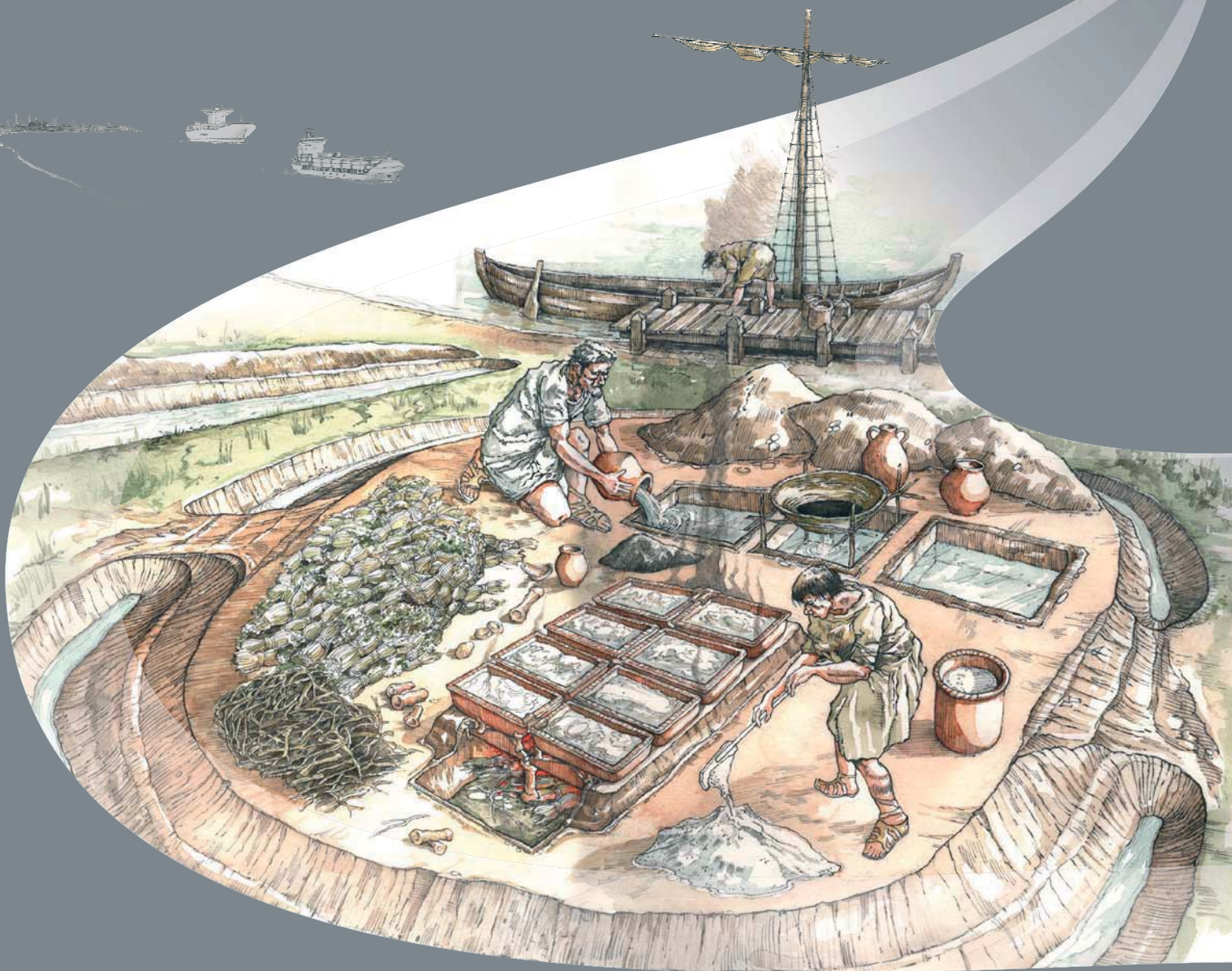


# LONDON GATEWAY

## IRON AGE AND ROMAN SALT MAKING IN THE THAMES ESTUARY

EXCAVATION AT STANFORD WHARF  
NATURE RESERVE, ESSEX



SPECIALIST REPORT 5

METAL FINDS

BY IAN SCOTT

## Specialist Report 5

### Metal Finds

*by Ian Scott*

#### Introduction

The metals assemblage from the site comprised some 172 objects (592 fragments) and was mainly concentrated in Area A (n = 155; no. fragments = 564). Otherwise, there are small quantities of finds from Areas B and C (Table 5.1). The fragment count is dominated by nails (n = 287) and small undiagnostic fragments of metal (n = 161).

