

Chapter 3: Green Park 3 – Iron Age, Roman and Post-Roman activity

ARCHAEOLOGICAL SEQUENCE

Middle to late Iron Age

Features dated to the middle to late Iron Age included ditches, pits and a cremation burial. The sparse distribution of features and the paucity of finds suggests that the main focus of occupation may lie outside the excavated area.

Ditches

A group of shallow ditches in the western half of the site (2639, 2640, 2719 and 2798) contained small amounts of handmade middle to late Iron Age pottery (Fig. 3.1 and Table 3.1). While ditches 2640 and 2719 ran parallel to each other on a NE-SW axis, 2639 and 2798 followed a different alignment that seems to mirror that of the Bronze Age field system. It is therefore possible that the alignment of 2639 and 2798 was influenced by surviving earthworks, or that the Iron Age pottery from these features is in fact intrusive. In the eastern half of the site, curvilinear ditch 3015 produced no datable finds, but could date to the Iron Age as it cut across a middle Bronze Age waterhole and was subsequently cut by a Roman ditch.

Pits

Iron Age pottery was recovered from three pits in the western part of the site (2173, 2178 and 2613). Pit 2613 was a small, bowl-shaped feature, 0.23m deep, cut by ditch 2639. Pits 2173 and 2178 lay within group 2117, a dense cluster of 66 bowl-shaped or irregular pits up to 0.42m deep, many of them inter-cutting. Most of the other pits within group 2117 lacked datable finds, except for a single sherd of Roman pottery from the upper fill of pit 2078, and it is thus plausible that the primary use of the group

Table 3.1 Summary of Iron Age ditches

Feature	Width (m)	Depth (m)	Finds and dating
2639	0.60-0.88	0.10-0.20	7 sherds MIA-LIA pottery
2640	0.25-0.65	0.04-0.20	3 sherds MIA-LIA pottery
2719	>1.50	0.38	6 sherds MIA-LIA pottery
2798	0.78	0.10	1 sherd MIA-LIA pottery
3015	0.70-0.85	0.11-0.30	Cuts MBA waterhole 3091 Cut by Roman ditch 3060

as a whole lay in the later Iron Age. The function of the pits is unclear.

Cremation burial

A heavily truncated late Iron Age cremation burial (3121) was found in the north-eastern corner of the site. The remains had been interred within a wheel-thrown vessel, and were associated with a few tiny fragments of copper alloy sheet (1g) which could represent the remains of a pyre good or grave good. The bones were heavily fragmented and abraded and could not be aged or sexed. Three environmental samples taken from the burial contained abundant oak charcoal. The presence of a wheel-made, grog-tempered pot could suggest that this burial is slightly later in date than the other Iron Age features at the site, although it is also possible that finer, wheel-made vessels would have been specifically selected for deposition in funerary contexts.

Romano-British period

During the Romano-British period, a rectilinear field system was laid out across the site, on a NNE-SSW/ENE-WSW alignment (Fig. 3.1). The sparse dating evidence for the field system centres

Table 3.2 Summary of Roman ditches

Feature	Width (m)	Depth (m)	Finds and dating
2388	0.40-0.70	0.10-0.18	Parallel to 2390
2389	1.00-1.50	0.30-0.31	2 sherds Roman pottery
2390	1.32-1.54	0.30-0.44	2 sherds Roman pottery
2657	1.80-1.86	0.50-0.68	3 sherds Iron Age and Roman pottery
3060	1.00-1.10	0.30-0.31	15 sherds 2nd-3rd century pottery
3183	0.85-1.35	0.30-0.40	10 sherds 2nd century pottery
3184	0.60	0.20	Cut by 3183
3256	0.90-1.20	0.25-0.50	Rotary quern fragment
3257	0.62-1.15	0.20-0.32	Cuts 3256, cut by 3320
3258	1.10	0.30-0.43	5 sherds Roman pottery
3259	1.26-2.00	0.48-0.62	Cut by 3060, cuts 3184
3281	0.85-1.10	0.28-0.37	Recut of 3283
3282	0.50-0.60	0.12-0.15	Cut by 3183
3283	0.60-0.80	0.30	Same as 3257
3320	1.06-1.66	0.32-0.66	1 sherd Roman pottery
3400	1.20	0.46	Cut by 3259

