

**RESCUE ARCHAEOLOGY
IN
HAMPSHIRE**

Number 1 for 1973

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RESCUE ARCHAEOLOGY IN HAMPSHIRE

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**Editors
Michael Hughes
Elizabeth Lewis**

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EDITORIAL

This is the first issue of a new journal which will be committed to the publication of the reports of rescue excavations.

It is published with the support of the Hampshire Field Club to provide an alternative and complementary outlet to the Proceedings for the growing mass of archaeological data that is the direct result of the activity and interest in rescue archaeology of the past few years.

The emphasis of the journal will be on direct, speedy publication. The editors aim to promote the rapid dissemination of information and to encourage excavators, either professional or amateur, to complete and present their evidence in report form, even if background research is limited, as the necessary final stage of excavation.

In order to accelerate the process of publication, the printing method which affords fewer delays in the production of each issue, will be by offset litho, but the format will be close in style to that of the Hampshire Field Club, and we hope quality will not be sacrificed to speed. An index will be published for each five issues.

Material for each issue will be accepted up to April 1st of each year and may be submitted by any individual or society involved in rescue work in the county.

Joint Editors

Elizabeth R. Lewis
Winchester City Museum

Michael F. Hughes
S.H.A.R.G.

January 1973

The Editors 'Rescue Archaeology in Hampshire'
c/o The Extra Mural Department,
The University, Southampton.

EXCAVATIONS AT BROWNWICH FARM, TITCHFIELD, 1971.

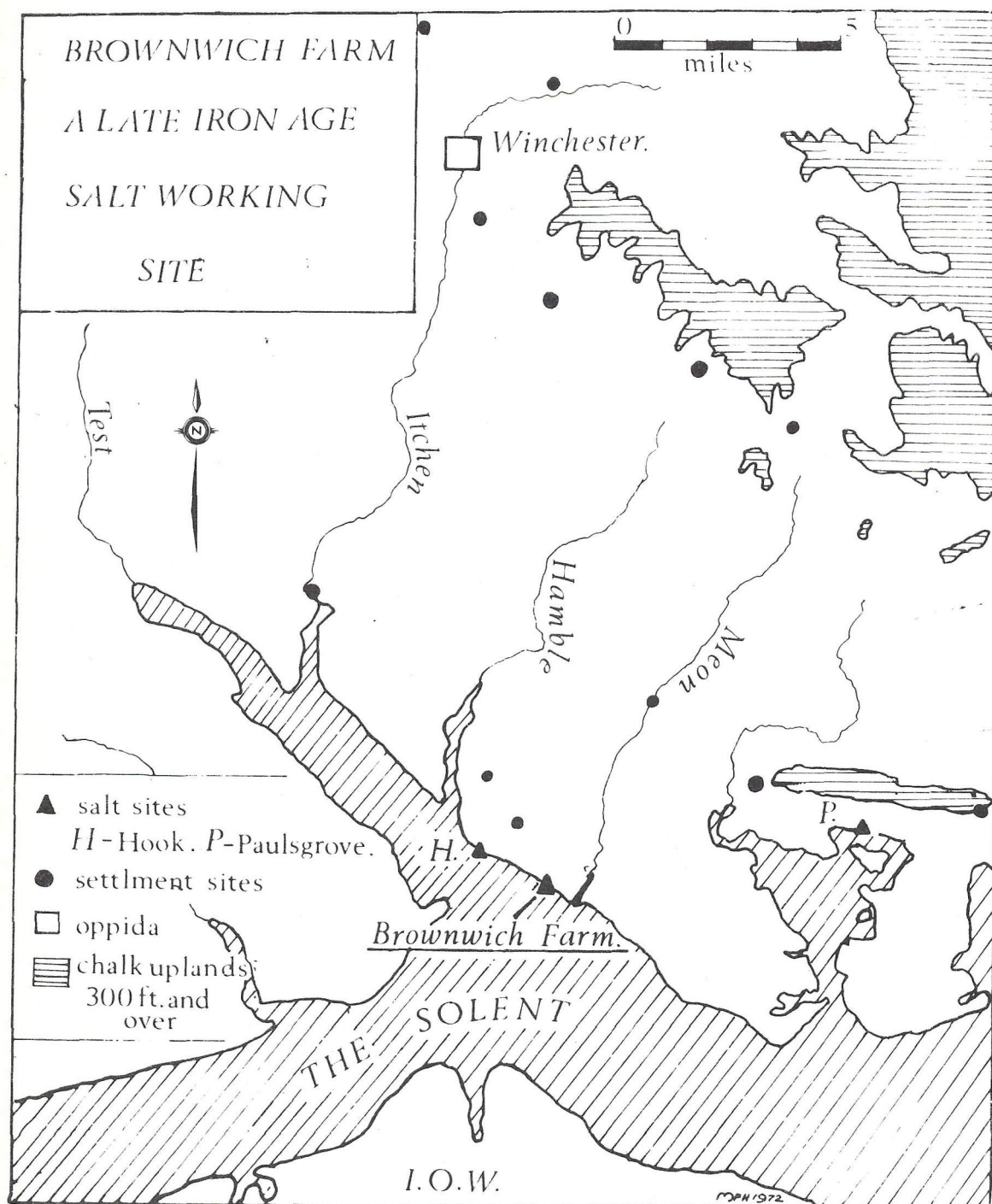


Fig. 1. Distribution of Late Iron Age Sites in Central Southern Hampshire

EXCAVATIONS AT BROWNWICH FARM, TITCHFIELD 1971

by Michael Hughes

GENERAL INTRODUCTION

A number of potsherds of Iron Age fabric and form were noticed in what appeared to be a small truncated ditch or pit, situated near the top of a 25 foot cliff face. The present high erosion rate of the cliffs on this part of the Solent coastline is causing numerous collapses of sections of the present public, cliff-top footpath and consequently the Hampshire County Council are intending to move the line of the path inland away from the dangerous cliff edges.

As a number of other possible associated features could also be seen in the cliff face, in the vicinity of the potsherds area, a small rescue excavation was undertaken by members of the South Hampshire Archaeological Rescue Group during the autumn of 1971, under the direction of the author. Details of this excavation, Site 1, appear as Part I of this report (pages 8 to 20).

Information was received from the tenant farmers regarding a recent exposure of seashells, a result of ploughing, in an adjacent field to that of the Iron Age site. Examination and consequent excavation of the area, Site 2, at first thought perhaps to be associated with the former site, revealed a medieval shell midden. Excavation details etc. form Part II of this report (pages 21 to 25).

During the course of the excavations, extensive field walking in the vicinity produced an interesting assemblage of worked flint material. These are discussed more fully in Part III (pages 26 to 28).

I should like to pay acknowledgements to the following people.

Firstly, Mr. P.J. Mulholland, who spotted the Iron Age potsherds in the cliff face, and for his promptness in reporting his finds to the Ordnance Survey, Archaeology Division (Mr. F. Hastings), who subsequently passed the information to the author. Secondly, Mr. Bonsey, the County Land Agent for the H.C.C. and the tenant farmers, Messrs. Kneller Bros., without whose cooperation and assistance the excavations would not have taken place.

Finally, I should like to express my thanks for the unstinting support of the Rescue Group, especially to Mrs. S. Bremner for her pottery and "briquetage" drawings and Mrs. G. Adams for her examination of the animal bones from the shell-midden; to Mr. A. ApSimon for his assistance on the flint assemblage and to Dr. D. Peacock for reading the draft of this report. The responsibility for any conclusions reached are entirely mine.

Both sites were subsequently backfilled at the end of the respective excavations.

All finds and notes etc. will be deposited with the Hampshire County Museum Service, Chilcomb House, Winchester.

I realise that the size and nature of the excavations were small and therefore not conclusive as to the extent or even complete nature of the sites, and also because of the lack of stratification the evidence is not of a primary nature. However, I am sure that the evidence recovered, i.e. pottery, "briquetage", shell-midden evidence and flints, is of sufficient interest to necessitate the writing of this report.

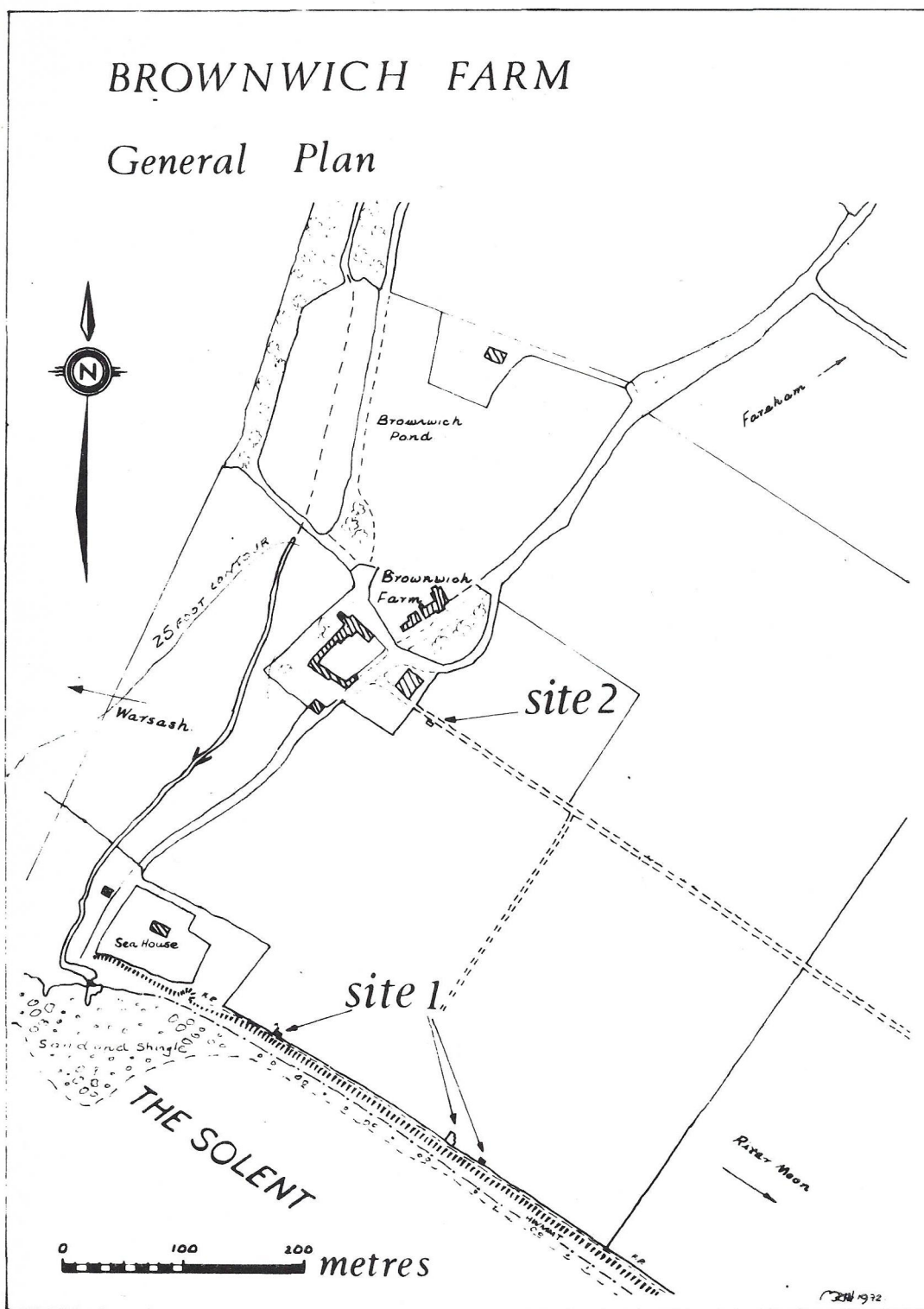


Fig. 2 Brownwich Farm: General Plan

PART I: A LATE IRON AGE SALT PRODUCING SITE

INTRODUCTION (Fig.2, Site 1)

The Iron Age site is situated on the top of a windswept 25 foot cliff, with the excavated features running inland at an acute angle to the line of the cliffs. (N.G.R. SU 52050324).

The topography of the area is typical of the rural Solent coastline, occasional small cliffs above beaches of sand and shingle, with flat, almost treeless, agricultural land running inland from the coast. To the north-west of the site the cliffline is broken by a large, gently sloping gully, into which a small fresh water stream enters from Brownwich Pond, half a mile inland. Good, well drained soils, capping Plateaux gravels and Bracklesham sands and clays form the geological background to the site, the Bracklesham strata dipping upwards and eventually coming to the surface at the mouth of the gully. The gently shelving beach, composed of eroded gravels and sands, gives way to thick clays, mud and silt, normally only exposed at low tides.

Figure 1 shows the location of the site and the distribution of other late Iron Age sites in the Central Southern Hampshire area. The nearest sites are the two minor farm sites at Warsash and the salt-site on the shore at Hook, discovered in the 1930's by C. Fred Fox F.S.A.¹ and dated by the pottery finds to the "Belgic" period.

An air photographic sortie carried out over the area after the excavations did not reveal any further information regarding the site or its alignment². A resistivity survey carried out in rather wet conditions of a small area of the field in which the site was situated also proved of negative value.

THE EXCAVATION

A small number of trenches were opened along the cliff top, within the confines of the fields, but up against the footpath boundary fence. These were dug in order to attempt to identify the cliff face features that were visible, and also to investigate the area immediately inland from the truncated ditch feature in the cliff face (F1 – Fig.3). The size of the trenches was limited by the width of the farm track that runs along the edge of the field, and the fact that the field held a large crop of winter cabbage.

All of the other cliff face features proved to be natural and consequently the excavated areas immediately behind them were backfilled.

The trenches opened up in the area behind the cliff face feature, F1, indicated a small truncated ditch or gully that ran inland at an angle to the cliff top (Fig.3). Much of the structural evidence had obviously been destroyed by earlier farming activity (evidence of steam ploughing was established), the movement of farm vehicles along the area in question and coastal activity during the last war. However, a small number of stakeholes were found, along with two hearth or oven areas at the bottom of the gully. The gully (Fig.4) was flat bottomed, 70 cms wide at the bottom and

¹ C. Fred Fox F.S.A. 1935. "Saltworks at Hook, Warsash, Hants." *Proc. H.F.C.* Vol. XIII, Part 1 p.105-109.