The metal finds were quantified by object and fragment count. Where several similar pieces were found together they were counted as one object and the fragments counted. Nails were quantified by head count and fragment count. Only complete nails are measured. The head count gives a minimum number nails present, but almost certainly underestimates the numbers of nails present, whereas the fragment count will indicate the maximum number of nails present, but this will almost certainly overestimate the number of nails recovered.

#### Area A (Table 5.1)

The metal finds from Area A come mainly from contexts of Roman date, or from undated contexts. There is a single small oval lump or fragment of iron from a medieval context. The Roman finds are dominated by nails (n = 58; no. fragments = 230), and come mainly from middle (MR) (n = 36; no. fragments = 105) and late Roman (LR) contexts (n = 15; no. fragments = 87). What is notable about the nails is the predominance of nail stem fragments. Only 68 nails or nail heads are present, while in total there are 287 nail fragments. This suggests that the contexts with nails may well have been disturbed or the finds re-deposited.

There are four coins from Area A (see Booth, digital volume, part 4), three from Roman contexts and one from an undated context. All the coins are Roman. There is a single incomplete small spearhead of Roman form (Cat. No. 1), one two-piece Colchester brooch of mid 1st-century date (Cat. No. 2), a fragmentary symmetrical plate brooch of 2nd- or early 3rd-century date (Cat. No. 4), an eroded and

fragmentary hair pin (Cat. No. 5), a hair pin stem (Cat. No. 6) and an unidentified cast copper alloy fragment with an iron insert (Cat. No. 7). The two-piece Colchester brooch is from an undated context.

There are only three household items, these comprise two lead rivets for repairing ceramic vessels (SF 1025, context 5133; SF 1502, context 1817) and a fragment of a knife blade (SF 1519, context 5136), unfortunately not identifiable to form. Structural items other than nails comprise a piece of melted lead used to secure an iron fitting to stone (SF 1504, context 1539), two lead washers (SF 1492, context 1539; SF 1026, context 5133), and possible fragment of a small iron clamp (SF 1482, context 5133). There are comparatively few miscellaneous fragments, but a number of objects that cannot be identified to function. In addition to the numerous nail stem fragments which have been noted there are numerous small undiagnostic fragments of iron ( fragments = 153).

### **Area B**

There are just 17 objects (18 fragments) from Area B, most of them from undated contexts. There are two Roman coins (SF 4011, context 4090; SF 4031, context 4225), a small two-piece Colchester brooch (Cat. No. 3), and lead rivet for repairing ceramics (SF 4014, context 4090). There are also two pieces of structural lead (SF 4027, 4029, both context 4090), and five pieces of melted lead waste (SFs 4005-4006, 4008-4010, 4028, all context 4090). Surprisingly, Area B produced only a single fragment of nail stem.

### **Area C**

There are just two nail stem fragments and eight small pieces of undiagnostic iron from Area C.

### **Discussion**

The metals assemblage is limited in quantity and the range of objects present. The relatively small number of datable objects confirms the presence of Roman occupation, but does not give much help in determining the nature of the occupation.

There is little in the way of household or craft tools, and limited personal items. It may be that the site was carefully cleared on abandonment, but is perhaps more likely that occupation was limited and seasonal.

## Catalogue

1. **Spearhead.** Two fragments of a small leaf-shaped spearhead with closed and welded socket. There is no visible nail to secure the socket to the spear shaft, but the socket is not complete. The blade is eroded, but appear to be of lenticular section. Originally probably *c* 140-180mm long. Iron. L extant: *c* 105mm. Area A, context 1633, late Roman (LR2). [Inv. No. 22]
2. **Two-piece Colchester brooch,** with a plain bow with a crest at the head end, and a simple plain foot. The pin and spring are attached by means of a lug with two holes and protected by wings (Hull Type T92: Bayley and Butcher 2004, 157, fig. 127). There is one extant wing with transverse grooved decoration. The catch-plate has a single triangular cut-out. Copper alloy. L: 67 mm; W extant: 23.5mm. Area A, context 6744, sf 1006, undated. [Inv. No. 200]
3. **Two-piece Colchester brooch,** with narrow plain bow with a crest at the head end. The crest merges into the lug for attaching the pin and spring (Hull Type T92: loc. cit). The bow has a narrow baluster foot, and plain catch plate with a simple triangular cut-out. There is one small plain wing extant. Copper alloy. L: 59mm; W extant: 11.5mm. Area B, context 4090, sf 4013, undated. [Inv. No. 195]

Two-piece Colchester brooches date to the middle of the 1st century AD.