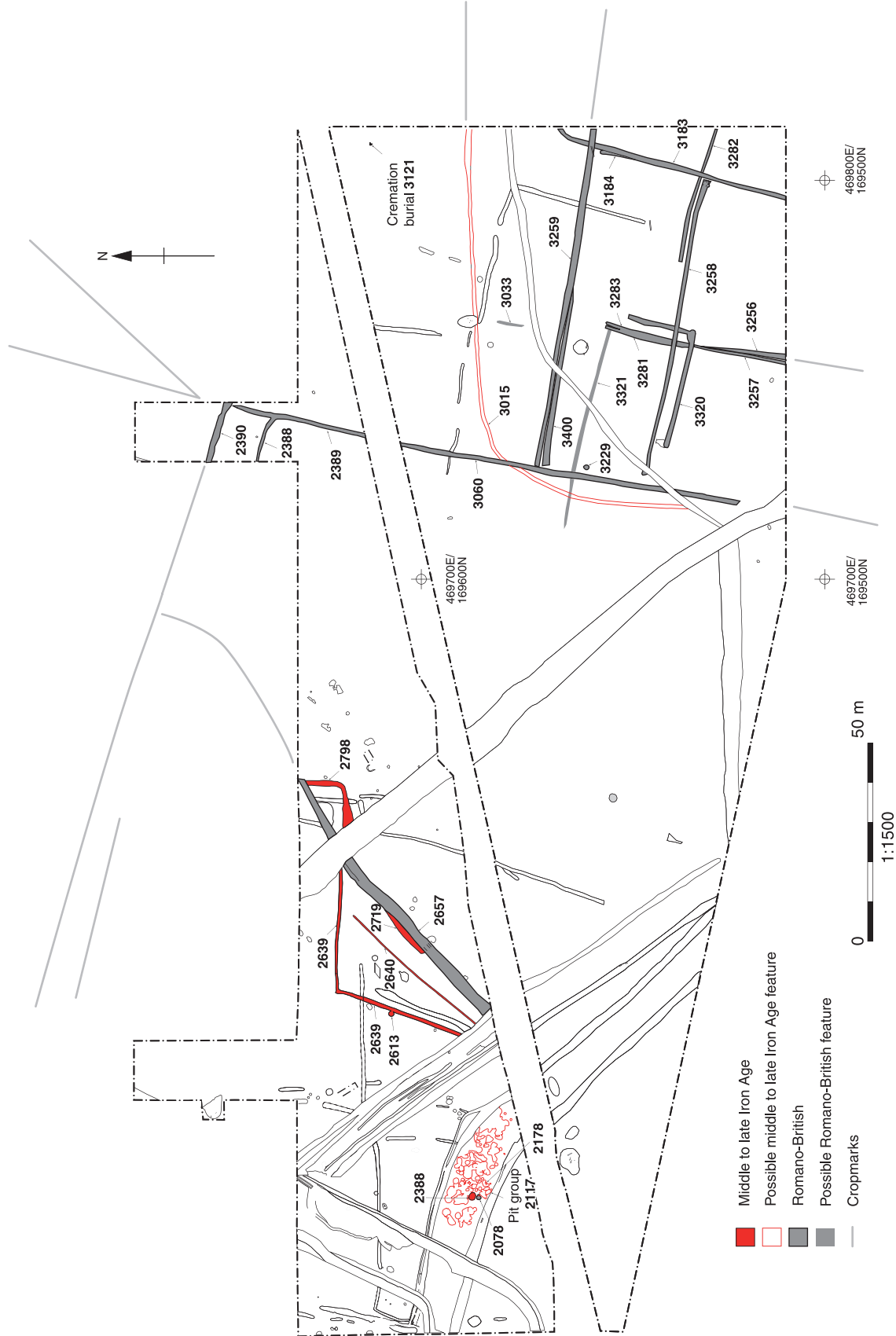


Fig. 3.1 Middle to late Iron Age and Romano-British features

around the 2nd century AD, although some later activity at the site is indicated by two unstratified sherds of late 3rd to 4th century pottery.

