

## Chapter 6: Artefacts from Castle Hill Environs

### PREHISTORIC POTTERY

by *Emily Edwards*

#### Introduction

A total of 5170 sherds (42,209 g), or 301 vessels, was recovered. The relatively high vessel count largely derives from material recovered from Trenches 14 and 15 and the high sherd count reflects the density of pottery within the midden. Condition was generally poor to average, and much of the assemblage has been affected by redeposition or disturbance of deposits; only 25 of 228 contexts contained assemblages weighing over 250 g.

Much of the assemblage was difficult to phase (Table 6.1), but the more diagnostic element (1267 sherds) consisted of <1% middle Bronze Age pottery, 9% late Bronze Age, 70% early Iron Age and 21% middle Iron Age. These figures may overstate the actual proportion of early Iron Age material in the assemblage, as pottery of this period has more distinctive characteristics than that of the middle Iron Age (Lambrick 1984, 165-7). A small proportion of the early Iron Age assemblage could be more specifically ascribed to the earlier (EIA1; c. 900-500 BC) or later (EIA2; c. 500-300 BC) parts of the period.

It is widely recognised that 25-30 is the minimum number of sherds from which the dating of a defined episode of occupation can be determined with any confidence (Shennan 1981, Lambrick 1984, PCRG 1992). It can be taken as a further emphasis of the difficulties in phasing the pottery, therefore, that only 27 of the 228 contexts contained deposits comprising over 30 sherds.

A selection of illustrated pottery from Castle Hill Environs and Hill Farm (see Chapter 10) can be found in Figures 6.1 to 6.6; the accompanying catalogue is given in Table 6.12.

#### Methodology

The pottery was recorded using the system recommended by the PCRG (1997). All rim diameters, diagnostic sherd forms, vessel forms, surface treatments, decoration, firing, use wear and refitting sherds were recorded, along with the wall thickness of identified vessels. A minimum vessel count is given, where a vessel is identified by rim or any other decorated sherd which can reasonably be said to represent a vessel. The incidence of refitting sherds was recorded on a limited basis, within the midden; a larger refitting exercise was not appropriate given the condition of the sherds.

Fabrics were examined using a binocular microscope (x20 magnification). The character of each fabric is indicated by an alphanumeric code. Letters were used to indicate principal inclusions (A: sand; B: solid glauconitic sandstone; C.: calcareous inclusions (not shell); D: voids; F: flint; G: grog; O: organic inclusions; Pfe: ferruginous pellets; M: mica; Q: quartzite; S: shell). Numerical codes (Morris 2004, 60) were used to indicate size, frequency and level of sorting of inclusions (1: well-sorted temper or primary inclusion, >2 mm with any density; 2: intermediate, moderately sorted temper, <3-4 mm with <common amount; 3: coarse, poorly sorted,

usually 5 mm or more and at least a common amount; 4: fine to intermediate; 5: intermediate to coarse).

## **Fabrics**

The geology of the area consists largely of First Terrace gravels (British Geological Survey, 1: 50,000 Solid and Drift series, Sheet 254; Corser 1981), fringed by alluvial floodplain deposits. Nearby, the Wittenham Clumps sit on fourth gravel terrace deposits, Lower Chalk and Glauconitic Marl, whilst the village of Little Wittenham is situated on Gault Clay, on the edge of the Upper Greensand.

The wealth of resources from which potting materials could be procured is reflected in the number of fabric types used to manufacture the pottery. An enormous variety of fabrics (103) is present, the majority of which contained shell, quartzite or sand (Table 6.2).

A number of the inclusion types present in the fabrics are common locally but are also ubiquitous within central southern England. It does not necessarily follow that the pottery is all locally made, therefore, especially as certain vessel types have non-local parallels. The red coated, globular bowls, for example, are a type very commonly found in Hampshire and Wiltshire, and heavy mineral analysis has found a single common source at Compton Chamberlain on Salisbury Plain (Williams and Wandibba 1984). The very fine, black clay used for the manufacture of these examples is similar to that used to manufacture the Wittenhams examples.

## **Procurement of resources: clays**

The pottery shows the same range of fabrics as the Hill Farm and Castle Hill assemblages, in that much contained small pebbles, ferruginous pellets and other detritus consistent with a gravel clay source (Table 6.3). Many of the fabrics contained very mixed combinations of fine and coarse inclusions.

There was an increase of 22% compared to Castle Hill in the utilisation of fine sandy potting clays. This is likely to reflect the different chronological profiles of the two assemblages (Table 6.4). These fine fabrics probably derived from the local Gault, which consists of a compact, grey-brown silty clay, often containing lumps of fine grained sandstone.

A small proportion of the assemblage was represented by sherds manufactured from a calcareous clay which may derive from the Chalk Marl deposits. A third clay, with coarse fossil shell inclusions, appears to have been used exclusively for the manufacture of T-rim jars. This could be derived from river bed clays, the parent source of which are Jurassic. Alternatively, it may derive from non-local Jurassic clay beds.

## **Procurement of resources: inclusions**

The fabrics containing lumps of fine-grained sandstone are characteristic of the locality and derive from the Upper Greensand. It is very likely that the quartzite fabrics were manufactured from crushed and added quartzite Terrace Gravel pebbles, but it is not necessarily the case that these all derived from local sources, as quartzite

fabrics are ubiquitous at late Bronze Age sites in the Upper Thames Valley. The flint-tempered sherds may have been imported, as although flints have been noticed in the local gravel, they are not common. The sands (both quartzitic and glauconitic) are present within the local geology and may either be naturally occurring or added.

