

(Microfiche) Chapter 3

The later prehistoric occupation

3 The Later Bronze Age and Iron Age occupation

3.1 Sections of the features

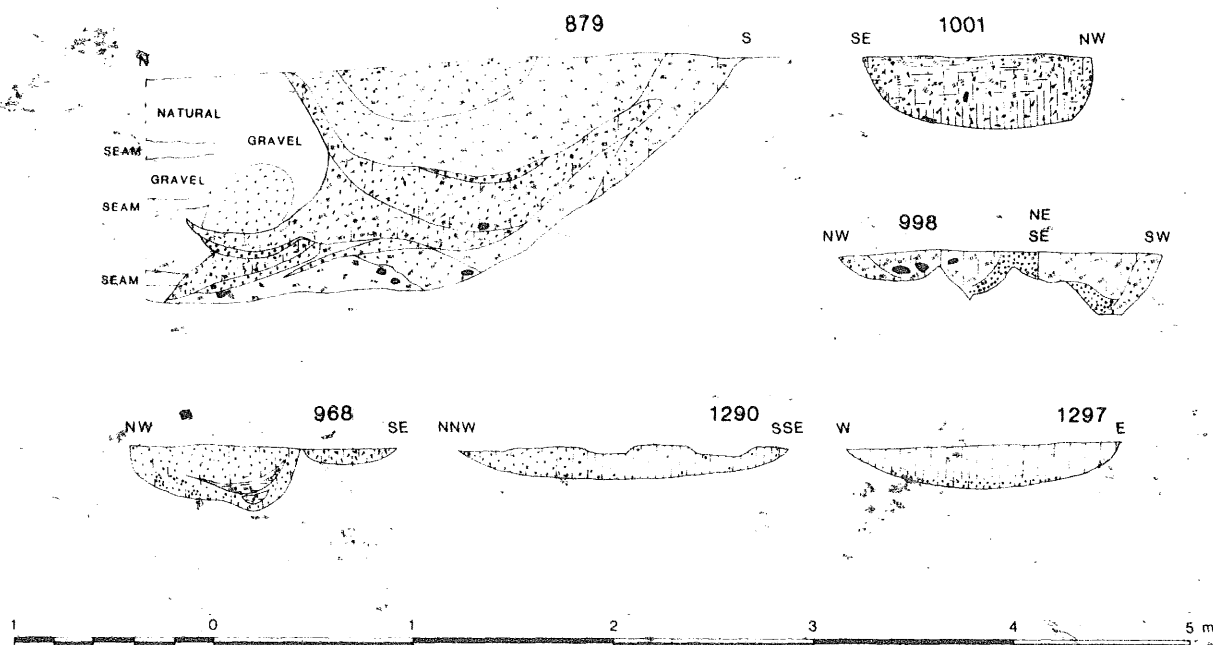


Figure 119 Later Bronze Age settlement: sections

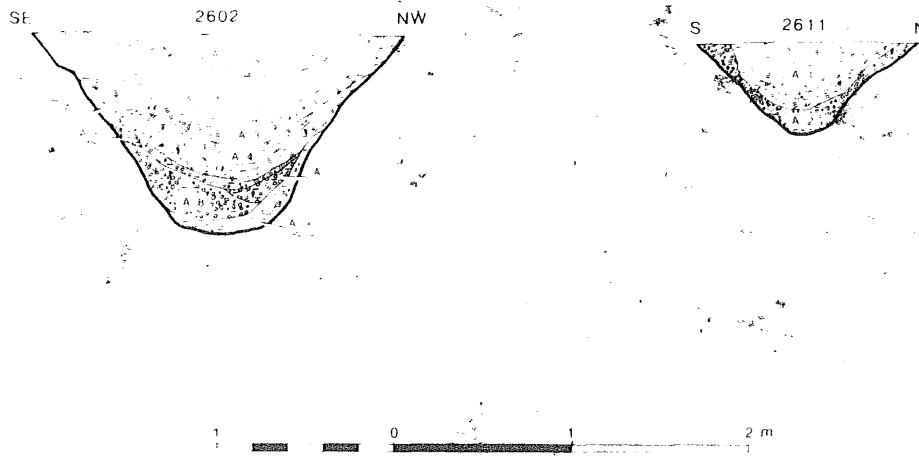


Figure 120 Sections of Early Iron Age ditch 2602 and pit 2611

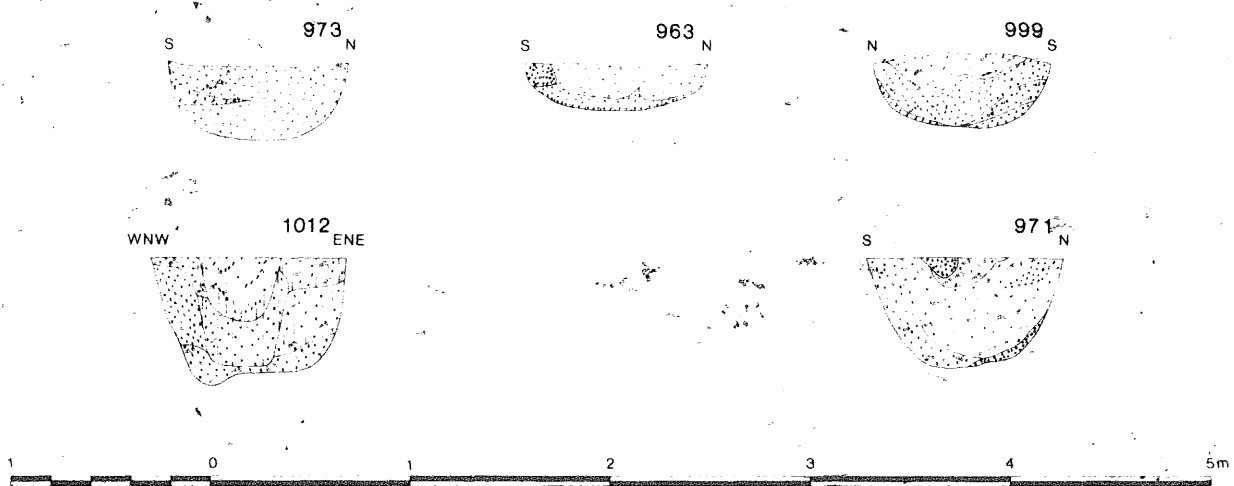


Figure 121 Early Iron Age: sections of scattered pit groups

3.2 The Later Bronze Age and Iron Age pottery

by Richard Hingley

3.2.a Introduction

The later prehistoric pottery runs from the Later Bronze Age to the Early Iron Age. Most of the fabrics and decorative motifs identified have a wide chronological range, but the forms indicate a fairly clear division between the Later Bronze Age and Early Iron Age ceramics. Table 34 on Fiche 1#21 lists the Later Bronze Age assemblages.

Feature	Number of sherds
1199	134
734	3
879	89
968	1
998	34
1001	74
1165	8
1290	17
1296	6
Total	366

Table 34 Incidence of Later Bronze Age pottery by context

The Early Iron Age features are divided into three groups:

- A a scatter on the site of an area of later Roman occupation (features between 1 and 919)
- B pit alignments, a roundhouse and small groups of pits east of this (features between 920 and 1199)
- C a concentration of pits and ditches at the south-east end of the site (features between 1200 and 1330).

Table 35 on Fiche 1#21 shows that the density of pottery per feature was much greater in C.

Feature group	Including all contexts with Early Iron Age pottery			Excluding contexts in which Early Iron Age pottery was residual		
	No. of contexts	No. of sherds	Average no. sherds per context	No. of contexts	No. of sherds	Average no. sherds per context