The ditches demarcating the field system were up to 0.66m deep, with a U-shaped profile (Table 3.2). The ditch fills often showed a sequence of an initial erosion deposit, rich in gravel, followed by a longer period of silting. Maintenance of the field system over a significant period of time is suggested by the fact that some of the ditches had been recut. For example, ditch 3400 had been recut as ditch 3259, and ditch 3256/3283 had been recut as ditch 3257/3281. Finds from the ditches were generally sparse, comprising pottery and animal bone, along with a rotary quern fragment from ditch 3256 and part of a copper alloy earring or bracelet from ditch 2390. However, one deliberate deposit was identified during the 1986 evaluation within ditch 3259, comprising three semi-complete ceramic jars. One of these – a burnished, necked jar in a reduced sandy fabric (Fig. 3.2) – contained cremated animal remains, probably belonging to an immature sheep or goat (TWA 1986). The necked jar can be dated to the 1st to 2nd centuries AD, while the other datable pottery from the field system has been attributed to the 2nd or 2nd–3rd centuries.

Ditch 2657 followed a differing alignment to the rest of the field system, and appears to have been a recut of Iron Age ditch 2719. Cropmark evidence suggests that the ditch curved northwards to meet ditch 2390 (Fig. 3.1), but this could not be observed on the ground as topsoil removal in this part of the watching brief area was incomplete, a factor which precluded examination of the northward continuation of other ditches (such as Iron Age feature 2798) in this area. The only datable finds comprised three sherds of Roman pottery from the upper fill. It is therefore possible that the ditch was

dug during the Iron Age but remained partly open into the Roman period. Three environmental samples taken from the ditch produced no plant remains other than sparse oak charcoal from the basal fill.

Two pits were the only potentially contemporary features within the field system. Pit 3229 was a bowl-shaped feature, 1.36m in diameter and 0.44m deep, which contained a single small sherd of Roman pottery. A single sherd of Roman pottery was also recovered from the upper fill of pit 2078 within pit group 2117.

Late medieval to post-medieval period

Three trackways defined by parallel ditches were present in the western part of the site (2541, 3123 and 3408) (Fig. 3.3). These are clearly visible on the cropmark plot of the area (Fig. 1.2), and the southward continuation of trackway 2541 had previously been investigated in the 1982 Pingewood excavations (where it was mistakenly regarded as Romano-British: Lobb and Mills 1993, 90, fig. 2). All three trackways produced late medieval to post-medieval finds, including pottery, tile, clay tobacco pipe and horseshoe fragments. Trackways 2541 and 3408 correspond with lanes depicted on the earliest detailed cartographic source for the area, John Rocque's 1761 map of Berkshire; they were erased by the inclosure of Burghfield parish in 1853 (Berkshire Record Office: Q/RDC/99A-B). Trackway 3123 does not appear on any maps, but excavation showed that it was cut by 3408, and it probably represents an earlier alignment of 2541. Wheel ruts were evident within 2541, but otherwise no traces of any road surfaces were present.

ARTEFACTS AND OSTEOLOGICAL EVIDENCE

Iron Age pottery by Elaine L Morris

A total of 39 sherds (225 g) of later Iron Age pottery was recovered (Table 3.3). The assemblage includes only a limited range of forms and is typical of the local area.