## **Forms**

A total of 148 vessels could be allocated to a form type (Table 6.5). The form series follows the vessel classification from Ashville, Abingdon (DeRoche 1978), with additions. Suffix 0 denotes a form which is not sufficiently distinct to be assigned to a subdivision of its class. The condition of the material prevented any study of rim diameter ranges.

The relationships between form and fabric are summarised by Tables 6.6 and 6.7. The extent to which finer fabrics dominate the assemblage is apparent. The B1 jars were manufactured from flint, quartzite and sand fabrics, whilst the bowls were made from a much more restricted range of fabrics. A close association between coarse shell fabrics and the A3 jars can be seen.

## **Surface treatment**

Seven different types of surface treatment were observed, with rough smoothing practised most often (Tables 6.8 and 6.9). A higher proportion of the assemblage was either smoothed or burnished than in the assemblage from Castle Hill. This difference may be explained by the higher numbers of highly decorated earliest Iron Age bowls and middle Iron Age fine ware vessels within the assemblage. Red-coated sherds accounted for 2 % of the assemblage. Where vessel form could be assigned, red coating was restricted to C2A type bowls.

## **Decoration**

Only 59 vessels (19%) were decorated (Table 6.10). The prevalence of All Cannings style decorated bowls is reflected in the high vessel counts for incised and grooved designs, although other techniques typical of ubiquitous early Iron Age coarse wares were also noted. Decoration was noted on seven middle Iron Age vessels; the techniques within this phase comprised a variety of motifs created by grooved lines, dots, and stamp or tool impressions. The similarity of the early and middle Iron Age decoration did, in some cases, make precise dating difficult. The recovery of one Chinnor/Wandlebury style decorated bowl from the midden created additional difficulties, in that certain motifs are shared by the All Cannings Cross and Chinnor/Wandlebury styles.

## **Evidence for vessel function**

Evidence of use was noted on 53 sherds and consisted of charred residue (mostly on the inside faces of body sherds) and calcareous deposits. Such calcareous deposits were noted on the inside of a hole drilled through a base sherd from context 15137.

The distribution of sherds bearing such evidence of use was relatively even within each trench.

### **Discussion of ceramics by phase**

#### ***Middle Bronze Age***

One flint-tempered body sherd (5 g) recovered from middle Iron Age ditch 15016 has been dated on the grounds of fabric to the middle Bronze Age (c.f. Table 6.3).

#### ***Late Bronze Age***

A total of 118 sherds (1137 g) of late Bronze Age pottery was recovered. Most came from Trench 14, with smaller amounts from Trenches 13, 15 and 19. The material consisted largely of plain body sherds, but observable forms included angular bowls and an ovoid jar. Fabrics contained either flint or quartzite (Table 6.3), as typical for the region in this period (Barclay 2001).

Most of the pottery was residual in later contexts. Some material potentially in contemporary deposits was however found in Trench 14. This included three quartzite-tempered body sherds from posthole 1450. A buried soil layer (1435/1455) overlying this posthole and underlying the early Iron Age midden contained 49 late Bronze Age sherds, although 13 sherds ascribed to the early Iron Age were also recovered; an associated wolf bone produced a radiocarbon determination of 900-790 cal BC (Poz-12517: 2680 ± 35 BP). Most of the late Bronze Age pottery from this deposit consisted of plain body fragments, but there were also two small rim sherds, one fingertip decorated sherd and one sherd decorated with incised lines. These were largely in quartzite fabrics, with only a few flint-tempered sherds. It is possible that the deposit equates stratigraphically to the 'light occupation layer' observed by Rutland beneath another early Iron Age occupation deposit at the Castle Hill car park. This produced a small amount of late Bronze Age pottery, largely flint-tempered, including fragments of slack-shouldered jars (Hingley 1980, Figure 8).

#### ***Early Iron Age***

A total of 888 sherds (8409 g) can be dated to the early Iron Age, most of which was recovered from the midden in Trench 14 and from settlement features in Trenches 15 and 19. There appeared to be two ceramic phases present. The earlier phase (EIA1) was characterised by angular bowls with incised decoration and white inlay jars, and the later phase (EIA2) by one Chinnor-Wandlebury style bowl and a limited number of T-shaped rims and globular, red-coated bowls. The bulk of the material, however, can be dated no more closely than to the early Iron Age as a whole. In particular, it was not possible to assign many of the slack-shouldered jars to a specific early Iron Age phase. Although sandy fabrics dominated the assemblage, shelly fabrics also form a significant component, these being almost unique to the early Iron Age (Table 6.4).

The largest group of early Iron Age pottery was recovered from the midden in Trench 14 (Table 6.11). Aside from a few sherds of residual late Bronze Age pottery, and seven sherds of middle Iron Age pottery from the uppermost fill (see below), all

of the chronologically diagnostic material from the midden dates to the early Iron Age. It is thus likely that most or all of the substantial amounts of pottery from the feature that have been more broadly dated 'early or middle Iron Age' also in fact belongs to this period. A few sherds of All Cannings Cross type pottery dating to EIA1 occurred in both the upper and lower layers of the midden, while material from EIA2 - comprising fragments of a single 'Chinnor-Wandlebury' type bowl (P56) - occurred only in lower layer 1454. Generic early Iron Age material from the midden largely comprised slack-shouldered jars. A dominance of early Iron Age material can also be seen in the material from the earlier excavations of the midden by Rhodes, and also from the occupation layer dug by Rutland (Rhodes 1948; Hingley 1980). As in the current assemblage, Rutland's finds included material from both the earlier and later parts of the early Iron Age. The former is represented by a furrowed bowl, and the latter by fragments of a Chinnor-Wandlebury type vessel (Hingley 1980, 45-6).