² Air photographs 1972 January, S.H.A.R.G. A.P. Library

BROWNWICH FARM *site 1*

PLAN

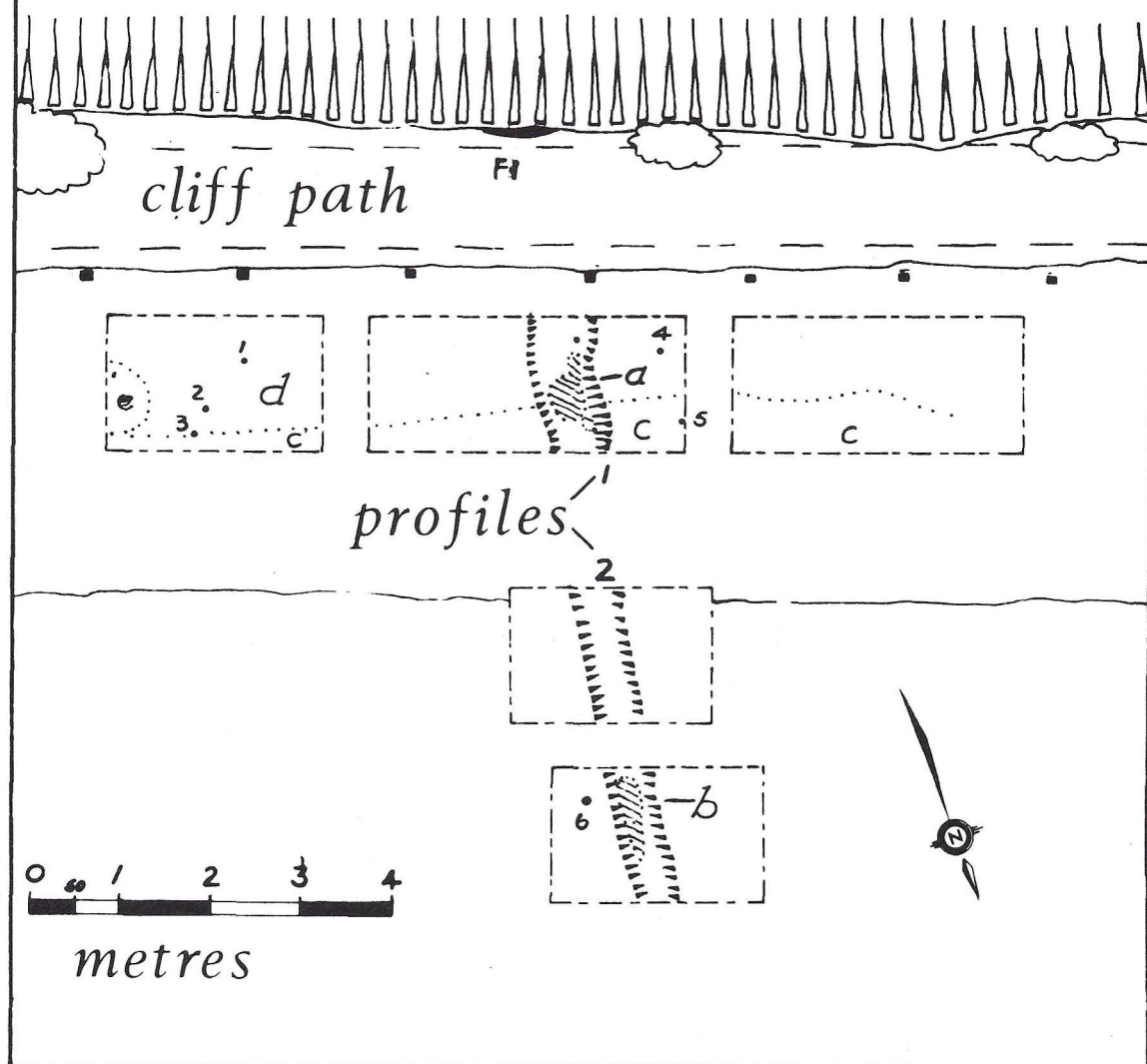


Fig. 3. Brownwich Farm: Iron Age Site Plan

only 10-15 cms high. Its length, as far as the excavation could ascertain, was approximately 10 metres. In profile (2) (Fig.4) a 'ghost' impression appeared to exist in the disturbed soil levels which indicated a much wider feature originally with a smaller gully cut into the bottom.

Along the length of the gully bottom two partially circular areas of burning (a and b, Fig.3), that contained daub, pottery sherds, "briquetage" fragments, charcoal and a few burnt flints, were identified. Associated with area (b) a narrow channel of potsherds, previously broken, was found, leading up to the edge of the burnt area. The sherds had been placed end to end and in some cases inside one another as if to suggest a drain or soak-away or perhaps some sort of flue.

Structural features were scarce, six stake holes, all approximately 6 cm in diameter, appeared to have existed, which may suggest some form of light structure such as a small wind-break. Five of these (Nos. 1-5, Fig.3) form a partial semicircle, which would at least have been situated in the right place to act as a break for the prevailing winds from the S.W. Rather vague evidence was also found in the form of a hard-packed clay area or floor (d), inside the area bounded by stake holes (1), (2) and (3) and two raised gravel platforms (c) and (e) which may well be natural undulations in the gravel strata. Fragmentary pieces of charcoal and daub were found in two of the stake holes (1) and (2), and also daub, fragments of "briquetage" and a few burnt flints were found in the area of the hard packed floor.

Some yellow-green staining was noticed in the clay situated in the fill of both hearth features. It is possible that it may be evidence of decomposed metalwork, or purely some chemical reaction from decaying vegetable matter.

The pottery and "briquetage" fragments came mainly from the cliff face feature, the two "hearth" areas and the gully area. There was no archaeological stratification present.

DESCRIPTION OF FINDS

Pottery

A total of 325 sherds of Iron Age pottery were recovered, comprising of 45 rim sherds, 27 base sherds and 253 body sherds. There appeared to be five main categories of fabric, which are given in the following table.

<i>Fabric</i>	<i>No. of sherds</i>	<i>% of total</i>	<i>Description of fabric</i>
A	99	30	Black with burnished exterior. Sandy fabric.
B	92	28	Black with burnished exterior. Small-medium flint tempering.
C	75	23	Red-brown wares, occasional evidence of exterior burnishing. Fine sandy fabric.
D	50	16	Red-brown wares. Coarse flint tempering.
E	9	3	Buff, vesiculated wares. Coarse flint tempering.

EXCAVATIONS AT BROWNWICH FARM, TITCHFIELD, 1971.

PROFILES

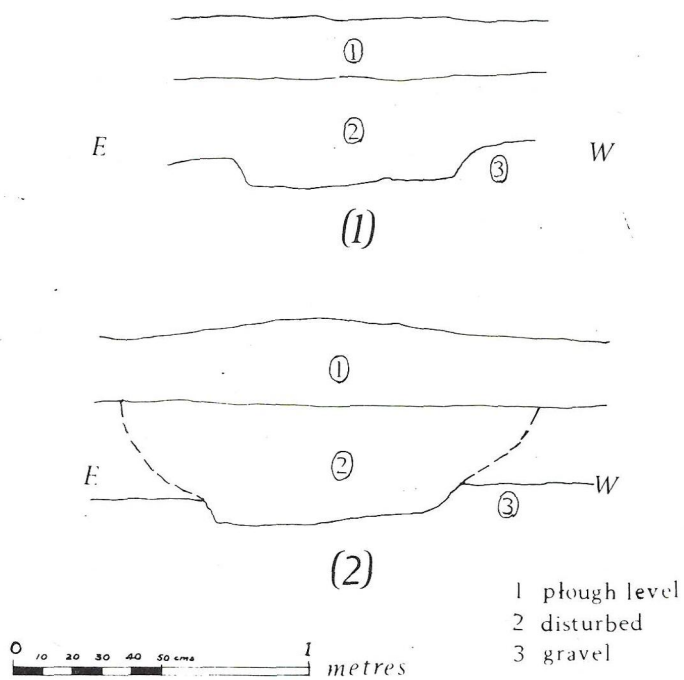


Fig. 4. Brownwich Farm: Profiles of Gully on Iron Age Site

A more detailed description of all the rims and bases, together with some of the body sherds, where some reconstruction has been possible, is now given. (Figs.5, 6 & 7). Body thicknesses quoted are average measurements.

Small flint tempered = 0.5 – 1.5mm flints
 Medium flint tempered = 1.0 – 2.5mm flints
 Coarse flint tempered = 1.5 – 5.0mm flints

Fig.5

- No. 1 Large jar with bead rim; body thickness 7.0mm; red-brown coarse flint/sandy fabric.
- No. 2 Rounded jar with a straight sided rim; body thickness 9.0mm; black with coarse flint tempering. Some evidence of burnishing on exterior.
- No. 3 Rounded jar with a slight everted rim; body thickness 7.0mm; red-brown coarse sandy fabric.
- No. 4 Rounded jar with bead rim; body thickness 6.0 – 8.0mm; black with medium flint tempering. Burnished externally.
- No. 5 Rounded jar with proto-bead rim; body thickness 5.0 – 6.0mm; black sandy fabric. Burnished externally.
- No. 6 Rounded jar with proto-bead rim; body thickness 6.0mm; buff-dark brown coarse sandy fabric.
- No. 7 Rounded jar with proto-bead rim; body thickness 7.0mm; pink-buff with medium flint tempering.
- No. 8 Rounded jar with bead rim; body thickness 8.0mm; black sandy fabric; medium flint tempering.
- No. 9 Shouldered jar with 'angular' bead rim; body thickness 9.0mm; black with coarse flint tempering. Burnished externally.
- No.10 Rounded jar with slight everted rim; body thickness 7.0mm; red-brown sandy fabric.
- No.11 Rounded jar with 'angular' bead rim; body thickness 5.0 – 7.0mm; black-buff vesiculated fabric; coarse flint tempering.
- No.12 Base of a jar; possible footring; body thickness 5.0 – 7.0mm; black-buff vesiculated fabric; coarse flint tempering.
- No.13 Rounded jar with partly everted rim; body thickness 8.0mm; black sandy fabric; small amount of small flint tempering. Burnished externally.
- No.14 Shouldered bowl with partly everted rim; body thickness 6.0 – 8.0mm; black sandy fabric; fine flint tempering. Burnished externally. Internal tool marks?

EXCAVATIONS AT BROWNWICH FARM, TITCHFIELD, 1971

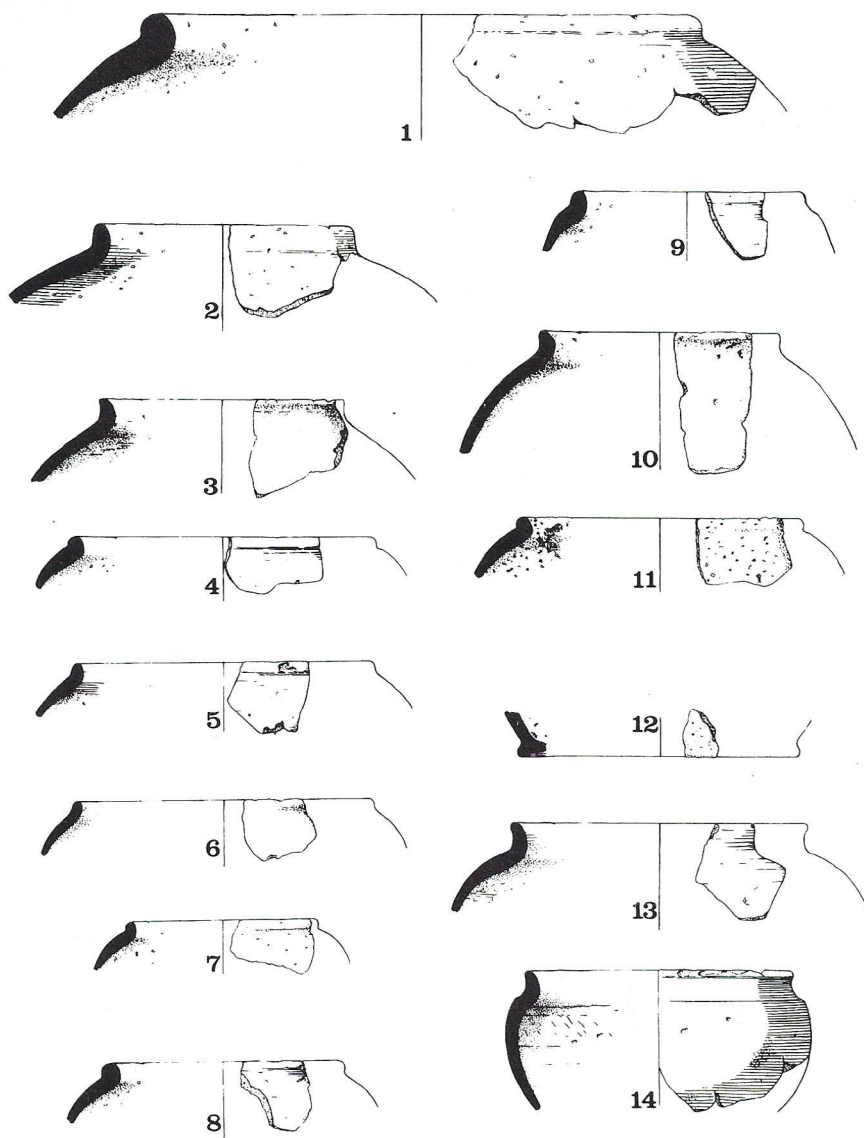


Fig. 5. Brownwich Farm: Iron Age Pottery. (Scale $\frac{1}{4}$)

Fig.6

- No. 1 "Saucepan" type pot with plain rim; body thickness 7.0mm; black with fine flint tempering. No decoration.
- No. 2 Slightly curved jar with small everted rim; body thickness 5.0 – 7.0mm; black sandy fabric; small amount of flint tempering.
- No. 3 Base sherds, probably of a jar; body thickness 5.0mm; black sandy fabric; medium flint tempering. Burnished externally.
- No. 4 Base sherd with a 'flared' profile; body thickness 6.0 – 7.0mm; black sandy fabric; coarse flint tempering; possible burnishing externally.
- No. 5 Base and body sherds of a jar; body thickness 5.0 – 6.0mm; black-brown sandy fabric. External tooling or decoration groove on body?
- No. 6 Small jar or bowl with curving rim; body thickness 6.0mm; black coarse sandy fabric.
- No. 7 Small bowl with out-turned rim; body thickness 7.0mm; black sandy fabric. Burnished externally.
- No. 8 Jar with a "flaring" type base profile; body thickness 7.0mm; orange-red sandy fabric; small flint tempering. External surface may have been covered by a buff coloured slip.
- No. 9 Rounded jar with everted rim; body thickness 7.0mm; black sandy fabric; medium flint tempering.
- No.10 Shallow bowl with proto-bead rim; body thickness 6.0mm; brown black sandy fabric, small flint tempering.
- No.11 Small rounded jar with thick bead rim; body thickness 4.0 – 5.0mm; black with small flint tempering. Burnished externally.
- No.12 Small rounded jar with thick bead rim; body thickness 8.0mm; black sandy fabric; small flint tempering. Burnished externally.
- No.13 Small, rounded jar with proto-everted rim; body thickness 4.0mm; black-brown with small flint tempering.
- No.14 Jar with 'flaring' angular base; body thickness 8.0 – 12.0mm; buff coloured coarse sandy fabric; large flint tempering.
- No.15 Small jar with 'flaring' angular omphalous type base; body thickness 6.0mm; black sandy fabric; small flint tempering. Burnished externally.

Fig.7

- No. 1 Small jar with flat base; body thickness 4.0mm; black with small flint tempering. Burnished externally.
- No. 2 Small jar with flat base; body thickness 3.5mm; black with medium flint tempering. Burnished externally.
- No. 3 Small jar with slightly "dished" base; body thickness 6.0mm; black brown with medium flint tempering.

EXCAVATIONS AT BROWNWICH FARM, TITCHFIELD, 1971.