A	38	175	4.6	28	144	6.3
B	27	127	4.7	21	98	4.4
C	39	614	15.7	39	614	15.7
Total	104	916	8.8	84	856	10.2

Table 35 Proportions of Early Iron Age sherds from contexts across the site

3.2.b Fabric

Seven fabrics were identified by macroscopic examination. In Tables 8 and 13 fabric proportions are compared between assemblages of more than 30 sherds, four of the later Bronze Age and eight of the Early Iron Age.

In the Later Bronze Age the calcareous Fabrics 2 to 4 account for 91.6% of all sherds, (and if Fabric

6 is included 95.2%).

In the Early Iron Age Fabrics 2-4 still predominate, making up 60.2% of the assemblage, (or 60.5% with Fabric 6), but their proportion has dropped considerably. In addition shell, which was the major inclusion in 60% of the Later Bronze Age sherds, represents only just over 20% of the Early Iron Age assemblage. The other calcareous groups, shelly limestone and oolitic limestone, remain at roughly the same proportion, but there is a sharp increase in sandy fabrics in the later period; at 39% sand is the largest single fabric group.

3.2.b.1 Microscopic analysis of pottery from 1001

by Timothy Darvill

A thin-section was prepared from a sample sherd of limestone-tempered ware from 1001. Under the microscope the fabric was seen to have an anisotropic groundmass containing a light scatter of small angular to sub-angular quartz grains up to 0.1 mm in diameter and a few mica flecks. Mixed into this matrix was a considerable amount of crushed fossil shell in fragments up to and occasionally exceeding 1.0 mm in length. Ooliths are also present, some over 1.00 mm in diameter. In view of the clastic additives a source on or near the Cotswolds can be suggested.