#### *Early Iron Age 1 (c. 800-500 cal BC)*

Only 23 sherds (269 g) from Trenches 14, 15 and 19 are diagnostic of this phase. These largely comprise fragments of decorated bowls in the early All Canning Cross tradition. There is also one red-coated sherd that is possibly a fragment of furrowed bowl, and several fragments of expanded rim forms. Fabrics consisted of fine sand, fine shell and a calcareous fabric. All Cannings Cross type pottery is present elsewhere in the region at Uffington Castle, Liddington Castle and Rams Hill (Brown 2005, 11). Very little was noted at Castle Hill or Hill Farm (see Chapters 3 and 9).

#### *Early Iron Age 2 (c. 500-300 cal BC)*

This phase is represented by 33 diagnostic sherds (1008 g) from Trenches 14 and 15. Forms comprised four A3 jars, three red-coated C2A bowls and two angular Chinnor-Wandlebury type bowls. The red-coated bowls were in fine sandy fabrics, while the A3 jars were in coarse shelly fabrics.

The material from the midden in Trench 14 consists of two vessels. Nine refitting sherds from a Chinnor-Wandlebury style bowl (Figure 6.1, 62) were recovered from different locations within layer 1413, and a fragment of a red-coated, globular bowl was found in the same context (Figure 6.1, 63).

The material from Trench 15 formed a slightly larger group (Table 6.1), including three A3 T-rim jars. A large refitting fragment of a T-rim jar (Figure 6.1, 67) was discovered in pit 15018 (ctx 15019), associated with a black burnished, rounded bowl with a long flared rim (Figure 6.1, 64). This bowl had tooled decoration, creating a lattice motif on the belly of the vessel. This deposit reflects the association between T-rim jar and burnished bowl also present in pit 3006 at Castle Hill. The feature also contained some plain body sherds and a refitting pedestal base.

Type A3 jars were also recovered from Rhodes' investigations of the midden (Rhodes 1948, fig. 9.5). Elsewhere in the region, examples have been found at Allen's Pit (Bradford 1942), Mount Farm (Myres 1937), Blewburton (Harding 1972, pl. 44-5), Gravelly Guy (Duncan *et al.* 2004) and Segsbury (Brown 2005).

Parallels for the globular bowls, some red coated, have been found at Faringdon (Timby 2004; Bryan *et al.* 2004), Blewburton (Harding 1972, figs 9.12, 9.14, 9.15 and 9.19) and Segsbury (Brown 2005). It is thought that globular bowls with flared rims are generally later early Iron Age in Berkshire and Oxfordshire, post-dating the biconical and angular forms associated with earlier All Canning Cross type

assemblages (Gingell and Morris 2000, 165). Rhodes (1948, 24) noted that 9 % of his assemblage comprised haematite-coated vessels, and that these appeared to survive into the later early Iron Age, where they were found “in association with vessels with swollen flat topped rims”. Further afield, examples are now much more common within Wiltshire and Hampshire than was evident in Rhodes’ time. The bowls were manufactured using a very clean, fine clay similar to that used for examples from Danebury, Hampshire, which have been traced to a source of manufacture on Salisbury Plain (Williams and Wandibba 1984).

Chinnor-Wandlebury style vessels appear to be uncommon locally; examples are widespread, however, including Bampton (Harding 1972, pl. 46A), Roughground Farm (Hingley 1993, 42), Yarnton (Booth in Hey forthcoming) and Abingdon Vineyard (T Allen pers. comm.). The main distribution of this style is in the Chilterns, at least 20 km to the east of the site.

### *Early Iron Age (general)*

This phase is represented by 793 sherds (6844 g) from Trenches 13, 14, 15 and 19. Forms attributed to this phase were those ubiquitous in both the earlier and later early Iron Age. This mainly comprised B1 slack-shouldered jars (minimum of 25 vessels), which were common over the entire site. Other forms included some C2 bowls and A2 jars. Fabrics were mainly sandy.

### *Middle Iron Age (300-100 cal BC)*

A total of 260 sherds (3032 g) of middle Iron Age pottery was recovered, representing 84 vessels. The bulk of the material came from contemporary pits, ditches and gullies in Trenches 15 and 19. Seven middle Iron Age sherds (88 g) were also recovered from the uppermost layer of the early Iron Age midden in Trench 14 (context 1401). These may be intrusive; certainly, there is no previous evidence for middle Iron Age material in the earlier investigations of the midden (Rhodes 1948; Wessex Archaeology 2004).

Middle Iron forms consisted almost entirely of globular bowls and jars and barrel-shaped jars. Seven of the bowl fragments were decorated. Most of the pottery was manufactured from sandy fabrics, which form 76% of the assemblage, compared to 60% in the early Iron Age material. A few sherds containing shell are present, but only in combination with sand (Table 6.4). There is no appreciable difference in the distribution of vessels between the trenches in terms of fabric, form or decoration.

## **LATE IRON AGE AND ROMAN POTTERY**

*by Paul Booth*

### **Introduction**

The 2004 excavations in the Little Wittenham area produced 182 sherds (2641 g) of late Iron Age and Roman pottery, the majority of which was of late Iron Age and early Roman date. The pottery came from Trench 13 (6 sherds, 332 g), Trench 14 (21 sherds, 99 g) and Trench 15 (155 sherds, 2210 g). The pottery was recorded using the

standard codes set out in the OA system for material of this date, with each context group divided in relation to fabric and form types and other characteristics as appropriate. Quantification was by sherd count and weight and rim equivalents (REs) were used to quantify vessel types. The pottery was in very variable condition - surfaces were relatively well-preserved in most cases but some the material was well-fragmented - most of the sherds in fabric F51, for example, were tiny. The average sherd weight of 14.5 g was boosted by fragments of a single (incomplete) vessel in fabric E80 from context 15194, which also accounted for 40% of the RE total for the site. Discounting this vessel, the average sherd weight was 11.3 g. Overall, there were no substantial individual context groups.

