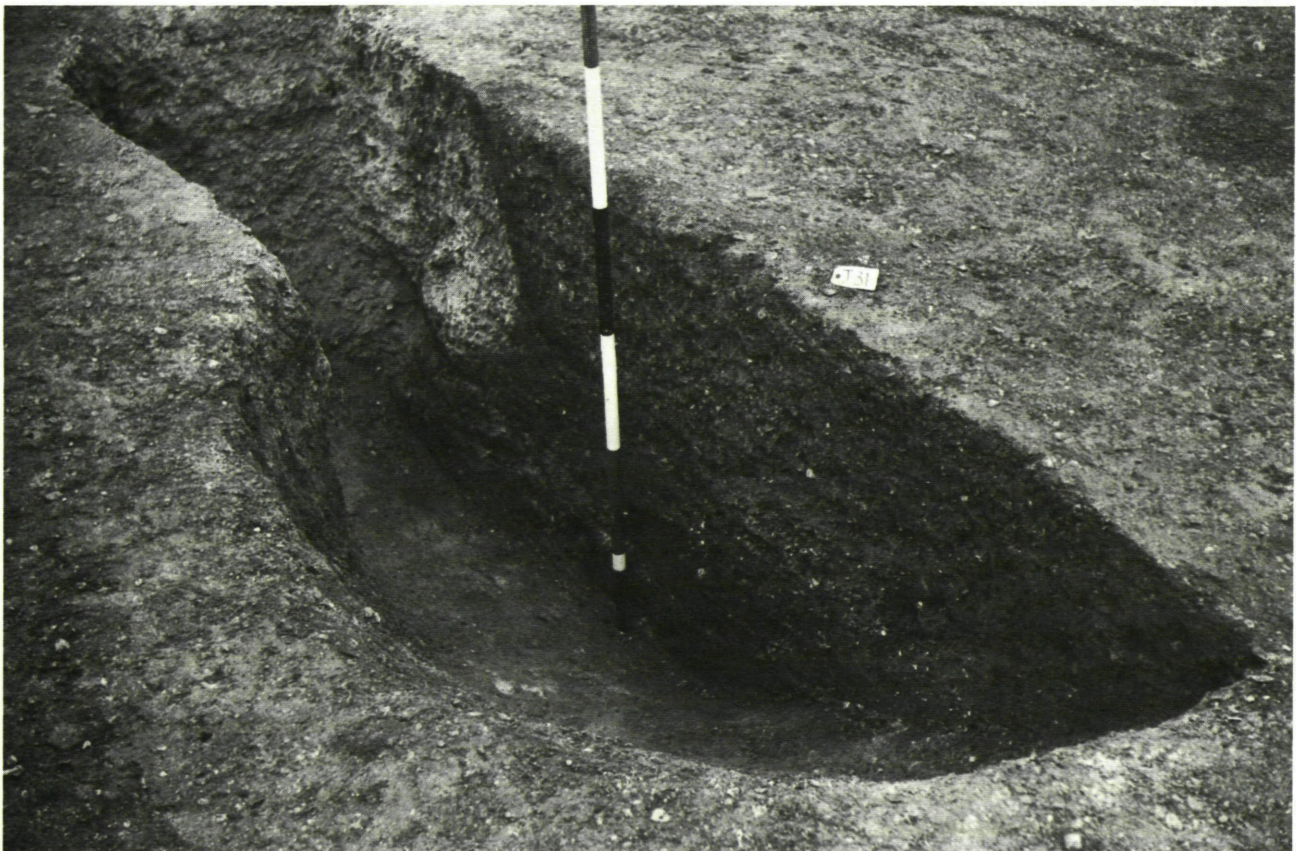


Figure 21 Bronze Age pit 879, over-excavated to show undercut

Another group of Bronze Age pits lay *c* 180 m north-east (Fig. 7; Fig. 119 on Fiche 1#19). 968 was cut by pit 988. A calibrated radiocarbon date of 1410–1170 cal. BC (at one sigma) was obtained from animal bone from pit 1001 (see Table 12). To the north-east were two further pits 734 (Fiche 4#41) and 1165 (Fiche 4#42). On the very north edge of the site were a crouch burial 1157 (Fig. 32) and a gully aligned upon it, 1156; the burial was radiocarbon-dated and gave a calibrated date of 1160–940 cal. BC (at one sigma) (see Table 12), and both features probably belong to the Later Bronze Age occupation. They are, however, described in the Early Iron Age section (see Ch. III.B.1 and Ch. III.B.4).

At the east edge of the site were adjacent circular pits 1296 and 1297 (Fig. 26). These pits were larger than the Iron Age ones, but were only shallow; for the section of 1297 see Fig. 119 on Fiche 1#19. Further south was an elongated pit 1290 (Fig. 26; Fig. 119 on Fiche 1#19), surrounded by small pits 1244, 1323 and 1327 which may have been of similar date (see Ch. 3.1 on Fiche 1#19). This area may therefore represent another small focus of Bronze Age occupation.

Feature 1199, salvaged by A J Baxter, produced the largest assemblage of Bronze Age pottery from Roughground Farm. Unfortunately no details other than its approximate position are available (Fig. 7).

These scattered features vary widely in shape and size, but common to all was a charcoal-laden dark fill containing occupation refuse and burnt stones. Except in the case of 897 the charcoal need not mean that the pits were the sites of fires, but does imply domestic occupation close by, in contrast to the Early Iron Age pits, many of which contained little or no rubbish (see below).

III.A.2 Bronze Age pottery

by Richard Hingley

Figs. 22, Fig. 23, Fig. 24

Nine features produced Later Bronze Age pottery, the assemblages from which varied from 1 to 134 sherds (see Table 34 on Fiche 1#21). Bone from one of these features, pit 1001, produced a calibrated radiocarbon date of 1410–1170 cal. BC (at one sigma) (see Table 12).

The pottery was classified according to fabric, form and decoration or surface treatment. Seven fabrics were identified by macroscopic examination. Fabric proportions were compared between assemblages of more than 30 sherds (following De Roche in Parrington 1978, 47). See Table 8 below.

In the Later Bronze Age the calcareous Fabrics 2, 3 and 4 account for 91.6% of all sherds, or if Fabric 6 is included, 95.2%.

Sherds of Later Bronze Age date were usually small, soft and friable, in contrast to those of Early Iron Age date. This

is probably due to harder and more even firing in the Early Iron Age.

Fourteen form categories have been defined on the basis of whole profiles, rims or shoulders (Table 9).

The forms cover both the Bronze Age and Early Iron Age assemblages, as a number occur in both periods. (For definitions of the terms used see the Microfiche report).

From the assemblage of 366 sherds 34 vessels were either partly reconstructable or had distinctive traits worth illustrating (Figs. 22, Fig. 23 and Fig. 24). A classification of illustrated sherds is given below:

- Form 1** Upright rims 3, 4, 14, ?22, 23, 25, 28, 32.
- Form 2** Inturned rims 6, 26.
- Form 4** Incurving rims 24
- Form 6** Rounded and out-turned rims 5.
- Form 8** Straight-sided upright vessels 7, 20.
- Form 9** Concave necks of vessels (none illustrated).
- Form 12** Bipartite vessels 27
- Form 13** Biconical vessels 1, 2, ?11, 18
- Form 14** Bucket urns 0, 13, 19, 21, 31, 33

Bucket urns (Form 14) and biconical vessels (Form 13) are predominant in these features (Table 9). Large fragments of bucket urn were recovered from 734 (No 13), 879 (No 33), 998 (No 0), 1001 (No 21) and 1296 (No 31). Small sherds, possibly from bucket urns (Form 8) came from 1199 (No 7), 1290 (Nos 19 and 20) and from 1242 (No 35). The sherds from 1242 was associated with Early Iron Age pottery and may have been residual. Four probable biconical urns (Form 13) are represented.

Six types of decoration were present (Table 36 on Fiche 1#23), the first three of which are characteristic of the Later Bronze Age. Shallow grooves, finger-tip/nail impressions and incised lines also occur, but are commoner in the Early Iron Age. The incidence of forms and types of decoration by feature is given in Table 37 on Fiche 1#23.

III.A.2.a Catalogue of the illustrated sherds

- Feature 998** Fig. 22.0 Fabric 2, dense and finely sorted. Exterior red-brown, interior orange to black, break dark grey to black. Form 14.
- Feature 1199** Fig. 23.1 Fabric 2 with addition of very small orange inclusions of uncertain origin. Exterior orange to grey, interior grey, break grey. Possible marks of vestigial cord on girth of pot. Form 13.
- Fig. 23.2 Fabric 4. Exterior orange, interior and break dark grey. Possible mark of vestigial cord on girth of pot. Form 13.
- Fig. 23.3 Fabric 4. Exterior orange to grey, interior dark grey, break grey. Form 1.
- Fig. 23.4 Fabric 2. Exterior orange, interior and break

Feature	1 Sand		2 Shell		3 Limestone		4 Shelly limestone		5 Grog		6 Shell + grog		7 Flint		Total number of sherds
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	
1199	6	(4.5)	69	(51.5)	3	(2)	45	(33.5)	0		11	(8)	0		134
879	0		71	(80)	0		18	(20)	0		0		0		89
998	0		32	(95)	0		0		0		2	(5)	0		34
1001	0		44	(59.5)	4	(5.4)	22	(30)	1	(1)	1	(1)	2	(2.5)	74
	6	(1.8)	216	(64.7)	7	(2.1)	85	(25.7)	1	(0.9)	14	(4.3)	2	(0.6)	331

Table 8 Fabric per Feature. Fabric proportions in Later Bronze Age features (for features with over 30 sherds). Percentages in brackets.

Vessel type	Form No.	Number	Percentage
Bipartite vessels	12	2	6.9
Biconical vessels	13	4	13.8
Bucket urns	14	5	17.2
Upright rims	1	8	27.5
Straight-sided walls	8	4	13.8
Inturned rims	2	4	13.8
Incurving rims	4	1	3.5
Rounded + out-turned rims	6	1	3.5
Expanded rims	5	—	
Flared or out-turned rims	3	—	
Rounded or sharp shoulders	7	—	
Concave necks	9	—	
Tripartite bowls	10	—	
Tripartite jars	11	—	
Total		29	

Table 9 Occurrence of vessel types in Bronze Age contexts (giving absolute number and percentage as a proportion of all types)

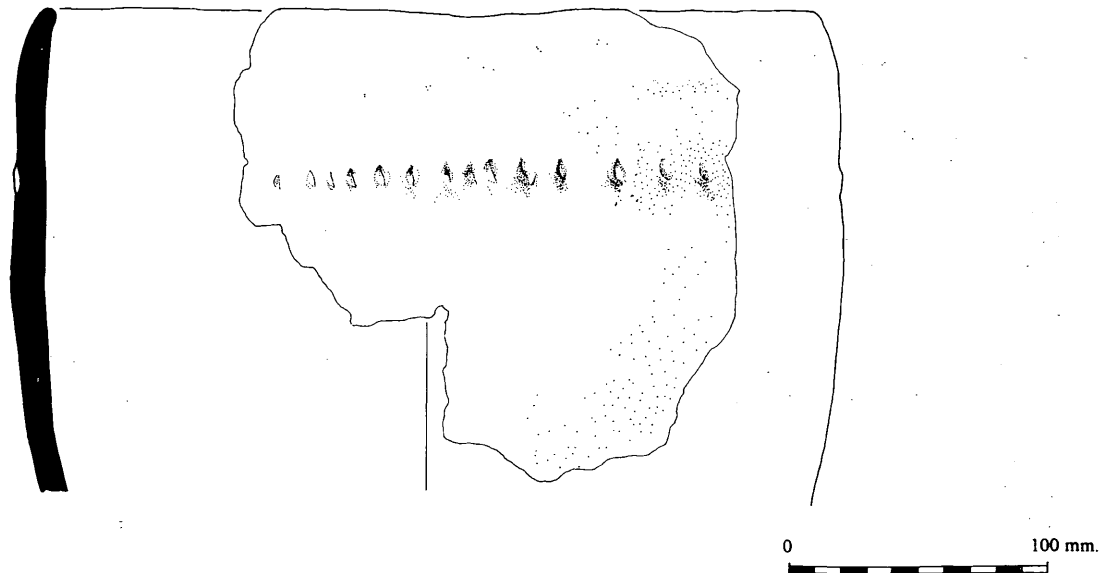


Figure 22 Later Bronze Age pottery No. 0 from context 998.