Fabrics

Six fabrics were defined amongst this small assemblage, representing four different fabric groups. The flint-tempered fabric is virtually identical to one of the types first recognised as late Bronze Age in date. This similarity in definition demonstrates the difficulties encountered when attempting to date plain body sherds of later prehistoric pottery recovered from fieldwalking in the Berkshire region. The single example with a naturally-gritted iron oxide and sandy clay matrix is quite similar to one from the sandy group (Q2), but the lack of form types for these groups precludes any discussion of the significance other than to suggest that these two fabrics

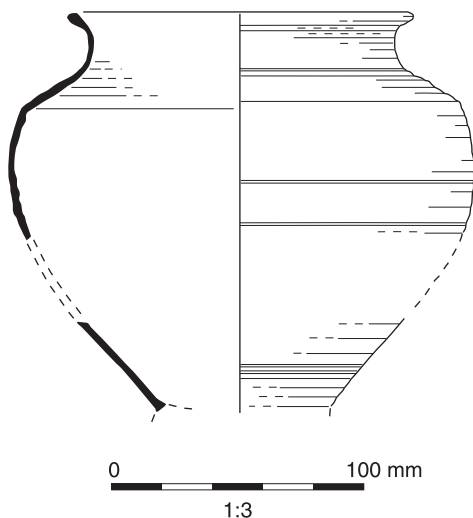


Fig. 3.2 Roman vessel containing cremated animal bone from ditch 3259, Wessex Archaeology evaluation