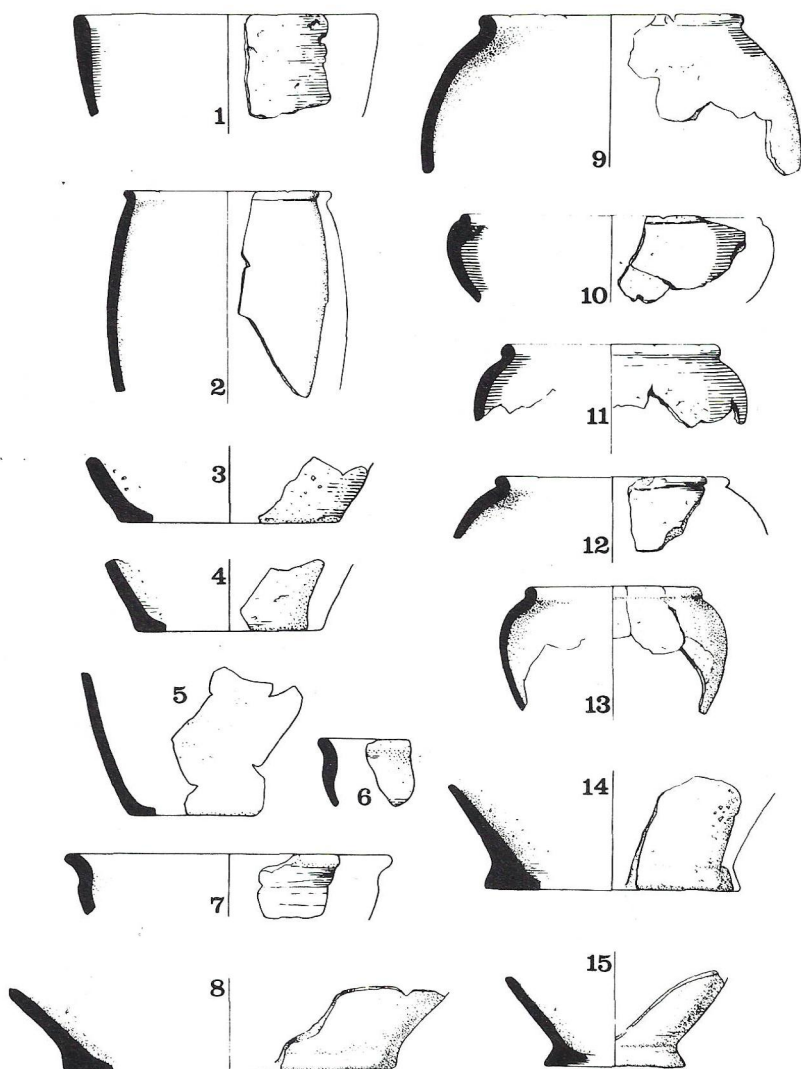


Fig. 6. Brownwich Farm: Iron Age Pottery. (Scale $\frac{1}{4}$)

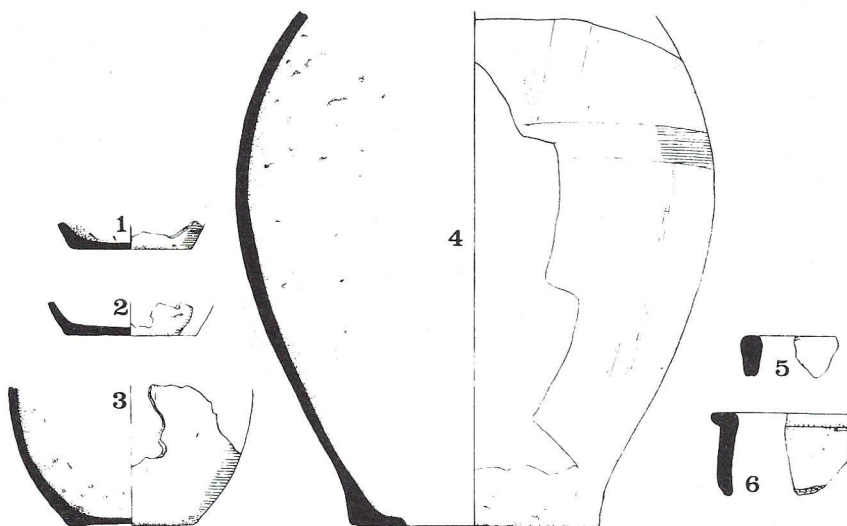


Fig. 7. Brownwich Farm: Iron Age and Medieval Pottery. (Scale $\frac{1}{4}$)

- No. 4 Large rounded jar with slightly 'flaring' flat base; body thickness 7.0mm; black brown with small flint tempering. Faint incised vertical decoration on body. Burnished externally, possibly in horizontal bands.

Discussion

Over 50% of the illustrated pottery consists of rounded jars, with proto-bead, bead and everted rims, and can be reasonably said, of comparable size and capacity, the proto-bead and bead rims dominating the assemblage (i.e. 64%). The majority of the pottery is well fired and wheel thrown.

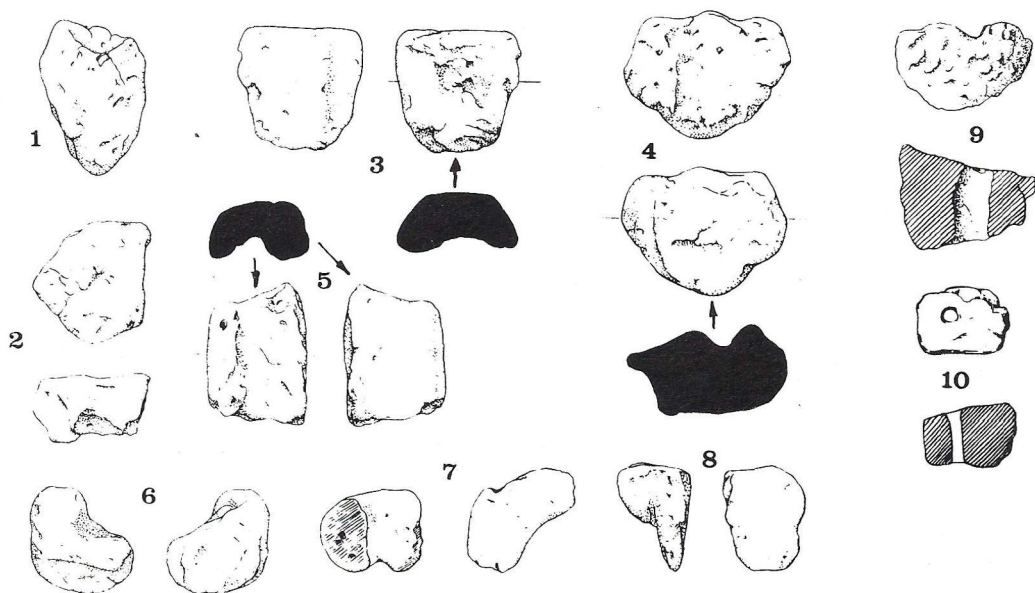


Fig. 8. Brownwich Farm: Objects of Burnt Clay. (Scale $\frac{1}{4}$)

Loomweight Fig.8 (No.10)

A fragment of baked clay, flat topped 3.0mm x 2.5mm with two almost vertical sides; contains a hole bored through the fragment, approx. 10mm in diameter. The fabric is sandy, tempered with chaff or grass, similar to the fabric of some of the "briquetage" fragments. It is possible that this is not part of a loomweight, as it does not conform to any loomweight shape from this period.

Daub

A number of small pieces of daub were found in the region of stakeholes Nos. 1 and 2 and in fill of main gully and "hearth" areas. Orange-yellow in colour, sandy in fabric. No fragment was larger than 6mm across.

Objects of burnt clay ("briquetage") Fig.8 (Nos.1-9)

A total of 120 large fragments and approximately 50 very small pieces of burnt clay were found. The majority were of odd shaped 'lumps' but 24 showed some signs of shape or use and nine of them are illustrated. I use the term 'briquetage'¹ loosely, as apart from the similarity of shapes to objects of 'briquetage' found on salt working sites, there is no absolute evidence to show that these objects were used in salt producing industries.

¹ R.A.H. Farrar. 1962. "A note on the Prehistoric and Roman Salt Industry in relation to the Wyke Regis site, Dorset." *Proc. Dorset N.H. and A.S.* Vol.84 p.137-144. In this article the author describes briquetage as "the term loosely used to categorize

crude clay fragments....of evaporating vessels, props or stands, hearth furniture etc....they appear not to be similar to any other industry of this period in prehistory."

The majority of the “briquetage” fragments were composed of three differing fabrics:

- A. Brown, red, black in colour. Clay, sandy fabric, flint tempering (1.0-5.0mm in size) and some vegetation, probably chaff or grass.
- B. Red, black, mottled in colour; clay, sandy fabric, flint tempering (1.0-5.0mm in size).
- C. Brown, black in colour; clay, sandy fabric, some flint tempering with chaff or grass. Appearance indicates constant re-heating.

Fig.8

- No.1 Inverted cone shaped fragment; 80mm in height, 55mm across at its broadest point. Fabric B. It has a hollowed out top. This piece, if compared to a similar find from the Hook site¹ and of continental parallels from the site of Halle², suggests a support or stand for a small rounded vessel which may have been the mould for the salt-cake.
- No.2 Fragment of possible evaporating vessel?; fabric A. Flat bottomed with part of one vertical side.
- No.3 Fragment of possible evaporating vessel or mould?; wall thickness 20 – 25mm; fabric B; flat bottomed 35mm x 65mm with two angled sides. Some comparison with half cylinder salt-cake moulds from Kimmeridge, Dorset³.
- No.4 Fragment of some kind of support, perhaps evaporating oven furniture?; fabric C, which supports this identity, as it has obviously been heated many times. The semicircular groove running across the fragment is approximately 12 – 15mm in diameter.
- No.5 Fragment of evaporating vessel or mould, similar to No.3; wall thickness 20 – 25mm; fabric B; bottom flatish again, with angled sides.
- No.6 Fragment of evaporating oven furniture?; fabric C; similar in appearance to No.4.
- No.7 Fragment of a circular object, not unlike a large bun-shaped loomweight; fabric C; elliptical in cross section. Possibly evaporating oven furniture.
- No.8 Fragment of an evaporating vessel?; fabric B; a right angled fragment.
- No.9 Fragment of circular object, again similar to a loomweight in appearance, but of rather irregular cross section; fabric B; semicircular groove is approximately 20mm in diameter.

¹ C. Fred Fox F.S.A. 1935. “Salt Works at Hook, Warsash, Hants.” *Proc. H.F.C.* Vol.XIII Part I p.105-109.

² K. Riehm. 1961. “Prehistoric Salt-Boiling” *Antiquity* Vol.XXXV. p.181-191.

³ J.B. Calkin. 1948. “The Isle of Purbeck in the Iron Age.” *Proc. Dorset N.H. and A.S.* Vol.68. p.56-57.

EXCAVATIONS AT BROWNWICH FARM, TITCHFIELD, 1971.

Discussion

Because of the large numbers of these clay fragments that were found in such a small excavated area, the indications are that they have been used for a particular industry in the vicinity. By drawing comparisons with similar material from other sites where salt-working was thought to have been carried out, e.g. Lincolnshire, Dorset and Essex as well as the site at Hook, the assumption that the Brownwich Farm site was involved in a similar enterprise is a reasonable one.

The close proximity of the Hook site, an isolated find (in the Locksheath School collections) at Brownwich of a fragment of briquetage 'pedestal', comparable to that from Hook, the historical documentation of medieval and post-medieval salterns along this area of the coast and in the estuaries of the rivers Hamble and Meon, would certainly underline this conclusion.

We can assume that the initial evaporation of salt by the sun took place in salt pans built up on the tidal beach areas, as suggested by Riehm and then the second stage of further evaporation or drying and producing saltcake moulds took place on the cliff site.

No 'red coloured' mounds were found on the Brownwich Farm site, although the report on the Hook site mentions red burnt earth areas, as does occur on a number of salt working sites, especially on the flat coast lines of Lincolnshire and Essex. Brownwich Farm, however, is more comparable to the Dorset sites that are situated above sea level, where no associated mounds have been found.

As salt was a very important and vital commodity, not only as a condiment, but also as a preserving and antiseptic agent, it is reasonable to assume some form of consistency in sizes and capacity or weight of the salt cakes produced for trading purposes. To this object moulds would have been used and even perhaps pottery vessels of similar capacity, as has been found at Brownwich Farm, the salt cakes probably being traded complete with containers. The Halle type salt cake moulds or containers it is assumed were made complete with pedestal or stand of clay (Fig.8. No.1), which was then broken off before trading. K.Riehm¹ suggests "that in the absence of balances and weights, handily shaped pieces of salt cake could be easily used as a unit of value, between bartering parties."

A number of late Iron Age settlement sites in central southern Hampshire have evidence of 'briquetage' imports and it is probable that the Hook and Brownwich Farm salt producing sites, along with the possible Middle Iron Age coastal site at Paulsgrove, nr. Portsmouth², supplied the needs of these settlement areas in the region. A number of other salt working sites are also known to exist in the Langstone and Chichester harbour areas.

¹ K. Riehm. 1961. "Prehistoric Salt-Boiling"
Antiquity Vol.XXXV. p.181-191.

² R. Bradley, Paulsgrove - forthcoming.

Burnt flints

A scatter of burnt flints (“potboilers”) were found in the fill around the two “hearth” regions, as well as occasionally in nearby areas. Nearly all were almost white in colour, indicating more than one heating and cooling cycle.

DISCUSSION

(a) The nature of the site

The large amounts of “briquetage” fragments found reasonably point to the site being used in some context for the production of salt, and not as a consumer site. Some of the shapes are comparable to those “fragments” found at the Hook site¹ and certainly compare favourably in fabric, i.e. tempered with chaff or grass. Further evidence for the nature of the site comes from the flat bottomed gully and oven or hearth areas where further evaporation or drying of the salt could have taken place, with the stakehole evidence providing a possible windbreak from the prevailing winds. Mrs. S.J. Hallam² mentions common features in Lincolnshire sites as “briquetage” fragments, vessel supports and baked clay debris along belts of burnt material often only 2 – 3ft wide (60 – 90cms). The pottery jars of possible similar capacity and the number of burnt flints adds to the evidence.

(b) The date of the site

The pottery represents a reasonably homogeneous assemblage of forms and fabrics similar to those from other sites, with late Iron Age phases, in Central Southern Wessex, e.g. Winchester, Horndean, M27 site Portsdown Hill, Crookhorn Lane Bedhampton, Owlesbury, Worthy Down, Twyford Down etc., for which a conventional date of 2nd to 1st century B.C. has been suggested by Cunliffe³. The majority of the sherds are well fired and wheel thrown and therefore can be assumed to have been produced by potters, possibly local to the area, well advanced in the general sequence of the development of techniques in the region. Some of the forms could certainly indicate some trading contact with Romanized or Gaulish tribes, more than the more popular concept of the result of a wave of immigrations of Belgic tribes around the middle of the 1st century B.C. The evidence of the “saucepan” type pot is the result of a long survival of a useful shape in pottery traditions during 2nd and 1st centuries B.C.

Consequently from the pottery evidence a reasonable chronology for the site would be late 1st century B.C., with no prolonged period of occupation being evident from the excavated material. This would place the Brownwich Farm salt-working site tentatively into context during the “Belgic” or perhaps more parochially Cunliffe’s Southern Atrebat³ phase of the late Iron Age in Hampshire.

¹ C. Fred Fox F.S.A. 1935. “Salt Works at Hook, Warsash, Hants.” *Proc. H.F.C.* Vol.XIII Part 1 p.105-109. ³ B. W. Cunliffe, 1964. “Winchester Excavations 1949–1960”. Vol. 1.

² S.J. Hallam 1960. “Romano-British Salt Industry in South Lincolnshire.” *Lincolnshire Architectural and Archaeological Socy.* Vol.8 (New Series).

EXCAVATIONS AT BROWNWICH FARM, TITCHFIELD, 1971.

