

## Chapter 3: Castle Hill Artefacts

### FLINT

by *Kate Cramp and Hugo Lamdin-Whymark*

A total of 478 struck flints and 300 pieces of burnt unworked flint and stone were recovered from Castle Hill (Table 3.1). The assemblage includes material of Mesolithic, Neolithic and Bronze Age date, along with a small quantity of possibly early Iron Age flintwork. A selection of flint is illustrated in Figure 3.1.

### Methodology

The artefacts were catalogued according to broad debitage, core or tool type. Classification of retouched pieces followed standard morphological descriptions (eg 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 was 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.

### Quantification and provenance

A total of 478 struck flints, including 217 chips, and 300 pieces (13.884 kg) of burnt unworked flint and stone were retrieved. A large number of unworked or frost shattered flints were also recovered from the site; these were discarded during the assessment. The assemblage is quantified by type and by trench in Table 3.1.

Flintwork was recovered from 88 individual contexts, including late Bronze Age, Iron Age, Roman and medieval features. The flint forms a fairly low density spread, with most contexts producing only one or two pieces (excluding sieved chips). A few deposits produced larger assemblages that may be *in situ*. These include a collection of 76 struck flints (including 28 chips) from an early Iron Age pit (3006) and a further 126 flints (including 63 chips) from two interventions through a ditch (3017 and 6003) whose deposits spanned the late Bronze Age and early Iron Age. A significant amount of redeposited flintwork came from colluvial layers and cut features of Roman and medieval date.

Burnt stone was excavated from sections through the late Bronze Age enclosure ditch (Table 3.2). It was also recovered, in varying quantities, from many of the pits; this material is quantified in Table 3.4.

## **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 late Bronze Age and early Iron Age features, have survived in a relatively fresh condition with minimal post-depositional edge damage.

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 for the flint assemblage seems to have been provided by the small, abraded pebbles of flint contained within the gravels capping Castle Hill. These nodules were probably of variable quality, with thermal fractures and large cherty inclusions affecting knapping success. Where present, the cortex is generally abraded and stained, sometimes pitted, and the interior of the nodules ranges through shades of brown, orange and grey. Most of the flint used for burning probably came from this source. A few blades were manufactured from a good quality black flint with a thick, white, unweathered cortex not observed in the natural gravels on the hilltop. These flints probably derive from chalk flint nodules, originating on the Berkshire Downs a few kilometres to the south and west of the site.

A single flake from Trench 3 (pit 3013) had been manufactured from bullhead flint, which can be distinguished by an orange band underlying an olive green cortex. Nodules of this flint type occur at the base of the Reading beds and in the south-east of the country (e.g. Dewey and Bromehead 1915; Shepherd 1972, 114; Rayner 1981, 357); it has also been identified in the Kennet gravels (Healy *et al.* 1992).

Most of the burnt unworked material consists of sandstone and limestone cobbles from the gravels capping the hill. A few nodules of flint are also present and probably come from the same source.

## **The assemblage**

What follows is a detailed discussion of the flint assemblage from Castle Hill, presented in chronological order from the Mesolithic period to late Bronze Age and early Iron Age period.

### ***Mesolithic and Neolithic***

A small number of Mesolithic and Neolithic flints were present in the assemblage, all of which occurred as residual finds in later features or layers. Diagnostic Mesolithic pieces include an obliquely blunted microlith (Fig. 3.1.1) from the topsoil in Trench 5,

which can be compared to Jacobi's class 1a (1978, 16, fig. 6). When dominant in an assemblage, class 1 microliths usually indicate a date in the earlier part of the Mesolithic, although it would be incautious to refine the date of a single stray find.

The uppermost deposit (3042) within middle Iron Age pit 3152 produced a fine tertiary blade, which had been snapped distally using the microburin technique and may represent an abandoned attempt at microlith manufacture. As such, this piece probably belongs to a Mesolithic industry and, along with the microlith, suggests that the hilltop saw a limited amount of human activity in the Mesolithic period.

Evidence for early Neolithic occupation also comes from the hillfort interior. A leaf-shaped arrowhead (Fig. 3.1.2) was recovered from a layer of medieval colluvium in Trench 3 (context 3043). A few narrow parallel-sided blades, carefully struck flakes, a serrated flake and a finely retouched scraper (Fig. 3.1.3) may also date from the Mesolithic or Neolithic. The scraper came from one of a complex series of late Roman quarry deposits in Trench 3 (ctx 3049).

### ***Late Bronze Age and ?early Iron Age***

A small assemblage of flintwork was recovered from the late Bronze Age enclosure ditch (interventions 3017 and 6003). This collection, comprising 126 struck flints and 73 pieces (4.18 kg) of burnt unworked flint and stone, was probably in contemporary association with the enclosure. This material was distributed relatively thinly between the various deposits that filled the enclosure ditch (Table 3.2), although most of the flintwork came from the upper fills.

The flint assemblage is dominated by flakes, many of which are in exceptionally fresh condition. The flakes tend to be thick and irregular. Technologically, these pieces show little evidence of platform preparation and platform edge abrasion is entirely absent. A brief assessment of bulb morphology suggests a largely hard-hammer percussion strategy (eg Onhuma and Bergman 1982), although the end-and-side scraper and serrated flake, along with a small number of blades, were probably soft-hammer struck and seem from their technological appearance and condition to be residual Mesolithic and/or Neolithic artefacts (see above).

An assemblage of 76 struck flints from early Iron Age pit 3006 has similar technological and morphological characteristics to the material from ditch 3017/6003. This collection is also dominated by thick, irregular flakes and includes several pieces of unclassifiable waste (Table 3.3). A further 78 pieces (3.502 kg) of burnt unworked flint and stone were recovered from the pit.

The struck flints were distributed across several fills, but were most numerous in the upper deposits and particularly in context 3040 (46 pieces). The burnt unworked flint, on the other hand, occurred lower down the profile, with the largest quantity (33 pieces/1.341 kg) coming from context 3034. While some of the flints have clearly from their condition been redeposited in the pit, others are in a fresh, undamaged state that suggests they were freshly deposited or deposited soon after manufacture. It also significant that a small number of chips were recovered by hand (four pieces) and from sieved residues (24 pieces), perhaps indicating the presence of knapping debris.

## **Discussion**

In the absence of contemporary features, the flint assemblage from Castle Hill provides the only evidence of Mesolithic and Neolithic activity on the hilltop. While the collection is limited in size and residual in origin, it nonetheless indicates the occasional use of the site and may relate to longer term occupation in the wider area (for instance the Early Neolithic pit at Hill Farm, Chapter 8).

The flintwork in the later Bronze Age enclosure ditch is probably contemporary with this phase of activity, but unfortunately is limited in size.

The small group of flintwork in early Iron Age pit 3006 is particularly interesting, if it is contemporary with the feature. Recent research suggests that flintworking probably continued into the Iron Age, but was of a poor standard with few tool types (e.g. Young and Humphrey 1999). The character of the material from pit 3006, and from the upper fills of the enclosure ditch, both of which are of Early Iron Age date, are consistent with this, and may represent the continued use of flint for tools into the Iron Age on this site.

### **Catalogue of illustrated flint (Fig. 3.1)**

1 **Microlith.** Simple obliquely blunted point, comparable to Jacobi's class 1a (1978, 16, fig. 6). Mesolithic. Trench 5, topsoil, ctx 5000. SF 5000

2 **Leaf-shaped arrowhead.** Slightly irregular outline. Recent damage to tip and base; otherwise in relatively fresh condition. Early Neolithic. Trench 3, colluvial layer, ctx 3043. SF 3032

3 **End-and-side scraper.** Manufactured on a slightly plunging flake. Fine, slightly invasive retouch curving around distal end. Mesolithic or Neolithic. Trench 3, quarry pit 3067, ctx 3049

### **PREHISTORIC POTTERY**

*based on a report by Emily Edwards*

A total of 3372 sherds (27,031 g), or 200 vessels, was recovered from Castle Hill. This assemblage generally dated from the late Bronze Age through to the middle Iron Age, although two residual sherds of early Bronze Age pottery were also recovered (Table 3.5). Early Iron Age pottery formed the largest element, and some of this could be more specifically ascribed to the earlier (EIA1; c 900-500 BC) or later (EIA2; c 500-300 BC) parts of the period.

The assemblage as a whole had a fairly low mean sherd weight of 8.0 g. Condition did however vary significantly between features, with the material from early Iron Age pit 3006 being relatively well-preserved. Much of the assemblage has clearly been affected by redeposition or disturbance of deposits, and only 12 contexts produced more than 250 g of pottery. It has been argued that 25-30 sherds is the minimum number required for a context to be dated with confidence (Shennan 1981; Lambrick 1984; PCRG 1997). The lack of good groups outside of pit 3006 is supported by the fact that only 16 contexts had sherd counts of over 30.

## Methodology

This pottery was recorded following PCRG (1997) recommendations. 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 sherd which can reasonably be said to represent a vessel.

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; P: 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 Castle Hill consists largely of Fourth Terrace gravels (British Geological Survey, 1: 50,000 Solid and Drift series, Sheet 254; Corser 1981) and lower chalk. A thin band of marly clay between the lower chalk beds was observed within boreholes and ditch cuts. The gravels, which were limited to the areas covered by the beech plantation, consisted of very large quartzite, sandstone, limestone and flint pebbles and clays containing glacial detritus. Below the lower chalk beds are Upper Greensand beds and, during fieldwork in this area, soft lumps of loose Greensand were noted. The Upper Greensand extends no more than half a mile away from the clumps and sits on Gault Clay.

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 (116) were used, the majority of which contained shell, quartzite or sand (Table 3.6). These can be sorted into 20 'fabric groups' according to the main inclusion types present (Table 3.7). The occurrence of fabric groups by phase is shown by Table 3.8.

### *Procurement of resources: clays*

The clay matrix of many of the sherds contains consistent small amounts of sand, small pebbles, small ferruginous pellets and other detritus consistent with a gravel clay source. It is plausible that the clays within the gravels on the hilltops were frequently utilised during the manufacture of much of the pottery, due to the fact that the fabrics in many cases contained very mixed varieties of fine and coarse inclusions. A small proportion of the assemblage was manufactured from a calcareous clay which may derive from the chalk marl deposits. A third clay type containing coarse fossil shell appeared to be used exclusively for the manufacture of T-rimmed jars (see below). This could derive from the local river bed clays, the parent source of which is Jurassic, although an origin in non-local Jurassic beds is also possible.

### ***Procurement of resources: inclusions***

The majority of the deliberately-added tempering materials could also have had a local origin. It is likely that the quartzite fabrics were manufactured from crushed and added quartzite Terrace Gravel pebbles. The fabrics containing lumps of fine-grained sandstone (Greensand) are characteristic of the locality and derive from the Upper Greensand beds. The flint-tempered sherds may have been imported, however, as although flints have been noticed in the local gravel, they are not common in the area.