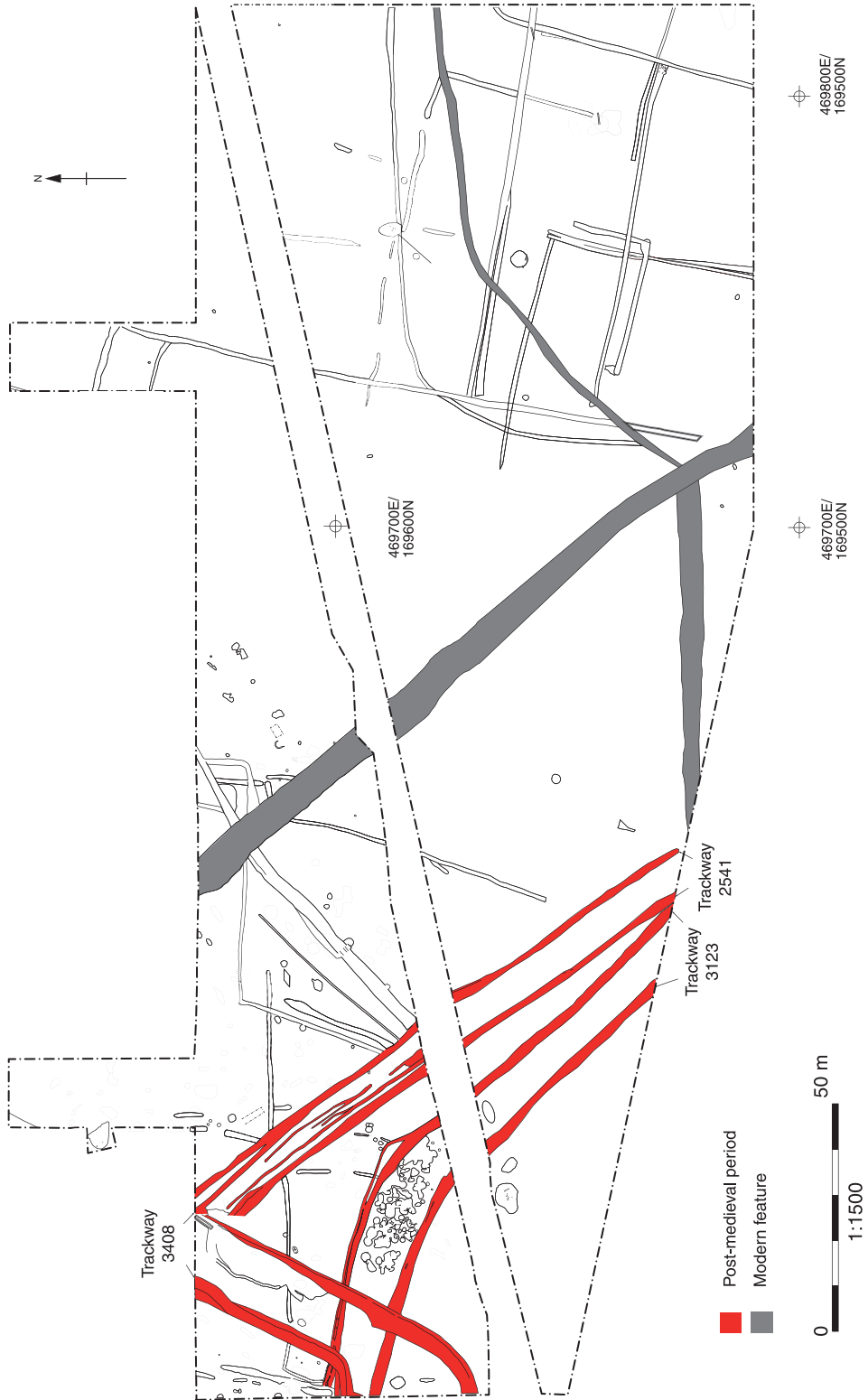


Fig. 3.3 Post-medieval and modern features

(and possibly all the sandy fabrics) are probably of local origin. The grog-tempered fabric is a very common type of the late Iron Age wheel-thrown tradition of the first century AD (if not earlier) in southern Britain.

These four different fabric groups can be paralleled at later Iron Age sites elsewhere in the local area. Grog-tempered ware and the Silchester ware have been found specifically in late Iron Age deposits at Ufton Nervet (Manning 1974), Riseley Farm, Swallowfield (Lobb and Morris 1993) and Silchester (Timby 1989; 2000), for example.

Grog-tempered group

G3: a moderate amount (10%) of fine to medium grog temper measuring ≤ 2 mm across in a softly-fired clay matrix containing a sparse amount (5%) of fine quartz/quartzite grains, rare (2%) iron oxides and rare ($< 1\%$) flint fragments measuring ≤ 1 mm across (late Iron Age)

Flint-tempered group

F10: identical to fabric type F10 at Green Park 2. The description of this fabric type is identical to that for the late Bronze Age examples and therefore has not been assigned a new code, despite the dating differences (late Iron Age)

Iron oxide and sandy group

IQ1: an intermediate fabric characterised by a sandy clay matrix containing a moderate to common amount (15–20%) of naturally-occurring, subrounded iron oxides or the voids where these once existed measuring ≤ 2 mm across and a sparse amount (10%) of fine-medium grains of quartz/quartzite sand, ≤ 0.5 mm across, and a rare to sparse amount (1–3%) of flint detritus which is ill-sorted, rounded to angular in shape and ≤ 6 mm across (middle-late Iron Age)

Sandy group

Q2: the same basic description as for Q1 at Green Park 2 but also bearing a sparse amount (5–10%) of rounded, iron oxide fragments measuring ≤ 2 mm across. This fabric is distinctively sandy in texture. The low density of iron oxide fragments distin-

guishes this fabric from IQ1 above (middle-late Iron Age)

Q3: a sandy clay matrix containing a sparse (5%) concentration of poorly-sorted burnt flint fragments including rounded large pieces with cortex adhering (6mm across) and others which are subangular to angular in shape and ≤ 4 mm across; the quartz/quartzite sand grains are moderately-sorted, subrounded to subangular in shape, measure ≤ 1 mm across and are found in common density (25%), along with a rare amount (1%) of subrounded iron oxide fragments, ≤ 1 mm across (middle-late Iron Age)

Q4: a very common to abundant amount of medium-fine, well-sorted, subrounded quartz/quartzite grains, < 0.5 mm across, and a rare amount (1%) of subangular flint detritus measuring ≤ 2 mm across (middle-late Iron Age)

Vessel forms

Amongst the 39 Iron Age sherds there are only three different identifiable vessel forms. The two represented by rims are dated to the late Iron Age and represent contemporary handmade (R90) and wheelthrown (R91) vessels.