4. **Symmetrical plate brooch,** fragmentary. The brooch had a flat lozenge-shaped central plate with short arms at each end. Five surviving fragments, the largest being the part of the central lozenge-shaped plate decorated with concentric lozenge-shaped panels defined by low ribs to hold enamelled decoration. Three small fragments with ribs were parts of the central decorated plate. The final two fragments are the short arms or terminals at each end of the brooch, now detached. The arm at one end has a part of the rib that formed

the catch plate, the arm at the opposite end has two lugs for attaching the hinged brooch pin. Little of the enamelled decoration survives. Copper alloy. L extant: at least 54mm; W extant: 17 mm. Area A, context 1539, sf 1505, late Roman. [Inv. No. 190]

Developed symmetrical plate brooches such as this date to the 2nd and early 3rd century AD (Hull Type 228: Bayley and Butcher 2004, 176-77 and fig. 152).

5. **Hair pin**, fragmentary (3 x fragments). Much eroded and broken hair pin with small baluster- or flame shaped knob with a cordon below (Cool Type 2C: Cool 1990, 154 and fig. 2, nos 3 and 8). Copper alloy. L extant of fragments: 11.5mm, 15.5mm, 26.5mm. Area A, context 1007, sf 1004, late Roman (LR). [Inv. No. 183]

This type of knobbed hair is found throughout the Roman period in Britain.

6. (not illustrated) **Hair pin or needle stem** (3 fragments). Eroded, broken, and lacking its head, the pin cannot be dated typologically. The two longer fragments join. Copper alloy. L extant of fragments: 51mm; 25.4mm; 13mm. Area A, context 1217, sf 1015, middle Roman (MR). [Inv. No. 184]

The thickness of the tapering stem suggests that these fragments are from a hair pin rather than a needle.

7. **Object of uncertain function**. This fragment of a cast object has a broken stem or rod of circular section rising from a circular plate, which itself appears to form the end of a narrower tubular section with evidence for iron inside. Its function is unclear. Copper alloy and iron. Ht: 20mm; D: 20mm. Area A, context 1531, sf 1491, late Roman (LR). [Inv No. 188]

## References

Bayley, J and Butcher, S, 2004 *Roman brooches in Britain. A technological and typological study based on the Richborough collection*, Reports of the Research Committee of the Society of Antiquaries of London **68**, London

Cool, H E M, 1990 Roman metal hair pins from southern England, *Archaeol. Journal* **147**, 148-82

## Metal Finds Table

**TABLE 5.1: SUMMARY QUANTIFICATION OF METAL FINDS BY SITE AREA AND PHASE, AND OBJECT FUNCTION (OBJECT AND FRAGMENT COUNTS)**

Area	Phase		Function										Totals	
			Coin	Military	Personal	Household	Structural	Nails	Misc	Query	Waste	Undiag		
A	ER	Count						0				4	0	4
		Fragt Count						15				4	1	20
	MR	Count	2	1	6			36	1	8			0	54
		Fragt Count	2	2	6			105	3	17			44	179
	LR	Count	1		18	1	2	15	12	5	3	0	57	
		Fragt Count	1		31	1	2	87	19	7	3	59	210	
	Roman	Count						7		1		0	8	
		Fragt Count						23		1		19	43	
	Medieval	Count								1			1	
		Fragt Count								1			1	
	undated	Count	1		2	2	2	10	1	6	7	0	31	
		Fragt Count	2		2	2	2	54	1	11	7	30	111	
		<b>Total Count</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>68</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>155</b>	
		<b>Total Fragt Count</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>39</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>284</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>37</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>153</b>	<b>564</b>	
B	ER	Count						0					0	
		Fragt Count						1					1	
	MR	Count	1										1	
		Fragt Count	1										1	
	undated	Count	1		1	1	3		1	3	6		16	
		Fragt Count	1		1	1	3		1	3	6		16	
	<b>Total Count</b>	<b>2</b>		<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>6</b>		<b>17</b>		
	<b>Total Fragt Count</b>	<b>2</b>		<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>6</b>		<b>18</b>		
C	LIA	Count						0				0	0	
		Fragt Count						2				8	10	
	<b>Total Count</b>						<b>0</b>				<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>		
	<b>Total Fragt Count</b>						<b>2</b>				<b>8</b>	<b>10</b>		
<b>Total Count</b>			<b>6</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>68</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>172</b>	
<b>Total Fragt Count</b>			<b>7</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>287</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>161</b>	<b>592</b>	



Figure 5.1: Metal finds



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