### **Forms**

A total of 136 vessels could be allocated to a form type (Table 3.9). 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 occurrence of forms through time is shown by Table 3.10, and the relationships between form and fabric are summarised by Tables 3.11 and 3.12. 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 recorded and, of those sherds which bore traces of treatment (403 sherds), smoothing was practised most often (Table 3.13). A smaller number (197) of sherds with observable surface treatments were attributed to vessel form (Table 3.14). Smoothing and rough smoothing was generally restricted to B2 and A3 jars, whilst burnished red surfaces were noted most commonly amongst the globular bowls with flared rims that were recovered from pit 3006. Burnishing was not associated with many other forms and did not occur on a large element of the assemblage.

### **Decoration**

Decoration occurred on only 5.4 % of assemblage by sherd count, although it was found on 98 of the 200 identified vessels (Table 3.15). Fingertip impressions on rims and shoulders were most commonly observed, and these occurred on B1 type jars only. Early Iron Age decoration types included 'pie crust' decoration (comprising fingertip impressions on the external and internal edges of T-shaped rims), small cordons on the necks of C2A type bowls and combinations of incised and impressed motifs on angular C2C bowls. Middle Iron Age decoration types included panels of incised lines placed underneath the rim (Fig. 3.7.48, .49, .53), deep dots (Fig. 3.7.47) and circular stamps at the ends of pendant swags. The similarity of the early and middle Iron Age decoration did, in some cases, make precise dating difficult.

## **Evidence for vessel function**

Seven vessels had charred residues indicating use for cooking. The majority of these were early Iron Age, with single middle Iron Age and late Bronze Age examples. Residues were noted on the inside and outside faces of rim sherds and, in one example, on the internal face of a base sherd. Vessel forms with residues included one T-rimmed vessel (A3), one slack-shouldered jar (B1) and one angular bowl.

## **Discussion of ceramics by phase**

### ***Early Bronze Age***

Two sherds (7 g) of early Bronze Age date were recovered as residual material from contexts 3034 and 5006 (Fig. 3.2.1). These are both decorated with twisted cord impressions and are manufactured from grog-tempered fabrics typical of the Beaker and Collared Urn traditions.

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

A total of 1062 sherds (7241 g) have been dated to the late Bronze Age, of which 431 sherds (3696 g) were recovered from the hilltop enclosure ditch, the rest being residual in later contexts. Fabric was particularly important in assigning material to this period, with quartzite fabrics assumed to be late Bronze Age, in line with evidence from elsewhere in the region (Barclay 2001).

The commonest vessel form is the slack-shouldered jar, represented by nine examples. Other forms include T-rim jars (A3), carinated jars (C1), angular bowls (C2C) and one globular bowl (C2D). Decoration included two incidences of fingertip impressed cordons (P52), 14 incidences of fingertip decorated shoulders or rims and five incidences of shoulders or rims decorated with incised decoration. Most sherds had received no surface treatment, although smoothing, rough smoothing and burnishing were noted.

The group from the hilltop enclosure ditch is key to understanding this ceramic phase. Significant assemblages of pottery were recovered from two interventions into the ditch, with 172 sherds (1525 g) from 3017 and 259 sherds (2171 g) from 6003. Mean sherd weight was modest at 8.5 g and 7.1 g respectively. Observations made in the field suggests that the infilling of the ditch may have occurred over a significant period, with naturally deposited erosion and silting layers interspersed with some deliberately dumped deposits.

In ditch 3017, the lowest fills 3082, 3099 and 3121 contained a small number of relatively large late Bronze Age sherds. This concurs with radiocarbon determinations of 1010-840 cal BC and 1000-820 cal BC from fill 3099. One B1 jar is the only recognisable form. The fill above, 3081, has also been radiocarbon dated to the 11th-9th centuries cal BC, but contained a small, mixed group of body sherds dated to the late Bronze Age and early Iron Age. This mixed character continues in the remaining fills, with early Iron Age pottery forming a slight majority. Late Bronze

Age pottery still formed a significant minority, however, and actually had a higher mean sherd weight than the early Iron Age material. Forms of vessels ascribed to the late Bronze Age comprise A3, B1 (three examples), C0, C1 and C2C (two examples). One type C2F bowl is also present, broadly datable to the late Bronze Age or early Iron Age.

The lower fills of ditch 6003 (6027, 6037 and 6021) produced mainly late Bronze Age material. Most of these were small fragments, but substantial conjoining fragments of a flared rim bowl (form C2E) decorated with an applied fingertip-impressed cordon around the neck were recovered from fill 6027. A radiocarbon determination of 905-805 cal BC (Poz-14319: 2700±30 BP) has been obtained from this layer. A few sherds ascribed to the early Iron Age also occurred in each of these fills, however. With a mean sherd weight of only 5.3 g, it is possible that this material is intrusive. Upper fills 6017, 6020 and 6004 had a different composition, with early Iron Age pottery forming the majority. As with ditch 6003, the majority of the material from these middle and upper fills dates to the early Iron Age, but the mean sherd weight of the late Bronze Age material is actually slightly higher. Forms of vessels ascribed to the late Bronze Age comprise B0, B1, C2C and C2D.

To summarise, the only vessel forms recorded from 'secure' late Bronze Age contexts in the lower part of the ditch are one B1 jar and one C2E bowl. The late Bronze Age pottery from the upper layers of the ditch shows a wider variety of forms. This latter group of material has been ascribed to the late Bronze Age largely on the basis of fabric (i.e. the presence of quartzite), although some of the forms such as angular jars and bowls are also common during the early Iron Age. As these upper fills show a mix of traits conventionally dated to the late Bronze Age and early Iron Age respectively, it is possible that they were laid down some time around the transition between these two periods.

Parallels from elsewhere in the region suggest that the late Bronze Age pottery from Castle Hill essentially belongs to the later, 'decorated' phase of the post-Deverel Rimbury pottery tradition. The flared rim bowl (C2E; Fig. 3.2.9) from ditch 6003 has no local parallels, although it was made from a fabric containing locally available materials (quartzite, sand and glauconitic sandstone). Instead, it has eastern parallels from the ditched enclosures at Monkton, Kent (Macpherson-Grant 1994, fig. 6.12), Mucking South Rings, Essex (Jones and Bond 1980, figs 13 and 14), and Scarborough, North Yorkshire (Smith 1928, fig. 1). Meanwhile, the high-shouldered bipartite bowl (C2F; Fig. 3.2.5) from ditch 3017 is similar to bowl type 3.2 at Potterne, where it has been dated to the 10th/9th to early 6th centuries BC (Gingell and Morris 2000).

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

A total of 1907 sherds (16,806 g) of pottery has been ascribed to the early Iron Age. This included 540 sherds from the upper fills of the late Bronze Age hilltop enclosure ditch and 791 sherds from a single large early Iron Age pit (3006). The remainder of the material was residual in later contexts. The material is largely in sand and shell fabrics, which replaced the quartzite and flint of the late Bronze Age.

There appeared to be two ceramic phases present in the early Iron Age element of the assemblages; the earlier (*c* 800-500 BC) was characterised by angular bowls with incised decoration and white inlaid jars, whilst the later (*c* 500-300 BC) was characterised by T-rim jars and globular, red-coated bowls. The bulk of the material is



only broadly datable to the early Iron Age, however. These included the A2, B0, B1 and C1 forms, manufactured from chronologically non-specific sandy fabrics.

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

A total of 23 diagnostic sherds of earliest Iron Age date were recovered from 11 contexts. A minimum of 11 vessels were noted, identified on the basis of form and the presence of incised motifs typical of All Cannings Cross type vessels. The difficulty in dating these sherds has arisen from the ubiquitous nature of some such incised and stamped motifs within the Iron Age; both early and middle Iron Age sherds with stamped circles and incised lines have been recovered from other features excavated elsewhere at Wittenhams. The fabrics used to manufacture the vessels contained fine quartzitic sand. Burnished finishes were present on five sherds, smoothing was present on four and a red coating on two. The sherds were all small and broken, suggesting redeposition.

Layer 3024 in ditch 3017 contained refitting sherds of a carinated furrowed bowl (Fig. 3.3.13), dating to the late 8th to early 6th centuries BC. This has parallels at Potterne (Gingell and Morris 2000, 156, fig. 47) and Budbury (Wainwright 1970, fig. 14, 74-8). A rim fragment from another furrowed bowl (Fig. 3.3.23), similar to Potterne Type 3.4 (Gingell and Morris 2000, fig. 49.34), was found in the uppermost fill of pit 3006.

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

A total of 288 sherds (4688 g) could be placed in this phase, most of which came from pit 3006. Diagnostic forms include T-rim jars with expanded, pie crust rims (Fig. 3.4.25-27, .37), round-bodied red-coated bowls (Figs 3.5.34, 3.6.38, and 3.6.40) and a decorated, flanged lid (Fig. 3.5.29). Coarse shell fabrics, which were used only in the manufacture of the expanded rim forms (A3), formed the majority of the assemblage.

The most unusual vessel is the decorated flanged lid (Fig. 3.5.29). Lids are rare in early Iron Age assemblages from Britain, although they appear to be rather more common in western continental Europe. However, the decoration of punched dots inlaid with white material is entirely in keeping with pottery of this period in southern England. Within the Upper Thames Valley, a fragment of a small flanged lid with incised curvilinear decoration has been found in an early or middle Iron Age context at Watchfield, Shrivenham (Laidlaw 2001, fig. 14.19). Further afield, a number of middle or late Iron Age flanged lids with La Tène style curvilinear decoration have been recovered from Meare, Somerset (Bulleid and Gray 1948).

The A3 jar type was also found in Trench 15 from the 2004 excavations, as well as in Rhodes' earlier investigations of the early Iron Age midden below (Rhodes 1948, fig. 9.1-5). It has also been recovered from other sites in the region such as 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, fig. 3.2).

Red-coated round-bodied bowls with flared rims, manufactured from very fine sand containing rare ferruginous pellets and other pebbles, were recovered in some numbers (Table 3.9). This vessel type was again found in the 2004 excavations. Further parallels (some red coated) have been recovered from Faringdon (Timby 2004; Bryan *et al.* 2004), Blewburton (Harding 1972, pl. 58) and Segsbury (Brown 2005). Gingell and Morris (2000, 165) argue that globular bowl forms are generally later early Iron Age within Berkshire and Oxfordshire, post-dating the biconical and angular forms associated with earlier All Canning Cross type assemblages. 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 those from Danebury, and it is therefore possible that they derive from the same source on Salisbury Plain (Williams and Wandibba 1984).

#### *Discussion of key groups*

There appears to be a chronological distinction between the key groups of early Iron Age pottery, with the material from pit 3006 apparently later in emphasis than that from the upper fills of the late Bronze Age hilltop enclosure ditch.