The fabrics identified are listed and quantified below with summary descriptions including cross-reference to the national Roman fabric reference collection codes (Tomber and Dore 1998) where appropriate in bold (Table 6.13).

### **Fabrics/wares**

The assemblage was dominated by 'Belgic type' (E) and reduced (R) coarse wares, which together accounted for 79.1% of the total sherds and 84.4% of weight. The latter figure was skewed by the presence of the jar in fabric E80 from 15194 mentioned above, which compensated for the fact that reduced wares were rather less well-represented by weight than by sherd count. The range of E wares was quite wide, including both fine and coarse tempered sandy fabrics and a few flint-tempered sherds (E60) as well as the more common grog-tempered (E80) material. The most common reduced ware groups, fine fabrics (R10) and coarse sandy fabrics (R20), indicate the generally early Roman emphasis of the assemblage, later assemblages being more usually dominated by the medium sandy fabrics of the R30 group, as at nearby Castle Hill. Fabrics R90 and R95 are also consistent with a predominantly 1st-2nd century date range. Fine and specialist wares were scarce and consisted largely of very small fragments of Oxford colour-coated ware (fabric F51), and Oxford mortarium and other white ware sherds. A single sherd in a probable mica-coated fabric (F30) was notable, but could not be assigned to a known source (such as Lower Farm, Nuneham Courtenay; Booth *et al.* 1993, 138) and the single sherd of samian ware was a tiny fragment probably of South Gaulish origin.

The dominant reduced and 'Belgic type' wares are likely to have been drawn mostly from quite local sources. The same is true of a minor but distinctive component of the assemblage, the oxidised wares. These were notable for their diversity despite the relatively small number of sherds present. Two sherds were assigned to fabric O19, one of a group of early Roman fine oxidised fabrics used for beakers and other fine ware forms (Timby *et al.* 1997). The fabrics were first isolated at Abingdon, and production in the Abingdon/Dorchester area is likely on distribution grounds. A further six sherds from context 15136 were from a single butt beaker recorded as fabric O10; this is clearly related to the 'Abingdon type' fabrics (O15-O19), but is not exactly matched amongst them. Fabric O11 is a certain Oxford product, and most common in the late 1st-2nd centuries.

### **Forms and chronology**

Twenty-three vessels were represented by rim sherds, of which 14 were certainly or probably from jars, totalling 82.4% of REs. The other forms were beakers (3, including the butt beaker mentioned above), bowls (1), uncertain bowls/dishes (3) and mortaria (2). These last were vessels of Young (1977) types M12 and C97, the former dated AD 180-240, the latter after AD 240. The Oxford colour-coated ware component of the assemblage (fabrics F51 and M41) is the only element that will necessarily date after the middle of the 3rd century AD but, as already noted, most of these sherds were very small. Three fragments from midden contexts 1408 and 1412, for example, all weighed 1 g or less and must have been intrusive in these contexts.

## **Discussion**

The late Iron Age-early Roman emphasis of the assemblage is clear, except perhaps in Trench 14 where the assemblage is too small for certainty. Some later Roman activity would be anticipated here in view of the other evidence from immediately adjacent areas recorded by Rhodes (1948) and in the Time Team work. Occasional late Roman sherds also reflect the presence of activity of that date in the general vicinity of Trench 15, some 260 m to the west, but the early emphasis of the great majority of material here is clear, and it is possible that occupation in the vicinity of Trenches 15 and 14 was sequential. Much of the material is unremarkable, but the presence of fine oxidised wares, particularly the butt beaker in 15136, is noteworthy, as is the probable mica-coated sherd, unstratified in Trench 15. The quantities of pottery are inadequate to provide a reliable indication of status, but the fine and specialist ware representation in Trench 15 is 5.2% (of the sherd total), which is comparable with the upper end of the range of values reported for lower status rural settlements in the region (Booth 2004a, 45, 50).

## **PREHISTORIC FIRED CLAY**

*by Cynthia Poole*

The fired clay report for Trenches 13, 14, 15 and 19 can be found together with the report on fired clay from the Hill Farm excavations in Chapter 9.

## **FLINT**

*by Kate Cramp and Hugo Lamdin-Whymark*

### **Introduction**

A total of 137 struck flints were recovered during the 2004 excavations (Table 6.14). The assemblage includes a small number of possibly Neolithic flints, but the majority of flints are from a flake-based industry of middle or later Bronze Age date. A post-medieval gun flint was also recovered.

### **Methodology**



The artefacts were catalogued according to broad debitage, core or tool type. Classification of retouched pieces followed standard morphological descriptions (e.g. Bamford 1985, 73-7; Healy 1988, 48-9; and Saville 1981, 7-11). Cores were classified according to platform and removal type; complete examples were individually weighed. Chips were defined as pieces whose broadest surface was less than 10 mm<sup>2</sup>, including small flakes or fragments of flakes (Newcomer and Karlin 1987, 33). In order to avoid any sampling bias, a distinction was made in the database between chips that were excavated by hand and those that were recovered by sieving.

The general condition of the flintwork was noted, along with details of cortication and flint type. The general technological appearance of the flintwork was described, particularly where such information contributed to the dating of individual pieces and groups. Evidence of burning and breakage were recorded consistently. Burnt unworked flint was quantified by piece and by weight, with further details of raw material type and degree of calcination recorded where appropriate.