PART II: A MEDIEVAL SHELL MIDDEN

During excavation of the I.A. site, the farmer, Mr. Kneller, pointed out a recent exposure of oyster shells at the opposite end of the same field. This has generally occurred, according to Mr. Kneller, every time in recent years that that part of the field has been ploughed. Because of the possible association with the I.A. site, although no comparative evidence had been found on the surface, he gave permission to excavate an area which had the highest density of shells (Fig.2, site 2) (N.G.R. SU 5200 0357).

THE EXCAVATION

An area 8 metres x 2 metres was opened (Fig.9) with two small baulks in between.

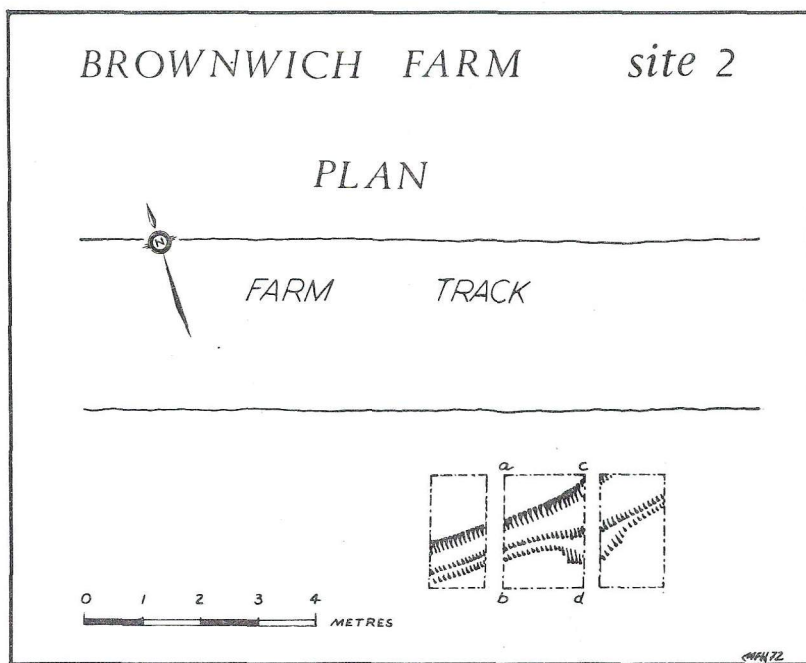


Fig. 9. Brownwich Farm: Medieval Shell Midden, Site Plan.

The result was the exposure of a small truncated gully or ditch, approximately 1.2 metres wide and 0.4 metres deep, which ran across the site in an E-W direction. This gully, where its course would have passed under the present-day farm track, showed as a slight depression in the track. The gully had been widened at a later date to approximately 1.6 metres at the point where the highest concentration of shell was present (Fig.10 Section c-d). Also evident in this area was a number of medium sized flints which may have been used to line the shell midden. Section a-b (Fig.10) presents a more symmetrical profile of the gully, with less shell in the fill, thereby indicating the edge of the midden area. This is confirmed by the fact that hardly any

shells were found near the western edge of the excavated area.

The dense packed layers of various types of shells, as shown in the sections, appear to overlie a certain amount of silting material, composed of soil and gravel, in the gully. This silted material contained some ox bones and a fragment of a “shelly” limestone quern or rubbing stone was found on the gully floor. The shell layers also contained a number of food refuse bones, a small number of medieval potsherds and an iron object.

SECTIONS

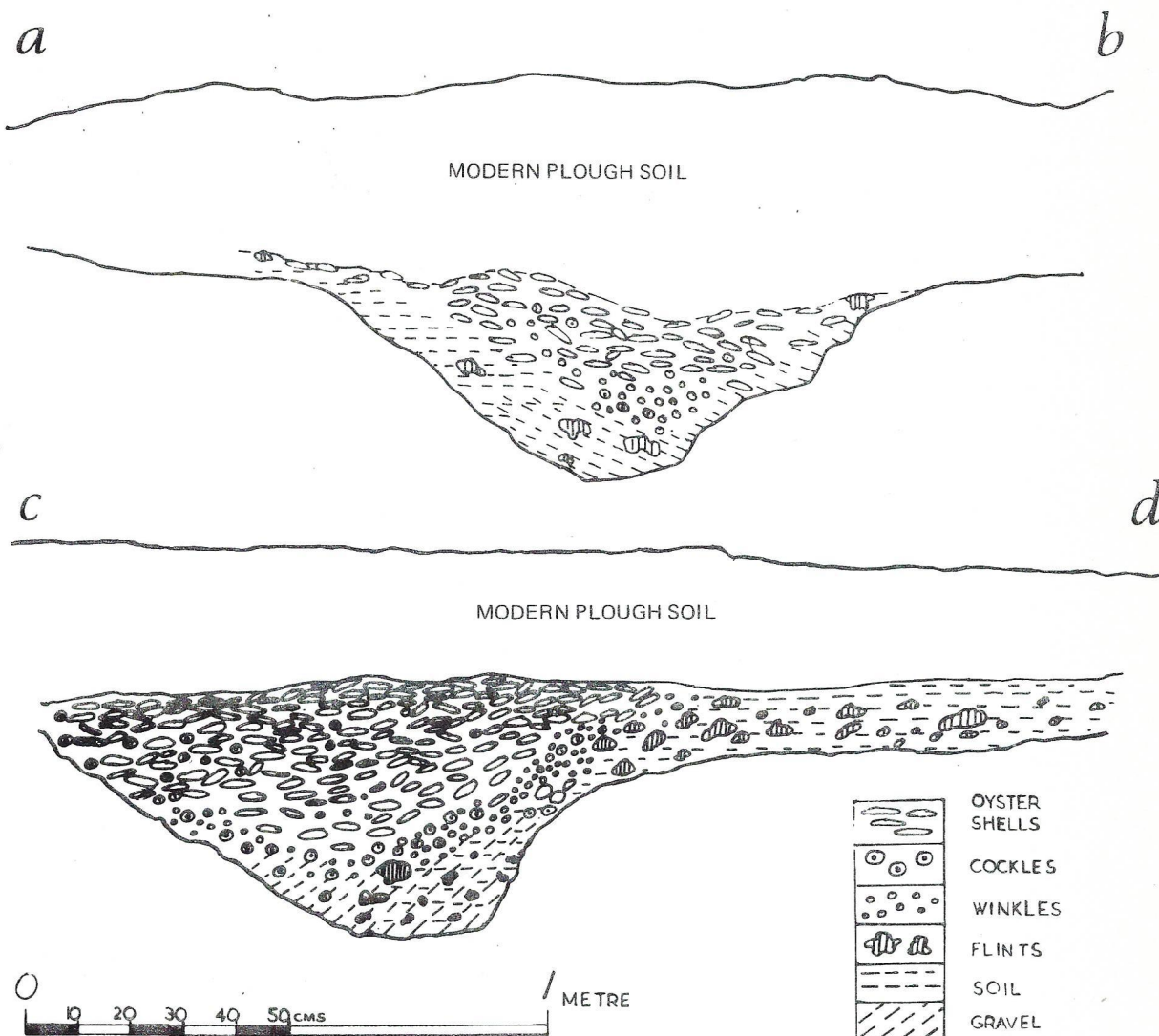


Fig. 10. Brownwich Farm: Sections of Medieval Shell Midden

EXCAVATIONS AT BROWNWICH FARM, TITCHFIELD, 1971.

DESCRIPTION OF FINDS

Stone

The fragment of quern or rubbing stone found at the bottom of the gully, indicated use by a slight concavity on one side. This had been worn smooth, with a slight chamfer partially around the edge. The material is of "shelly" Purbeck limestone, (not illustrated).

Pottery Fig. 7 (Nos. 5 and 6)

All from Midden layers.

No. 1 Flat topped rim sherd, 8mm thick, exterior pink coloured fabric, interior grey, flint tempered 0.3 – 1.0mm in range, well fired. No decoration. (Fig.7, No.6).

No. 2 Body sherd, 6mm thick, pink coloured fabric, flint tempered 0.5 – 3.0mm in range, well fired. Haphazard 'scratch' marks over surface. This form of decoration is similar to the "scratch" wares of 12-13th century date, only found mainly in Wilts, Hampshire and some parts of Dorset.

Nos. 3 Body sherds, 8mm thick, pink coloured fabric, flint tempered 0.5 – 3.0mm
4 & 5 in range. Well fired. No decoration.

No. 6 Simple rim sherd, with slight curving profile on top of rim, 10mm thick, greyish-pink fabric, flint tempered 0.5 – 1.0mm in range. Well fired. No decoration. (Fig.7, No.5).

No. 7 Body sherd, 5mm thick, grey-black fabric, flint tempered 0.3 – 1.0mm in range. Well fired. No decoration.

No. 8 Body sherd, 6mm thick, grey-black fabric, flint tempered 0.3 – 1.0mm in range. Well fired. No decoration.

No. 9 Body sherd, 4mm thick, grey-black sandy fabric. No decoration.

No.10 Body sherd, 5mm thick, grey fabric, flint tempered 0.5 – 3.0mm in range. Well fired. No decoration.

Iron

An iron object, of somewhat amorphous form, was found in the shell midden approximately 0.55 metres below the surface (not illustrated).

Animal Bones by Gina Adams, B.Sc.

50-60 fragments of animal bones were examined and identified, and of these 50% were those of two cats which may or may not have been contemporary with the shell midden.

The remainder were thought to be food refuse bones and pig, ox and sheep were present, together with a few bird bones, probably wild fowl.

With so few specimens, comparative measurements were not possible, and the sizes and sex of species could not be ascertained. Fragments showed an age killing as follows:

Sheep: two animals, under 3 years. (32% of remaining 50%).

Pig: under 2 years (this would be in keeping with usual pig husbandry). (16%).

Ox: uncertain. (52%).

Ox vertebrae showed that the animal had been cleaved vertically, and the ribs also bore chop marks. The sheep and pig forelimbs had been butchered at the joints with the scapula and ulna respectively.

Molluscs

The marine shells identified in the midden layers were as follows:

Oyster	<i>Ostrea edulis</i> L.
Cockle	<i>Cardium edule</i> L.
Winkle	<i>Littorina littorea</i> (L.)
Mussel	<i>Modiolus modiolus</i> (L).
Whelk	<i>Buccinum undatum</i> Linné.
Pullet Carpet Shell	<i>Venerupis pullastra</i> (Montagu).
Trough Shell	<i>Spisula solida</i> (L).

(other members of the Trough Shell family i.e. Mactridae were not positively identified but were of varying sizes from length 55 – 70mm and width 45 – 58mm).

From a random sample of 100 shells, the following frequency of species was determined.

Oyster	52%
Winkle	15%
Cockle	10%
Pullet Carpet Shell	8%
Whelk	8%
Trough Shell	4%
Mussel	3%

DISCUSSION

The documentary evidence for Brownwich obtained without intensive research, is rather sketchy. It is mentioned in a Domesday entry as *Burnewic* and in the text mentions “*land for 3 ploughs.....5 villeins and 11 borders with 3 ploughs. There is one serf. It was always, and is, worth four pounds.*” There is further tenuous evidence for the existence of the area in the later middle ages, the name “*Brunnage*” appears on Norden’s map of 1610, whilst in the Court Book of 1667 a number of people were named for homage at *Brunewick*. The present day farmhouse was probably built at this time, if not earlier. (A bricked up casement window was found recently, probably as a result of the window tax of 1695.)

EXCAVATIONS AT BROWNWICH FARM, TITCHFIELD, 1971.

The marine mollusca evidence is of interest, especially in light of possible famine periods that may have existed from time to time during the medieval period. Coastal communities, such as Brownwich, could have only survived by the fact that there existed on their doorstep a well stocked marine "larder". Also two of the shells, (Pullet carpet shells and Trough shells), found in the midden are not among the known gastronomic delights of the 20th C.

Again from the shell midden evidence it appears that winkle and cockle shells formed a distinct layer at the bottom and sides of the midden pit, whilst oyster and other shells formed the remaining bulk. This suggests, perhaps, a change in the gastronomic habits at a later date; due possibly to environmental conditions affecting the cockle and winkle beds, or perhaps a sharp increase in the local oyster population, or simply to the fact that the local inhabitants found they preferred oyster and the other shell fish. It is of course dangerous to draw too many conclusions from the tenuous evidence of one midden, although another of the same date has been recorded in the vicinity¹ as well as in other parts of the Hampshire coastline². The period of use of such a "shell rubbish pit" is difficult to ascertain, especially as it would depend on a number of local socio-economic factors.

The animal bone evidence of pigs and ox suggests possibly a stock raising farming community in the vicinity, although the rearing of sheep in large numbers is not really feasible when considering the damp environment, prevalent in low lying coastal regions.

The wild fowl bones would also be in keeping with the area, for even today a great number of wild fowl colonies exist in the estuaries of the Rivers Hamble and Meon.

Whilst the construction date for the gully is tenuous, with only the fragment of limestone quem or rubbing stone as evidence, the pottery sherds reasonably indicate a medieval date for the shell midden.

Therefore, together with the documentary evidence, the pottery and to some extent the possible economic evidence of the mollusca, a tentative date of 12th-13th C is suggested for the shell midden.

¹ SU531029 Titchfield Haven. A shell midden was discovered in 1953, in the sides of a gravel pit. Pottery with fluted pie crust rims, similar to local wares from Catherington, Hants, indicate a 12th-13th C date. Information from J.C. Draper.

² SZ705996 S. Hayling, St. Catherines Road. A shell midden found here, in 1968, also contained 12th C pottery. Information Mrs. G. Adams.

PART III: SURFACE FLINTS

Field work in the vicinity of the I.A. site and adjacent fields produced among other things an assemblage of interesting flint material. (N.G.R. SU 5220 0320 radius 200 metres). Apart from three waste flakes, this material is illustrated in Fig.11. The fine example of the flint 'adze' found during the time of the excavation by one of the farmer's sons, in an adjacent field, has remained in his possession.

Description

- No. 1 Adze, 'Cissbury' type, light/dark grey flint. Probably made from a large flake. Flaking all over the back. Round pointed butt with gently convex sides, ridge cross-section. Cutting edge partly formed by longitudinal facets.
- No. 2 Blade segment, grey patinated flint, bulb of percussion removed, end snapped, right-hand edge has fine 'nibbled' trimming.
- No. 3 Bulbar end of flake/blade, fresh brown flint, cortex, some trimming on right-hand edge.
- No. 4 Flake, greyish flint, probably waste, some trimming on left-hand edge.
- No. 5 Blade segment, probably waste, light grey patinated flint, bulb of percussion snapped off.
- No. 6 Flake, grey banded flint, possible trimming along right-hand edge.
- No. 7 Convex end/side scraper from thick flake of grey, brown, lustrous, flint, cortex. Working at end fairly steep, much used, iron stained.
- No. 8 Convex end scraper on flake, grey flint, cortex. Steep trimming of right-hand side and end.
- No. 9 Blade, mottled grey flint or chert, patinated, cortex. Edges possibly used but not retouched.
- No.10 Barbed and tanged arrow head, grey banded flint/chert. Very finely worked on both faces, sides slightly convex, barbs square ended, tang broken, notches rounded.
- No.11 Scraper, on thick flake of grey flint, slightly tanged. Working edge steep, rather battered.
- No.12 (a) (b) (c)
Fabricator, grey banded flint, partly tri-hedral cross section, two edges and end steep, much battered (view (b) and (c)), iron stained.

Discussion

The majority of the material is of a somewhat glossy appearance (Nos. 1, 6, 7, 11, and 12) with some iron staining present. In contrast, Nos. 3 and 7 are fresh in appearance, whilst Nos. 9 and 10 are dull.