Pit 3006 contained a remarkable assemblage of 11.5 kg of pottery, with a mean sherd weight (10.6 g) that is above average for the site. Observations made in the field suggest that the pit was filled fairly rapidly with a series of dumped deposits, interleaved with brief episodes of erosion. This is supported by the essentially coherent character of the pottery. The large majority of pottery is dated to EIA2 or more broadly to the early Iron Age. Distinctively EIA2 pottery occurs from fill 3061 upwards; in other words, from the first fill to contain a significant quantity of pottery. Small amounts of earlier pottery dated to the late Bronze Age and EIA1 is dispersed throughout the stratigraphic sequence. These have a significantly lower mean sherd weight than the EIA/EIA2 material (Table 3.16), and can thus probably be regarded as residual.

Forms from the pit are dominated by T-rim jars (A3) and round-bodied, flared rim bowls (C2). The association between these two vessel types is notable; a similar association was seen in pit 15018 from the 2004 excavations. Rhodes' earlier investigations of the early Iron Age midden below Castle Hill also showed that haematite-coated round-bodied vessels were found "in association with vessels with swollen flat topped rims" (Rhodes 1948, 24). There are no clear trends in vessel forms through the stratigraphic sequence within pit 3006.

The early Iron Age pottery from the Late Bronze Age hilltop enclosure ditch was in a poorer condition to that from the pit, with a mean sherd weight of only 6.6 g. In contrast to the pit, forms were dominated by slack-shouldered jars, with only small numbers of bowls and T-rim jars (Table 3.17). Generally speaking, material ascribed to Early Iron Age 2 - such as the two A3 T-rim jars - was restricted to the uppermost two fills of the ditch (3024 and 3046; 6004 and 6017). The exception to this was a fragment of a red-coated bowl from fill 3081, fairly low down the sequence.

The differences between the pit and ditch assemblages are likely to be at least partly chronological. The bulk of the infilling of the ditch probably predated the deposit within the pit, although the uppermost two fills of the ditch may have been chronologically closer to it. It is also possible, however, that the differences seen in the assemblage from the pit are not (solely) chronological. A deposit of this size from a pit is very unusual in a regional context, and hence it may have constituted a 'special' deposit, containing a selected range of pottery differing from the material in contemporary 'refuse' deposits.

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

A relatively small amount of middle Iron Age pottery was recovered, comprising 215 sherds (1435 g). Most of this material came from 16 middle Iron Age pits, all of which also contained residual material from the late Bronze Age and/or the early Iron Age. The vessels were all manufactured from fabrics containing fine sand and other

inclusions, such as fine shell or glauconitic sandstone. Forms comprised globular bowls, globular jars and barrel-shaped jars (Fig. 3.7.47-54). A variety of decorative motifs were present on globular bowls. The decoration on vessels Fig. 3.7.48-49 can be paralleled at Blewburton (Harding 1972, pl. 68H and J; plate 66F), and that on vessel Fig. 3.7.53 at Gravelly Guy (Duncan *et al.* 2004, fig. 7.5 and 7.6). Although radiocarbon dates were obtained from a number of middle Iron Age contexts at Castle Hill, none of these contexts contained pottery with recognisable vessel forms or decoration.

### **Catalogue of illustrated pottery (Figs 3.2-3.7)**

- 1 Fabric group 17. EBA. Ctx 5006, post-medieval wood bank
- 2 Fabric group 5. Form B1. LBA. Ctx 3034, EIA pit 3006
- 3 Fabric group 16. Form B1. LBA. Ctx 3026, MIA pit 3025
- 4 Fabric group 16. LBA. Ctx 3035, LBA enclosure ditch 3017
- 5 Fabric group 1. Form C2F. LBA. Ctx 3046, LBA enclosure ditch 3017
- 6 Fabric group 5. Form B1. LBA. Ctx 4004, medieval pit 4003
- 7 Fabric group 16. Form B1. LBA. Ctx 6017, LBA enclosure ditch 6003
- 8 Fabric group 14. Form C2D. LBA. Ctx 6021, LBA enclosure ditch 6003
- 9 Fabric group 5. Form C2E. LBA. Ctx 6031, LBA enclosure ditch 6003
- 10 Fabric group 14. Form C0. LBA or EIA. Ctx 6004, LBA enclosure ditch 6003
- 11 Fabric group 14. Form B1. LBA or EIA. Ctx 6004, LBA enclosure ditch 6003
- 12 Fabric group 4. Form C0. Ctx 6017, LBA enclosure ditch 6003
- 13 Fabric group 20. Form C2B. EIA1. Ctx 3024, LBA enclosure ditch 3017
- 14 Fabric group 1. Form C2. EIA. Ctx 3024, LBA enclosure ditch 3017
- 15 Fabric group 20. Form B1. Ctx 3024, LBA enclosure ditch 3017
- 16 Fabric group 1. Form B1. EIA. Ctx 3024, LBA enclosure ditch 3017
- 17 Fabric group 1. Form C2C. EIA1. Ctx 3040, EIA pit 3006
- 18 Fabric group 1. Form C2C. EIA1. Ctx 3059, EIA pit 3006
- 19 Fabric group 1. Form C2C. EIA1. Ctx 3060, EIA pit 3006
- 20 Fabric group 1. Form C2C. EIA1. Ctx 3007, EIA pit 3006
- 21 Fabric group 1. Form C2C. EIA1. Ctx 3007, EIA pit 3006
- 22 Fabric group 7. Form B1. EIA. Ctx 3034, EIA pit 3006
- 23 Fabric group 1. Form C2B. EIA1. Ctx 3007, EIA pit 3006
- 24 Fabric group 6. Form C2. EIA2. Ctx 3034, EIA pit 3006
- 25 Fabric group 20. Form A3. EIA2. Ctx 3034, EIA pit 3006
- 26 Fabric group 20. Form A3. EIA2. Ctx 3034, EIA pit 3006
- 27 Fabric group 20. Form A3. EIA2. Ctx 3034, EIA pit 3006
- 28 Fabric group 21. EIA2. Ctx 3034, EIA pit 3006
- 29 Fabric group 1. Lid. EIA2. Ctx 3036, EIA pit 3006
- 30 Fabric group 1. Form B1. EIA. Ctx 3038, EIA pit 3006
- 31 Fabric group 2. EIA. Ctx 3040, EIA pit 3006
- 32 Fabric group 1. Form B1. EIA. Ctx 3040, EIA pit 3006
- 33 Fabric group 1. Form C2D. EIA. Ctx 3040, EIA pit 3006
- 34 Fabric group 1. Form C2. EIA2. Ctx 3040, EIA pit 3006
- 35 Fabric group 20. Form B1. EIA2. Ctx 3040, EIA pit 3006
- 36 Fabric group 1. Form C0. EIA. Ctx 3061, EIA pit 3006
- 37 Fabric group 21. Form A3. EIA2. Ctx 3061, EIA pit 3006
- 38 Fabric group 2. Form C2. EIA2. Ctx 3061, EIA pit 3006

- 39 Fabric group 21. Form B1. EIA2. Ctx 3061, EIA pit 3006
- 40 Fabric group 1. Form C2. EIA2. Ctx 3061, EIA pit 3006
- 41 Fabric group 14. EIA. Ctx 3020, MIA pit 3019
- 42 Fabric group 1. EIA. Ctx 3020, MIA pit 3019
- 43 Fabric group 21. Form C1. EIA. Ctx 4017, medieval pit 4003
- 44 Fabric group 21. Form B1. EIA. Ctx 4008, LBA enclosure ditch 4007
- 45 Fabric group 1. Form B1. EIA. Ctx 4008, LBA enclosure ditch 4007
- 46 Fabric group 1. Form C2C. EIA. Ctx 6004, LBA enclosure ditch 6003
- 47 Fabric group 1. Form D0. MIA. Ctx 3003, MIA pit 3002
- 48 Fabric group 4. Form D1. MIA. Ctx 3003, MIA pit 3002
- 49 Fabric group 1. Form D1. MIA. Ctx 3005, MIA pit 3004
- 50 Fabric group 1. Form D0. MIA. Ctx 3014, MIA pit 3013
- 51 Fabric group 1. Form D0. MIA. Ctx 3030, MIA pit 3029
- 52 Fabric group 1. Form D1. MIA. Ctx 3028, late Roman quarry pit 3067
- 53 Fabric group 1. Form D1. MIA. Ctx 3028, late Roman quarry pit 3067
- 54 Fabric group 1. Form D0. MIA. Ctx 3132, MIA pit 3131

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

*by Paul Booth*

The 2003 and 2006 excavations at Castle Hill produced 2532 sherds (21,422 g) of late Iron Age and Roman pottery, the majority of which was of late Roman date, or occurred in context groups of that date. All but 9 sherds (55 g) of this material came from the trenches excavated in 2003 (Trenches 1-6). 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) as well as a count of rim sherds were used to quantify vessel types. The pottery was in moderate condition at best - surfaces were usually relatively well-preserved but the material was fragmented, as indicated by the average sherd weight of only 8.5 g. In particular, a number of very small fragments of Oxford colour-coated ware were recovered.

### **Fabrics**

The fabrics identified are listed and quantified below (Table 3.18) with summary descriptions including cross-reference to the national Roman fabric reference collection codes (Tomber and Dore 1998), where appropriate, in bold.

The fabrics are listed in the sequence of ware groups used for comparative analysis of a number of assemblages from the region (eg Booth 2004a; forthcoming). Overall, the assemblage was dominated by reduced coarse wares and by Oxford colour-coated ware (fabric F51). The latter was the most important of the 'fine and specialist ware' fabrics, along with Oxford mortaria. F51 comprised 28.7% of the total sherds from the site (but only 17.7% by weight) and formed the great majority of the fine (F) ware category. Within that category sherds recorded as fabric OF are also probable/possible examples of F51, but with all traces of the colour-coated surface missing. Other fine wares were from the Nene Valley (F52) and the New Forest (F53), with only a single sherd assigned to the latter source. Oxford industries

accounted for all but one of the mortarium sherds. It is notable that white mortaria were entirely absent from the Castle Hill assemblage (see further below), in which the white-slipped fabric M31 (Young 1977 fabric WC) was dominant, being twice as common as the red colour-coated fabric M41. The pattern set by the mortaria is seen in other ware groups - only a single white ware sherd (in fabric W12) was present and Oxford parchment ware (fabric W11) was, remarkably, totally absent. Conversely the Oxford oxidised white-slipped fabric Q21 was represented relatively well in comparison with other late-Roman groups in the region. Sherds in the other fine and specialist ware groups - samian ware and amphora - were tiny and undiagnostic. For these reasons the attribution of samian ware sherds to South and Central Gaulish sources should be regarded as tentative.