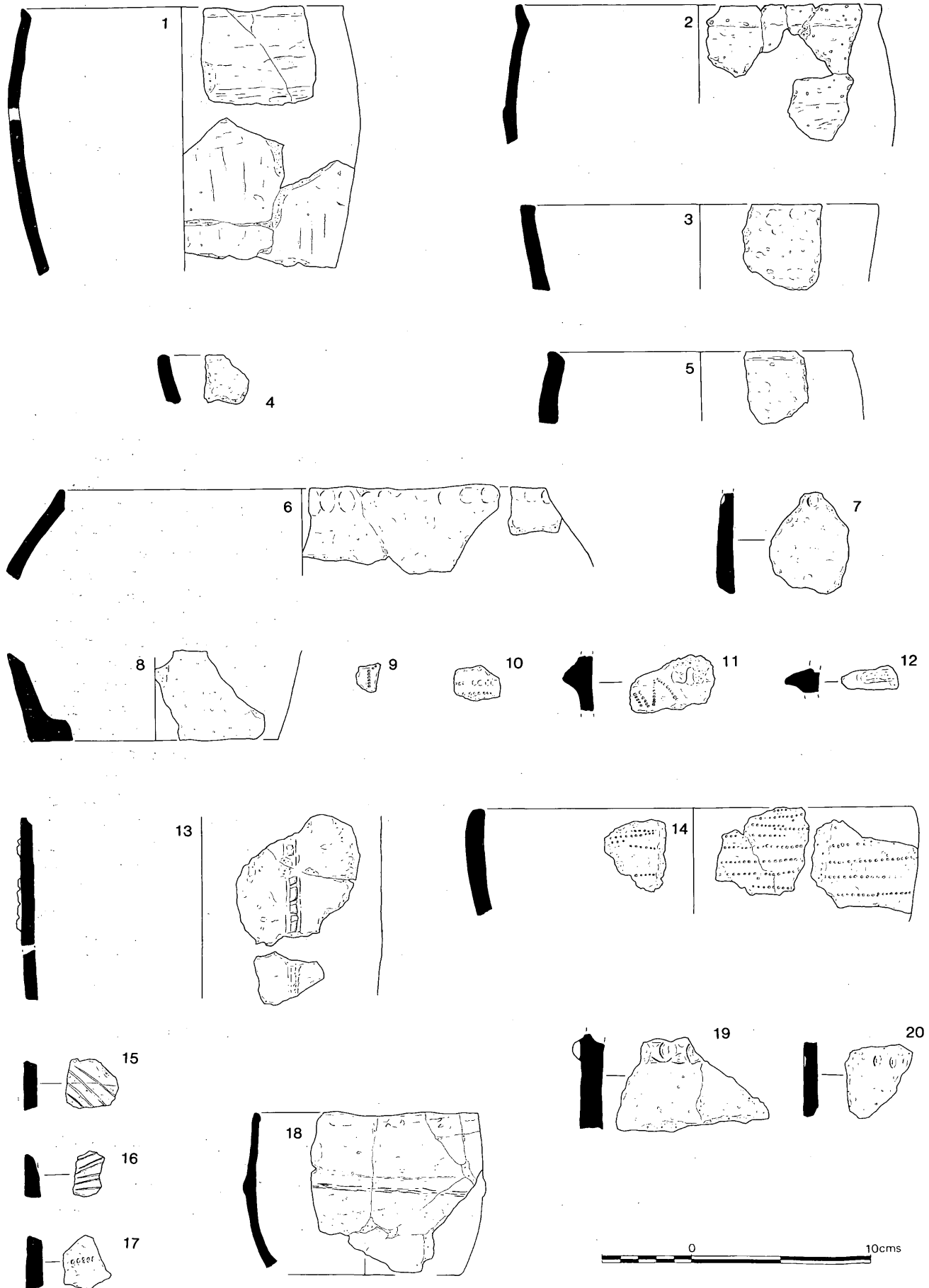


Figure 23 Later Bronze Age pottery Nos. 1–20. 1–12 from context 1199; 13–17 from 734; 18 from 1165; 19 and 20 from 1290.

- grey. Angle of rim uncertain. Form ?1.
- Fig. 23.5 Fabric 2. Exterior grey, interior orange to dark grey, break grey. Form 6.
- Fig. 23.6 Fabric 2. Exterior and interior orange, break grey. Slight finger impressions along outside of rim. Form 12.
- Fig. 23.7 Fabric 2. Exterior orange, interior and break dark grey. Possible trace of fingertip impression in outer face. Form ?8.
- Fig. 23.8 Fabric 2. Exterior orange, interior very dark grey, break orange to very dark grey.
- Figs. 23.9–11 Fabric 2. Exterior orange, interior and break dark grey. One sherd has a pierced lug and all three have comb tooth decoration. All three sherds may be from a Wessex biconical type urn. Form ?13.
- Fig. 23.12 Fabric 2. Exterior, interior, and break orange. Applied lug.
- Feature 734** Fig. 23.13 Fabric ?4. Exterior and interior orange, break dark grey. Applied vertical cordons with impressed nicks. Form ?14.
- Fig. 23.14 Fabric ?5. Exterior and interior orange, break dark grey. Multiple lines of comb-tooth decoration on exterior. Form ?1.
- Figs. 23.15–16 Fabric 6. Exterior, interior, and break grey. Multiple incised lines on exterior.
- Fig. 23.17 Fabric ?4. Exterior orange, interior dark grey, break orange to dark grey. Line of comb-tooth decoration. Possibly from vessel 13.
- Feature 1165** Fig. 23.18 Fabric 2. Exterior and interior orange to grey, break grey. Applied cordon on girth of vessel. Form 13.
- Feature 1290** Fig. 23.19 Fabric 4. Exterior and interior orange, break grey. Applied horizontal cordon with fingertip impressions. Form ?8.
- Fig. 23.20 Fabric 2. Exterior, interior, and break orange. Fingertip impressions. Form 8.
- Feature 1001** Fig. 24.21 Fabric 2. Exterior grey, interior and break dark grey. Fingernail impressions in exterior of rim and fingertip impressions on girth. Form 14.
- Fig. 24.22 Fabric 4. Exterior light grey, interior and break dark grey. Form ?1.
- Fig. 24.23 Fabric 2. Exterior grey, interior and break dark grey. Form 1.
- Fig. 24.24 Fabric 2. Exterior orange, interior and break dark grey. Form ?4.
- Fig. 24.25 Fabric 6. Exterior and interior grey, break dark grey. Form 1.
- Fig. 24.26 Fabric 7. Exterior and interior grey, break orange. Form 2.
- Fig. 24.27 Fabric 2. Exterior orange to grey, interior orange, break grey. Form 12.
- Fig. 24.28 Fabric 2. Exterior and interior grey, break dark grey. Form 1.

Fig. 24.29 Fabric 4. Exterior orange, interior and break grey. Applied lug.

Feature 968 Fig. 24.30 Fabric? S. Exterior orange to dark grey, interior orange, break very dark grey. Incised or impressed decoration.

Feature 1296 Fig. 24.31 Fabric 4. Exterior and interior orange, break dark grey. Fingertip impressions on girth of vessel and faint vertical striations perhaps from smoothing with finger. Form 14.

Feature 879 Fig. 24.32 Fabric 2. Exterior orange, interior grey, break dark grey. Form 1.

Fig. 24.33 Fabric 2. Exterior brown, interior grey, break dark grey. Fingernail impressions and an applied boss on girth of vessel. Height of vessel uncertain. Form 14.

III.A.2.b Discussion

It has recently been suggested that collared urns, biconical and bucket urns formed part of a 'single burial tradition' on some sites of the Bronze Age in the Upper Thames Valley (Case in Linington 1982, 87). At Roughground Farm two of these elements existed in a possible settlement context. Case has discussed the occurrence of bucket urns and biconical urns in the Upper Thames Valley (Case *et al* 1964). The biconical vessels discussed by Case and three of the examples from Roughground Farm are plain with only a slight trace of a cordon. By contrast a fourth decorated vessel with a pierced lug and comb-tooth decoration above is closer in type to the true Wessex biconical urn (see I Smith 1961).

No clear stratified association between bucket urns and biconical vessels occurred at Roughground Farm. In pit 1199 biconical and bipartite vessels predominate and are associated with one possible sherd from a bucket urn. In contrast to this 1001, with a calibrated radiocarbon date of 1410–1170 cal. BC to one sigma (see Table 12), is dominated by bucket urns and vessels with fairly upright rims; the bipartite vessel from 1001 is not truly biconical. As a consequence the chronology of ceramic development at Roughground Farm is uncertain. Biconical urns and bucket urns may have formed distinct and successive ceramic styles. The C14 date for 1001, an assemblage dominated by bucket urns, accords well with the general cluster of dates for such assemblages (Barrett 1976, 289–307).

III.A.3 Flints from Bronze Age features

by Timothy Darvill

A collection of 72 struck flints weighing a total of 600 grams was recovered from seven of the nine features with Later Bronze Age pottery. Table 10 summarises the composition of the assemblage, and Fig. 25 illustrates a representative selection of the tools and worked pieces.