The assemblage was catalogued directly onto a Microsoft Access database, a copy of which will be deposited with the archive. If possible, a digital copy of the flint database will also be made available.

## **Quantification**

A total of 137 struck flints were recovered during the excavations in 2004. Most of this material came from Trench 14 (64 pieces) and Trench 15 (52 pieces). Very little flintwork came from Trenches 13 and 19, while none at all was recovered from Trench 18 on Round Hill. A single flake was recovered from Trench 11 on Clifton Meadow (see Chapter 13). The flint assemblage is quantified by trench in Table 6.14.

## **Provenance**

The assemblage was recovered from 56 contexts dating from the late Bronze Age to the Roman period. The flintwork formed a fairly low density spread, with most contexts producing one or two flints. Trench 14 produced the largest quantity of material, a total of 64 pieces. Within this trench, the flints were mostly confined to contexts 1401 (25 pieces), 1408 (13 pieces) and 1413 (18 pieces); these deposits were part of the midden and were dated to the early Iron Age.

## **Condition**

The condition of the flintwork is variable and largely determined by context. Thus, many of the flints from topsoil and ploughsoil deposits are in a heavily damaged, rolled condition following repeated redeposition. Others, including those from the early Iron Age midden, have survived in a relatively fresh condition with minimal edge damage. This suggests that any post-depositional disturbance has been slight.

While the vast majority of flints are uncorticated, a small number exhibit an incipient cortication that appears as a light speckling on the surface of the flint. Several flints display a yellow or yellow-brown iron stain, but in most cases this was probably present in the flint nodule prior to reduction and is unlikely to result from post-depositional conditions.

## **Raw material**

The raw material used was flint from a derived source. Where present, the cortex is thin, abraded and often stained. The interior of the nodule varies in colour from browns and greys to yellows; cherty inclusions and thermal fractures were occasionally noted and may have affected knapping quality. The flint nodules probably originated from river gravel deposits. No local sources are available, but the terrace gravels on the river Thames, downstream and south of the Goring Gap, would have provided a ready supply of suitable nodules. Another possible source, closer to hand, may have been provided by the small, abraded pebbles of flint contained within the gravels capping Castle Hill.

## **The assemblage**

The assemblage is large composed of unretouched flakes (112 pieces). These are generally of thick and squat proportions, produced with minimal core preparation and the use of direct, hard-hammer percussion. This simple reduction strategy is typical of middle and later Bronze Age industries (e.g. Ford *et al.* 1984), and was apparently still used for the crude assemblages of probable early Iron Age date on Castle Hill (see Chapter 3, Struck Flint). A few flakes and one blade from Trenches 13, 14 and 15 exhibit platform edge abrasion, reflecting a more careful reduction strategy; these flakes are characteristic of Neolithic industries.

The assemblage contains four flake cores and two partially-worked nodules, which reflect irregular, uncontrolled flake removal with little core preparation. As such, these cores probably belong to the same industry as the majority of the flakes.

Six retouched tools were recovered from the site, including two end-and-side scrapers, two denticulates and one simple edge-retouched flake. A date in the middle or late Bronze Age would be appropriate for these simple flake tools. A post-medieval gun flint was recovered from the topsoil in Trench 15 (context 15000).

A concentration of flintwork was recovered from a series of early Iron Age midden layers (1401, 1408 and 1413) in Trench 14. These layers sealed a buried Late Bronze Age soil, which contained very small amounts of flintwork. While it is conceivable that some of the flintwork has been reworked from the late Bronze Age layers, the possibility that the upper midden layers contained contemporary early Iron Age flintwork is not dismissed.

## **Discussion**

The flint assemblage recovered in 2004 dates either to the middle and later Bronze Age or just possibly to the early Iron Age. If the former is correct, it has survived as a largely residual spread below Castle Hill, particularly around Trenches 14 and 15, and to a lesser extent in Trenches 19 and 13. Low levels of earlier prehistoric activity were also demonstrated by a thin scatter of residual Neolithic flints; these were mainly recovered from the area below Castle Hill. A small assemblage of Mesolithic and Neolithic flintwork was recovered from the hilltop itself (see the Castle Hill flint

report for further details), and from an early Neolithic group from a pit at Hill Farm (see Chapters 8 and 9), indicating low-level activity across this whole area.

## **WORKED STONE FROM THE SETTLEMENT AROUND CASTLE HILL**

*by Fiona Roe*

### **Introduction**

Thirty five stone objects have been summarised in Table 6.15 and are described further in the catalogue, which is to be found on the CD. Quern fragments predominate but there is a good range of other artefact types, all except one made from local materials. The exception is a rotary quern fragment of Upper Old Red Sandstone which is probably of Roman date. The other worked stone has mainly been assigned to the early Iron Age, but there are also finds from three middle Iron Age contexts. A number of pieces were retrieved from the midden/occupation layer 1401 and are not well preserved. The majority of the other finds were from pits and again are almost all fragmentary. Nevertheless the combination of artefact types and lithic materials gives a good picture of activities on the site during the earlier part of the Iron Age.

Burnt stone amounted to 1100 fragments and is summarised in Table 6.16, while further detail is available in the archive.

### **Hammerstones**

There are six hammerstones, 4 of quartzite and two of flint, all pebbles that could have been collected from the Plateau Gravel that occurs on the top of the Sinodun Hills (Jukes Brown & Osbourne White 1908, 84). Five of them are from early Iron Age contexts, four of these coming from the midden/occupation layer 1401 and one from a pit, while the sixth example came from an undated posthole. All are typical of Iron Age sites where usable pebbles were readily available.