A small group of late Iron Age/early Roman material was present, represented principally by sand- and grog-tempered fabrics in a late Iron Age 'Belgic' tradition (E30 and E80 respectively). This material was concentrated in the hillfort ditch in Trench 1 (Table 3.19). Oxidised wares were more numerous, amounting to 5.1% of sherds, but were only half as important in terms of weight. Sherds in the fine fabric O10 had an average weight of only just over 3 g. Many of the fragments assigned to this fabric were completely lacking in diagnostic characteristics; some could have been very abraded fragments of fabric F51. The only distinctive non-local fabric in this group was O81, from a source in Buckinghamshire, represented by a single sherd.

The dominant reduced wares (53% of sherds, 64.9% by weight) were presumably also drawn mostly from quite local sources, but the fabrics are relatively undiagnostic and not easily assigned to specific production centres. The majority of these sherds were assigned to a generalised moderately sandy reduced ware group (R30), usually associated with the Oxford industry. Within this grouping, however, a number of sherds were recorded as fabric R36, characterised by slightly above-average representation of quartz sand grains and the typical appearance of these at sherd surfaces. This fabric is assigned somewhat tentatively to the poorly-understood late-Roman production site at Compton in Berkshire located less than 15 km south of Castle Hill (Harris 1935; Harding 1937). In the absence of published characterisation of the products of this industry it is difficult to be certain about their definition, however, although inspection of material in Newbury Museum (by the writer in 1998) supports the identification. Separation of fabric R36 from other R30 material has probably not been achieved consistently in this assemblage but it is more likely that R36, although present in significant quantities (27.5% of all reduced ware sherds), was still under- rather than over-represented in recording. A few sherds in a coarser sandy fabric, R23, are also assigned (more tentatively) to the Compton kilns.

The only identifiable non-local reduced ware was R39, from the Alice Holt industry, a consistent (low-level) component of late-Roman assemblages in the region but best-represented at the present site. Most sherds in fabric groups R10 and R20 are likely to have derived from the Oxford industry but cannot be linked with individual production sites within that industry. It is possible that some of the sherds in fabric R20 were of early Roman date, but this cannot be demonstrated from the minimal evidence of vessel forms. An early date is also possible for sherds in the coarse grog-tempered fabric R90, but this fabric remained in use for much of the Roman period, specifically for large jars (Young 1977, 203).

The only other significant ware group, calcareous-tempered fabrics, consisted almost entirely of fabric C11, late shell-tempered ware, assigned to the production site at Harrold, Bedfordshire (Brown 1994), although it is possible that other (unknown) sources may have produced similar material.

The breakdown of fabrics in terms of the main excavated trenches at Castle Hill is shown in Table 3.19. This is not particularly significant since Trenches 1-3 were all linked and therefore closely adjacent; of the remaining trenches only Trench 4 produced a reasonable assemblage of Roman material. The tiny collection from Trench 10, all effectively unstratified, is included in the 'Others and unstratified' column. The breakdown shows that E wares concentrated in Trench 1, within the hillfort ditch, which had correspondingly lower proportions of fine and specialist wares and reduced coarse wares. In general, however, the distribution of the most significant fabrics or ware groups seems to have been reasonably consistent across the site. The principal points of note are that reduced wares (particularly the 'Compton' fabric R36) were most common and fabric C11, otherwise ubiquitous, was absent from contexts in Trench 4, but the size of this assemblage (only 77 sherds) is such that the figures may not be properly representative.

### **Vessel types**

Vessel types were recorded in terms of fairly broad subdivisions of major functional categories. The degree of fragmentation of the material meant that in many cases identification beyond the level of major vessel class (eg type C, jars) was not possible. Quantification of vessel types by Rim Equivalents (REs) with a (less reliable) estimate of numbers based on rim count, is presented in Table 3.20.

As usual, jars were the principal component of the assemblage, but the fact that they did not dominate it completely is in line with the regionally (and in broad terms, nationally) observed pattern in which the representation of jars decreases steadily through the Roman period from a level of up to *c* 90% of the assemblage (see further below). Bowls and dishes correspondingly increase in importance, but in the Castle Hill assemblage these are complemented by flagons/jugs and mortaria, both of which are present at levels well above the average for the Oxford area. In contrast, cups and beakers were of minimal importance (the former class was represented by a single vessel but without a rim) and types such as lids were completely absent. A tiny fragment in fabric O10 was from a miniature vessel of uncertain function.

Jars occurred in the widest range of fabrics. Reduced fabrics R30 and R36 accounted for the majority, but they were also well-represented in fabric C11 (all but one example of the specific 'cooking pot type' jar CK were in this fabric) and occurred in O20, O80, Q21 and F51. Jars were the only vessels in the early E wares; the single example of the high shouldered type CE, a distinctive late Iron Age-early Roman form, was in fabric E80. Bowls were also found in a wide range of fabrics, although Oxford colour-coated products dominated most of the sub types except the straight-sided (type HB) category; these were in reduced Compton fabrics (4 examples) and shell-tempered fabric C11 (2 examples) with single examples in fabrics O20 and R10.

Straight-sided dishes (type JA) were likewise in reduced coarse ware fabrics except for single examples in C11 and typical Nene Valley (fabric F52) colour-coated ware. Compton products were again important, but there were 4 examples in Alice Holt fabric R39 and two in a coarse grog-tempered R90 fabric. Type JA vessels include several examples of a very distinctive group of dishes typically with slightly incurving sides and with external and internal burnished line decoration. Some examples have small bosses on the external wall, a feature which appears to have very localised distributions, as observed by Malcolm Lyne (eg Lyne 1999, 285). The

general type occurs in a number of fabrics and is clearly related to an Alice Holt form (Lyne and Jefferies 1979, 48, types 6A.8-6A.11) with particular parallels at Overwey (eg Clark 1949, 49, nos 59-69), though without the bosses. Several examples of the type, including two with bosses, have been recently recorded from an Oxford production site at Blackbird Leys but were subsumed under Young type R53 in the summary publication of the site (Booth and Edgeley-Long 2003, 249). The detailed chronology of Blackbird Leys is not very clear, and the sequential relationship between the occurrence of these dishes there and at Overwey (assuming that such a relationship exists, which seems likely) is therefore uncertain. The bossed examples of the type from Castle Hill are, however, both in Compton fabric R36 and Lyne (1999, 285) has also noted this form/fabric combination. Other evidence, particularly the occurrence of reduced ware copies of Oxford colour-coated ware forms amongst the Compton material in Newbury Museum, suggests a close connection between the two industries, but the origin of other examples of the dish type (eg No. 13 below), in quite different fabrics such as R90, remains unclear, although an association with one or the other industry seems most likely.

The remaining vessel types are also of interest. A majority of the flagons and jugs, often difficult to assign to well-defined types, were in colour-coated fabric F51 but there were also 5 reduced ware examples, 4 in R30 and 1 in R36. The colour-coated examples, however, are of types not easily paralleled in detail in Young's corpus. It is unclear if these were spouted types, although this is quite possible. As already noted, identifiable mortarium forms are all in Oxford fabrics, the types represented being C97 and WC4 and, particularly, WC7, of which there were 13 possible examples.

## Chronology

Only two context groups, 1006 and 1016, were clearly dated to the late Iron Age/early Roman period. Apart from a single intrusive sherd of R30 and four sherds of the coarse oxidised O80 these groups consisted entirely of sherds in fabrics E30 and E80. This small but distinct component was in marked contrast to the remainder of the assemblage, which was of late Roman date. Oxford colour-coated ware and associated fabrics were ubiquitous and thus indicate a *terminus post quem* of at least AD 240 for most context groups.

Many of these, however, may have been entirely of 4th century date, rather than earlier. This is most easily assessed in relation to the dating of the individual Oxford colour-coated ware vessel types present. These are as follows (Table 3.21):

Of the 13 vessel types represented, including the mortarium C97, only four (including type C45, for which see Booth *et al.* 1993, 167) have date ranges starting *c* AD 240, the remainder being thought to appear no earlier than AD 300. Quantified (more reliably) by REs the vessels divide almost evenly between those with an AD 240-400 date range and those dated AD 300 or later. The latter may be taken as a guide to suggest that at least some if not the majority of the vessels with the wider date range were in fact 4th century examples of their types. For example, while C51 is dated AD 240-400 by Young (1977, 160) recent analysis of a number of production site assemblages suggests that it was relatively rare on sites with a strong later 3rd century emphasis (eg Booth *et al.* 1993, 139; Booth and Edgeley-Long 2003, 249). Correspondingly, the almost total absence of C45, which generally seems to be the most common late 3rd century bowl form produced in the industry, is notable here,

while the occurrence of C46 may tend to support Young's later dating of this type. The lack of Oxford white wares, including mortaria and parchment ware, is also striking and may be chronologically determined. Late Roman production in the southern part of the Oxford industries seems to have exploited the local iron-rich clays to the exclusion of the white firing clay which had to be transported from Shotover, whereas in the 2nd and 3rd centuries white wares were manufactured across the industry alongside other products. The absence of white wares at Castle Hill might indicate that pottery was only (or, at least, very largely) reaching the site once this change in resource exploitation had been implemented. In this late period white-slipped wares may have been used increasingly in lieu of white wares proper, both for mortaria and also for small jars in fabric Q21, these perhaps serving as a substitute for the parchment ware forms P7-P9. It has also been suggested (S Green pers comm) that white-slipped Oxford mortaria were particularly characteristic of the unusually well-preserved very latest phases at Bath; the published data (Green and Young 1985) do not distinguish between probable residual and non-residual Oxford mortaria in the phase groups.

Other late Roman indicators in the Castle Hill assemblage include fabrics F52, C11 and R39, for all of which a date range entirely within the 4th century is likely, though a wider range is theoretically possible. On present evidence the Compton industry is also dated largely if not entirely to the 4th century and the bossed dishes discussed above are considered by Lyne (1999, 285-6) to date to the very end of the Roman period in Britain. The evidence already reviewed makes it clear that at least some context groups at Castle Hill must belong to the second half of the 4th century. Indeed a majority of groups could be of this date, though this is currently incapable of proof. The total absence of black-burnished ware may be a supporting factor, however, as this would normally be expected on any site in the region, particularly if occupied in the late 3rd-early 4th century. It is possible therefore that its absence here indicates that the bulk of activity took place after the contraction of the main area to which black-burnished ware was exported, after *c* AD 360.