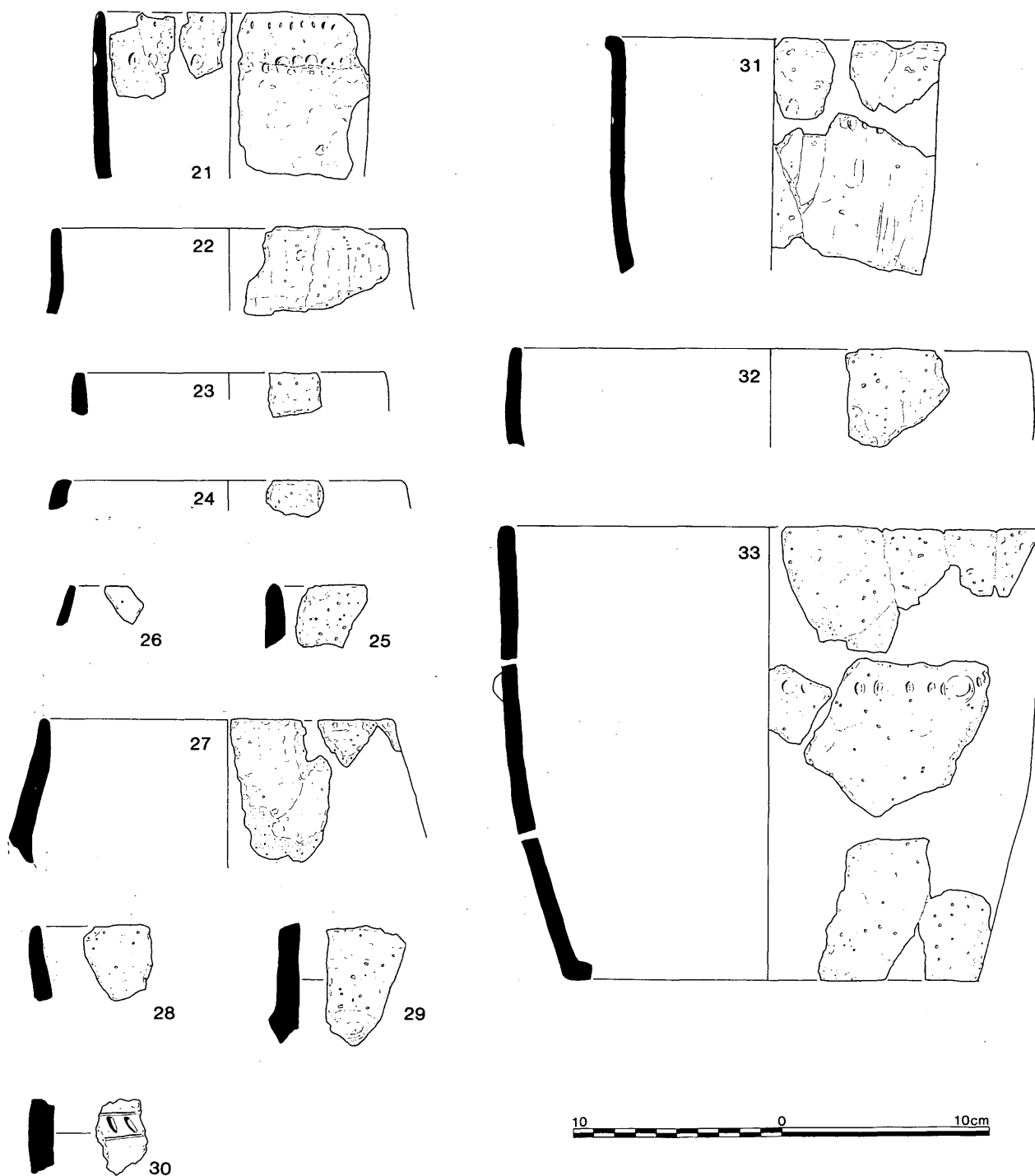


Figure 24 Later Bronze Age pottery Nos. 21–33. 21–29 from context 1001; 30 from 968; 31 from 1296; 32 and 33 from 879.

Types	Feature							Totals
	734	879	998	1001	1165	1290	1296	
Scrapers	1			1		2	1	5
Serrated flakes				2		2		4
Retouched flakes		1	1	1			2	5
Utilized flakes		1					1	2
Cores				3				3
Unutilized flakes	1	5	4*	31**	1	4	2	48
Calcined lumps				5				5
Totals	2	7	5	43	1	8	6	72

* including 2 calcined flakes

** including 1 calcined flake

Table 10 Summary of flintwork from Later Bronze Age features

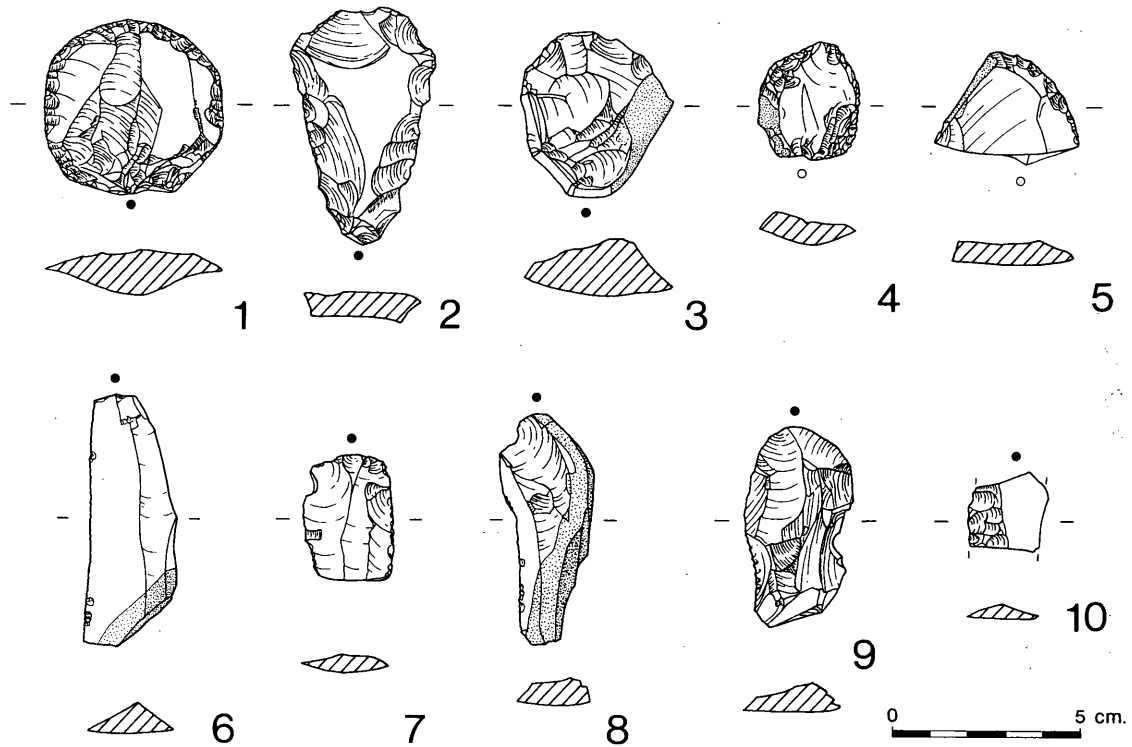


Figure 25 Flints from Later Bronze Age pits. Scrapers: 1-5; Serrated flakes: 6-9 Miscellaneous retouched flakes: 10. 1 from context 734; 2, 6 and 9 from context 1001; 3, 4, 7 and 8 from context 1290; 5 and 10 from context 1296.

With such a small assemblage it is uncertain to what extent the collection is contemporary with the pottery, rather than residual from Late Neolithic and Beaker period activity in the vicinity.

The raw material is all good quality imported flint, and is broadly similar to that used during Late Neolithic and Beaker times (see Ch. II.A.3 and Ch. II.B.4). Thin cream to light-grey coloured cortex predominates, although a few fragments display a thicker and lighter coloured cortex. Most of the flints have a light milky-white patina. No drift flint is present.

In contrast to most Neolithic/Bronze Age flint assemblages the percentage of unutilized flint flakes as a fraction of the total assemblage is rather low at about 66%; a figure of over 90% is customary (Saville 1980, 19). Several factors may account for this, among them the small size of the sample, the position of the site in an area where good flint is not available naturally and thus has to be used sparingly, and the possibility that worked pieces were preferentially collected during the excavation. The flakes represent a wide range of sizes from 18 mm in length to over 45 mm long, but no small chips or splinters from retouching and fine flaking are present. In general the flakes are squat with abundant hinge fractures and rather ragged irregular outlines. Insufficient pieces are present to allow any metrical analysis, but the general character of the cores and the flakes is similar to material from other Bronze Age sites in southern England (eg Fasham & Ross 1978).

Overall, this small assemblage is extremely difficult to evaluate. All the tool forms present could be accommodated within the typological and stylistic range represented by examples from the Late Neolithic and Beaker period features, and there are also similarities in the types of raw material represented. Given these features, together with the small size of the assemblage, it seems unlikely that flintworking was undertaken on any scale, if at all, by the Later Bronze Age inhabitants of the site.

III.A.4 Other finds

III.A.4.a Worked bone

Two bones from pit 1001 showed signs of working.

1. The point of a pin or needle, slightly curved and polished at the end, probably through wear. Length 32 mm.
2. A sheep or goat metatarsal split lengthways, much of the split edges being smoothed. There were traces of polish on the abraded exterior, and a number of short incisions or scratches down the length on one side, though these did not form any pattern. One end of the metatarsal was broken. In the Iron Age split bones such as this were often used as gouges or awls, as at Ashville (Parrington 1978, 81–82). Surviving length

94 mm, width 13 mm.

III.A.4.b Fired clay

582 grams, all in Fabric A—Mixed streaky Clays, came from four of the Bronze Age pits. (For details see Ch. 5.11.b on Fiche 2#63 and Table 53 on Fiche 2#66).

These included one possible mould fragment, part of a flat slab and daub fragments.

III.A.4.c Stone

One worn lump, probably of Sarsen sandstone, came from pit 1001. This was possibly a quern rubber.

III.A.5 Animal bones

by Gillian Jones

Under 200 animal bones were recovered from the Bronze Age pits. Table 11 lists these and gives percentages of the species.

	Cattle	Sheep	Pig	Red deer	Dog	Unidentified	
						Large	Medium
879	2	1	—	—	—	4	3
968	—	—	—	1	—	—	—
1001	7	46	—	—	—	11	107
998	2	3	—	—	—	—	1
1296	2	—	—	—	—	3	4
Total	13	50	—	1	—	18	115
Percentages of identified bones of each species							
	20	78	—	1.7	—	(32% identified)	

Large — cattle-sized fragment; medium — sheep/pig-sized fragment

Table 11 Animal bones: percentages of species from Bronze Age features

Bones from the Later Bronze Age features, all of them pits, were dominated by those of sheep or goat. The sample size is small, but comparison of the unidentified fragments gave a similar pattern, 87% being of sheep size (and few of these being at all like pig bone).

One horn core fragment was identified as sheep; no bones were positively identified as goat, and most of them are probably from sheep. Evidence of the age at death was scant. One mandible was well worn (wear stage 44E, Grant 1975), but of nine first or second molars, all probably from different individuals, only one showed sufficient wear to have come from a mature animal.

The cattle bones included two from calves (a mandible with M_1 unerupted, and a very immature femur) and only one from an adult beast. The surface of the bones was rather eroded, and no butchery marks were observed.

Deer was represented only by a single piece of large antler, presumably red deer, and no pig or horse bones were found.

Bone from these pits were collected by hand and with care, many small fragments being recovered. The sheep bones were fragmentary and the large number of sheep sized ribs and unidentified pieces were also unusually small and jagged (130 pieces, mostly 20–50 mm in length). No signs of butchering or working were observed but it seems likely that the fragmentation was intentional, perhaps indicating use of the marrow.

One of the sheep bones and 5% of the unidentified bone were burnt, whereas none of the Neolithic bone was burnt.

A bone point and a sheep metatarsal which may be worked are described above (see Ch. III.A.4.a).

Other sites of Bronze Age date have indicated a decline in the importance of the pig, with cattle and to a lesser extent sheep being more numerous (Grigson in Tinsley & Grigson 1981). The present sample is unusual in that most of the bones were from sheep. Of the sites quoted, only at the Early Bronze Age phase of Mount Pleasant were sheep more numerous than cattle. At least some reduction in woodland probably took place, since sheep require open

ground, and the availability of wool points to an increased variety of clothing and coverings.

III.A.6 Mollusca and charcoal from pit 879

by Mark Robinson

The molluscan fauna from a sieved soil sample (c 1 kg in weight) from pit 879 suggests dry, open conditions around the pit. For details see Table 39. Wood charcoal from the pit included mature oak (*Quercus*) and alder or hazel (*Alnus/Corylus*).