### **Loomweights**

Fragments from two loomweights ((19021) SF's 19011 & 19013) were found in the fill of middle Iron Age pit 19019 (Fig 6.7.1 & 2). Both were made from local chalky greensand, similar to that used for spindlewhorls found both on Castle Hill (Chap 3) and at the settlement, and also for another loomweight found at Hill Farm (Chapter 9). This greensand has the appearance of chalk but is in fact speckled with minute grains of dark coloured glauconite. The loomweights are of the pyramidal variety, a term used to describe ones that were often somewhat informally shaped but narrower at the end with the hole. They are known mainly from later Bronze Age or earlier Iron Age sites and some similar loomweights, although made from chalk, were found at White Horse Hill, Uffington, Oxfordshire (Roe 2003, 184 & Fig 9.10).

### **Polisher/whetstone**

A pebble of quartzitic sandstone ((15203) SF 15013) with a smoothly worn, shiny surface may have been used to burnish pottery, while the edges of the long sides seem additionally to have been used for whetting. This artefact came from early Iron

Age pit 15021. Pebbles with surfaces worn to a glossy polish are relatively common on Roman sites but are not unknown from Iron Age contexts and one or two such worked pebbles were found at Gravelly Guy, Stanton Harcourt, Oxfordshire (Bradley *et al.* 2004, 376). A similarly worked pebble with a glossy surface was found during fieldwalking (Chapter 14).

## **Querns**

Quern fragments were the most frequently found stone objects at the settlement, all but one being pieces of saddle querns from Iron Age contexts. These are not on the whole well preserved, although one large block with a worn surface (15068) came from a middle Iron Age pit. Fragments from 11 contexts, recorded as querns, now lack working traces, although they are pieces of local quern materials, either Culham greensand or Lower Calcareous Grit. These two materials would have been deliberately brought to the site to be used for corn grinding.

A single rotary quern fragment (0) was found in topsoil 50 m west of trench 19, in an area of known Roman activity. It is made from Upper Old Red Sandstone from the Forest of Dean/Wye Valley area, a well known source area for Roman querns (Shaffrey 2006). Other rotary quern fragments made from this particular variety of stone came from Castle Hill (Chap 3) and from fieldwalking (Chap 14). The numerous pieces of saddle quern are all made from local materials. Culham greensand, with the nearest source area, was especially favoured but a number of saddle querns were also made of Lower Calcareous Grit from the Corallian ridge (Table 6.15), while the Corallian limestone was used for a possible rubber. The quern fragments from dateable contexts are all either from the midden/occupation layer (1401) or from various pits.

The choice of the main two quern materials shows a consistent pattern at the Wittenhams, since both Culham greensand and Lower Calcareous Grit were in use at Castle Hill (Chap 3) and also later on at Hill Farm (Chap 9). An earlier excavation at Long Wittenham (Savory 1937) produced saddle querns said to be in the British Museum (Oakley *et al.*, 1939, 192, fn), but enquiries have failed to trace any information about them. There are however many further sites where these two main quern materials were utilised. Local sites with some early Iron Age occupation include the Ashville Trading Estate and Wyndyke Furlong at Abingdon (Roe 1999(a), 44) and Gravelly Guy, Stanton Harcourt (Bradley *et al.* 2004, 368). In addition a fragment of worked Culham greensand came from an early Iron Age pit at Mount Farm, Berinsfield (Roe, in prep (a)).

## **Paving stone or smoothers**

Three worked pieces of chalky greensand ((1410) SF 2480, (15011) & (19021)) are less easily explained. All have smoothly worn concave surfaces. It was suggested that similarly worn small slabs found at Gravelly Guy, Stanton Harcourt might have been used as smoothers (Bradley *et al.* 2004, 375). However at Beckford in Worcestershire similarly worn pieces of limestone seemed best interpreted as slabs used as flooring in Iron Age houses (Roe in prep (b)).

## **Spindlewhorls**

Both the spindlewhorls from the settlement are fragmentary. One of these ((1401) SF 2481) is part of a bun-shaped spindlewhorl, which came from the midden/occupation layer, while another small, perforated fragment (0), probably part of a spindlewhorl of the disc variety, was unstratified. Both are made from chalky greensand, as were the two spindlewhorls from Castle Hill (Chap 3) and another unfinished one from Hill Farm (Chap 9). Iron Age spindlewhorls tend to vary in shape (Bellamy 2000, 181) and it would seem that morphological differences are not of any particular significance. A chalk spindlewhorl from White Horse Hill, Uffington, Oxfordshire was unevenly shaped (Roe 2003, 184 & Fig 9.10.2), as were two from Segsbury Camp, Oxfordshire (Roe 2005, 122 & Fig 3.60).

### **Strike-a-light**

A worn nodule of iron pyrites (15078) could have been used with a piece of flint to generate sparks for fire-lighting.

### **Whetstones**

Whetstones from Iron Age sites are not always obvious, but there are two or three possible candidates from the settlement area. A quartzite pebble with worn patches (1401) from the midden/occupation layer may have been used for whetting. Another possible whetstone is a slab of Lower Calcareous Grit with a worn edge ((15116) SF 15005), which was found in early Iron Age pit 15012. In addition, the polisher described above ((15203) SF 15013) has worn edges and appears also to have been used as a whetstone.

### **Burnt stone**

The burnt stone is summarized in Table 6.16. All of it is of local origin with quartzite and flint predominating amongst other materials such as chert and vein quartz, all of which could have come from the Plateau Drift, while the local greensand was also quite widely utilised. This burnt stone is predominantly from early Iron Age contexts, with just 4 fragments from late Bronze Age contexts, while 136 fragments have been assigned to the middle Iron Age and another 18 came from late Iron Age/early Roman contexts. Much of the burnt stone came from the midden/occupation area (contexts 1401, 1408, 1412 and 1413), but also from pits in Trench 15, and less frequently from ring gullies, ditches and postholes.