## **General discussion**

The most distinctive characteristic of the assemblage is its generally late Roman date. Small groups of material from the hillfort ditch in Trench 1 indicate activity in the 1st century AD, though whether before or after the conquest period is impossible to tell. A number of tiny fragments of samian ware and a single small amphora sherd may represent low level 'background noise' from an otherwise largely unidentifiable early to middle Roman component in the assemblage, but the quantities are very small. These were the only imported fabrics in the entire assemblage. It is notable that the most common extra-regional Romano-British coarse ware, black-burnished ware, was completely absent. The remaining pottery was dominated by local production based on the Oxford and Compton industries. Extra-regional fabrics were from sources characteristic of late Roman assemblages in the area; the lower Nene Valley, ?Harrold in Bedfordshire and Alice Holt, with single sherds from the New Forest (F53) and the Stowe area of Buckinghamshire (O81). Of these only the Harrold material was numerically significant, but the quantity of Alice Holt material is notable in terms of regional comparisons and is probably another indicator of a very late Roman emphasis in the assemblage.



The chronological range of the Castle Hill material contrasts with that from areas immediately west of the hillfort, including Hill Farm and the intervening area in the vicinity of the site examined by Rhodes (1948) and subsequently by Time Team (Wessex Archaeology 2004) and in the context of the present project (Trenches 13-15). The material from the Time Team work was thought to be mainly of mid 3rd-4th century date (Wessex Archaeology 2004, 21) but it certainly included earlier pottery. Equally, while some late Roman material was present in Rhodes' excavation (Rhodes 1948, 30), this was clearly associated with 2nd and 3rd century pottery in some quantity and the pottery from OA Trenches 13-15 was mostly of 1st-2nd century date, although some later sherds were also present.

Close comparison with other late Roman site assemblages in the area is difficult because the importance of the Compton industry has not generally been understood, owing to lack of detailed publication. It may also be the case that the distribution of the products of this industry was in some way restricted to the area south of the Thames and that these products were perhaps significantly less important in Dorchester than at Castle Hill, despite the proximity of the two places. There have been no significant recent excavations of late Roman sequences in Dorchester which would allow this proposition to be tested, however. The assemblage from Beech House Hotel (Rowley and Brown 1981) appears to have a roughly comparable level of fine and specialist wares (a minimum of 30.3% of sherd count) to that seen at Castle Hill, similarly dominated by Oxford colour-coated ware, but the data are incomplete (Booth 2004a, 47). This is nevertheless the most closely comparable (approximately) quantified later Roman assemblage from the region. The higher levels of Oxford colour-coated wares at Castle Hill arguably reflect a more restricted late Roman date range, with activity concentrated at a time when colour-coated ware production was at its peak (at least as a proportion of total Oxford industry output), in the second half of the 4th century (see Going 1992, 101-102). Locally this trend can be demonstrated in the northern extramural settlement at Alchester, where the percentage of fabric F51 was noticeably higher in the second half of the 4th century than in the preceding early 4th century phase (Booth *et al.* 2001, 458-9), although the quantities were still considerably less than at Dorchester and Castle Hill. High representation of colour-coated wares is indicated in the unquantified reports on material from other sites within Dorchester (eg Frere 1962, 143-5, group D) and immediately outside, such as Bishop's Court (May 1977, 62-70, e.g. fig. 8, on which no. 1 is a bossed dish - the description of the fabric is consistent with a Compton product) and Wally Corner, Berinsfield (Sutton 1963, 14-18), but it is not seen in a smaller fieldwalking assemblage from just east of Dorchester, at a site known as CD92 (Booth 2004a, 44, 48).

Slightly further afield there is good evidence for Roman reuse of the hillfort at Uffington, which produced an assemblage of very similar size to that from Castle Hill (2644 sherds, 22,456 g, 26.6 REs; Brown 2003). There were marked differences between the two, however, although Uffington was comparable to Castle Hill in that its most distinctive component was late Roman and included Compton and shell-tempered wares (*ibid.*, 177, fig. 9.7, nos 3 and 4 and 6 respectively, the first of these quite closely comparable to Castle Hill No. 11) as well as reduced coarse wares. The most notable differences were a much higher representation of oxidised coarse wares at Uffington (24.5% of sherds, as opposed to only 5.1% at Castle Hill) and much smaller quantities of Oxford colour-coated ware, which only amounted to 3.8% of sherds at Uffington (but 6.6% of REs; *ibid.*, CDROM table 9.11). The relationship between jars and bowls was therefore rather different, these comprised 73% and

12.1% respectively of REs at Uffington. These figures may reflect a wider date range for the assemblage there than at Castle Hill. Mortaria were almost entirely from the Oxford kilns, but were less common than at Castle Hill (comprising 2.8% of sherds and 4.1% of REs) and consisted almost entirely of white slipped forms WC5 and WC7, plus two examples of C97. Again a chronological factor may explain the absence of white Oxford mortaria. This characteristic is also seen at another reoccupied hillfort, Madmarston Camp, close to the Roman roadside settlement at Swalcliffe in north Oxfordshire (Fowler 1960). The unquantified illustrated pottery from there, suggests an essentially late Roman group (*ibid.*, 34), amongst which the four mortaria shown (*ibid.*, fig 16 no. 9, fig. 17 nos 1, 15 and 23) are all most likely to be Oxford white-slipped ware vessels.

The Castle Hill assemblage can therefore be seen as demonstrating characteristics shared with a number of other late Roman sites in the region, although the closest comparanda seem, unsurprisingly, to lie in the immediate vicinity of Dorchester. For the most part these do not show any clear cut distinction of character between intra-mural and extra-mural Dorchester sites, but in the absence of quantified data such a judgement can only be subjective. In a comparative review of assemblage status it was suggested that the Beech House Hotel site, with its high level of fine and specialist wares, reflected the status difference between contemporary urban and rural sites, although it was admitted that proximity to the production sites would have served to boost the quantities of Oxford fine and specialist ware products (Booth 2004a, 48). The latter factor was presumably very important in the immediate vicinity of Dorchester but it may also be that social factors such as control of distribution networks played a part in determining the quantities of colour-coated wares reaching individual sites, otherwise the contrast between Beech House Hotel and a site such as CD92 (*ibid.*, 44, 48) should not have been as marked as it was. In view of the possibility that the great majority of the Castle Hill assemblage was exclusively of very late Roman date (at least after AD 350), however, it is difficult to determine whether the high fine and specialist ware percentage there should be seen as simply reflecting this factor, or whether it can be taken as an indicator of relatively high status for this site. If Castle Hill was a high status site in the late 4th century this was presumably within the framework of social and economic structures based upon Dorchester itself.

Either way, the assemblage provides some insight into and confirmation of certain characteristics of the latest Roman assemblages in the Dorchester area. The aspects of this that relate to the Oxford industry - high levels of colour-coated ware vessels and of white-slipped vessels, including jars, and an absence of white mortaria and other wares - have already been discussed. The high percentage of mortaria raises questions about the use of these vessels. Were they numerous simply because they were readily available, or was there a functional aspect to this as well? A similar situation was seen at Mansfield College, Oxford, where mortaria (principally white wares) comprised 12.5% of the assemblage in terms of REs, but again the interpretation of this highly atypical figure was uncertain (Booth 2000, 313). It seems unlikely, however, that such large quantities of these vessels would have been in use simply for grinding and mixing, and use for a wider range of functions may be suspected. The relative frequency and variety of liquid containers (flagons/flasks) does seem to be a real feature of some late Roman assemblages, but at Castle Hill was not matched by similar numbers of drinking vessels. The poor representation of beakers here is notable and not easily explained.

Finally, what was the significance of the most distinctive component of the Castle Hill pottery, the bossed dishes? Lyne (1999, 285-6) sees them as representing potential sub-Roman activity and closely linked to areas of early Germanic settlement, a case supported by the presence of broadly comparable bossed vessels in 'Anglo-Saxon' fabrics at Barton Court Farm (Miles 1986, fiche 7:G2-3 no. 5) and Dorchester (Frere 1962, 147-8, no. 20; 1984, 169, no. 146). This may be so, and superficially fits the evidence from the Dorchester area well, but the origins of the type in a regional context clearly lie within mainstream pottery production in the Oxford industry, as seen at Blackbird Leys, although it is particularly unfortunate that close dating was not possible there. It is presumed, but not demonstrable at present, that the type became part of the Compton repertoire through the connections of potters there with the Oxford industry. Other examples of the bow sided dish form, both with and without bosses, occur in a variety of fabrics, both at Castle Hill and at other sites in the area. The distribution of the bossed vessels is notably restricted, however, extending from Frilford in the west (Bradford and Goodchild 1939, 60, fig. 13 no. 11) to Blackbird Leys, Dorchester and Castle Hill and as far south as Lowbury Hill (Atkinson 1916, 60, 62, fig. 16 no. 18). Given that Compton was one source of these vessels, however, the distribution should include sites in the vicinity of the production centre, but there are no data for this area

### **Catalogue of illustrated Roman pottery (Fig. 3.8)**

Much of the Roman pottery was poorly stratified. The illustrated vessels are selected to demonstrate the range of material present, including in some cases good examples of well-known types. Pottery from colluvial and dumping layers of Roman date behind the hillfort rampart in Trenches 2 and 3 is grouped together, followed by other material from contexts which were either later in date or less certainly securely Roman. Within these groupings vessels are listed in ware group and then type order.

#### *Late Roman fill of hillfort ditch*

1 Fabric C11. Medium mouthed 'cooking pot type' jar with sharply hooked rim. Context 1011.

#### *Colluvial and dumping layers behind rampart*

2 Fabric F51. Flagon or jug with angled beaded rim and three or four-ribbed handle. The form is not in Young's corpus. Context 2017.

3 Fabric F51. Flagon or jug cf Young type C12 but the everted bead rim is different. Context 2028.

4 Fabric F51. Bowl of Young type C46. Context 2011.

5 Fabric F51. Curving sided flanged bowl of Young type C52 with white painted decoration. Context 3122.

6 Fabric M31. Mortarium of Young type WC4. Context 3130.

7 Fabric Q21. Small everted rim jar, approximately of Young type WC2 (cf No. 21). Context 2006.

8 Fabric R36. Mid grey. Jug or handled jar with simple slightly cupped rim and two-ribbed handle. Context 3130.

9 Fabric R30. Mid grey. Jug or handled jar with thickened slightly everted rim. Little more than the handle scar survives. Context 3107.

10 Fabric R30. Medium grey. Narrow mouthed jar with frilled thickened everted rim and cordon at base of neck with impressed decoration. The top of the rim is burnished and there are multiple horizontal burnished lines on the neck and below the shoulder cordon. Contexts 3112 and 3122.

11 Fabric R36. Mid grey. Medium mouthed jar with thickened everted rim. A broad cordon at the base of the neck is defined by grooves and marked with closely-spaced oblique slashes and there is a band of combed wavy line decoration between two girth grooves. Roughly executed overall burnishing on the top of the rim, the shoulder and the lower body and burnished lines on the neck. Sooted on exterior and on top of rim. Contexts 2017, 3075 and 3130.

12 Fabric R36. Mid grey with brown core. ?Medium mouthed jar with slightly hooked everted rim. Heavily sooted on exterior. Context 3130.