III.A.7 Radiocarbon dates

Two samples for C14 dating were taken from features of possible Later Bronze Age date. The results are given in Table 12 below.

Context	Lab. No.	uncal. BP	calibrated interval $\pm 1 \sigma$	calibrated interval $\pm 2 \sigma$
1157	HAR-5503	2840 \pm 90	1160–940BC	1310–820BC
1001	HAR-5504	3040 \pm 100	1410–1170BC	1520–1000BC

Table 12 Radiocarbon dates obtained from bone from Bronze Age features. Calibrated using a local IML program with the data files ATM20.C14 provided by Washington University, USA (Stuiver & Reimer 1986) compiled by them from the recommended calibration data of Stuiver and Pearson (1986), Pearson and Stuiver (1986) and Pearson et al (1986).

III.A.8 Discussion

The pattern of scattered pits, occurring in several clusters but without traces of more permanent settlement, is in sharp contrast to the series of enclosures and the possible round-house at Corporation Farm, Abingdon (Barrett & Bradley 1980, 251 and 258). No evidence of arable agriculture of this date has been found at Roughground Farm, and the nature of the occupation evidence may reflect instead shifting settlement based upon pastoralism. Bradley (1986, 39–40) has suggested a mobile settlement pattern for the earlier Bronze Age whose domestic occupation and structures left little trace below ground. This may have persisted in parts of the Upper Thames Valley, for instance around Lechlade and Stanton Harcourt, contemporary with the establishment of organised field systems and trackways in the Abingdon-Dorchester area at Long Wittenham (Thomas 1980, 310–311), Mount Farm (Lambrick pers. comm.) and the Dorchester bypass (Chambers 1987, 64–5).

Recent work in Wessex (Bradley 1986, 42) has suggested that settlements may lie only a few hundred metres from their cemeteries, and the occupation at Roughground Farm

is similarly situated in relation to the ring-ditches to its south and south-west. However, only one of these burial monuments has been excavated, that at Butler's Field (Miles & Palmer 1986, 3–4) and it is not dated.

The unaccompanied inhumation 1157, radiocarbon dated to 1160–940 cal. BC, deserves comment. Burials of this date range are more usually cremations, but there is a growing body of evidence for flat crouched inhumation burials at this period. For instance, a flat grave at Todmarton in Gloucestershire was radiocarbon dated to 1297–1001 cal. BC (Rowlands 1976, 55, 192). Two unaccompanied flat inhumations at Radley, Barrows Hills, Oxon. were radiocarbon dated to 1258–1043 cal. BC and 987–842 cal. BC respectively (A. Barclay pers. comm.). These latter burials were inserted into an earlier prehistoric monument, and flat inhumations are normally found in association with barrows or other monuments. The discovery of an apparently isolated inhumation of this date is more unusual, but burials in stratigraphic isolation are rarely subjected to radiocarbon dating, and it is likely that many more of a similar date exist amongst the those ascribed either to the Beaker period or to the Iron Age.

III.B The Early Iron Age occupation

III.B.1 Description of the features

Plans: Figs. 7, Fig. 26, Fig. 30. Sections: Fig. 27, Fig. 120 on Fiche 1#20

III.B.1.a The major land boundaries

For the overall distribution of Iron Age features see Fig. 7. The most prominent feature was 1141, a large ditch running NE–SW, whose cropmark can be traced north to Veneymore Lane and south beyond the disused railway line (see Fig. 110 and Fig. 7). Early Iron Age pottery was present throughout the fills, and 1141 was cut through by Roman ditches 959/960 and 719 (Fig. 27).

Some 300 m to the north-east another large ditch 484 ran north-east (Fig. 7; Fiche 4#3). This was cut across by Roman ditch 485 (Fig. 27), and had a deep V-profile like that of 1141, but produced no finds. It is however parallel to 1141 and both ditches kink opposite one another (Fig. 7), and it is suggested that 484 was contemporary with 1141. A probable continuation of 484, ditch 2602, was found beneath the track to Roughground Farm during the 1990 excavation (see Fig. 7 and Fig. 128 on Fiche 1#32).

A crouched burial 1215 (Figs. 26 and 32) was found in the bottom of 1141 during mechanical excavation. A calibrated radiocarbon date of 350–40 cal. BC (at one sigma) was obtained from the skeleton (see Table 16). This would suggest that the burial was most likely inserted after the ditch had partially silted up. Another crouched burial 1275 lay just south of 1141 (Figs. 26 and 32; see also below).

Both 1141 and 484 have a pronounced kink; that of 1141 lay within the excavated area. No evidence remained of any landmark the ditch might have been respecting, and alternatively there may originally have been a gap here, but this was not investigated. Alongside the kink were large pits eg 1271 and 1272 and shallower hollows eg 1311, 1312 and 1313 (Fig. 26; Fig. 27). The pits may have been for storage (see Table 76 on Fiche 3#2).

A possible four-post structure 2.25 m square (postholes 1201–1204; Fig. 26) of side 2.25 m (Fig. 28) lay just west of 1141, but the postholes may simply have been part of a scatter either side of the ditch here.

South of 1141 were three parallel slots 1150a, b and c (Fig. 26). These were undated; similar parallel marks have been found on an Early Iron Age settlement at West Hesterton, North Yorkshire (D Powlesland pers. comm.), and at Romano-British sites at Whitton and Mucking (Morris 1979, 187 Fig. 29). At the latter sites it was suggested that they represented slots for granaries on timber ground-sills.

III.B.1.b The main occupation area

Plan: Fig. 26; sections: Fig. 27

Features and occupation material were concentrated south-east of 1141 alongside a parallel ditch 1241 (Fig. 26; Fig. 120 on Fiche 1#20). Since there was no evidence of Roman occupation here, there is a potential problem in distinguishing Roman features with residual Iron Age pottery from genuinely Iron Age ones, especially ditches and postholes on alignments like those of the Roman fields, such as 1263. Most features however are considered to be Iron Age; some of the postholes were filled with dark soil and charcoal as well as Iron Age pottery, suggesting contemporary occupation, and ditch 1241 contained concentrations of Iron Age pottery remote from other Iron Age features, and was apparently cut by Iron Age pits.

No structures were found in this area. At its north end 1241 intersected with a cluster of pits. The fills of the pits and the ditch were very similar, but it was believed that the pits were later. The pits all lie east of ditch 1248–1249, which was therefore perhaps a later boundary contemporary with the pits, with an entrance between 1248 and 1249.

Parallel to 1248–9 was a line of postholes, Nos. 1251 and 1253–7 (Table 77 on Fiche 3#10). The postholes were in line with the end of Roman ditch 959/960, and both lined up with the southern part of 1241, perhaps suggesting continuity of a boundary here. East of 1241 were other phases of boundary; 1263 contained Early Iron Age pottery, but its cropmark can be traced running south-east parallel to Roman ditch 710 for several hundred metres (see Fig. 110), so was most likely also in use in the Roman period. Around these boundaries were scattered pits and postholes. Bone ostensibly from Iron Age pit 1280 gave a calibrated radiocarbon date of cal. AD 160–380 (at one sigma; see Table 16); the records suggest that this pit was cut into by a later feature, not noticed during excavation, from which the bone must have derived.

III.B.1.c Pit scatters

Plans: Fig. 78; Fiche 4#52–3, 66–8, 80, 81. sections: Fig. 27; Fig. 120 on Fiche 1#20

North-west of 1141 occupation was much more scattered. The only boundaries probably of this date were two alignments of rectangular pits, 921–935 and 1143–1147, both aligned approximately north-south (Figs. 7 and Fig. 78). Both alignments had postholes alongside; those next to 923 etc had different fill from the pits, and were probably not contemporary.

Close to and parallel to Roman ditch 959/960 were short gullies 984 and 1018 (Fiche 4#67). 984 contained Iron Age pottery; gully 1018 (possibly a continuation of 984) was undated. Between the two Iron Age pit alignments was a scatter of pits, clustered in small groups. Several pits in each group contained a little Iron Age pottery, others flints.