EXCAVATIONS AT BROWNWICH FARM, TITCHFIELD, 1971.

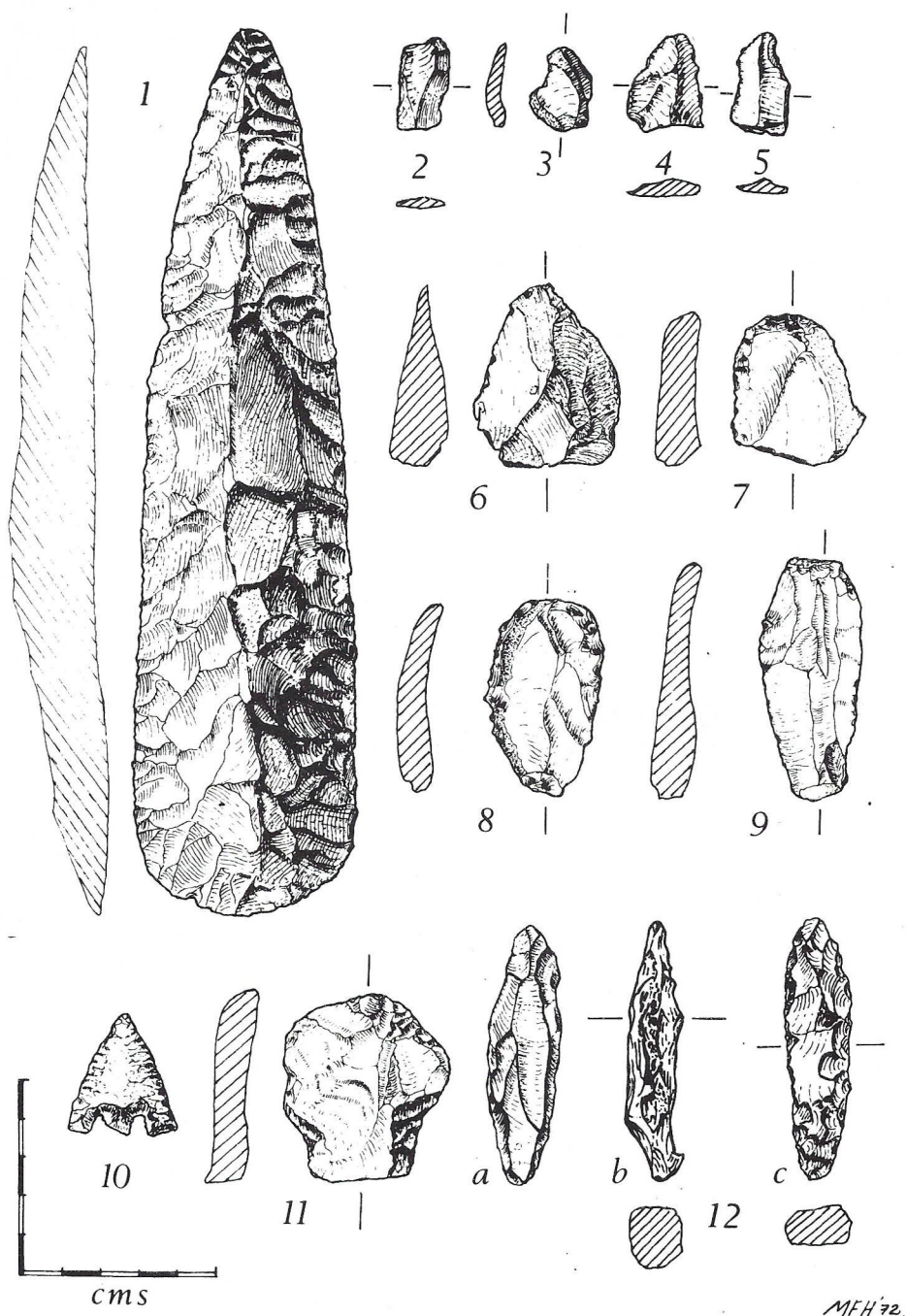


Fig. 11. Brownwich Farm: Surface Flints (Scale ½)

Nos. 2, 3, 4, 5, 7, 8 and 12 are diagnostic of Mesolithic knapping techniques and can be paralleled with similar material found in the South Hants, region, along the coastal areas, e.g. Beaulieu¹, Hillhead, Titchfield, Fareham². The Brownwich Farm site lies within the region drained by the old River Solent system, with two of its former tributaries nearby, i.e. the Rivers Hamble and Meon. This region would have provided a suitable environment for the littoral, food gathering peoples of Mesolithic cultures, with its abundance of fish, both fresh and seawater, shellfish and wild fowl.

Although no evidence was found on this occasion of "tranchet" type axes and/or axe-sharpening flakes (Lower Halstow culture type "fossils"), association of similar material as that shown in Fig.11 with Lower Halstow artefacts are known from other sites in this area, e.g. Rainbow Bar Hillhead, Titchfield, Lee-on-Solent and Netley³. Broadly then, this association could tentatively place the Brownwich Farm Mesolithic material in a 5th millenium B.C. context as belonging to food gathering tribes of the Lower Halstow cultures. The adze, No.1, and scraper, No.11, are paralleled in early Neolithic contexts and with the barbed and tanged arrow head of Early Bronze Age date, could possibly indicate a continual use of the area over a broad span of time.

¹ Rankine W.F. 1939 "Mesolithic Sites in Hampshire, some notes on flints from Beaulieu." *Proc. H.F.C.* Vol.XIV, Part II, 230-240.

² Rankine W.F. 1956 "The Mesolithic of Southern England." *Research Papers, Surrey Arch. Socy.* No.4.

³ Draper J.C. 1968 "Mesolithic Distribution in South-East Hampshire." *Proc. H.F.C.* Vol.XXIII, Part III, 110-119.

A LATE SAXON SITE AT EMSWORTH

by Richard Bradley

INTRODUCTION

In 1957, workmen laying a water main on the Emsworth Harbour Estate brought to light fragmentary loom weights, a small quantity of clay daub and one sherd of Late Saxon character. Some of this material was salvaged by the writer, then aged ten. A watch was then kept on all subsequent building until the completion of the estate and further finds of the same date were recorded. This account is based upon notes made between the ages of 10 and 17 and must be read with this in mind.

The site lies about 300 yards inside the present shoreline on slightly raised ground which falls away to a marshy valley to the north and to the Emsworth Millpond to the east. The natural subsoil over the whole area was an alluvial brickearth over contorted Coombe Rock.

Before any continuous commentary on the features recorded is offered, a word must be said of the limitations on the task of rescue work. Most of the trenches dug on the site were only two or three feet in width and house foundations barely reached the level of the Saxon material. The site had been ploughed continuously since the Middle Ages and scattered Saxon pottery in the topsoil suggests that some features had been destroyed. Consequently only features cut into the underlying soil might be expected to survive and the very small areas cleared to a sufficient depth make it likely that most linear structural features were never exposed at all. Only where vestigial occupation layers survived over some area were finds likely to be made.

Despite these limitations, however, a midden, a possible weaving shelter, and occupation floor and a daub filled pit were found and examined as time allowed. The excavated material is deposited with Portsmouth City Museum.

THE EXCAVATIONS

Area A. (Fig.12) Following the finds from the original mains trench, the area to its south was examined without result and when a narrow strip of ground to the other side became available, two trial trenches were dug there¹.

These sectioned a slight hollow 8 inches in depth and 12 feet across, which sloped down to the north where further work could not be carried out. On its base were local traces of charcoal. One pit immediately south of the original disturbance showed that this hollow had ended sharply two feet to its south. On its base was a fragment of a further loom weight. Two post holes marked the southern limit of this feature, each packed with Roman bricks.

After 4 inches of sterile soil had accumulated in this hollow it was reused as a midden. A spread of dark soil of similar thickness was found containing Late Saxon pottery, a few animal bones and many oyster, cockle, winkle and mussel shells. Daub and loom weights were completely absent.

¹ The initial examination was made under Mr. R.P. Wade and the later work under Master (late Professor) B.W. Cunliffe who has kindly made his notes available.

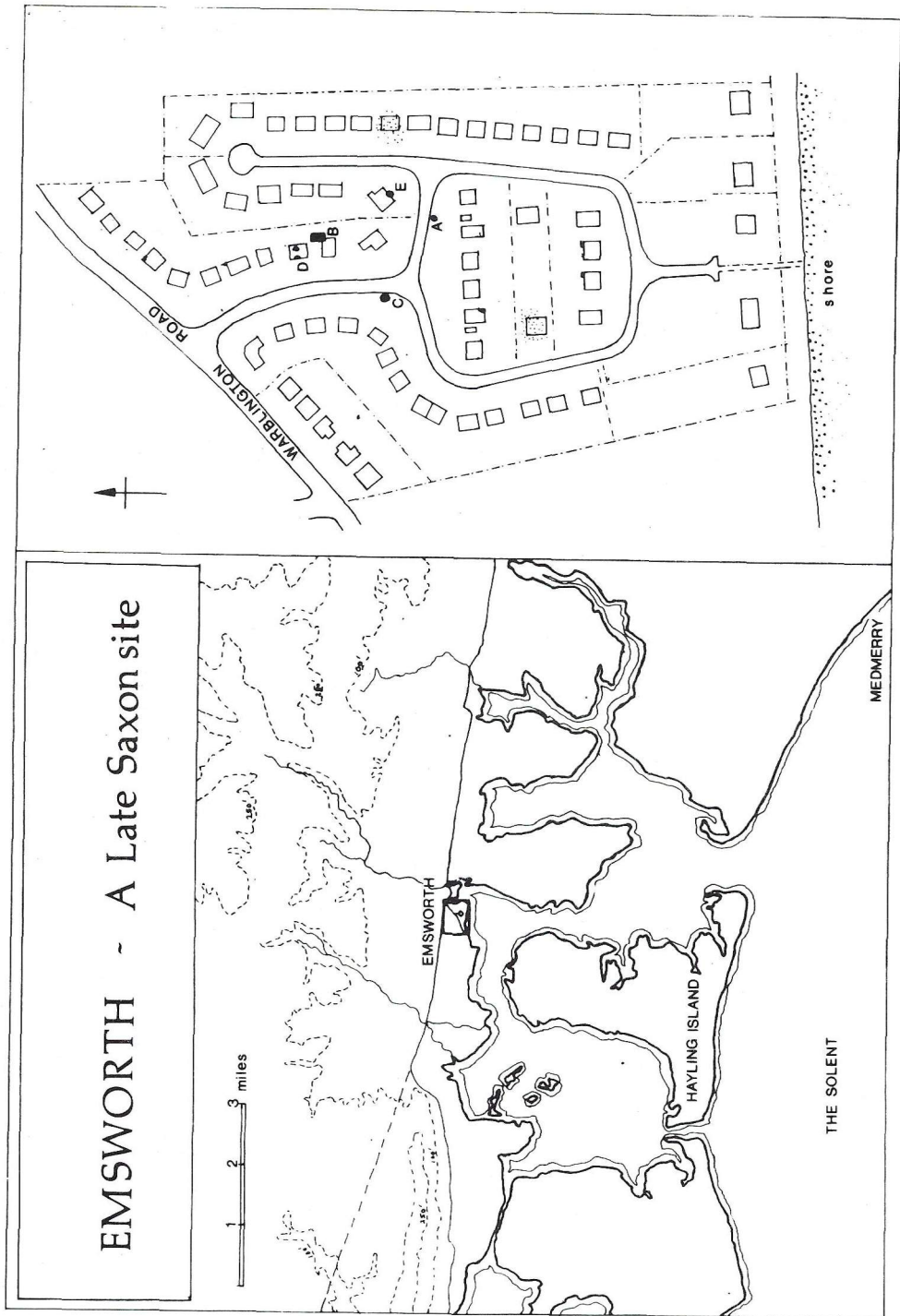


Fig. 12. Emsworth: General Plan

It seems likely then that both the daub and the loom weights had been associated with the hollow rather than the later midden. The two posts had been uprooted while the midden was in use and might also belong with the original feature. With such limited work, its nature must remain in doubt, though the finding of post holes, daub and loomweights in such proximity might suggest the site of some form of weaving shelter.

Area B. (Fig.13) To the north of the features already described, workmen digging house foundations came upon a layer of burnt daub, itself sealing an occupation deposit. A search of their spoil heaps produced a small number of Late Saxon sherds.

As a result, a number of very limited trenches were laid down to determine the nature and extent of occupation. Their size was entirely dictated by the lack of any labour force and their layout by the progress of building work. Despite these major limitations, it was still possible to define a rectangular occupation floor, fifteen feet by eleven, and to expose over half its area.

The floor lay directly upon the natural brickearth. About much of its perimeter small flints, both burnt and unburnt, had been rammed into this surface and an area of these about two feet square was found in what was probably the north west corner. No internal post holes were recognised, though the unsatisfactory trench plan might be responsible for this.

Over the western area of the floor a large quantity of burnt daub lay directly over the occupation soil but very little was found over the remaining part of the site. There was nothing to suggest that this material had been heaped up from a wider area and no support for the view that this might result from the clearance of a collapsed oven. A particular density of woodash was also recorded which could be viewed as burnt roof material. There was no sign of a hearth in the areas excavated.

It seems possible that the consolidated flint perimeter might have acted as the base for sill beams. If so, internal post holes may not have been necessary in structural terms, although a number of large and unburnt Roman tiles close to the centre of the floor could have acted as a single post rest. The unhappy trench plan also precluded the search for external buttress post holes.

Except over the consolidated flints at the north west corner of the floor, a thin but uniform layer of occupation debris was recorded. This need not be taken as a guide to the lifespan of the building, since much fuller excavation would be required to rule out the existence of external rubbish pits or further middens. Debris might in any case have been spread as manure.

A small burnt area immediately to the west was also encountered in the house foundations. This only contained scattered animal bones, but could represent a contemporary cooking site.

Area C. (Fig.13) In 1962, a mains trench to the south west of this structure again brought to light small pieces of unburnt daub. As a result it was possible to locate and clear half of a roughly oval pit.

On examination this pit was found to be five feet four inches in length by about four feet in breadth. Its depth in the natural subsoil was two feet six inches. Small amounts of carbonised oak remained both against the faces of the pit and in its earliest filling. Though so tenuous, these suggested a main bracing against the sides of

the pit made up of thin horizontal planks held upright against the sides by a framework of vertical and transverse struts. Some of this shuttering seems to have slumped with the sides of the pit.

The main filling of the pit consisted of a tumbled mass of clay daub, showing the imprints of squared staves, two inches or more thick, interwoven in a tight mesh with many smaller withies. The daub had reached a maximum thickness of four inches and had been carefully smoothed on its outer face. Its weight alone seems to preclude it as a cover for this pit and it may best be viewed as the residue of a wider deposit protected from the plough where it had sunk into an earlier feature. It was sealed by a thin midden deposit, entirely comparable with that already described, while the upper filling was made up of a dark organic soil.

The purpose of this pit is not clear. Its bottom was untrampled and contained only a few small animal remains. There was no evidence that it had been floored by planks. Its relationship to any nearby building too remains unknown. All that can be said is that its perimeter included no stake or post holes and that its size alone must rule it out as a sunken floored hut². Its dampness might make it an unsatisfactory storage pit.

Other observations. It has already been argued that a number of structures on this site might not have been detected owing to the nature of the work. It remains briefly to note four features which might give clues to the sites of further features.