The thin-section is number N409 in the Thin-Section Library of the Department of Archaeology, University of Southampton.

3.2.c Decoration and Surface Treatment

(Table 36 on Fiche 1#23)

Six types of decoration were present, three of which are characteristic of the Later Bronze Age. A comparison of the proportions of decorative type and finish by period is given in Table 36 on Fiche 1#23.

	Lug	Comb-tooth	Applied cordons	Shallow Groove	Finger-tip/nail	Incised lines	Total
Later Bronze Age	4 (20)	2 (10)	5 (25)	1 (5)	7 (35)	1 (5)	20
Early Iron Age					23 (53.5)	20 (46.5)	43

Percentages in brackets

Table 36. Decorative motifs on Bronze Age and Iron Age pottery

Shallow grooves, finger tip or nail impressions, and incised lines occur on pottery of both periods, but are commoner in the Early Iron Age. A comparison of the types of decoration occurring in each of the Bronze Age assemblages is given in Table 37 on Fiche 1#23.

Vessel type	Bipartite vessels	Biconical vessels	Bucket urns	Upright rims	Straight-sided walls	Inturned rims	Incurving rims	Rounded out-turned	Unassigned
Form No.	12	13	14	1	8	2	4	6	
1199	P	P,P,1+2		P	1	P			5
734			3	2					
879			1+5	P		P			
998			5						4
1001	P		5	P,P,P,P		P	P		
1165		P							
1290			3+5						
1296			5						

Decoration codes

P = Plain 1 = Lugs 2 = Comb-tooth 3 = Applied cordons 4 = Shallow groove 5 = Finger-tip/nail 6 = Incised lines

Table 37 The incidence of vessel types by feature including type of decoration for Later Bronze Age pottery

3.2.d Form

Fourteen form categories have been defined on the basis of whole profiles, rims or shoulders. The relative frequency of these in the Later Bronze Age and Early Iron Age features is given in Table 38 on Fiche 1#24.

Vessel type	Form number	Late Bronze Age		Early Iron Age	
		No.	%	No.	%
Bipartite vessels	12	2	6.9		
Biconical vessels	13	4	13.8		
Bucket urns	14	5	17.2		
Upright rims	1	8	27.5	6	8
Straight-sided walls	8	4	13.8	2	2.7
Inturned rims	2	4	13.8	3	4
Incurving rims	4	1	3.5	1	1.3
Rounded + out-turned	6	1	3.5	4	5
Expanded rims	5			2	2.7
Flared or out-turned rims	3			12	17
Rounded or sharp shoulders	7			18	25
Concave necks	9			6	8
Tripartite bowls	10			17	23.5
Tripartite jars	11			5	6.7
<i>Total</i>		29		76	

Table 38 Occurrence of vessel types in Bronze Age and Early Iron Age contexts (giving absolute number and percentage as a proportion of all types for that period)

Definitions of the terms used are given below:

1. Tripartite vessels are those with a flared, or out-turned rim, concave neck and rounded or sharp shoulder.
2. A division is usually drawn between jars and bowls in the study of Iron Age ceramics (eg Harding, 1972). In this study jars are taller than their maximum diameter, while bowls are squatter than their maximum diameter.
3. The term 'biconical' is derived from Case (in Case *et al* 1964, 75). In this report the term 'biconical' is restricted to vessels with traces of an applied or pinched cordon at the point of maximum girth (see Smith's definition; I Smith 1961). Vessels without the cordon are bipartite (see next definition).
4. Bipartite vessels are those with an inturned rim and a rounded or sharp shoulder at the point of maximum diameter.

Some of the profiles are chronologically distinctive, viz: Forms 12, 13 and 14 for the Later Bronze Age and Forms 10 and 11 for the Early Iron Age; and it is on the basis of form that features have been assigned to either period. Some form categories based upon rims or shoulders can also be linked with these profiles, in particular Forms 3, 7 and 9 with the Early Iron Age tripartite vessels. Expanded rims (Form 5) are also characteristic of the Early Iron Age. Vessels with straight sides and upright or incurving rims are part of a coarse-ware tradition that persists through both the Bronze and the Iron Age.

3.2.e Discussion

The pottery falls into two chronologically distinct groups.

Bronze Age pottery is characterised by bucket and biconical urns. Decoration includes finger tipping, applied cordons and bosses, incised line and comb-tooth decoration. Fabrics are commonly heavily shell-gritted and often poorly-fired.