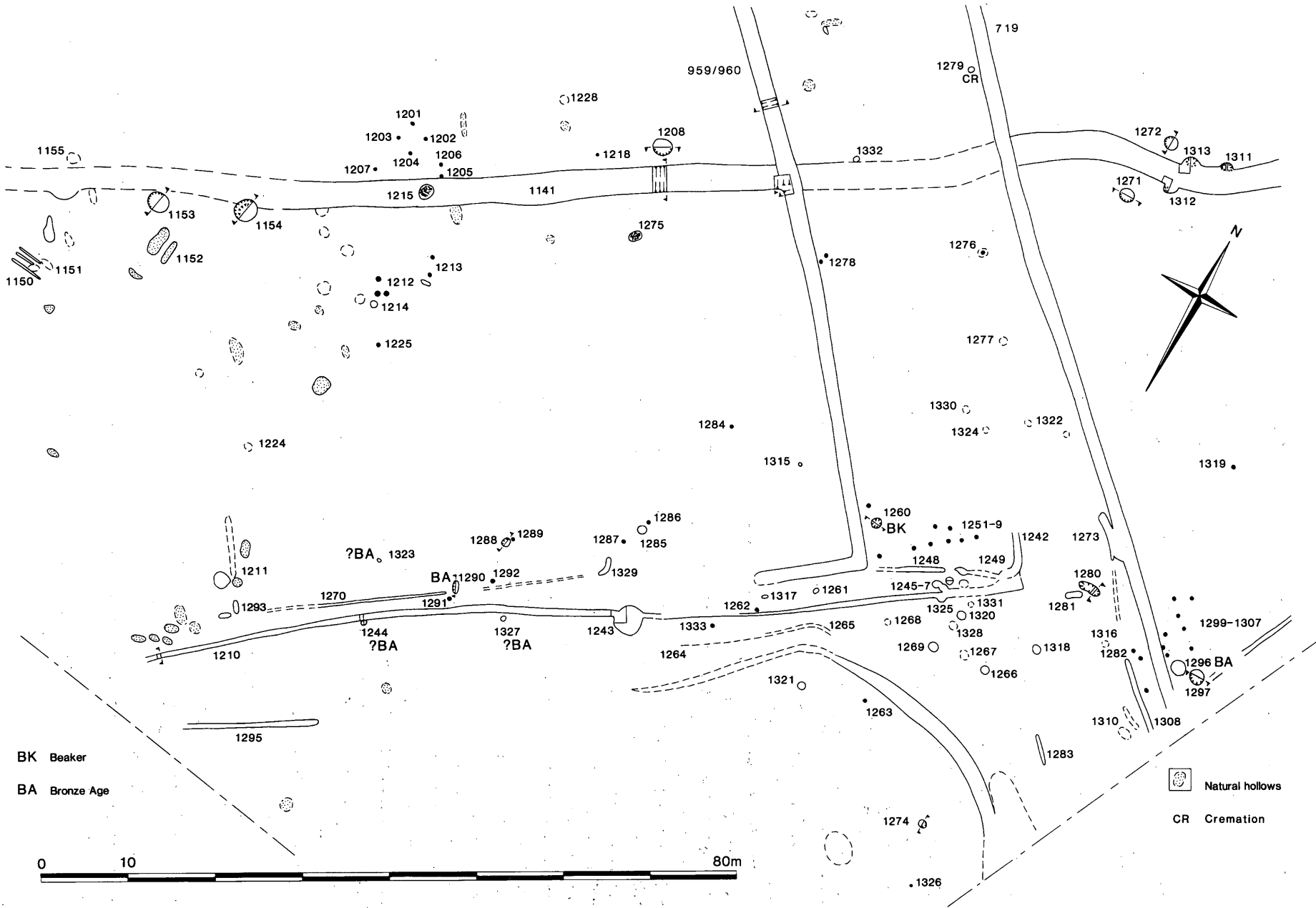


Figure 26 Plan of Early Iron Age settlement at the east of the site

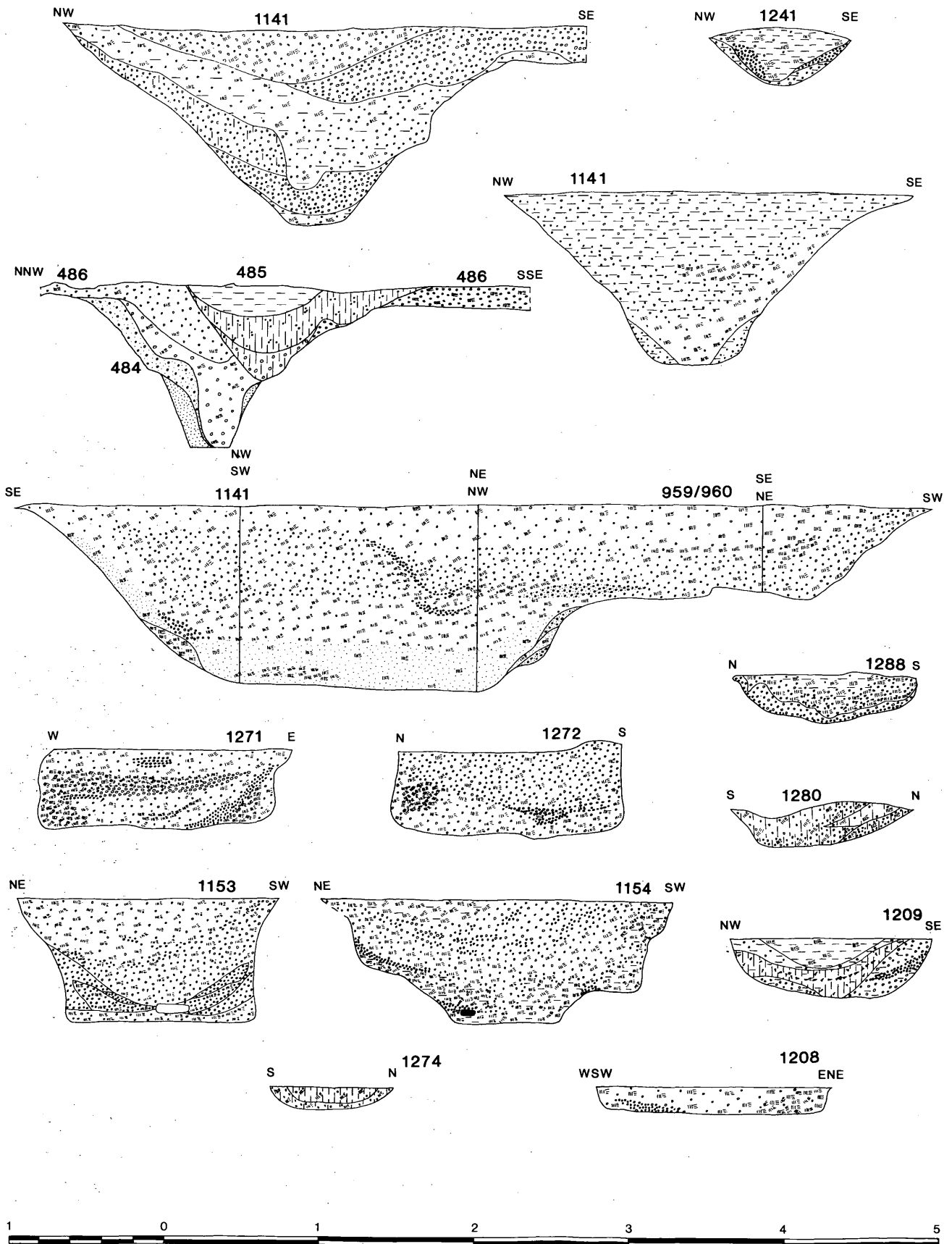


Figure 27 Early Iron Age settlement: sections

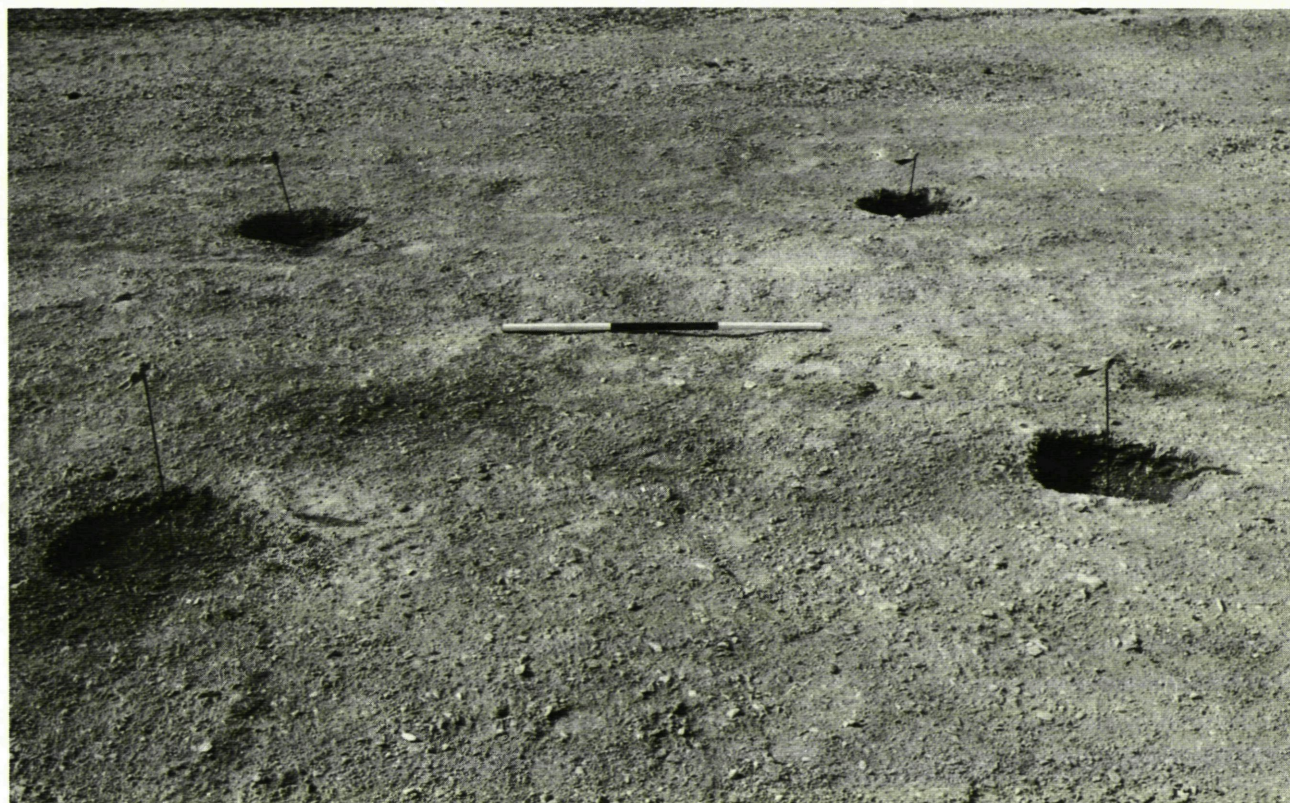


Figure 28 Early Iron Age four-post structure 1201-1204 taken from the south-east



Figure 29 Iron Age roundhouse taken from the north-east (photographed by W T Jones)

III.B.1.d The roundhouse

Plan: Fig. 30, Fiche 4#42, Fig. 29

Post-circle 1100 was found *c* 100 m north-east adjacent to a small square-ditched burial enclosure 1137. The post-circle has already been published as an Iron Age roundhouse (Harding 1972, 24–5 and Fig. 3). There were 22 postholes on the circumference, mostly grouped in twos or threes, possibly indicating that the structure had been rebuilt once or twice. The entrance to roundhouses in the Upper Thames is usually on the east or south-east, and the pair of postholes 1101 and 1132 outside on the east here may have been for a porch.

III.B.1.e Other features

Some 75 m north-east of 1100 was a crouched burial 1157 (Fiche 4#19; Fig. 32), with gully 1156 running north-east adjacent and apparently aligned upon 1157 (Fiche 4#5 and Fig. 26). The burial was radiocarbon-dated to 1160–940 cal. BC (to one sigma; Table 16). The gully contained only undiagnostic flints (see Ch. 2.E on Fiche 1#17). These features could belong either to the Later Bronze Age or to the Early Iron Age occupation. The burial is described in Ch. III.B.4.

West and north of the pit alignment 922 etc and of the roundhouse there were very few Iron Age features, though close to 484 a scatter of pits may have been prehistoric (see Ch. IV.F.5). No Early Iron Age features were found further south-east below the Roman enclosures nor any in the area of the southern Roman enclosure group (see Ch. IV.F.1 and Ch. IV.F.6).

Beneath the villa and to the north and west of it the only certainly Iron Age features were pits 447 and 448 (Fiche 4#47) and a small enclosure 397 etc (Fiche 4#16–17). See Table 76 on Fiche 3#2 for details. Iron Age pottery was also recovered from features of the Early Roman occupation area, most of it residual; pit 12 however may genuinely have been Iron Age. A few indeterminate or Middle-Late Iron Age forms occurred, for instance Fig. 31 Nos. 48 and 65, which may be Iron Age survivals in use together with Romano-British pottery in the mid-first century AD (see also Ch. V.2.c.3).

III.B.2 Early Iron Age pottery

by Richard Hingley

Fig. 31

III.B.2.a Summary

One hundred and four features produced Early Iron Age pottery. This pottery constitutes what is sometimes called a 'Decorated Ware assemblage' (Barrett 1980, 305). Features were scattered across the site, but the main concen-

tration occurred at the south-east edge of the site (Fig. 26). The Early Iron Age assemblages are quantified in Table 35 on Fiche 1#21.

III.B.2.b Fabrics

The pottery was classified according to fabric, form and decoration or surface treatment. Of the seven fabrics identified in the Bronze Age pottery (see Ch. III.A.2) five were still present in the Early Iron Age. Fabric proportions were compared between assemblages with more than 30 sherds (following De Roche in Parrington 1978, 47). The results are shown in Table 13.

The calcareous fabrics (2–4) make up 57.6% of the whole assemblage or 58% including Fabric 6. This corresponds closely the 60.2% from the Early Iron Age features with more than 30 sherds, showing that these features are representative of the whole assemblage. This proportion matches closely the predominance of calcareous fabrics in the Early Iron Age at Ashville (Period 1: 67%) (De Roche in Parrington 1978, 70) and this has been seen as the general trend for the Upper Thames Valley (Lambrick & Robinson 1979, 38).