13 Fabric R10. Medium grey. Wide mouthed jar with thickened everted rim and girth groove. Burnished overall on top of rim and on shoulder. Context 2017.

14 Fabric R36. Dark grey-brown. Curving sided dish with exterior boss(es) and oblique burnished lines both interior and exterior. Context 3130.

15 Fabric R30. Mid grey. Curving sided dish with internal burnished surface and oblique burnished lines on exterior. Diameter uncertain. Context 3130.

16 Fabric R90. Black. Curving sided dish with burnish on top of rim and oblique burnished lines on interior and exterior. Slightly sooted on exterior. Context 2017.

17 Fabric R90. Grey-brown, hand made. Shallow dish (or possibly lid) with burnish on top and outer edge of rim. Context 2017.

*Miscellaneous later contexts etc*

18 Fabric F51. Curving sided bowl of Young type C75. Context 3105. Mixed colluvial layer.

19 Fabric M31. Mortarium of Young type WC7. Context 3075. Medieval colluvial layer

20 Fabric M31. Mortarium of Young type WC7. Slight sooting at one point on interior. Context 3117. Fill of middle Iron Age pit cut by Roman feature.

21 Fabric Q21. Small everted rim jar. The form is not closely paralleled in Young, who identifies a single jar type in his white colour-coated series (form WC2). Context 3076. Medieval colluvial layer.

22 Fabric O10. Small straight sided bowl with stubby flanged rim. Partially burnished on exterior. Context 1005. ?Post-Roman layer beneath topsoil above hillfort ditch.

23 Fabric R30. Mid grey. Large ?medium mouthed jar with heavy rolled rim. Burnished on top and outer face of rim. Context 3043. Medieval colluvial layer.

24 Fabric R30. Mid grey. Medium mouthed jar with slightly thickened everted rim. Burnished on shoulder and top of rim. Context 3105. Mixed colluvial layer.

25 Fabric R30. Mid grey with 'fire cloud' effect variation. Curving sided dish with double groove below rim and fine rilling beneath that. Overall burnish on interior and exterior of base and oblique burnished line decoration on interior and exterior walls. Context 3112. Top fill of middle Iron Age pit, or overlying layer.

26 Fabric R36. Mid grey. Curving sided dishes with interior and exterior oblique burnished line decoration. Slightly sooted. There are two very similar fragments, possibly from different vessels. Diameter uncertain. Context 4029. Medieval pit fill.

27 Fabric R36. Mid grey. Curving sided dish with deeply grooved upper body wall and applied boss beneath. Faint oblique burnished line decoration on interior. ?Context 3024, uppermost fill of late Bronze Age ditch.

28 Fabric C11. Medium mouthed 'cooking pot type' jar with hooked rim. Context 3028. Mixed colluvial layer.

29 Fabric C11. Large ?medium mouthed jar with hooked rim. Context 3077. Medieval colluvial layer.

## **POST-ROMAN POTTERY**

*by Paul Blinkhorn*

The post-Roman pottery assemblage comprised 123 sherds with a total weight of 2136 g (Table 3.22). The estimated vessel equivalent (EVE) by summation of surviving rim-sherd circumference was 1.27. All the post-Roman pottery consisted of early medieval unglazed wares except for a single sherd of late medieval Cistercian ware, two modern sherds and four small sherds of early-middle Saxon handmade pottery, one of which had faint traces of decoration, suggesting a date of the 5th-6th century. Generally, the assemblage was comprised small, scattered groups, with the exception of two well-represented and partially reconstructable vessels, although one of these was deposited in a number of different contexts due to the effects of site erosion.

### **Early to middle Saxon pottery**

Four small sherds (10 g) of early to middle Saxon pottery were recovered from Trench 3. One was intrusive in the upper fill of a middle Iron Age pit (ctx 3030), one was from a colluvial layer containing mixed Roman and medieval finds (ctx 3028) and two were residual in a medieval ploughsoil layer (ctx 3044). The fabric was as follows:

F1: Moderate to dense chaff voids up to 3 mm, sparse to moderate oolitic limestone up to 1 mm.

Such fabrics are typical of early-middle Saxon pottery from this area of Oxfordshire, and can be paralleled at sites such as the Oxford Science Park, Littlemore (Blinkhorn 2001, 189-97). The sherd from context 3030 is somewhat abraded, but has faint combed lines on the outer surface, indicating a date of the fifth- or sixth century.

### **Late Saxon and later pottery**

The late Saxon and later pottery was recorded utilising the coding system and chronology of the Oxfordshire County type-series (Mellor 1984; 1994), as follows:

OXAC: Cotswold-type ware, AD 975-1350. EVE = 1.18

WA38: Wallingford ware, AD 1050-1250. EVE = 0.09

OXAG: Ashampstead ware, mid-late 11<sup>th</sup>-13<sup>th</sup> century. EVE = 0

OXCL: Cistercian ware, AD 1475-1700. EVE = 0

WHEW: Mass-produced white earthenwares, mid 19<sup>th</sup>-20<sup>th</sup> century. EVE = 0

Refitting large sherds from a single Wallingford Ware jar (Fig. 3.9.1) were found in a series of contexts within the colluvial layers behind the hillfort rampart in Trenches 2 and 3 (ctx 2004, 2017, 3075, 3076 and 3077). Sherds from contexts 2006, 3022 and 3130 also appear likely to be from this vessel. A large fragment of a further Wallingford Ware jar was found in medieval pit 4003 (Fig. 3.9.2).

## **PREHISTORIC FIRED CLAY**

*by Emily Edwards*

There was only a single identifiable prehistoric fired clay artefact from Castle Hill. This was a slingshot of the typical Iron Age 'rugby ball' form, recovered from early Iron Age pit 3006. A similar example has previously been found locally at Mount Farm, Dorchester (Myres 1937, fig. 9).

In addition, 18 fragments (98 g) of structural fired clay - probably either burnt daub or oven lining - and 4 fragments (9 g) of amorphous fired clay were recovered (Table 3.23). The majority of the structural fired clay was from middle Iron Age pit 3020, including a piece with a convex, smoothed surface and two rod impressions. All of the prehistoric fired clay material is in sandy fabrics.

## **ROMAN AND POST-ROMAN FIRED CLAY AND CERAMIC BUILDING MATERIAL**

*by Paul Booth*

Some 33 fragments of fired clay (1190 g) and 98 fragments of ceramic building material (4391 g) were recovered. Fabrics for all categories of material were generally recorded only in relation to their principal inclusion types (notes in archive) and quantified by fragment count and weight. In view of the size of the assemblage no attempt was made to match the recorded tile fabrics with those from nearby sites. The material is discussed under four major headings: amorphous fired clay, fired clay 'blocks' (of Roman date, see further below), tile certainly or probably of Roman date and post-medieval ceramic building material. In some cases the typologically undiagnostic material could be assigned to period on the basis of fabric. Other fragments for which this was not the case were usually assumed to be of Roman date, however, although instances where this was really uncertain have been indicated as such in the table.

### **Amorphous fired clay**

Only six fragments (34 g) of amorphous, undiagnostic fired clay were recorded from Roman and later deposits (Table 3.23). This material, all in sand-tempered fabrics, cannot be dated on intrinsic criteria.

### **Fired clay 'blocks'**

This distinctive material, generally characteristic of early Roman sites in the region (see further below), occurred consistently in fabrics with abundant fine sand tempering supplemented with organic inclusions indicated by voids in the fabric. Occasionally, as here in context 3005, the organic inclusions were dominant. The firing was usually irregular (ie patchy, unlike the consistent oxidised appearance of ceramic building material) and generally considerably less hard than ceramic building material, so that the fragments were often quite friable. This characteristic makes identification of the forms quite difficult, but it is clear that this material was used largely (and here, on present evidence, exclusively) for flat block-like objects. These range from *c* 13 mm to 27 mm in thickness, but are characteristically in the middle of this range. The Castle Hill assemblage contained no fragments with a complete dimension other than thickness, however. It included a number of examples of blocks with a straight edge, which could be either slightly tapered or thickened. The largest surviving fragment, in three pieces, from context 2017, was at least 195 mm long and 117 mm wide and ranged in thickness from 14 mm (at the edge) to 20 mm. Both surfaces of this piece were quite smooth, but a number of other pieces (eg from contexts 1006/1016, 2016 and 3075/6) had one surface smoothed or burnished and the other (?lower) surface rougher with organic impressions, a fairly common feature of this material.

Comparable material is increasingly widely recognised in the region, in two main forms. Circular discs are more widespread, occurring for example at Old Shifford (Barclay *et al.* 1995), Watkins Farm (Allen 1990), Gravelly Guy (Barclay and Wait 2005), Farmoor (Lambrick and Robinson 1979, 53-4), Alchester (Booth 2001) and the Chemistry Research Laboratory, Oxford (Biddulph 2005) but are sometimes found together with probable rectangular blocks of the general type present at Castle Hill, as for example in several of the sites evaluated in the area of the

potential Abingdon Reservoir (Hearne 2000; OAU 1998, 37). Exactly similar material of rectangular form has been found at Hatford (Booth 2004b) and within sight of Castle Hill at Appleford (Booth and Simmonds forthcoming), where again both discs and rectangular blocks were present. The latter appeared to be consistently thicker than the discs but in terms of fabric there was no clear distinction - both forms occurred in the spectrum of sand/organic temper combinations.

Both types of object occur quite consistently in late Iron Age and/or early Roman contexts. Occasional later examples (as at the Chemistry Research Laboratory, Oxford) are probably residual. Their function remains uncertain, and has been the subject of considerable speculation; that they were related to food preparation and/or cooking seems most likely, but remains to be demonstrated conclusively. In view of the general absence of evidence of burning, either on the examples from Castle Hill or elsewhere, an association with food preparation may be preferred.

Fragments of fired clay blocks occurred in Trenches 1-3, with the majority of the material (by weight) in Trench 2 (Table 3.24). In Trench 1 the fragments from the hillfort ditch (contexts 1006 and 1016) are associated with late Iron Age/early Roman pottery as would be expected, but all the material from Trenches 2 and 3 was from late Roman contexts. While it is likely that clay blocks in such contexts were redeposited, this cannot be regarded as completely certain.

### **Ceramic building material: Roman**

Roman ceramic building material occurred across the site but some 70% (by weight) was found in Trench 1 (Table 3.24). Fabrics were all sand-tempered to varying degrees, and thus prefixed A following the OA Iron Age and Roman pottery recording system (Table 3.25). The principal fabric (A1) had sparse-moderate rounded quartz sand grains, some quite large, and occasional flint, chalk and iron oxide inclusions. Fabric A3, with moderate-abundant sand grains, was probably a variant of this. As noted above, small fragments were not systematically assigned to individual fabrics, but the great majority were certainly or probably in fabric A1. Two other fabrics were recorded specifically. Fabric A2 had sparse-moderate fine quartz sand grains and occasional fine white (chalk?) inclusions. Five joining fragments (846 g) of a tegula from context 1004 were the only pieces assigned to this fabric, distinguished initially on the basis of their hard-fired reddish (rather than orange) surfaces. This distinctive tile had a broad flange and was the only piece to carry a signature, consisting of three well-defined concentric grooves formed with the fingertips and describing slightly more than a semicircle (Fig. 3.10). Six pieces of tile (114 g) had grog or clay pellet inclusions as well as sand (fabric A4), but none of these pieces occurred as typologically identifiable fragments. They included a very small fragment from context 2003 which was notable for having lumps of grog on one surface, clearly a substitute for the sand more usually found on the underside of tiles.