In the Upper Thames region Early Iron Age wares are often tripartite in form and are decorated with finger tipping and incised lines. At Roughground Farm a high percentage of the pottery has calcareous inclusions, although the proportion is lower than for the Later Bronze Age pottery.

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

3.3 Flints from Bronze Age features

by Timothy Darvill

Fig. 25

3.3.a Catalogue of Bronze Age flint types

Scrapers and serrated flakes are the main tool types represented. The large scraper from 734 is over 50 mm in diameter and with retouch around more than two-thirds of the circumference is a particularly fine specimen (Fig. 25.1). In contrast, the scrapers from 1001, 1290 and 1296 are all-end scrapers which are rather crude and display signs of breakage and damage from use or post-depositional attrition (Fig. 25.2-5). Two of these scrapers are made on cortical flakes. One from 1001 (Fig. 25.2) was made on a large flake struck from a polished implement of some kind, probably a flint axe. Of the serrated flakes those from 1290 and one from 1001 (Fig. 25.6-8) have fine serrations, but the other piece from 1001 (Fig. 25.9) has much larger teeth and could almost be classified as a saw. Two of the serrated flakes are made on cortical flakes. No gloss is present on the serrated flakes.

The retouched flakes and utilized flakes are indistinctive, mostly having slight traces of working or use along one edge of a long flake. One piece from 1296 has traces of shallow-angle invasive retouching. The piece is broken, but may have been part of a knife (Fig. 25.10).

Only three identifiable cores are present, all from 1001, although one of the calcined lumps may also have been a core before it was burnt. All three certain cores are well worked down, but are of simple type with only one or two platforms each, and little trace of core preparation.

3.4 Other Finds of Bronze Age or Iron Age date

3.4.a Fired Clay

Table 52 on Fiche 2#64

582 grams, all in Fabric A — Mixed Streaky Clays, came from four of the Bronze Age pits (for details of the clay fabrics see Ch. 5.11.b). These included one possible mould fragment, part of a flat slab and daub fragments.

Only 33 grams were recovered from the Early Iron Age features, of fabrics A — Mixed Streaky Clays, F — Quartz and C — Organic. These included another possible mould fragment and one highly fired piece that may have come from a crucible, though there were no metal residues upon it. There was possibly a change of fabric used during the prehistoric period; the Neolithic fired clay was made from fabrics D — Calcareous and E — Quartz and Organic, whereas the Bronze Age clay was fabric A and the Early Iron Age, while including fabric A, introduced further new fabrics.

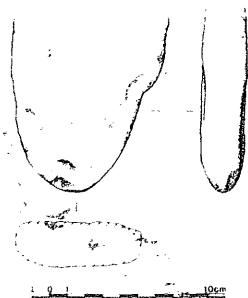


Figure 122 — Early Iron Age quernstone from pit 1257

3.4.b Stone

by Thin-sections by Timothy Darvill

Fig. 121 on Fiche 1#20

One small worn lump, possibly a quern rubber, came from Bronze Age pit 1001. This is probably Sarsen sandstone (see below).

One fragment of sarsen quernstone came from Iron Age pit 1257. This is a thin flat slab with sides tapering to a point and the wide end broken off transversely. Both flat faces were worn smooth and one side was also worn flat. The point appears to have been battered, suggesting that this stone was used as a hammer. 102mm × 88mm × 23mm.

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

The following stone artefacts were thin-sectioned and identified by Timothy Darvill:

934 Two fragments of blueish-coloured medium grained sandstone.

1001 Rubber — probably sarsen sandstone.

1257 Fragment of quernstone — probably sarsen sandstone.

3.6 Environmental evidence

by Mark Robinson

3.6.a Mollusca from pit 879

Mollusca.	No. of individuals
<i>Cochlicopa</i> sp.	2
<i>Vallonia costata</i> (Mull.)	6
<i>V. excentrica</i> sterki	7
<i>Vallonia</i> sp.	32
<i>Cecilioides acicula</i> (Mull.)	2
Total	49

Table 39 Mollusca from pit 879

3.6.b Charcoal from Bronze and Iron Age features

Bronze Age	
1001	indet. (not <i>Quercus</i>)
Early Iron Age	
923	<i>Quercus</i>
967	<i>Quercus</i> + another species
969	indet. (not <i>Quercus</i>)
973	cf <i>Crataegus</i> type
1012	<i>Quercus</i>

Table 40 Charcoal identifications of hand-picked samples from Bronze Age and Iron Age contexts