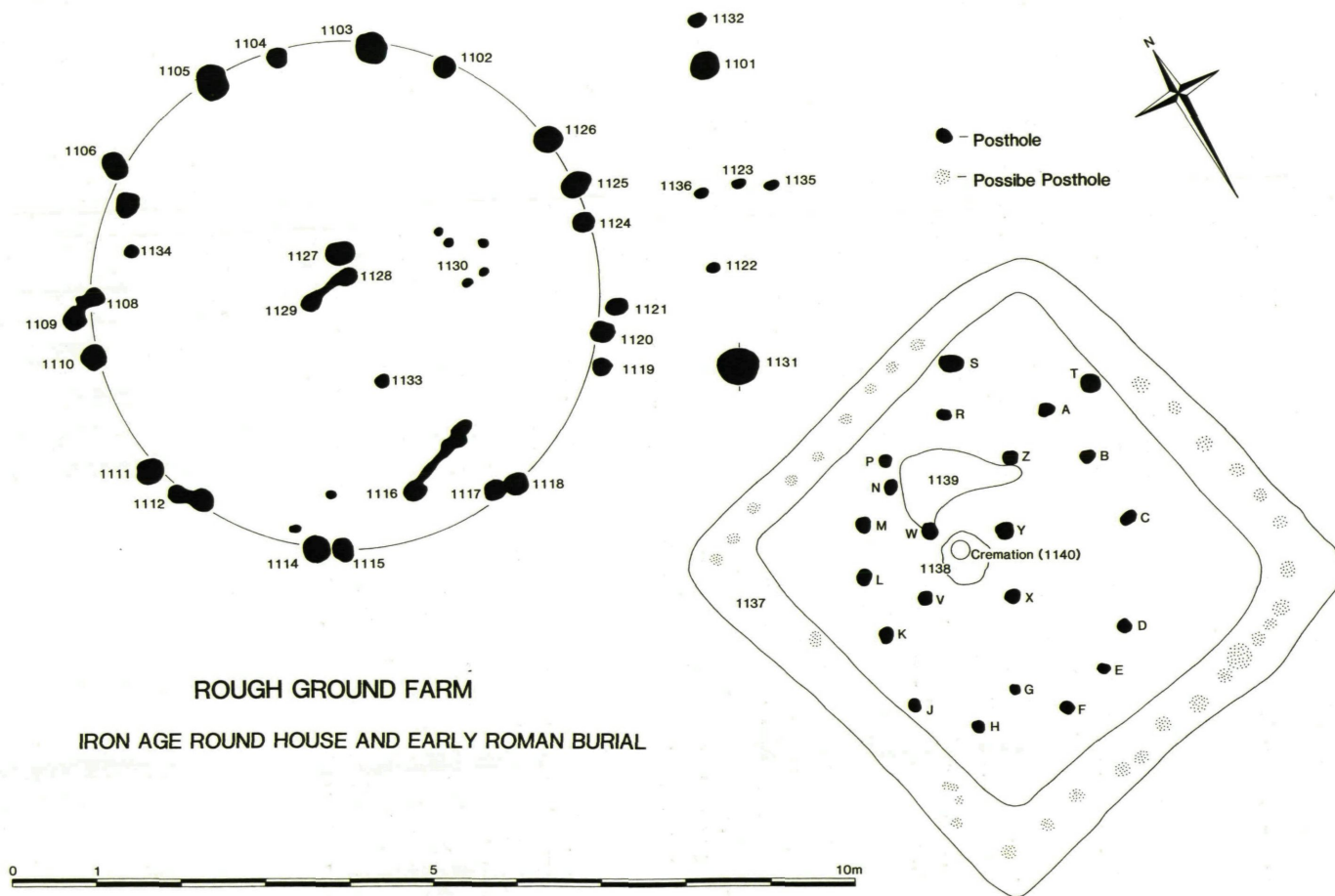
There is a change in the proportions of the different fabrics from the Later Bronze Age, where calcareous fabrics made up 95% of the assemblage. In the Early Iron Age calcareous Fabrics 2–4 still predominate, but their proportion has dropped considerably. In addition shell, which was the major inclusion in 60% of the Later Bronze Age sherds, represents only just over 20% of the Early Iron Age assemblage. The other calcareous groups, shelly limestone and oolitic limestone, remain at roughly the same proportion, but there is a sharp increase in sandy fabrics in the later period; at 39% sand is the largest single fabric group.

III.B.2.c Forms

Eleven forms were identified: the incidence of these is shown in Table 14.

A representative sample of the Early Iron Age forms is illustrated (Fig. 31). A classification of illustrated sherds according to form category is given below:

- Form 1 Upright Rims 39, 41.
- Form 2 Inturned Rims 755, 56.
- Form 3 Flared or Out-turned rims 36, 47, 50, 52.
- Form 5 Expanded rims 54, 65.
- Form 6 Rounded and Out-turned rims 48, 758.
- Form 7 Rounded or sharp shoulders of vessels 38, 42, 743, 44, 57, 763.
- Form 8 Straight-sided upright vessels 35.
- Form 10 Tripartite Bowls 37, 745, 49, 51, 61.
- Form 11 Tripartite Jars 34.



ROUGH GROUND FARM
IRON AGE ROUND HOUSE AND EARLY ROMAN BURIAL

Figure 30 Iron Age roundhouse and Early Roman burial

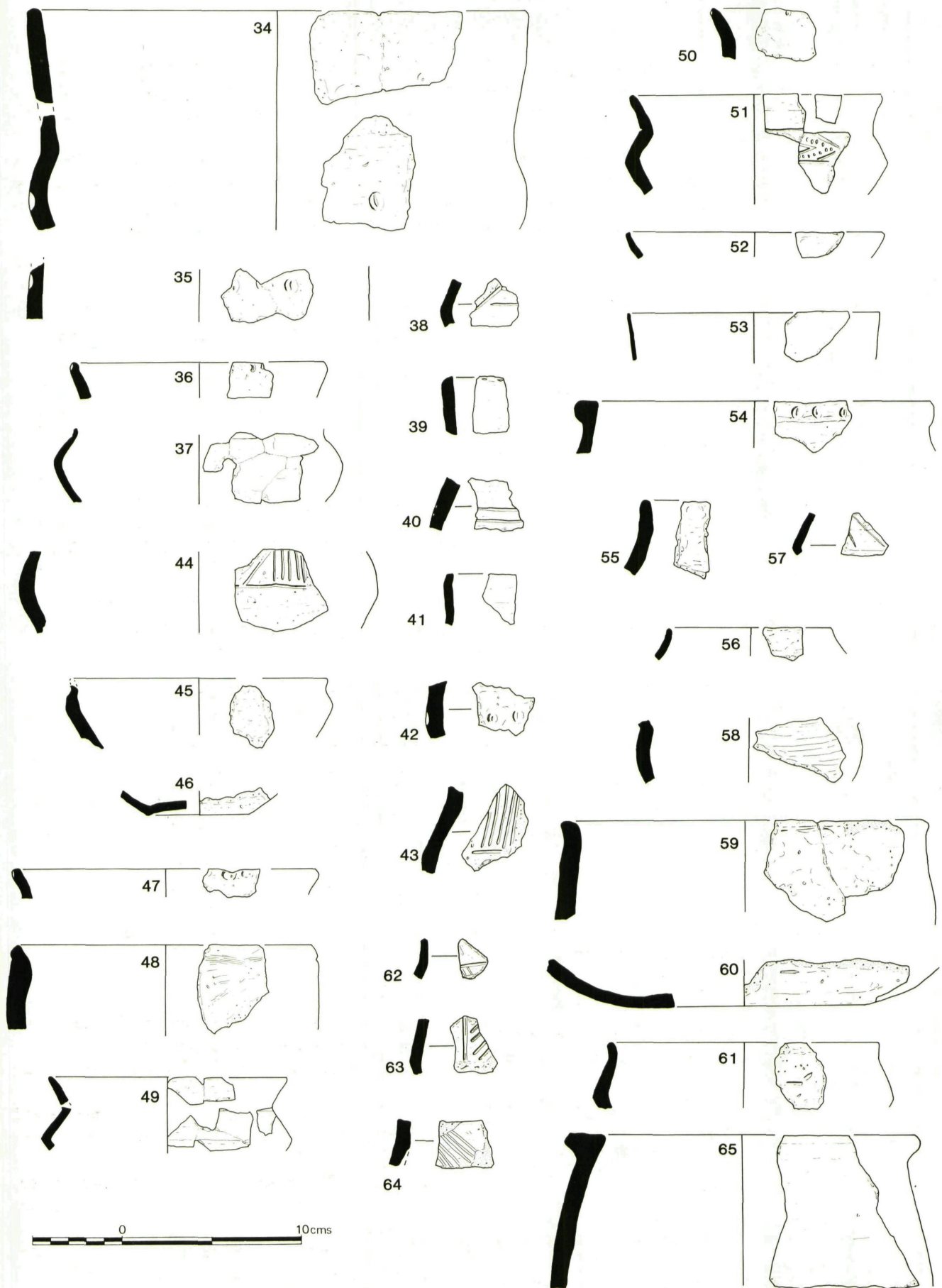


Figure 31 Early Iron Age pottery. 34-42 from context 1242; 43 and 44 from 1273; 45-47 from 1325; 48 from 332; 49 from 1137; 50 and 51 from 1274; 52 from 1280; 53 from 1241; 54-56 from 1141; 57 from 1103; 58 from 550; 59 from 413/7; 60 from 448; 61 from 1308; 62 from 481; 63 from 498; 64 and 65 unstratified.

The two most distinctive forms are tripartite jars (Type 11) and tripartite bowls (Type 10). The assemblage from feature 1242 is fairly characteristic, although it contains a couple of sherds which may have come from a bucket urn (No 35) and are probably residual. 1242 also contained a tripartite jar (No 34) and part of an angular tripartite bowl (No 37), and other sherds (Nos 37, 38, 40) are probably from tripartite bowls and have burnished outer surfaces and incised linear decoration.

Among other forms of particular note is a vessel with an expanded rim (No 65); this has parallels on other Early Iron Age sites in the Upper Thames Valley (Harding 1972, Plates 44, 45).

Some individual sherds could be of Middle Iron Age date (eg Nos 48, 55, 56), but no distinctive Middle Iron Age forms (eg globular bowls and saucepan pots; Harding 1972; De Roche in Parrington 1978) were found.

Feature	1 Sand		2 Shell		3 Limestone		4 Shelly limestone		5 Grog		6 Shell + grog		7 Flint		Total number of sherds
	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%	
27	23	(47)	6	(12)	2	(4)	18	(37)	0		0		0		49
1141	27	(47)	15	(26)	0		13	(23)	0		2	(3.5)	0		57
1241	22	(38.5)	12	(21)	0		23	(40)	0		0		0		57
1242	31	(32)	19	(20)	8	(8)	38	(39.5)	0		0		0		96
1273	62	(38)	30	(19)	18	(11)	50	(33)	0		0		0		160
1274	12	(34)	6	(17)	0		17	(48)	0		0		0		35
1280	29	(41)	24	(34)	0		18	(25)	0		0		0		71
1325	15	(39.5)	8	(21)	2	(5)	13	(34)	0		0		0		38
Total	221	(39.3)	120	(21.3)	30	(5.3)	190	(33.6)	0	(0)	2	(0.3)	0	(0)	563
	Fabric proportions of all Early Iron Age sherds														
	341	(37.4)	212	(23.3)	63	(7.0)	249	(27.3)	16	(1.7)	4	(0.4)	23	(2.5)	908

Table 13 Early Iron Age pottery: fabric proportions by context groups (for features with over 30 sherds) and for all Early Iron Age sherds. (Percentages in brackets)

	Upright Rims	Straight-Sided Walls	Inturned Rims	Incurving Rims	Rounded + Out-turned	Expanded Rims
Form No.	1	8	2	4	6	5
Number	6	2	3	1	4	2
	8%	2.7%	4%	1.3%	5%	2.7%
	Flared or Out-turned Rims	Rounded or Sharp Shoulders	Concave Necks	Tripartite Bowls	Tripartite Jars	Total
Form No.	3	7	9	10	11	Total
Number	12	18	6	17	5	76
	17%	25%	8%	23.5%	6.7%	

Table 14 Summary of Occurrence of Vessel Types (giving absolute number and percentage as a proportion of all types)

III.B.2.d Catalogue of illustrated sherds

Feature 1242 Fig. 31.34 Fabric 4. Exterior and interior orange, break grey. Fingertip impressions on girth of vessel. Form 11.