All the certainly identifiable tile fragments were from tegulae. A single small fragment from 3043, too thin (14 mm) to be a tegula but probably of Roman date on the basis of the fabric, may perhaps have been from a box-flue tile. It is notable, however, that the pieces recorded as tegulae were generally quite thin, ie less than 25 mm, a typical thickness for tegulae (the fragments from 1004 discussed above ranged from 18-25 mm in thickness), and only one piece (from 1011) was more than 25 mm in thickness. No examples of imbrices or bricks were noted. The absence of imbrices, which should normally occur in a roughly 1:1 ratio with tegulae, might suggest that



the material derived from a building located nearby but not actually on the present site and was collected for secondary use. Flat (tegula) fragments were typically selected preferentially in these circumstances as they were more versatile. There is insufficient recorded detail on the ceramic building material from the site to the west of Castle Hill (Rhodes 1948; Wessex Archaeology 2004, 22) to enable it to be identified as the source of the Castle Hill material, but this is most likely.

### **Ceramic building material: post-medieval**

Some 26 fragments (651 g) of ceramic building material were of post-medieval date (Table 3.24), defined on the basis of a combination of morphological characteristics and a generally distinctive fabric, typically more sandy than that employed for the corresponding Roman material. All but two of these fragments were of flat roof tiles, usually less than 15 mm in thickness, but with no surviving evidence for peg holes or nibs. A single brick fragment occurred in context 1001 and a probable floor tile in context 1005. This had a glaze patch on its surviving edge.

### **Discussion**

The material provides confirmation of the presence of a Romanised building in the vicinity, but probably not within the present site. The building examined by Rhodes in 1948 and again in 2003 is a plausible candidate. Material from this building was probably salvaged for secondary use in the late Roman period. Fired clay 'blocks' provide an insight into other activities on the site, particularly (most probably) food preparation in the early Roman period. Some of these occurred in (the few) contemporary contexts in Trench 1. Since analogous material appears, when well stratified, to be almost invariably of late Iron Age to early Roman date, a similar date range seems likely for the clay blocks found in late Roman contexts in Trenches 2 and 3. The absence of contemporary pottery, which might be suggestive of accidental redeposition of early material, could suggest that the clay blocks were selectively recycled in the same way as the Roman ceramic building material.

## **METALWORK**

*by Ian Scott*

The metalwork assemblages comprise 134 iron objects and 4 copper alloy objects (Table 3.26). The preservation of the ironwork is variable but generally quite good. Some of the material is encrusted with corrosion products and few items are poorly preserved. Most are quite well preserved and without heavy encrustation. The copper alloy objects from Iron Age contexts are poorly preserved, but the later material is generally in very good condition.

The metalwork assemblage is dominated by nails (70) and miscellaneous or unidentifiable pieces (41). Together these form 80% of the metalwork assemblage by number. The small number of identifiable objects include a possible door stud (context 2017) and a penannular brooch (context 2017) from Roman contexts.

## **Provenance of the assemblage**

The small number of finds from Iron Age contexts (9) must be viewed with scepticism. There are two iron nails from an early Iron Age context (context 3018), but it is certain that these are intrusive since the context is disturbed. The finds from Middle Iron Age contexts include three iron nails (contexts 3004 and 3012) and two miscellaneous iron fragments (contexts 3012 and 3016) that are almost certainly intrusive. Finally there are two copper alloy fragments from context 3014 that probably are of Iron Age date (Cat. no. 1).

The bulk of the metal finds are from contexts that are assigned Romano-British and medieval dates. The Roman finds are numerous (47), but comprise predominantly nails and miscellaneous fragments (40). There are also two hobnails, a small penannular brooch (Cat. no. 2), a door stud (Cat. no. 3), and three objects of uncertain function - a pin or nail (Cat. no. 4), a possible clamp (Cat. no. 5) and an object with an oval blade (Cat. no. 6). Finally there is an unidentifiable fragment (context 3129). The penannular brooch is of a late Iron Age/ early Roman form, but was found in a late Roman context, so may have been an heirloom.

Many of the finds are from colluvial deposits with mixed Romano-British and medieval finds (16). The finds from these contexts comprise seven nails, a hobnail, a horseshoe nail, and seven miscellaneous or unidentified fragments.

The largest part of the metalwork assemblage (61) is from medieval contexts including colluvial deposits. A number of identifiable objects were recovered from medieval contexts: a spoon bit (Cat. no. 9); a horseshoe fragment of medieval form (context 6024); three knives (Cat. nos 10-12), one of which is of a distinctive early medieval form; and a possible handle mount from a vessel or bucket (Cat. no. 15). There is also a decorative door hinge fragment (Cat. no. 14) and a barb spring padlock bolt (Cat. no. 13), both of medieval form. Amongst the uncertain items are two socketed objects, which may be arrow-, or bolt-heads (Cat. nos 16 and 17).

Finally there are three objects from post-medieval contexts, including a complete pocketknife, and a single unstratified nail.

## **Catalogue of notable objects**

### ***Middle Iron Age***

**1 Two cast fragments** (Fig. 3.11.1). Cu alloy. Two fragments from objects of hollow curved cross section. Possibly parts of hollow cast rings? The longer fragment has a deposit, possibly some sort of filler on the inner hollow curved surface. There is also slight evidence for the back of the object. Uncertain function. Middle Iron Age pit 3013, ctx 3014.

### ***Late Iron Age and Roman***

**2 Penannular brooch.** Fe. A small brooch with rolled terminals. Late Roman 'midden' layer 2017.

Simple penannular brooch related to Fowler type C, which was originally dated broadly to the period from the 1st century BC to the Anglo-Saxon period (Fowler

1960, 151-52, 165-66, 171). This dating has been refined with the recognition of a plain earlier form dating to the late Iron Age, to which the present example belongs, and a much later form often of flat cross-section and decorated (Fowler in Crummy 1983, 18-19). See examples from Dragonby (Olivier 1996, 261-63, figs 11.11 and 11.12).

**3 Door stud.** Fe. Stud with a large, almost flat, circular head. Square section stem, with battered flattened end. L: 45mm; D: 57mm. Late Roman 'midden' layer 2017. SF 3060.

**4 Nail or pin.** Fe. Almost conical head and broken stem of circular section. L: 46mm. Late Roman 'midden' layer 2017.

**5 Possible clamp.** Fe. Broad back, slightly curved in section, curving to a thin point at one end, broken at the other end. L: 33mm. Late Roman 'quarry' pit 3067, ctx 3055. SF 3022.

**6 Oval blade or plate.** Fe. Thickening for stem of rectangular section at one end. Part of a tool? L: 65mm; W: 40mm. Late Roman layer 3130. SF 3157.

**7 Socketed awl.** Fe. Parallel-sided socket and tapering point of square/diamond section. The point is offset to one side of the socket. L: 89mm. Medieval colluvial layer, ctx 3076. SF 3059.

Socketed awls are not common. There is a Romano-British example from the Walbrook, London (Manning 1985, 41 and pl.16, E28). This is probably a residual piece of Roman date.

### *Medieval*

**8 Possible punch.** Fe. Comprises tapering spike with stepped head. The tip is eroded. L: 97mm. Medieval ploughsoil layer 5013.

**9 Spoon bit.** Fe. Complete, with diamond-shaped tang. The stem is roughly circular in section. The blade of the bit, of hollow section is heavily encrusted with corrosion products. Medieval pit 4003, ctx 4040. SF 4005.

Compare examples from Anglo-Scandinavian York (Ottaway 1992, 532-35 and fig. 208, nos 2262-64) and medieval York (Ottaway and Rogers 2002, 2726-7 and fig.1335, nos 8189-91, 11487 and 13690).

**10 Whittle tang knife blade.** Fe. Small parallel-sided blade, with slightly angled tang. End of blade missing. The blade form is not certain. Probably medieval. L: 61mm. Roman-medieval colluvial layer 3028.

**11 Whittle tang knife.** Fe. Narrow blade with slightly curved back. Strongly triangular blade. Ottaway Type C1. L: 130mm. Medieval pit 6011, ctx 6024. SF 6001.

A good Saxon form (see Ottaway 1992, 568-70 and fig. 231, no 2837; fig.233, no 2877).

**12 Whittle tang knife blade.** Fe. Tapering blade of triangular section. Tip missing. Angled choil. L: 87mm. Medieval pit 6011, ctx 6024. SF 6002.

The form of the blade is not diagnostic. There are a few Romano-British examples with this blade form (Type 16: Manning 1985, 116, fig. 28), but also medieval examples (Cowgill *et al.* 1987, 8-2, fig. 55, nos 28, 30 and 32).

**13 Double barb-spring padlock bolt.** Fe. Bolt from a cylindrical padlock. The circular plate has two barb-springs, one with a single spring, the other with two springs. L: 73mm. Medieval pit 4003, ctx 4024. SF 4001.

Cylindrical, or barrel-, padlocks with barb-springs are a distinctive medieval form. See the examples from York (Ottaway and Rogers 2002, 2861-67, figs 1442-48) and from London (Egan 1998, 91-99).

**14 Probable hinge or door strap** (Fig. 3.11.2). Fe. One end has a tightly rolled scroll. There is a single clear nail hole and another possible with a fragment of nail in situ. L: 150mm. Medieval colluvial layer 3077. SF 3045.

Possibly part of C-hinge or associated strap work from an exterior door (see Geddes 1999).

**15 Possible handle mount** (Fig. 3.11.3). Fe. Looped terminal at one end. This is thicker than the strip and broken. The strip is shaped and has two nail holes. Decorative and slightly curved mount. Roman-medieval colluvial layer 3028. SF 3012.

**16 Socketed point** (Fig. 3.11.4). Fe. Point possibly with small diamond-shaped head. The point was originally heavily encrusted with corrosion products and the x-ray plate does not provide evidence for the form of the point. Because the object is mineralised careful cleaning has not given conclusive evidence for the form of the point. Probably an arrowhead. L: 63mm. Medieval colluvial layer 3077.

**17 Socketed point** (Fig. 3.11.5). Fe. Encrusted around head. Probably an arrow or bolt head with a tapering square section point. L: 65mm. Medieval colluvial layer 3077. SF 3044.