R90: an upright or pulled, beaded rim jar with sloping shoulder; this is a common handmade form which dates to the late Iron Age (Fig. 3.4.1).

R91: a long-necked, wheelthrown cordoned bowl or jar; this is a common form which dates to the late Iron Age (Fig. 3.4.2).

A2: identical to rounded shoulder type A2 at Green Park 2; this is a simple handmade form which can be found from the late Bronze Age through the Iron Age.

Catalogue of illustrated pottery (Fig. 3.4)

- 1 Rim, beaded-rim jar; R90, less than 5% present; fabric F10; unoxidised throughout and appears to be extremely hard fired. Handmade. Pit group 2117, pit 2173, context 2172.
- 2 Rim, cordoned bowl/jar; R91, 5% of 140mm diameter; fabric G3; cordon at lower neck; oxidised exterior and interior, unoxidised core. Wheel-thrown. Late Iron Age cremation burial 3121, context 3127.

Roman artefacts by Leigh Allen, Ruth Shaffrey and Jane Timby

The Roman pottery assemblage comprises 119 sherds (1054 g), and includes material spanning the 2nd to 4th centuries AD (Table 3.4). The bulk of the assemblage comprises grey sandy wares, largely from the Alice Holt industry, grog-tempered storage jars and one sherd of Dorset black burnished ware, the products of long-lived industries spanning the

Table 3.3 Quantification of Iron Age pottery by fabric

Fabric group	Fabric type	No. of records	No. of sherds	Weight of sherds (g)	Mean sherd weight (g)
Grog-tempered	G3	4	10	22	2.2
Flint-tempered	F10	2	2	21	10.5
Iron oxide and sandy	IQ1	9	20	119	6.0
Sandy	Q2	3	5	54	10.8
	Q3	1	1	6	6.0
	Q4	1	1	3	3.0
	Total	20	39	225	5.8

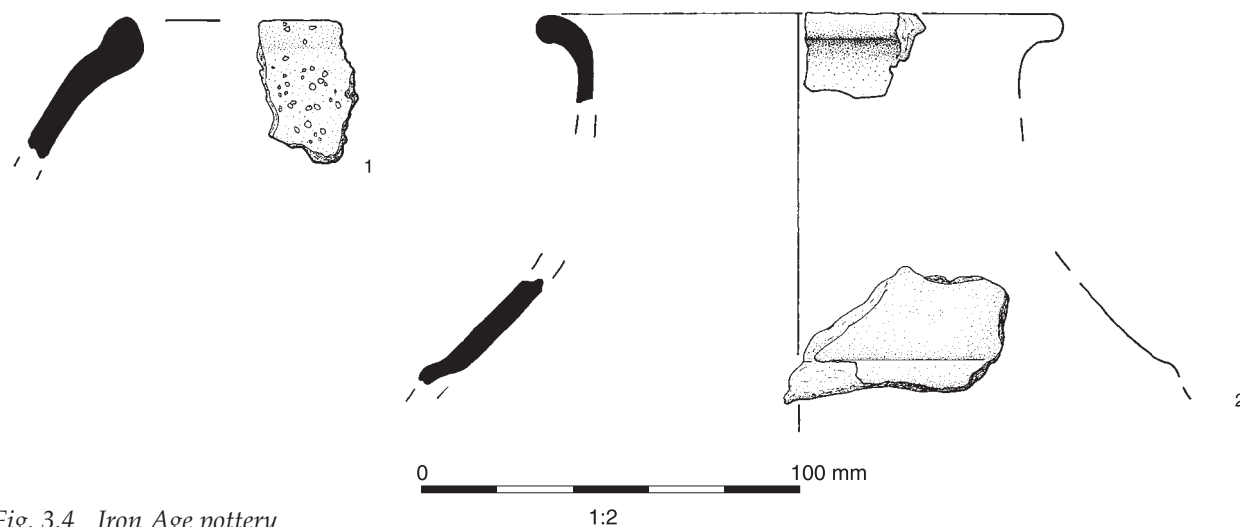


Fig. 3.4 Iron Age pottery

1st to 4th centuries AD. Recognisable 2nd-century wares include 14 sherds of Central Gaulish samian ware, ten of which belong to a single cup (Dragendorff form 33) from ditch 3183. A burnt Oxfordshire white ware mortarium (Young 1977, form M17) from a post-medieval ditch indicates later 3rd-century activity, whilst two sherds of Oxfordshire colour-coated ware from the subsoil are of later 3rd or 4th century date.