Fig. 31.35 Fabric 4. Exterior dark grey, interior and break orange. Fingertip impressions. Form 8.

Fig. 31.36 Fabric 4. Exterior, interior and break orange. Fingernail impressions on rim. Form 3.

Fig. 31.37 Fabric 1. Exterior grey and burnished, interior orange, break grey. Form 10.

Fig. 31.38 Fabric 1. Exterior orange, interior and break grey. Incised lines on exterior. Form 7.

Fig. 31.39 Fabric 1. Exterior, interior, and break grey. Fingernail impressions on top of rim. Angle of rim

uncertain? Form 1.

Fig. 31.40 Fabric 1. Exterior and interior grey, break dark grey. Incised lines on exterior.

Fig. 31.41 Fabric 2. Exterior and interior grey, break orange. Form 1.

Fig. 31.42 Fabric 2. Exterior orange, interior and break grey. Fingertip impressions on exterior. Form 7.

Feature 1273 Fig. 31.43 Fabric 4. Exterior orange, interior and break grey. Incised lines on exterior. Form ??.

Fig. 31.44 Fabric 4. Exterior and interior orange, break grey. Incised lines on exterior. Form 7.

Feature 1325 Fig. 31.45 Fabric 4. Exterior orange,

interior and break dark grey. Form ?10.

Fig. 31.46 Fabric 1. Exterior and interior orange, break grey.

Fig. 31.47 Fabric 4. Exterior, interior and break orange. Fingertip impressions on exterior of rim. Form 3.

Feature 332 Fig. 31.48 Fabric ?5. Exterior and interior orange, break dark grey. Smear marks on exterior. Form 6.

Feature 1137 Fig. 31.49 Fabric ?7. Exterior and interior orange, break light grey. Form 10.

Feature 1274 Fig. 31.50 Fabric 4. Exterior, interior and break orange. Form 3.

Fig. 31.51 Fabric 1. Exterior and interior dark grey and burnished, interior grey. Incised lines and impressed dots on exterior. Form 10.

Feature 1280 Fig. 31.52 Fabric 1. Exterior, interior, and break grey. Form 3.

Feature 1241 Fig. 31.53 Fabric 1. Exterior and interior orange and burnished, break grey. Form 1 or 3.

Feature 1141 Fig. 31.54 Fabric 4. Exterior and interior orange, break grey. Expanded rim with fingertip impressions in exterior. Form 5.

Fig. 31.55 Fabric 7. Exterior grey, interior and break dark grey. Form ?2.

Fig. 31.56 Fabric 1. Exterior grey, interior orange, break grey. Form 2.

Feature 1103 Fig. 31.57 Fabric 1. Exterior and interior grey, break light grey. Incised lines on exterior. Form 7.

Feature 550 Fig. 31.58 Fabric 1. Exterior orange and burnished, interior and break orange.

Feature 413/7 Fig. 31.59 Fabric 4. Exterior grey, interior orange, break grey. Form 6.

Feature 448 Fig. 31.60 Fabric 7. Exterior, interior, and break grey.

Feature 1308 Fig. 31.61 Fabric 4. Exterior dark grey to grey, interior and break dark grey. Form 10.

Feature 481 Fig. 31.62 Fabric ?1. Exterior, interior, and break grey. Incised lines on exterior. Form ?10.

Feature 498 Fig. 31.63 Fabric 1. Exterior dark grey, interior and break light grey. Incised lines on exterior. Form ?7.

U/S (1240) Fig. 31.64 Fabric 4. Exterior dark grey and burnished, interior grey, break orange. Incised lines on exterior with white paste infill.

U/S (70) Fig. 31.65 Fabric 1. Exterior, interior, and break dark grey. Expanded rim. Form 5.

III.B.2.e Decoration

Of the 916 sherds 43 (4.7%) were decorated either with fingertip or nail impressions (23) or with incised lines (20) (see also Table 36 on Fiche 1#23).

III.B.2.f Discussion

The Early Iron Age pottery at Roughground Farm represents a 'decorated ware' assemblage (see Barrett 1980). Sites with decorated ware assemblages are common on the Upper Thames gravels (Harding 1972; De Roche 1978; Lambrick 1984,).

Another Early Iron Age assemblage was recovered from only 1 kilometre away at The Lodgers, Lechlade (Darvill *et al* 1986). This shared the tripartite jar and bowl form (Forms 10 and 11) at Roughground Farm; calcareous and sandy fabrics were equally represented at c 48% each. It is suggested that the high representation of sandy fabrics at The Lodgers resulted from the high proportion of fineware angular vessels, which are almost always made in sandy fabrics. The representation of sandy fabrics at Roughground Farm, however, and in a small assemblage from Hambridge Lane nearby (J Moore in prep), suggests that in general sites in this area conform to the trends evident further down the valley (Lambrick 1984).

In spite of the differences between the Later Bronze Age and Early Iron Age assemblages there is also considerable overlap in form, decoration and fabric. Gingell has recently argued a late date for the occurrence of Deverel Rimbury ceramics at Burderop Down, 20 km south of Lechlade (Gingell 1980, 218), while on Cranborne Chase it is evident that Deverel Rimbury ceramics were replaced directly by a decorated ware assemblage (Barrett *et al* 1981, 232-4). A similar succession, with bucket urns giving way to a decorated ware assemblage could be indicated by the Roughground Farm material. If this is so the sequence at Lechlade differed from that in the Thames Valley downstream of Abingdon, where Deverel Rimbury ceramics appear to have been replaced by 'plain ware ceramics' and then in turn plain ware by decorated ware assemblages (Barrett 1980; Bradley *et al* 1980).

III.B.3 Other finds

III.B.3.a Stone

Thin-sections by Timothy Darvill

Fig. 122 on Fiche 1#26

One fragment of Sarsen quernstone came from pit 1257, a thin flat slab tapering to a point at one end, the other broken off. Both flat faces and one side were worn smooth. The point appears to have been battered, suggesting that this stone was used as a hammer. 102 mm × 88 mm × 23 mm.

Two fragments of sandstone also come from pit 934 in the rectangular pit alignment.

III.B.3.b Fired clay

Only 33 grams were recovered from the early Iron Age features, of fabrics A—Mixed streaky Clays, F—Quartz

and C—Organic. (For details see Ch. 5.11 on Fiche 2#62). These included one possible mould fragment and one

highly fired piece that may have come from a crucible, though there were no metal residues upon it.

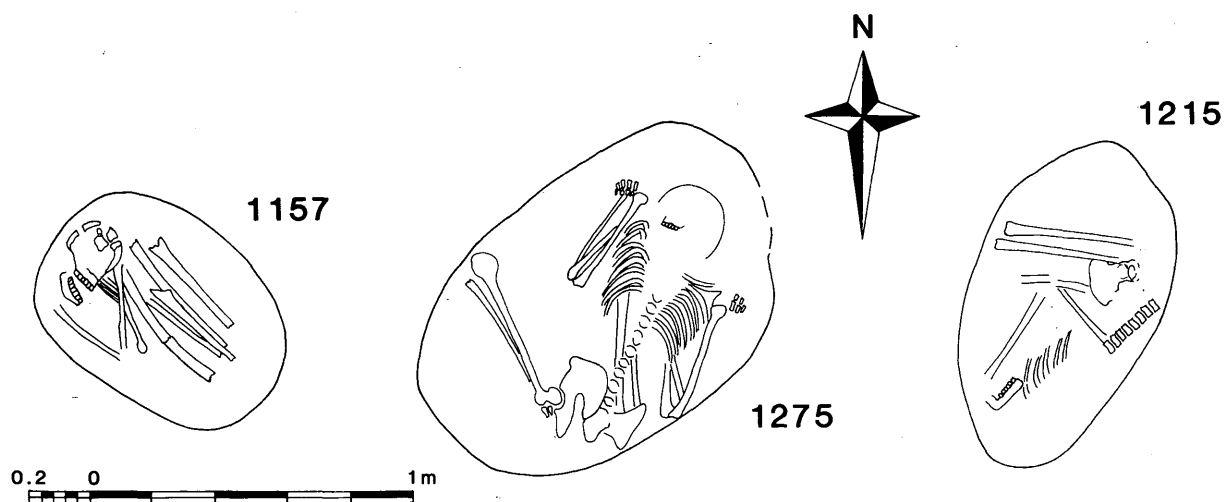


Figure 32 Later prehistoric burials: 1157 Bronze Age; 1275 & 1215 Iron Age

III.B.4 Contracted or crouched burials

Fig. 32

Three such burials were excavated at Roughground Farm. For details of the skeletal analysis see Table 64 and Table 65. 1157 (Fiche 4#19) was an isolated oval pit containing a contracted burial lying on its left side. The head lay to the south-east and was bent forwards with the arms and legs tightly folded up so that its knees rested against its forehead. The body was that of an adult male aged 30–35 years, and there were no grave goods. Bone from this burial has been radiocarbon dated to 1160–940 cal. BC (to one sigma).

1215 was a crouched burial at the bottom of the Early Iron Age ditch 1141 in an oval pit cut 0.15 m below the bottom of the ditch. Their relationship was not established as the ditch was emptied by machine along this length, but the pit is unlikely to have cut prior to the ditch 1.2 m into the gravel. The head was at the south and was bent forwards. The arms were bent up to the head, and the legs drawn up almost touching the elbows. The body was that of a young adult aged 18–23 years. There were no grave goods, but bone from the skeleton was radiocarbon dated to 350–40 cal. BC (to one sigma).

1275 was another crouched burial in an oval pit south-east of 1141. The body was prone with the head to the north-east turned to the left side. The arms were raised against the shoulders with the elbows at the sides, and the legs were bent up, the right one underneath the body, the left knee out to the left side. The body was that of an adult male aged 30–35 years. There was no dating evidence for

this burial, but it was probably associated with the adjacent Early Iron Age settlement.

Crouched burials are quite numerous from Iron Age sites, though few are known from the Upper Thames Valley. Moderate contraction, in other words in a grave about 1 m in length, is more common than extreme contraction (Wilson 1981), and at Roughground Farm burials 1215 and 1275 are of this order of size. With moderately contracted burials the hands and feet are often tied, but at this site neither burial was; unusually 1275 was prone rather than lying on one side. 1157 had a smaller grave-pit, but did not even occupy all of this, and the body was probably tightly bound, as is common in more extreme cases of contraction (Wilson 1981).

Burials within settlements become more common as the Iron Age progresses, Early Iron Age adults tending to occur in perimeter ditches or outside settlement boundaries (Wilson 1981). The three burials at Roughground Farm fit this suggested pattern, 1157 being isolated (and clearly Late Bronze Age), the other two lying in or close to a boundary ditch at some distance from the main focus of Iron Age settlement.