Area D. In the foundations of the house immediately north of the structure already defined two small post pits could be recognised, each of which seems to have held a post about ten inches in diameter, set one foot into the natural subsoil. One pit contained small fragments of unburnt daub and the other a single Late Saxon body sherd. Their relationship is speculative.

Area E. In a second main trench north of area A a thin film of occupation debris could be traced for several feet apparently ending against a vertical feature cut into the natural subsoil to a width of eighteen inches. The bottom of the trench had already been concreted and so its claims to be regarded as a wall trench cannot be pressed.

To the east again further quantities of daub were recovered from house foundations. They did not extend beyond the area of the footings and no further record could be made.

Reports from workmen seemed to indicate the discovery of an extended burnt area, south of area A before work on this site began. Its exact location is not clear and the siting in the accompanying plan (Fig. 12) is only approximate.

² This corrects the erroneous impression given by a summary account in J.G. Hurst and M. Beresford (eds) 1971 *Deserted Medieval Villages*.

A LATE SAXON SITE AT EMSWORTH

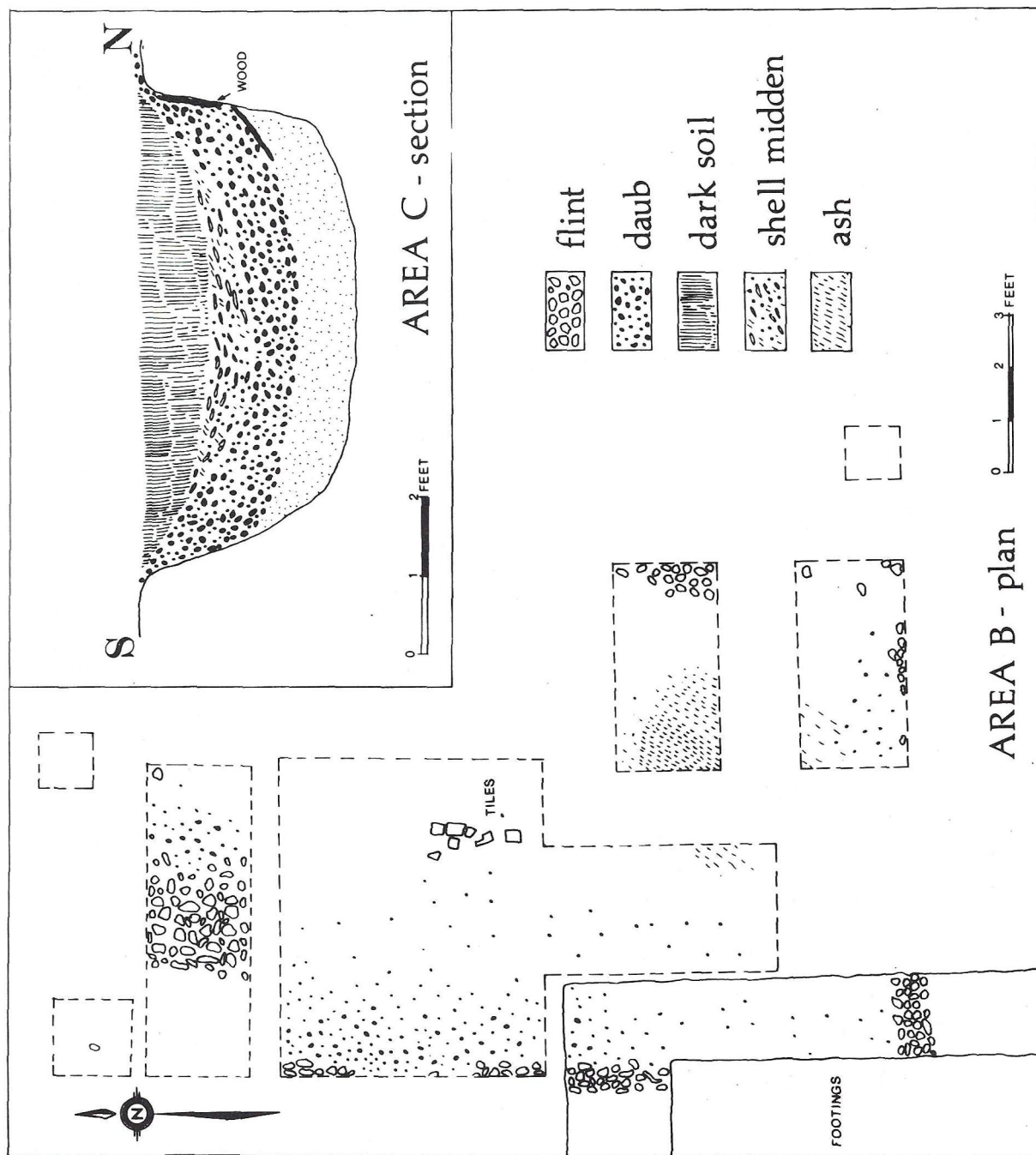


Fig. 13. Emsworth: Detail Plans

The obvious difficulties of recording on this site have already been outlined; nor should retrospective memory be permitted to make too much of the quality of the site record. Even so, it is unlikely that it will be possible to determine the exact status of this site; but even if all the circumstantial evidence for possible house sites is accepted, this will still not add up to a village. The absolute absence of ditches in the areas watched, the rarity of rubbish deposits and the extreme paucity of archaeological material all carry the same implication. In fact fewer Saxon sherds were found in the spoil heaps than medieval, even though in the latter period the site was only a cultivated field. Since the mysterious Domesday settlement of Neutebrigge has now been identified with the later place name Newtimber at Wade Court to the west, the case for a Saxon village on the site seems to lose ground³ and the features described here are better not raised above the status of a peasant farm.

DESCRIPTION OF FINDS

Pottery

Only a limited number of sherds were recovered from the site. These came predominantly from hand-made cooking pots in a coarse black or red/brown fabric with pounded shell or flint filler. Of the illustrated sherds 6, 9 and 10 were unstratified (Fig.14).

With the exception of one sherd from the Pit C these all belong within Dunning's Late Saxon Group I, a group of hand-made wares with a wide distribution in the area south of the Thames dateable between the eighth or ninth and the twelfth centuries A.D.⁴ Within this general classification it is necessarily to be expected that regional variations will have occurred.

The nearest parallels to these sherds, to the east of Emsworth, are those found at Medmerry⁵ on the Selsey peninsular, a small occupation site, and the pottery excavated from a weaving pit and 'cellar' in 1950 from East Pallant in Chichester⁶.

The profile of Nos.1, 6 and 10 would be appropriate to a 9th century context, but other elements, the ill defined sagging bases and the sharply everted rims of Nos.2 and 9 indicate a later date, since wheel-made vessels with sagging bases are known in Winchester⁷ in the eleventh century, and in Portchester⁸ in the late 10th century. If the hand-made Emsworth examples are imitative of wheel-turned forms, they should perhaps be placed at the end of the tenth century, representing a durable local tradition influenced partly by newer forms.

Eight sherds are illustrated.

³ A.J.C. Reger. A Short History of Emsworth and Warblington. *Victoria County History Hampshire* Vol 1, p. 478.

⁴ G.C. Dunning in 'Anglo Saxon Pottery', a Symposium, *Medieval Archaeology* Vol.3 1959, p.31-34.

⁵ Miss G.M. White - 'A Settlement of the South Saxons' *Antiquaries Journal*. 14 1934, p.393.

⁶ *Sussex Archaeological Collections* 90 1951-2, p. 171-5.

Sussex Archaeological Collections 91 1953, p.144-7.

⁷ J.G. Hurst in *Winchester Excavations 1949-60*, vol 1 p.123 by Barry Cunliffe.

⁸ B. Cunliffe. The Saxon Culture Sequence at Portchester Castle. *Antiquaries Journal*, Vol. 1, Part 1. 1970.

A LATE SAXON SITE AT EMSWORTH

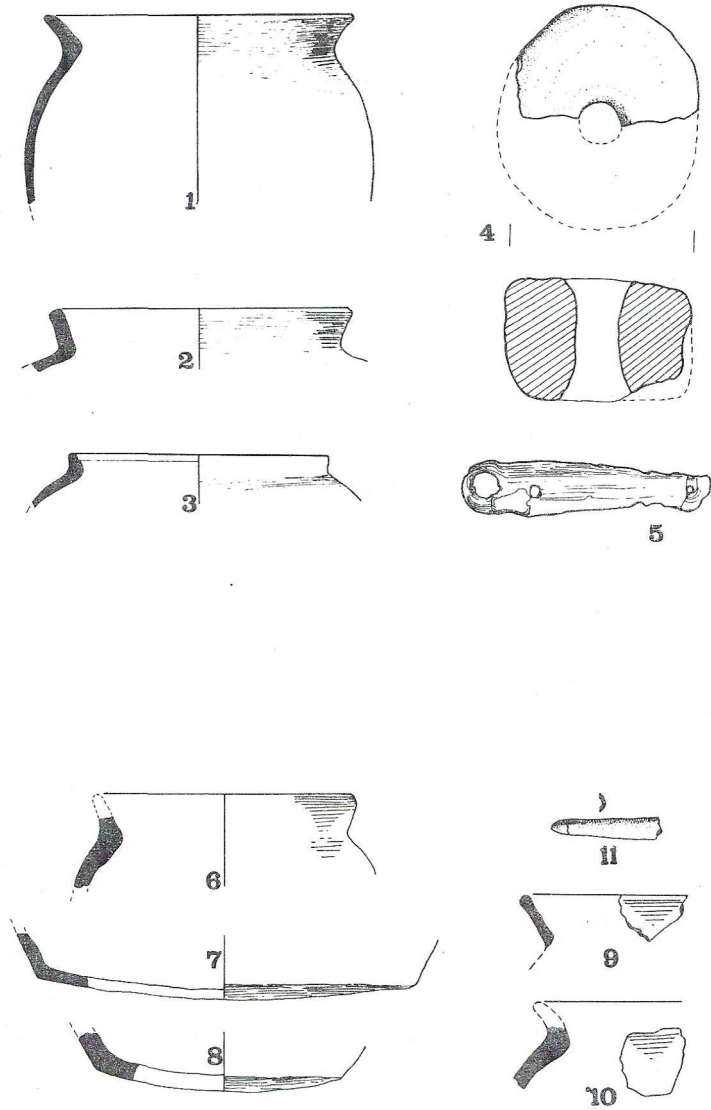


Fig. 14. Emsworth: Pottery and Objects of Clay, Iron and Bone (Scale $\frac{1}{4}$)

Fig.14

- No. 1 Black to red brown exterior. Black interior. Well finished hard fabric containing medium pounded shell filler. Midden sealing gully.
- No. 2 Black exterior and interior. Hard well-fired fabric with much small to medium flint filler, particularly within the core. (Pit C)
- No. 3 Black exterior and interior. No filler survives, only voids.
- No. 6 Black exterior and interior. Uneven surface, hard black fabric. Almost devoid of filler. Unstratified.
- No. 7 Base, externally grey black, grey black internally. Powdered flint filler externally, medium flint filler internally. (Pit C)
- No. 8 Grey black exterior and interior. Much medium to large flint filler. Midden sealing gully.
- No. 9 Grey black exterior, red orange interior. Powdered flint filler externally, medium internally. Unstratified.
- No.10 Grey black exterior, slightly red brown interior. Unevenly fired with red brown edges and black core. Only a little powdered flint filler. Unstratified.

Small Finds.

Fig.14

- No. 5 Iron Bucket fitting. This was found stratified within the collapsed daub seal of the pit. It survives for about half its presumed length in the form of a continuous iron strip up to 2.5mm thick pierced by one large hole 1.4cm in diameter at its upper end and by two smaller holes 4mm and 5mm in diameter placed centrally 8.5cm apart.

It formed part of one of two vertical bindings for a wooden bucket formed of upright staves braced by three or more horizontal bands. The uppermost of the two smaller holes marks its junction with the band binding the rim of the bucket while the largest hole projected above this rim to take a handle. It is possible but not certain that it was secured to the horizontal bands by rivets and that it braced them on the outside. The material of the handle is uncertain.⁹

⁹ I am grateful to Mr. N. Cook and Mr. R. Merrifield for examining this object.

A LATE SAXON SITE AT EMSWORTH

This type is not itself closely dateable but is in marked contrast to the earlier Roman fitting of this nature where the link for the handle would be in the form of a hook rather than an unbroken ring. Buckets of this type are known from medieval illuminations and one example of this exact type though entirely in wood was recovered complete from a well in Lund¹⁰ and is dateable to the early eleventh century.

Loom Weights. Parts of three loom weights were found, two of them showing traces of the central hole (Fig.14 No.4). All were in a baked clay fabric mixed with a varying proportion of chalk marl. This material is natural brickearth and was also used for the daub recovered.

All three examples come securely within Hurst's classification¹¹ of the 'bun shaped' loom weight which was in use between the ninth and the twelfth centuries. Loom weights of very similar proportions were found on the sites at both Selsey and Chichester.

- No.11 Bone Stylus. This was recovered from the primary silting of the pit in two joining fragments. It may still be incomplete. It was formed from a small but unidentifiable long bone which had been split or cut along its length for the extraction of the marrow. After being cut to a rough point it had been hardened by fire. In its fragmentary state its purpose is doubtful.

Not illustrated

Worked flint flake. This came from the secondary midden filling the pit. It is probably a chance survival.

Animal bones. Because of building work few animal bones were recovered that could be clearly related to the Saxon levels on the site. Consequently it is only of value to list the bones recovered from the pit, which was excavated almost completely. All were too fragmentary for measurement. The following types were identified:

		<i>Primary Filling</i>	<i>Secondary Midden</i>
Ox	—	Humerus	Humerus
Pig	—	Canine tooth	Mandible, humerus
Sheep	—	—	Scapula, mandible, 2 radii
Dog	—	Radius, ulna	—
Chicken	—	Sternum, humerus, ulna, radius, rib	—

¹⁰ Blomquist and Martensson, Thulegravingen 1961
(*Archaeologica Lundensia* 2) Fig. 149 p.155.

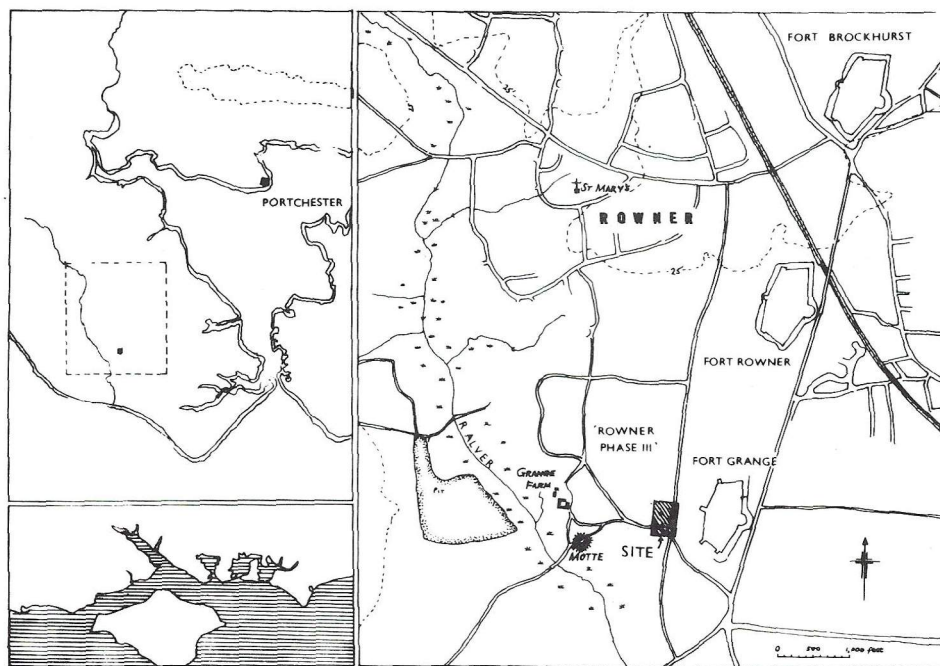
¹¹ J.G. Hurst in 'Anglo Saxon Pottery', a Symposium, *Medieval Archaeology*, Vol.3, 1959 p.23-5.