Two small rotary quern fragments of disc type were retrieved; both were made from the Quartz Conglomerate type of Old Red Sandstone from the Forest of Dean. The first item was from Roman ditch 3256 and was fairly fresh, while the second specimen was recovered from the subsoil. Both are fragments of upper stones. Old Red Sandstone was widely used for rotary querns in this area during the Roman period (Shaffrey 2006). Examples were found in Romano-British contexts

Table 3.4 Quantification of Roman pottery by fabric

Fabric		No. of sherds	Weight (g)
ALHRE	Alice Holt reduced ware	55	363
CGSAM	Central Gaulish samian ware	13	31
CREAM	Roman cream sandy wares	2	6
DORBB1	Dorset Black Burnished ware fabric 1	2	23
GROG	Roman grog-tempered wares	2	128
GRSA	Roman grog-tempered sandy wares	4	186
GW	Roman grey wares	21	134
OXFRS	Oxfordshire colour-coated wares	2	8
OXFWM	Oxfordshire white ware mortaria	1	35
OXID	Roman oxidised wares	5	11
SAM	Samian ware	1	1
WSLIP	Roman white-slipped oxidised ware	2	59
WW	Roman white wares	9	69
	Total	119	1054

at Green Park 1 (Moore and Jennings 1992, 97) and it is one of the most common materials at the town of Silchester, 10 km to the south-west (Shaffrey 2003).

Ditch 2390 produced a curved fragment of twisted, square-sectioned copper alloy wire. The fragment measures 18mm long and is up to 2.5mm in thickness. It is likely to represent part of an earring or bracelet.

Late medieval to post-medieval artefacts

by Leigh Allen and Jane Timby

Twenty sherds (152 g) of later medieval and post-medieval pottery were recovered. At least five pieces from trackway 3408 appear to be from the same vessel, an internally glazed Surrey-Hampshire white ware which is tentatively assigned a later medieval or early post-medieval date (c 15th–17th centuries). Another context from the same feature produced sherds of glazed red earthenware of 18th century or later date.

Fragments of four clay tobacco pipes were recovered from the trackway ditches. This included a near-complete bowl with a fairly wide mouth and thin walls from trackway 2541. The base is plain but the initials 'P' and 'I' appear in relief either side of the base. This piece is of late 17th to early 18th century date. A stem fragment stamped with the initials 'OPH' in one half of a rectangle also came from the same context. The other two fragments came from trackway 3408. One, comprising just the base and a short section of the stem, bears the initials 'P' and 'I'.

Other artefacts include a small assemblage of late medieval to post-medieval ceramic building material and a range of common metal objects.

Animal bone by Bethan Charles

A small and poorly preserved assemblage of

Table 3.5 Animal bone from Iron Age and later contexts

<i>Phase</i>	<i>Cattle</i>	<i>Horse</i>	<i>Dog</i>	<i>Unident.</i>	<i>Total</i>
Middle to late Iron Age	-	-	-	114	114
Iron Age?	2	-	-	-	2
Romano-British	3	-	1	17	21
Post-medieval	3	2	-	19	24
Unphased	22	3	-	165	190

animal bone was recovered from Iron Age, Romano-British and post-medieval contexts (Table 3.5). None of the bone from certain Iron Age contexts could be identified to species, although two fragments of cattle bone were recovered from possible Iron Age ditch 3015. Cattle and dog were the only identified species from the Romano-British period. The cattle bones include a metacarpal that has been chopped, probably for marrow extraction.