III.B.5 Animal bones

by Gillian Jones

Only *c* 170 animal bones were recovered, and the density of bones was low, 24 features producing only 42 identifiable pieces. The percentages of species identified are given in Table 15.

Number	Cattle	Sheep	Pig	Horse	Deer	Others
42	31 %	52 %	12 %	*	*	—

* indicates a species represented by a single bone

Table 15 Animal Bones: Percentages of species in Early Iron Age contexts

Despite its small size, this sample contrasts with the

Context	Lab. No.	uncal. BP	calibrated interval $\pm 1 \sigma$	calibrated interval $\pm 2 \sigma$
1215	HAR-5502	2130 \pm 120	350–40BC	400BC–120AD
1280	HAR-5505	1760 \pm 100	160–380AD	20–530AD

Table 16 Radiocarbon dates obtained from bone from Iron Age features. Calibrated using a local IML program with the data files ATM20.C14 provided by Washington University, USA (Stuiver & Reimer 1986) compiled by them from the recommended calibration data of Stuiver and Pearson (1986), Pearson and Stuiver (1986) and Pearson et al (1986).

III.B.6 Charcoal from Iron Age features

by Mark Robinson

Hand-picked samples of charcoal from 5 Iron Age features included both *Quercus* (oak) and cf. *Crataegus* (Hawthorn). For details see Table 40.

III.B.7 Radiocarbon dates

Two radiocarbon dates were determined by the Harwell Radiocarbon laboratory on samples of bone from the crouched burial 1215 and from pit 1280.

A radiocarbon date calibrated to cal. AD 160–380 (at one sigma) was obtained from bone in pit 1280. This pit contained a large assemblage of Early Iron Age pottery, which is unlikely to be residual, and the date must therefore be regarded with suspicion. The records suggest that possibly there was a later feature cutting into the Early Iron Age pit, from which the dated bone may have come.

A date of 350–40 cal. BC (to one sigma) was obtained from a crouched burial 1215 within ditch 1141. Sherds from the ditch are of Early Iron Age date and the burial therefore appears to be a later Middle Iron Age insertion.

III.B.8 Discussion

III.B.8.a The major land boundaries

Ditches 1141 and 484 are interpreted as contemporary linear boundaries dividing up the gravel terrace at right angles to the river Leach. 1141 is visible as a cropmark both north and south of the excavated area (Fig. 110), and a probable continuation of 484 was excavated some 600 m to the south in Butler's Field, Lechlade (Miles & Palmer 1986, 4). At right angles to this continuation were

earlier groups in suggesting that by the early Iron Age, sheep and cattle were the two major species, with pig also of some importance. One sheep bone and 12% of the sheep-sized unidentified fragments were burnt. The one deer fragment had been worked and may be a gaming piece. The presence of horse (one bone) is of note, horse being absent from the earlier samples.

smaller contemporary ditches, and this subdivision was also evident at Roughground Farm (Fig. 26) in ditch 1241 and cropmarks further north.

It is tentatively suggested that kinks in both 1141 and 484, which occurred roughly opposite one another, may originally have been gaps c 30 m wide for a trackway parallel to the river Leach and on the line of the later Romano-British droveway. Short lengths of Early Iron Age ditch lay alongside the Romano-British ditches of the droveway (see Ch. III.B.1.c above), and ditch 1241 also turned a corner into 1242 in line with this (Fig. 26). This trackway was apparently temporarily blocked and the gaps in 1141 and 484 dug through. Alternatively there may have been landmarks where the kinks occurred which were respected by the Early Iron Age boundaries, and which survived to be used again by the Romano-British boundary. However no trace was found of any such features, and the obvious importance of a route alongside the winding course of the river Leach makes it likely that there would have been gaps left for this in digging the major Early Iron Age ditches.

Evidence of land-division as early as this is uncommon on the Upper Thames gravels. Double-ditched trackways or boundaries probably of the Bronze Age have been found at Dorchester crossing the cursus (Atkinson *et al* 1951; Chambers 1987, 64–65) and at Mount Farm (Lambrick 1979, 113–4), and a Bronze Age field system has been proposed from cropmark evidence at Long Wittenham (Thomas 1980, 310–311). Ditched field boundaries of Middle and Late Iron Age date have been excavated at Gravelly Guy and Blackditch, Stanton Harcourt (Lambrick 1985, 108; Lambrick 1983, 144–5), and at Gravelly Guy the settlement layout suggests that the boundaries, though not the ditches, were present in the Early Iron Age. The gravels north of Lechlade however provide the only evidence so far for the large-scale division of the valley bottom at this date.

On higher ground the parcelling-out of the landscape in the Early Iron Age is attested at Rollright on the Cotswolds (Lambrick 1988, 80–82), and probably in the Later Bronze Age at Grimsbury near Banbury (Allen 1989, 41–2).

III.B.8.b Pits and pit-alignments

The main settlement consisted of a cluster of storage pits alongside ditches 1241 and 1247. Clusters of storage pits are often the only element of Early Iron Age settlement found on the Upper Thames gravels, and at sites such as Farmoor (Lambrick & Robinson 1979, 19 and 37–8) may genuinely reflect agricultural activity separate from permanent settlement, cultivation of the narrow gravel terrace by settlements on higher ground. At Roughground Farm however the concentrations of pottery in both the ditches and the pits suggests that there were houses close by.

A number of pits also occurred alongside 1141 and possibly 484 (Figs. 26 and Fig. 27). These were not closely spaced like the pit alignments alongside the ditch at Butler's Field (Miles 1986, 4), but may have been storage pits; it has been suggested on the evidence of linear alignments of pit groups at Stanton Harcourt (Case 1982c, 107ff) that pits were sometimes dug alongside the edge of arable fields at some distance from settlements, and excavation at Gravelly Guy there (Lambrick 1986, 112–113) has recovered small groups of such pits. Pit 1313 was, however, respected by ditch 1141, showing that, as at Butler's Field (Boyle *et al* forthcoming), the large linear ditches were secondary developments.

Two short alignments of linear pits (Fig. 78) may also have been contemporary, as similar pit alignments of this date were found alongside the linear boundary at Butler's Field (Miles & Palmer 1986, 4). Neither alignment at

Roughground Farm, however, contained more than scraps of Iron Age pottery, and the longer one was adjacent to Roman (or later) posthole-lines (Ch. IV.F.9). Similar alignments are known from Middle Iron Age and Roman contexts at Mingies Ditch, Hardwick, Oxon (Allen & Robinson forthcoming) and Watkins Farm, Northmoor, Oxon (Allen 1990, 27–30) respectively, and those at Roughground Farm may also be later.

III.B.8.c Structures

No buildings were identified in the main settlement area, with the exception of a possible four-post structure adjacent to 1141. Scatters of postholes may represent the position of former buildings but the only recognisable patterns appear to be fence-lines. The absence of recognisable structures is likely to be the result of truncation by medieval agriculture. Few houses of this period have been found in the region (see Allen *et al* 1984, 89–100), and identification is made more difficult by the apparent absence of drainage ditches around them at this date; the largest early group of houses, recently excavated at Gravelly Guy, Stanton Harcourt, Oxon, are all without surrounding gullies (Lambrick 1985, 111 Fig. 27).

One post-circle, feature 1100 etc, was found in apparent isolation midway between the large boundary ditches (Fig. 30). The lack of associated features or occupation material makes interpretation as a house less secure. 1100 etc was found immediately adjacent to an Early Roman ditched cremation burial, and the Iron Age dating evidence consisted only of a few small abraded sherds from two postholes. Other possibilities are that it was either not Iron Age, or that the post-circle revetted a mound, hence the survival of its position into the Roman period and the positioning of the cremation burial adjacent.

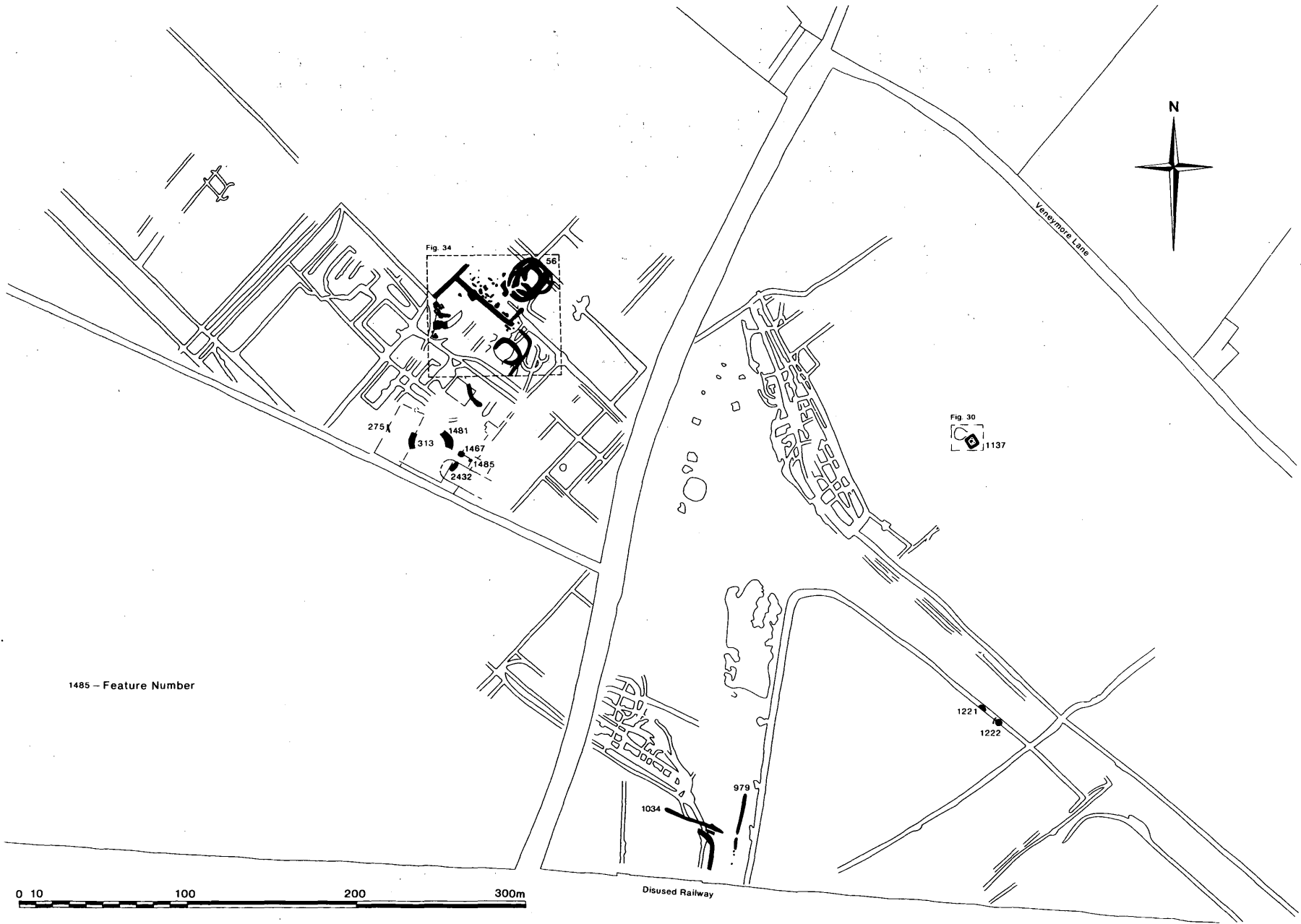


Figure 33 Early Roman settlement plan: overall distribution of features