RESCUE EXCAVATIONS ON A SAXON SETTLEMENT SITE AT ROWNER, 1971

by Elizabeth Lewis and John Martin

That there were settlements on the Gosport peninsula in the tenth century has been established since the publication of the King Eadrid's grant of land at Stoke.¹ In the section citing the bounds of Stoke the charter gives a good impression of the geography of the region; river and salt marsh intersected by old dikes, with woods and rough moorland inland. In addition to Alverstoke (Stok) two other settlements are mentioned, Rowner (*Ruwan Ora*; Domesday: *Ruenore*) and Elson (*Athel-switheton*) and present-day Gomer was then Gale Moor (*Gagol Mor*).

Apart from this very interesting document the only other evidence for Saxon Gosport at present comes from the construction trenches of Messrs. Wimpey on the site of the new naval estate at Rowner, east of Fort Grange (H.M.S. Sultan) Grid Ref: SU 587 002. By the nature of its discovery and rescue, this evidence is scrappy and indeterminate, being domestic refuse discarded in middens and pits – no individual house plans could be made out, nor was there any depth of stratigraphy – yet the finds appear to be broadly coeval and the features were dispersed over sufficiently wide an area as to suggest a settlement the size of a small hamlet.



¹ *Proc. Hants Field Club* Vol. XVIII part 1 page 36. Captain G. Civil "Saxon Gosport and a Royal Charter of Alverstoke", Peter Sawyer, *Anglo Saxon Charters*. No. 532 (Royal Historical Society) 1068. H.P.R. Finsberg, *The Early Charters of Wessex*, 1961. (This authority considered the manuscript to be authentic, although Drogereit (1935) regarded it as suspicious).

Fig. 15. Gosport: General Plan

RESCUE EXCAVATIONS ON A SAXON SETTLEMENT SITE AT ROWNER, 1971

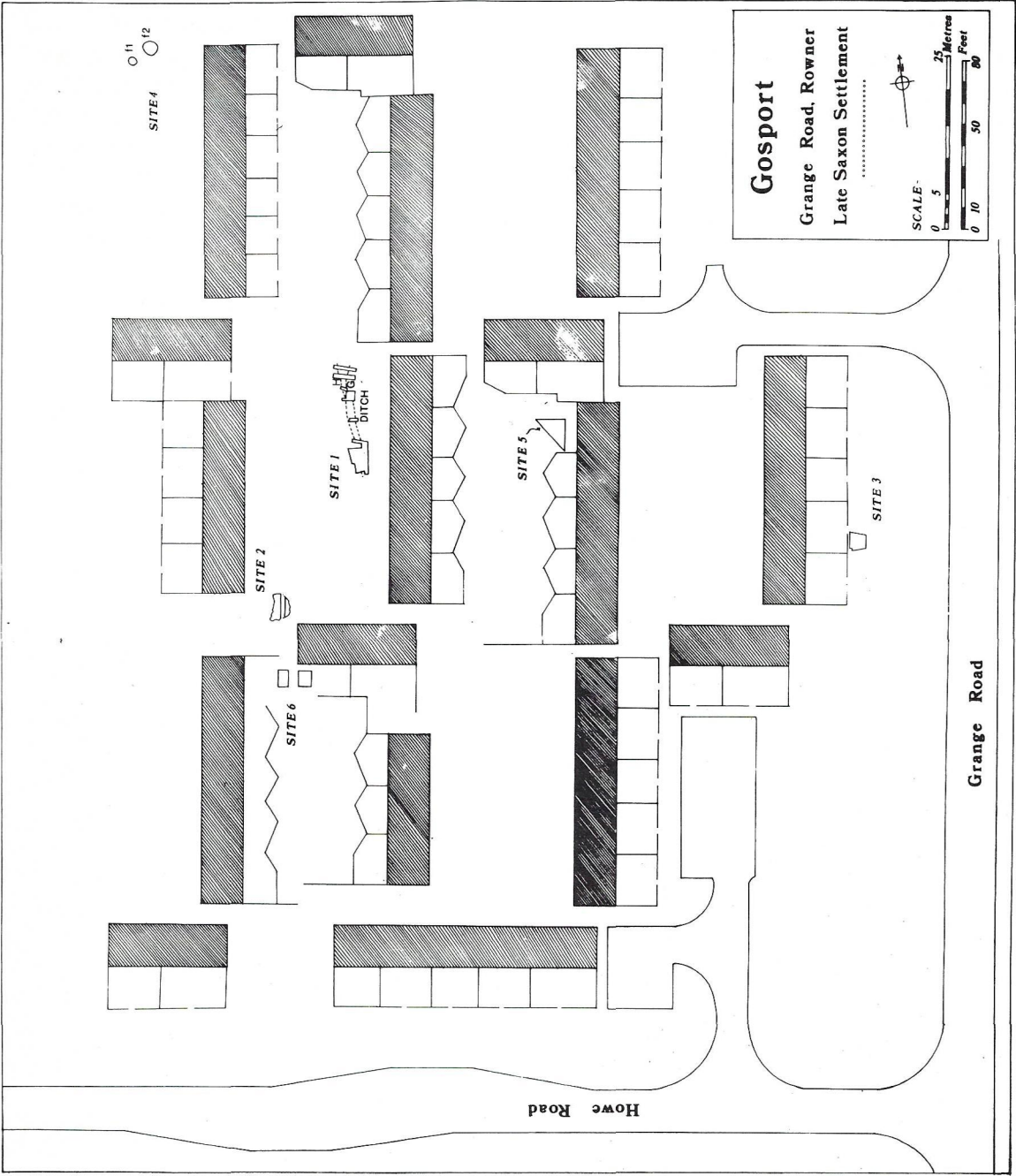


Fig. 16. Gosport: Site Plans

The position of the site (Fig.15) however, is too remote from the medieval villages of Rowner and Alverstoke to suggest any identification with them. It lies within the manor of Rowner² but is a mile to the south of the church. The boundary of Rowner is the River Alver, which flows to the west of the site, through an area of marsh. Grange Farm is mentioned in 1594³ and Grange Lane to which the Saxon Site is adjacent and which links Grange Farm to the village of Rowner is very probably of some antiquity⁴, the redevelopment of the area has, however, robbed this lane of its name and redirected it as a supply road to the estate.

Patches of shells and charcoal were the first indications of the previous occupation of the site and these were first noticed and reported by Mr. John Clark, to whom much credit is due, who was working on the site. Construction work was almost complete by this time, but footings for garden walls, clearance for hardstandings and service trenches continued to be cut, and over a period of 3 months, from April 1971, 6 different sites were exposed by machine and recorded on behalf of Portsmouth City Museums and the South Hampshire Archaeological Rescue Group. All these sites were uncovered at random, and all had been disturbed either by recent construction work, or by the building of Grange Airfield before World War II. The truncating effect of levelling at first seemed to preclude all possibility of finding out the history of the site in medieval times, but on sites 1 and 3 a layer of original loamy topsoil containing a sherd of sandy tempered early medieval pottery was preserved which indicated that the settlement had been abandoned by the Conquest and given over to pasture or tillage. A late medieval sherd in a pit on site 6 (F3) is scant evidence for later reuse of the site.

FIELD EVIDENCE

Site 1 (Figs. 16 and 17)

This site was first discovered by a machine-dug trench which cut straight through it. (Fig. 17 section A-B). An area to the west of the trench was then searched both mechanically and by hand, and sections cut across the ditch that was revealed (sections E-F and G-H). The following phases could be distinguished. During Phase 1 a floor of flint cobbling was laid down in the natural clay, in the centre of which was a shallow posthole containing packing stones. At the western limit of the floor and contemporary with it was a shallow pit (F2) 20cm deep, containing charcoal, fragments of lava from broken querns, and fragments of bone and pottery; perhaps an abandoned hearth. Also outside the floor area may have been another posthole (F5) and pit(F6), a straight sided rubbish pit 55cm deep at the north-eastern end. This was filled with domestic refuse and many shells and the following separate layers could be distinguished:

² *Victoria County History*, Hants. Vol. III, p.218.

³ *Ibid*, page 219. Also 1585 Chart of Portsmouth BM Cott. 1. i.27 No. 718 (copy in Portsmouth Library) also shows 'Grange' situated at the head of an inlet into which the Alver flows.

⁴ 1774 'Survey of Gosport side from Portsmouth Harbour. . . by order of His Majesty' by Matthew Pitts. Copy in Portsmouth Library; this is the earliest map showing roads in this area.

RESCUE EXCAVATIONS ON A SAXON SETTLEMENT SITE AT ROWNER, 1971

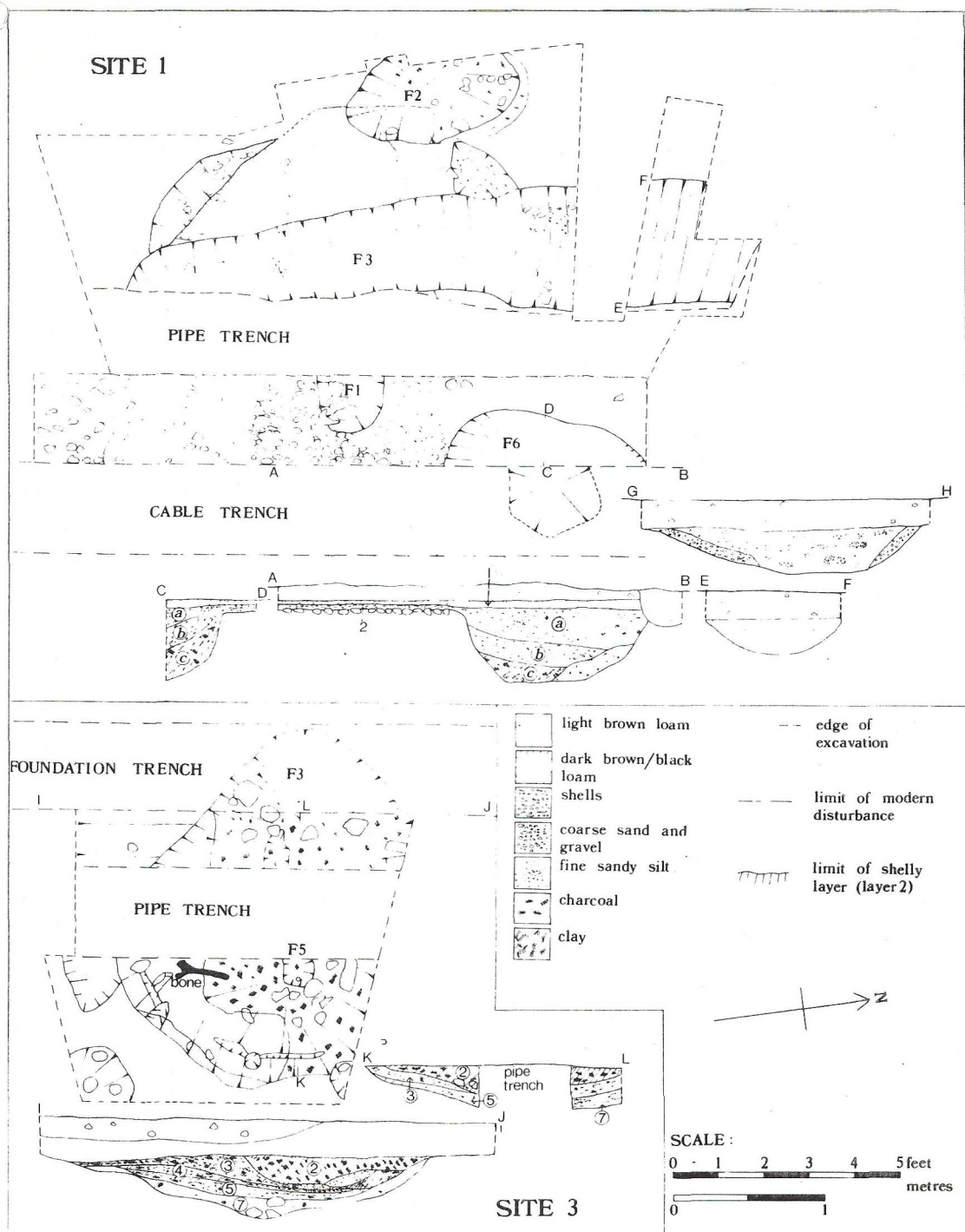


Fig. 17. Gosport: Site Plans

- (a) a silty black layer with much charcoal.
- (b) sea shells compacted in brown soil, predominantly oyster.
- (c) sea shells in brown soil, mostly winkles and cockles.

Over the whole area of the floor and outside the cobbled area, a deposit of sea shells and other refuse 15cm deep (layer 2) had accumulated during phase 2, sealing the posthole in the centre of the floor and the top of Pit (F6), representing the abandonment of the floor as a living area, when the site was used to dump refuse from elsewhere.

In phase 3 a gully was cut through the shelly layer. It could be traced running north for 30 metres, but no end to it was found. Its course was very irregular, widening towards the north, and it had silted up, although in the area of the floor an amount of debris had been washed in. That this gully was of the late Saxon period is proved by the fragments of a cooking pot tossed into the otherwise barren gully fill (Fig. 20 No.3). So uneven was this gully that its form could have been caused by water action, and it seems likely that it served as an open drain to some other part of the settlement. A thin layer of brown loamy soil subsequently developed over the whole site, probably plough soil (layer 1).

Sites 2 and 6 (Figs. 16 and 18)

Another very disturbed, shelly scatter was revealed by surface stripping at site 2, which seemed to be related to site 6, discovered several weeks later. Here there were two rubbish pits intersected by a third of medieval date. F2, less disturbed than F1, was 1 metre deep with straight sides. Layer 3 was of sterile grey silt deposited on the bottom; layer 2 of dark brown silty clay compacted with winkle, oyster and mussel shells, together with quantities of burnt clay and charcoal. Layer 1 was hard packed with small flints and clay (possibly redeposited). The top of this pit was disturbed.