### **Acknowledgement**

I am grateful to Gillian Varndell for looking through records at the British Museum in search of information about the saddle querns from Long Wittenham said to have been deposited there.

### **WORKED BONE** *by Rosemary Grant*

A total of eight worked bone objects were recovered from the 2004 excavations. The objects form a coherent assemblage characteristic of the early Iron Age in southern England. The collection includes a fragmentary needle, a complete bone gouge and

the tip of a second example, an awl, two points and two unclassifiable pieces. Six of the objects came from early Iron Age midden deposits in Trench 14, and one each from features in Trench 15 and Trench 19.

The gouge (1401, sf. 1400; Fig. 6.8, 1) is made from the end of sheep/goat metatarsal with slight degradation at the head. The butt is perforated by a round hole 3 mm in diameter. The hole is roughly aligned with an oblique cut on the shaft, which begins 47 mm from the point. The shaft above the oblique cut is sub-square in section. The point is rounded and incorporates the central hollow of the bone (Sellwood 1984, 384, Figure 7.34, no. 3.123).

The needle (1401, sf. 2387; Fig. 6.8, 2) is incomplete and manufactured from unidentifiable bone. The head and part of the shaft below the eye remains. It has a sub-rectangular cross section, which widens around the oval-shaped eye. Above the eye, the needle tapers to a point aligned with the centre of the shaft. It is polished and worn along the shaft around the eye (Sellwood 1984, 381, Figure 7.32, no. 3.93). The gouge and the needle were both recovered from context 1401, an early Iron Age occupation layer within Trench 14.

A bone awl came from an early Iron Age midden deposit (context 1413) sealed by layer 1401. This piece has been made from a length of cattle ulna, worked into a point and slightly polished. An object of worked red deer antler (1413, sf. 4754; Fig. 6.8, 3), which has been burnt and subsequently sawn at one end, was recovered from the same deposit. Areas of polish along the length may result from its use.

This midden layer (1413) also contained two bone points. The first of these (1413, sf. 5199; Fig. 6.8, 4) was manufactured from an unidentifiable bone and is slightly eroded (possibly reworked), but is otherwise complete. It has been worked on all sides into a point with a round section that diminishes to the tip. The butt-end of the point has been shaped into a tang 4 mm long, aligned off-centre to the shaft. The second point (sf. 5726) is a fragment of sheep/goat ulna, which has been polished along the length (Sellwood 1984, pp. Figure 7.36, no. 3.154).

The gouge tip was recovered from the fill (19056) of a middle Iron Age pit (19055) exposed in Trench 19. It has been made from a medium-sized mammal long bone, with an obliquely cut tip and highly polished surface (Sellwood L 1984, p384 fig 7.34 no3.124).

A fragment of cattle mandible has an area of abrasion down one edge. It was recovered from the fill (context 15173) of an early Iron Age gully (15330) revealed in Trench 15.

## Catalogue

### 1 Gouge (Fig. 6.8, 1)

Complete. Proximal end of sheep/goat metatarsal with slight degradation at head. The butt is perforated by a round hole, 3 mm in diameter. The hole is roughly aligned with an oblique cut on the shaft, which begins 47 mm from the point. The shaft above the oblique cut is sub-square in section. The point is rounded and incorporates the central hollow of the bone. Length = 74 mm. Trench 14. Layer 1401 (sf. 1400).

### 2 Needle (Fig. 6.8, 2)

Incomplete needle made from unidentifiable bone. The head of the needle and part of the shaft below the eye remains. The needle has a sub-rectangular cross-section, which widens around the oval-shaped eye. Above the eye, the needle tapers to a point,

aligned with the centre of the shaft. The object is polished with some wear along the shaft around the eye. Length = 41 mm. Trench 14. Layer 1401 (sf. 2387).

### **3 Awl**

Right cattle ulna worked into a point. Slightly polished through use. Length = 110 mm. Trench 14. Layer 1413.

### **4 Antler object** (Fig. 6.8, 3)

Piece of worked red deer antler. Burnt and subsequently sawn at one end. The length is polished, possibly through use. Length = 45 mm. Trench 14. Layer 1413 (sf. 4754)

### **5 Point** (Fig. 6.8, 4)

Unidentifiable bone. Slightly eroded point, possibly reworked, but otherwise complete. Worked on all sides into point with a round section that diminishes to the tip. The butt-end of the point is worked into a tang 4 mm long, aligned off centre to the shaft. Length = Trench 14. Layer 1413 (sf. 5199).

### **6 Point**

Fragment of a right sheep/goat ulna worked into a point. The length of the point is polished. Length = 57 mm. Trench 14. Layer 1413 (sf. 5726).

### **7 Mandible**

Fragment of cattle mandible with abrasion down one edge. Trench 15. Gully 15330 (context 15173).

### **8 Gouge tip**

Medium mammal long bone. Oblique cut to create tip of a gouge. Highly polished. Length = 31 mm. Trench 19. Pit 19055 (context 19056).

## **METALWORK**

*by Ian Scott*

### **Composition and provenance of the assemblage**

This assemblage comprises 44 pieces, excluding coins. A large part of the assemblage is made up of nails (n=15) and miscellaneous fragments (n=13). Ten pieces are from phased contexts. Of these six pieces are from early Iron Age contexts. Context 1431 contained a probable iron swan's neck pin (Fig. 6.9, 1), and a piece of a copper alloy pin. Contexts 1437 and 1468 contained a small modern machine-rolled object and a nail respectively. Both pieces are very small and certainly intrusive. Context 15079 produced a short tapering iron spike, and context 15300 a very small tapering strip of iron. Context 15013 produced a small strip of copper alloy. With the exception of the finds from context 1431, none of the finds from early iron Age contexts are of any intrinsic interest, and all could be intrusive.