**18 Strip or binding.** Fe. Plano-convex cross-section, wide in the middle and tapering to each end. One end bent back over the centre. No clear nail holes show on x-ray. One end has a notch that may be a broken nail hole. L: 175mm. Medieval colluvial layer 3043.

## **ROMAN COINS**

*by Paul Booth*

Five small late Roman coins were recovered, equivalent to AE4 (ie 13 mm diameter and less) in size. All are in relatively poor condition. One of the coins was found within late Roman pit 4009, two within late Roman colluvial layer 3122, and two within medieval colluvial deposits (Table 3.27).

All the coins are late 3rd to 4th century in date. One bears traces of a radiate crown of late 3rd century date and another is attributable to the House of Valentinian (AD 364-378). The other three are completely illegible. The coins are intrinsically unremarkable and typical of Roman settlement site finds.

## **ROMAN GLASS**

*by Hilary Cool*

Four fragments (122 g) of Roman glass were recovered. These were examined by Hilary Cool, whose comments have been used as the basis for this report.

Post-medieval layer 1002 produced a single fragment (4 g), probably a chip from a blue/green prismatic bottle of 1st to 3rd century AD date. Late Roman colluvial layer 3122 contained two fragments (117 g) of a vessel handle (SF 3053 and 3054), probably of late 4th to 5th century AD date. A small fragment (1 g) of a pale blue bead recovered from an environmental sample from late Roman layer 3130 is also consistent with a late 4th century date.

## **WORKED BONE**

*by Leigh Allen*

Three worked bone objects and one worked antler object were recovered, all from early Iron Age pit 3006. The artefacts comprise a needle, two possible gouges and a possible handle.

### **Catalogue of illustrated artefacts (Fig. 3.12)**

1 **Needle.** A needle with a circular cross section that flattens to an oval cross section just below the eye. The needle has broken across the eye (a common form of break); only the very bottom section of the eye can be seen and it was probably originally oval in form. The shaft has an upward curve towards the tip. The whole object is highly polished. Similar examples have been recovered from Danebury (Sellwood 1984, 380-382, fig. 7.32, nos 3.87-3.39). Pit 3006, context 3061. SF 3064.

2 **Possible gouge.** An incomplete sheep radius (right) with a small, crudely made perforation through the proximal end. The beginnings of a second perforation (or possible a tooth mark) can be seen just above this. There are areas of light polish on the shaft. It is possibly a fragment from a gouge. Pit 3006, context 3039.

3 **Possible gouge.** An incomplete sheep metatarsal (left) with a longitudinal perforation down through the proximal end. There are areas of polish along the shaft. It is possibly a fragment from a gouge, but the functional end of the object has broken off making this identification uncertain. Pit 3006, context 3061.

**4 Possible handle.** An incomplete worked antler tine with areas of high polish on the curved end of the tine and along the back edge. The broken end shows possible traces of a drilled hole. It is possibly a fragment from a handle. Pit 3006, context 3034.

## **WORKED STONE FROM CASTLE HILL**

*by Fiona Roe*

### **Introduction**

Seven objects of worked stone were recovered and are described in a catalogue that can be found on the CD. They comprise part of a possible stone mould, two spindlewhorls and four quern or rubber fragments (Table 3.28), while a little burnt stone was also collected, and is summarised in Table 3.29. The different varieties of stone were identified by examination with a x8 hand lens. Most were found to be of local origin, although the igneous rock used for the mould and the Upper Old Red Sandstone used for a later rotary quern were both imported from some distance away. Only two pieces, the possible mould and a spindlewhorl, came from prehistoric contexts that could be linked with the hillfort.

### **Possible mould**

A piece of igneous rock with a flat worked surface, more smooth than might be expected on a quern or rubber, is possibly part of a mould or it may have been intended for manufacture into one. No trace of a matrix now exists. It was recovered from the uppermost fill (5011) of the late Bronze Age hilltop enclosure ditch, which is thought to date to the early Iron Age, but both the variety of stone and its possible use as a mould suggest a later Bronze Age date for the object.

The stone is a coarse-grained igneous rock and mainly light pink in colour although grey where it has been burnt. The pink colouration comes from pink alkali feldspar, while there are darker inclusions of a ferro-magnesian mineral, which is now altered in places so that it appears bronzed. The artefact has been thin sectioned (R 309) and examination under a petrological microscope has shown that the rock consists mainly of alkali feldspar, but that it also contains scattered biotite, now mostly altered to chlorite, some altered plagioclase, a little quartz and a few needles of apatite, a mineral assemblage that suggests that the stone is a syenite.

This is clearly an imported piece and one that is without parallels locally. Other comparable finds are not common, but some stone moulds are known to have been used for casting socketed Stogursey axes. Three moulds of comparable igneous rock were originally recorded, from Egham, Surrey, and two sites in Wiltshire, Burderop Down and Bulford (Needham 1981). To these may be added a fourth example, from Everley Meadow, Iwerne Courtney, Dorset (Needham in prep). At the time of writing the thin sections made from these moulds could not be traced, but it was possible to examine two of the moulds and compare the stone used to make them directly with the find from Castle Hill. The mould from Bulford (Salisbury Museum) appeared in hand specimen to be a good match, but the one from Burderop Down (Devizes Museum) is made from a different variety of igneous rock, more reddish in colour, and the suggested source for this one is the Hestercombe rock, a known quern

material from near Taunton in Somerset, originally identified as a syenite or lamprophyre but now reclassified as a diorite (Prudden 2003, 31). The description of a thin section made from this rock (Edmonds & Williams 1985, 47) corresponds with that given for the thin section from the Bulford mould (Needham 1981, 12). However the descriptions of the stone used for the mould from Everley Meadow, Dorset, both in hand specimen and thin section (Needham, in prep), suggest that it should compare well with the piece from Castle Hill. A fifth fragment of worked igneous rock, which like that from Castle Hill now lacks evidence for use as a mould, came from Aldermaston Wharf, Berkshire (Bradley *et al.*, 1980, 245 and Reading Museum). It has been possible to compare the Wittenhams piece directly with this find both in hand specimen and in thin section (R 302), and once again there were indications of a good match. It is not known where this particular igneous rock was obtained from, but Brittany, with its known Bronze Age contacts with Britain (Briard 1993, 189), is a potential source area.

## Querns

The saddle querns consist of two fragments, one of which appears to have been re-used after breakage as a rubber, together with another rubber fragment. These three fragments were all unstratified, but both the types of quern and the materials used for them are typically prehistoric. The rotary quern fragment is clearly of later date and consists of a piece of rim from a quern of Roman disc type, found in a late Roman colluvial layer (ctx 3122).

Good saddle quern materials were available in Oxfordshire, and stone for these querns could have been obtained from sources not far from the site. One saddle quern was made from Lower Calcareous Grit, which came from the Corallian ridge 16 km to the north-west (Arkell 1947, 78). A second saddle quern was made from Lower Greensand found around Culham only 7 km north-west of the site (Arkell 1947, 160). A third fragment, a rubber probably re-using a broken fragment of saddle quern, was made from a cobble of quartzite, which could have been collected either from the local Plateau Gravel (Jukes Brown & Osbourne White 1908, 84) or the local Thames gravels.

These unstratified saddle quern fragments could well be either late Bronze Age or Iron Age in date. Lower Calcareous Grit is known, for instance, from a late Bronze Age context at Wallingford (Roe & Barclay 2006, 71), while Culham greensand was found at Appleford (Hinchcliffe & Thomas 1980, 60 & Fig 24, 4) and at the late Bronze Age site at Reading Business Park (Roe 2004, 95). Abundant evidence for the Iron Age utilisation of these two quern materials comes from the settlement site at the Wittenhams. Saddle querns made from both Lower Calcareous Grit and Culham greensand were found in mainly early Iron Age contexts in the trenches around the hillfort (see Chapter 6), while further finds of middle Iron Age date came from the Hill Farm site (Chapter 9).

By contrast, the Roman rotary quern was made from Upper Old Red Sandstone, which had been transported some 105 km from the Forest of Dean/Wye Valley area (Welch & Trotter 1961, 49). Again the occurrence of this particular material is not unusual, since rotary querns made from upper Old Red Sandstone are known from virtually all the Roman sites in the area (Shaffrey 2006). Further finds of rotary querns made from the same stone were made during the 2004 excavations below the hillfort (Chap 6) and during fieldwalking (Chap 14).

## Spindlewhorls

The spindlewhorls are both of the disc variety and made from the local chalky greensand. The Sinodun Hills consist mainly of a variety of Upper Greensand which has been termed malmstone (Jukes-Brown & Osbourne White 1908, 11) and this includes calcareous stone with the appearance of chalk. It was also used to make loomweights (Fig 6.7.1 & 2). One spindlewhorl was recovered from an early Iron Age fill in the top of the late Bronze Age hilltop enclosure ditch (ctx 3024, Fig 3.13.1). The other came from a colluvial layer containing both Roman and medieval finds, along with some residual Iron Age pottery (ctx 3122, Fig 3.13.2). Its date is therefore uncertain. Further spindlewhorls, made from the same variety of chalky greensand, were found in Iron Age contexts both in the settlement below Castle Hill (Chap 6) and at Hill Farm (Chap 9).

## Burnt stone

There is very little burnt stone from Castle Hill (Table 3.29) but the few finds correspond to those from the other seasons of excavation.

## Acknowledgements

I am grateful to Philip Jackson, of the Department of Earth Sciences, University of Oxford, for making the thin sections of the possible mould from Castle Hill and also another piece from Aldermaston Wharf, Berkshire. I am very grateful to Leslie Cram, then at Reading Museum, for permission to thin section the Aldermaston Wharf artefact. In addition I was able to make direct comparisons between the Castle Hill object and other moulds thanks to the assistance of Jill Greenaway at Reading Museum, Peter Saunders at Salisbury Museum and Paul Robinson at Devizes Museum and their help has been much appreciated.

**4 Saddle quern fragment.** Lower Calcareous Grit with shell fragments partly weathered out; Corallian, Oxon. Burnt, slightly concave grinding surface. 138 x 104 x 30.5 mm, 479 g. Trench 3, unstratified.

**5 Possible rubber.** Quartzite, probably from local Thames gravels. Fragment of a cobble with one flat surface. 84 x 75 x 49 mm, 275 g. Unstratified

**6 Rotary quern rim fragment.** Upper Old Red Sandstone. Appears to be from a Roman disc type, may have been re-used for whetting and point sharpening. 74 x 46 x 39 mm, 202 g. Late Roman colluvial layer 3122. SF 3049

**7 Possible mould fragment.** Igneous rock, coarse-grained, originally pinkish but pale grey where burnt, possibly a syenite. Flat, smooth worked surface, partly burnt. 118 x 69 x 37.5 mm, 399 g. Ditch 5018, ctx 5011. SF 5002