Middle Iron Age contexts have produced a length of iron wire (context 15144) and a small irregular triangular block of iron (context 19018). The former is almost certainly intrusive. There is a single nail from a late Iron Age/early Romano-British context (1308).

Most of the remaining finds are undated and undistinguished. The unphased finds include a small hammer head (context 15000) and a gouge (unstratified), a fragment of a penknife, a heel iron, a horseshoe nail all of which are or may be of recent date. The most interesting unphased find is a well-preserved bag-shaped sword chape (Fig. 6.9, 2) dating from the late Bronze Age.

## Discussion

The bag-shaped sword chape (Fig. 6.9, 2) is an imported type that is diagnostic of the late Bronze Age Carp's Tongue Sword Complex (Burgess 1968, 38-9, and fig 13, 24 & fig 14). Carp's Tongue swords and a small range of associated objects - swords, socketed axes, tanged chisels, triangular or hog's back knives, spearheads, 'bugle-shaped' objects, bag-shaped chapes and decorative attachments (Burgess 1968, fig. 13, nos 1, 7, 9-11, 18, 20-22, 24 & 26) - form a suite of objects that are found widely distributed on the Atlantic coast of Iberia and France and in the southeast of Britain. The distribution of the distinctive Carp's Tongue swords and associated objects can be taken to be a marker showing trading contacts, and it has been argued, points to the existence of an 'Atlantic Bronze Age' (Briard 1979, 201-04) although its precise nature is uncertain (see Coombs 1998, and Oliveira-Jorge 1998, *passim*). The swords and other objects are found in association with objects of more local provenance. In Britain the Carp's Tongue Sword complex forms part of the Ewart Park phase of the late Bronze Age. It should be noted that in 1995 there were 26 Carp's Tongue swords and 412 Ewart Park swords from Britain (Coombs 1998, 152). In Britain, metalwork of the Carp's Tongue complex is very much concentrated in East Anglia, the Thames Valley and along the south coast (Burgess 1968, fig. 14). The Wittenham chape lies at the very edge of the main distribution of this suite of imported material.

Other Bronze Age metalwork has been found in the area, much of it from the Thames itself (eg. from Wallingford: Thomas 1984; see also York 2002; now see Northover 2006). Amongst this material are items assigned to the Ewart Park phase (Northover 2006, table 3.1).

Aside from the material from the excavated settlement at Wallingford most of the metalwork has been recovered from the river. River deposits have been taken to show the importance of metalwork in the ritual life of communities (see Bradley, 1998). Although the Wittenham chape was not closely stratified, it was found in the field south of Hill Farm in the vicinity of Trench 15, and is thus closely associated with the settlement.

The swan's neck pin (Fig. 6.9, 1) is a very early Iron Age type associated with Hallstatt material. It therefore dates to slightly later period than the sword chape. Good parallels for the Wittenham piece were found at Woodeaton (Dunning 1934, 270 & 288, and fig. 2, no.5; see also Kirk 1949, 15). The Woodeaton examples are copper alloy, but an example of an iron swan's-neck pin was found at All Cannings Cross (Dunning 1934, fig. 2, no.1). This particular form of pin with upright head is found in north Germany and the Rhineland. Only a small number of swan's neck pins have been found in Britain. They are associated with Hallstatt material imported in the very early Iron Age, but cannot be more closely dated.

It is usually thought that these pins were used to fasten clothes, although Dunning noted that a coral-decorated example of the later ring-headed pin from Danes Grave, Kilham, Yorkshire was found next to a woman's skull suggesting that it might have been used as a hair pin (Dunning 1934, 276 and no. 3). The notched end found



on some examples, such as that under discussion, does not appear to be decorative yet is clearly intentional, and may have served some practical purpose.

### **Catalogue of illustrated pieces (Fig. 6.9)**

#### **1 Probable swan's neck pin (Fig. 6.9, 1)**

Formed from thin rod, with a cranked stem and upright head. The head appears to have been flattened and splayed and probably notched (cf. examples from Woodeaton illustrated in Harding 1972, Plate 73 Nos 1 and 2). Poorly preserved. Fe. Length = 51mm. LWNT 04. Trench 14. Early Iron Age midden layer 1431 (Sf. 5913).

#### **2 Bag-shaped chape (Fig. 6.9, 2)**

Well-preserved. There are two small opposed holes just below the curved mouth. These served to secure the chape to the scabbard. The only damage is a hole at the bottom of the chape. Copper alloy. Width = 46mm, height = 40mm and depth = 16mm. LWNT 04. Trench 15. Topsoil 15000.

### **ROMAN COINS**

*by Paul Booth*

Five late Roman copper alloy coins were recovered from three phases of work (Table 6.17). All were unstratified and in poor condition, to the extent that none could be precisely identified. Three of the coins can be assigned to the later 3rd century, although none is closely identifiable. The other two coins are of 4th century date, assignable to the major period of minting of the House of Constantine, from AD 330-346. The reverse types, *Urbs Roma* and *Victoriae DD Augg q NN*, are very common ones in this period. The identification of the latter is, however, quite speculative, although entirely consistent with the obverse, which is probably of Constantine. The coins are unremarkable, either intrinsically or as site finds.

### **GLASS**

*by Adam Partington*

A total of two glass shards from post-medieval or modern bottles were recovered from the 2004 excavations. Both shards were found in the topsoil or ploughsoil in Trenches 13 and 15 (Table 6.18), and both were in poor condition.