Site 3 (Figs. 16 and 17)

Site 3 had suffered from bisection by two modern trenches, the more recent of which had provided section IJ and destroyed a quarter of the site, leaving only the very bottom of the depression. The form of this feature seems to have been sub rectangular with gently sloping sides, reaching a depth in the centre of 38cm. On the bottom, which was cut into natural clay, lay several large flints and pieces of greensand and limestone. These were roughly grouped at the east and west end of the pit and may have been used as packing to support posts. One water-smoothed piece of greensand bore the marks of knife sharpening. The articulated bones of the foreleg of a horse lay discarded at one edge. Above these stones lay an accumulated layer of brown soil and large sea shells (layers 5 & 7) with a layer of smaller sea shells – winkles, cockles and mussels – above (layers 3 and 4). Associated with these two layers was a square post socket, F5, 10cm deep, with the remains of carbonised wood still visible in section. This had been sealed with burnt matter and 3 thin pieces of carbonised wood, apparently from planks – were lying in the thick layers of burnt material and charcoal. So little other occupation debris lay in layer 2 that it might be postulated that the charcoal and burnt material in this layer represent a burnt superstructure that had collapsed about the central post, and this might

RESCUE EXCAVATIONS ON A SAXON SETTLEMENT SITE AT ROWNER, 1971

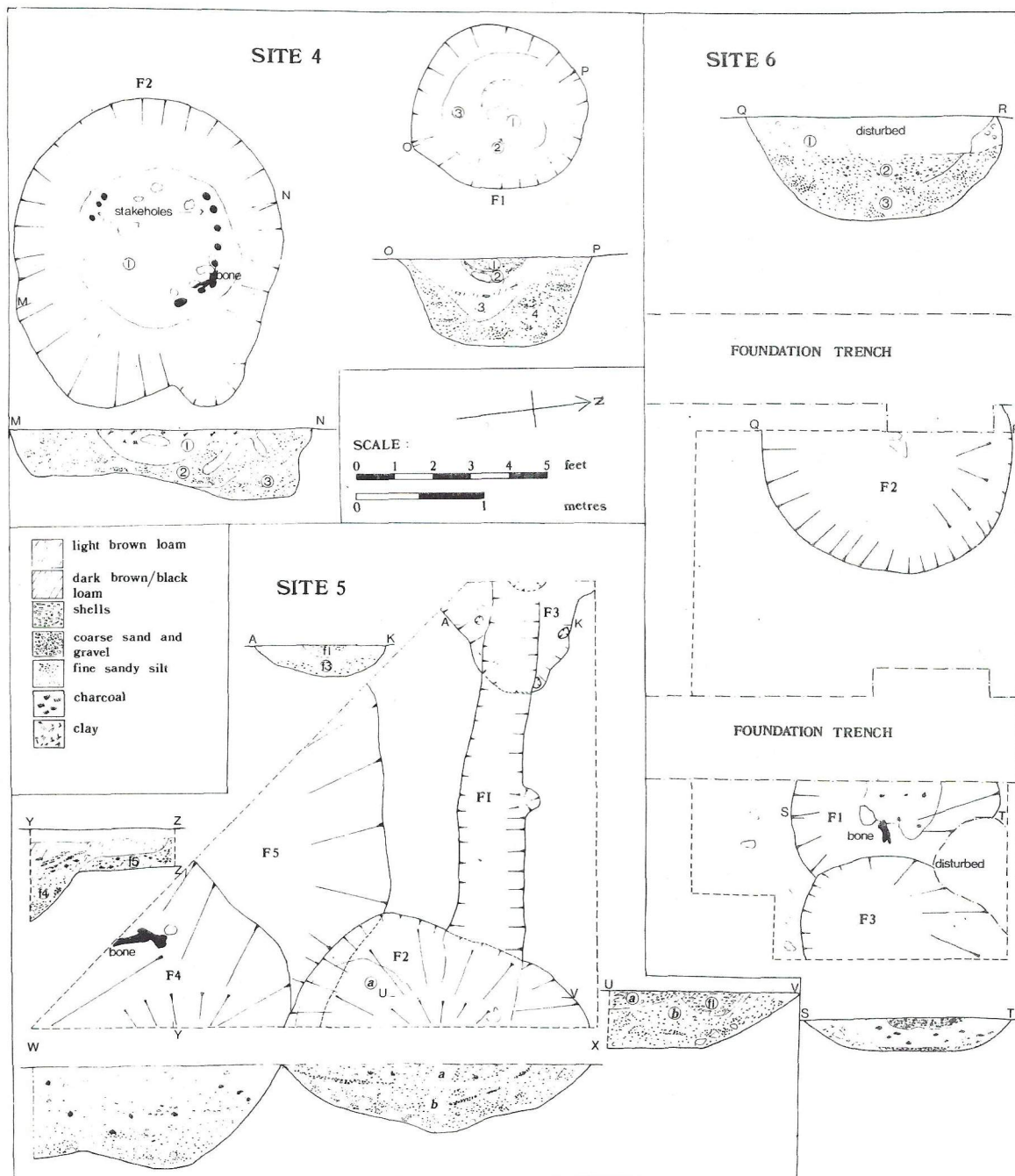


Fig. 18. Gosport: Site Plans

account for the survival of the carbonised wood. If this is so, the whole feature must be interpreted in terms of a hut or roofed store rather than as an open hearth or cooking area. Some support is lent to this idea by the marks of stake holes cut into the outside eastern edge of the feature with the outlines of withies wound between them, which could be clearly seen impressed into the damp clay.

The diameter, at 2.4m would make this a small and rather inadequate shelter but it may be compared with the 'floors' found in 1934 at Medmerry Farm, Selsey⁵ which were only 2.4m and 1.2m across, and yet had clearly marked walls of 2.5cm sticks set in clay, or in one case, a circle of limestone slabs. Quantities of burnt daub indicated the type of cladding to the walls: its absence at Gosport at all sites was notable by contrast. A layer of brown loam, probably ploughsoil lay overall, in which one fragment of early medieval pottery was found.

Site 4 (Fig. 18)

There were two pits at Site 4, seemingly isolated from any other occupation area. F1 was straight sided and had been filled up with layers of sand (layer 3) and dark soil (layer 4). Fragments of a complete pot (Fig. 20 No.15) were found scattered through the whole fill, indicating that it had been filled in fairly rapidly. The uppermost deposit (layers 1 and 2) contained charcoal and shells, as if used for a small hearth. F2 had certainly been used as a hearth after it had been nearly filled with sand. The bottom fills, (layers 2 and 3) were barren, but at the top was a thick layer of charcoal and black soil with a patch of shells and larger pieces of burnt bone. The hearth area at the surface was surrounded with large flints and greensand, and encircled with stake holes on the north side, which may have provided a windbreak.

Site 5 (Fig. 18)

Site 5 was delimited by modern drain trenches on the south-west and east sides, so that only a triangular area was available for excavation (Fig.18). In this small space there were three interesting pits, the earliest of which was F5, which had been filled in with gravel and flints but contained no dating evidence. Through this was cut F4, a pit 7.5cm deep of which only a quarter could be excavated due to later disturbance. It appeared to have been backfilled fairly quickly with an even fill of sand and loam. F2 may have been contemporary, also cutting F5, but its fill was rather more gravelly with flints, and very silty towards the bottom – F2 (b). After its abandonment a slot(F1) was cut through it and through another pit,(F3), which lay on the west of the site. The bottom of the slot showed no signs of post holes, but it may have been used to hold a sill beam. In time, quantities of shells were dumped in it though the surrounding soil was quite clean. (These shells covered part of the top of F2, and are shown as F2(a) on the plan.)

⁵ Miss G.M. White 'A Settlement of the South Saxons', *Antiquaries Journal* Vol. X 1934.

Discussion

The problem presented by the site at Grange Road is to distinguish between living areas and rubbish dumps. The deep straight sided pits at sites 1, 4 and 5 were probably dug specifically as rubbish tips, but the floor at site 1 and the flat-bottomed hollow at site 3 could be interpreted as living areas, though whether these were roofed, there is insufficient evidence to tell. If this was so, why did the occupants allow the accumulation of some very smelly refuse – rotten sea shells and discarded meat joints – to build up in these used areas? One answer would be that none of these areas was occupied for long, and the occupants removed only a short distance away to cleaner ground and the area was given over to rubbish dumping. It is possible that people only came here at certain times of the year to collect shell fish, and though a shoreside encampment would be better suited to this activity, the nearness of the river would be convenient for a boat-owning community. The way in which certain species of shells were deposited separately, creating distinct layers in the pits, certainly suggests the results of collecting trips to different parts of the shore. The congregation of certain species in separate areas would tend to make such selection follow naturally.

The status of the settlement described therefore perhaps does not justify the title of village, a view supported by its exclusion from the Domesday survey. On the other hand, there is some indication that it lay on a road or track from Rowner, branching at Grange to cross the river.

The choice of a nearby position for a Norman Motte and Bailey⁶ (see Fig.15) suggests that there must have been a river-crossing near the site of present-day Apple Dumpling Bridge, of some geographical, even strategic importance – probably the lowest point downstream where a ford or bridge was possible, before the marshy mouth of the Alver was drained and reclaimed. Such a position is often favourable to the development of a small hamlet, such as the one at Grange Road.

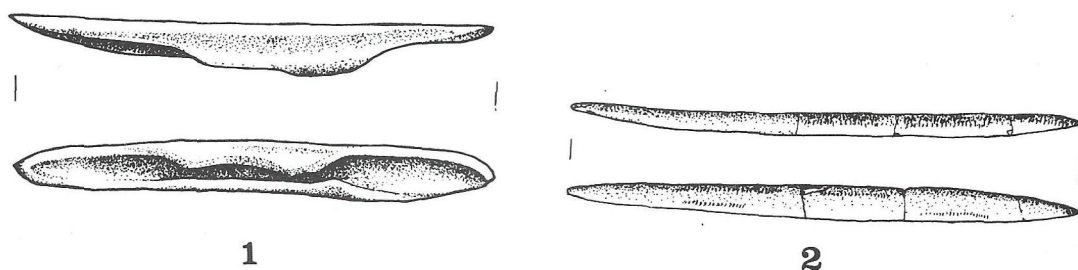


Fig. 19. Gosport: Bone Objects (Scale ½)

⁶ This earthwork had been designated as a medieval windmill mound (V.C.H. iii 1907 p.218), but the Ordnance Survey in 1956 traced the line of the bailey which established it as a motte and bailey. (Antiquity No. SU 50 SE 13).

DESCRIPTION OF FINDS

Bone

Fig.19

- No.1 Bone awl, from site 4, F1. Fashioned from a split long bone, possibly sheep, the implement has been worked to a point at one end.
- No.2 Bone threadpicker, from site 1, F2. A highly polished double ended bone implement, with file marks showing as parallel crosswise striations. It was used in weaving for lifting or smoothing the threads, and is an object commonly found on Saxon sites.

Quern Fragments and Greensand

A large quantity of dark grey lava quern fragments were recovered during excavation. Although some were found scattered throughout the sites, concentrations were noted in the fill of F3, site 1, where the ditch cut through the earlier occupation remains, and also over the floor of F3, in site 3. Because of the fragmentary and friable condition of the material, no individual querns could be identified or reconstructed.

A number of greensand fragments were found, particularly in site 3. Greensand is not found locally and it is not clear whether it was brought to the site for use as building material or for grindstones. One large water-worn pebble of greensand found on site 3 seems to have been used as a whetstone as indicated by a number of narrow parallel grooves on its surface.

Burnt Clay

The only area where fired clay occurred in discernable amounts was site 6, where it was found in the fill of F1 and F2. The clay exhibits no signs of wattle impressions, and may be part of hearths or ovens. Indeed, we have already observed a noticeable absence of daub from the walls of timber buildings.

TABLE OF ANIMAL BONES

Many of these bones were fragmentary and, in the case of horse or ox, difficult to identify precisely.

	OX	HORSE	SHEEP/GOAT	PIG
SITE 1	3 molars femur	left innominate with acetabulum	metacarpal or metatarsal mandible	scapula IV phalanx
SITE 3		distal end L. humerus. ulna & radius.	2 molars. molar.	

RESCUE EXCAVATIONS ON A SAXON SETTLEMENT SITE AT ROWNER, 1971

SITE 4 F1	molar frags. horn core		2 premolars frags. horn core	molar III carpal
F2	 rib		2 femurs	
	 fused epiphysis.....			
	radius			
SITE 5 F1	I & II phalange			
F2	 rib		rib	
F4	molar incisor distal end	R. humerus mandible L. humerus ...		
SITE 5 F2	mandible 6 molars & premolars	premolar molar 2 incisors	2 premolars molar vertebra	
SITE 6 F1	 a mandible		mandible	
	premolar			
F3			molar	mandible

TABLE OF MOLLUSCA

	SITE 1 PIT			SITE 6 F1 & 2	SITE 3 F3 L.3a	SITE 3 F3 L.6
	layer a.	layer b.	layer c.			
Common European periwinkle <i>Littorina littorea</i>	372	48	85	121	270	160
Edible Oyster <i>Ostrea Edulis</i>	2	26	8	4	7	4
Blue Edible mussel <i>Mytilis edulis</i>	2+	2+	20+	3+	—	—
Common cockle <i>Cardium edule</i>	—	—	2	1	2	—
Common Northern No Whelk <i>Buccinum undatum</i>	—	—	—	1	—	—
<i>Venerupis decussata</i>	2	2	—	1	—	—

Common Limpet
Patella vulgata

— 1 — — — —

The figures give the numbers of each shell found in a sample of 2 kg total weight. In the case of the bivalves, the figures give an indication of the numbers of complete shell fish, not the number of separate discarded valves.

DESCRIPTION OF THE POTTERY (Fig. 20)

1. Site 1 F6 Very well made symetrical jar. Smooth burnished surface, red-brown colour. Filler of evenly distributed chalk particles with a few flint and sand fragments.
2. Site 1 F6 Rim fragment of red fabric, filler of flint and sand.
(c)
3. Site 1 F3 Cooking pot of exceptionally thick, coarse fabric, poorly made and fired, with a filler of large flint fragments, sparsely distributed. The exterior is red and roughly burnished, the interior burnt black.
4. Site 1 F3 Thick-walled pot of brown to black fabric with a dense fill of sand particles.
5. Site 1 F3 Rim fragment with red body, black exterior, filler of large particles of flint and sand.
6. Site 1 F3 Hard black fabric, very dense sand filler.
7. Site 1 F2 Base, rounded with a level bottom, buff colour, filler of chalk layer 1 which has been mostly dissolved away.
8. Site 1 F1 Cooking pot, well made, but in a very soft fabric filled with many small chalk fragments and a little sand.
9. Site 1 Pot with smooth profile, well made. Filler of chalk particles and layer 2 crushed shells.
10. Site 1 F2 Brown/black fabric, with a filler of chalk fragments, mostly washed out, and some quartz particles.
11. Site 1 F2 Black fabric tempered with chalk and sand.
12. Site 1 F2 Small short rim, fabric red on exterior, filler of chalk mostly washed out.
13. Site 1 F2 Sharply everted-rimmed pot. Fabric black, tempered with quartz and sand particles, evenly dispersed.
14. Site 1 F2 Black fabric, sand tempered.
15. Site 4 F1 Entire vessel of black fabric with a dense, sandy fill. The form is uneven and bag-shaped, with a rounded, flattened base.
16. Site 4 F2 Narrow-mouthed pot, with sharply everted rim, thick walls.
layer 1 Fabric black, filler sandy with a few large flint fragments.

RESCUE EXCAVATIONS ON A SAXON SETTLEMENT SITE AT ROWNER, 1971

17. Site 5 F2 Jar-like form, with uneven, thick walls and the rim rolled over. The filler contains odd pieces of chaff, but is mainly of washed-out chalk and flint fragments.
18. Site 5 F4 Narrow-rimmed pot, the rim bent outwards, in a black fabric with a chalk filler.
19. Site 6 F1 Hard black fabric, with filler of flint and quartz. Evenly made, layer 2 traces of chaff or straw on exterior as if it was wiped before firing.
20. Site 6 F2 Rim fragment, the fabric black, sparsely tempered with chalk and flint. layer 1
21. Site 3 F3 Vessel with very thick rim, the body tempered, the interior burnt very black. It was probably a cresset or hanging lamp. Filler of large flint fragments.

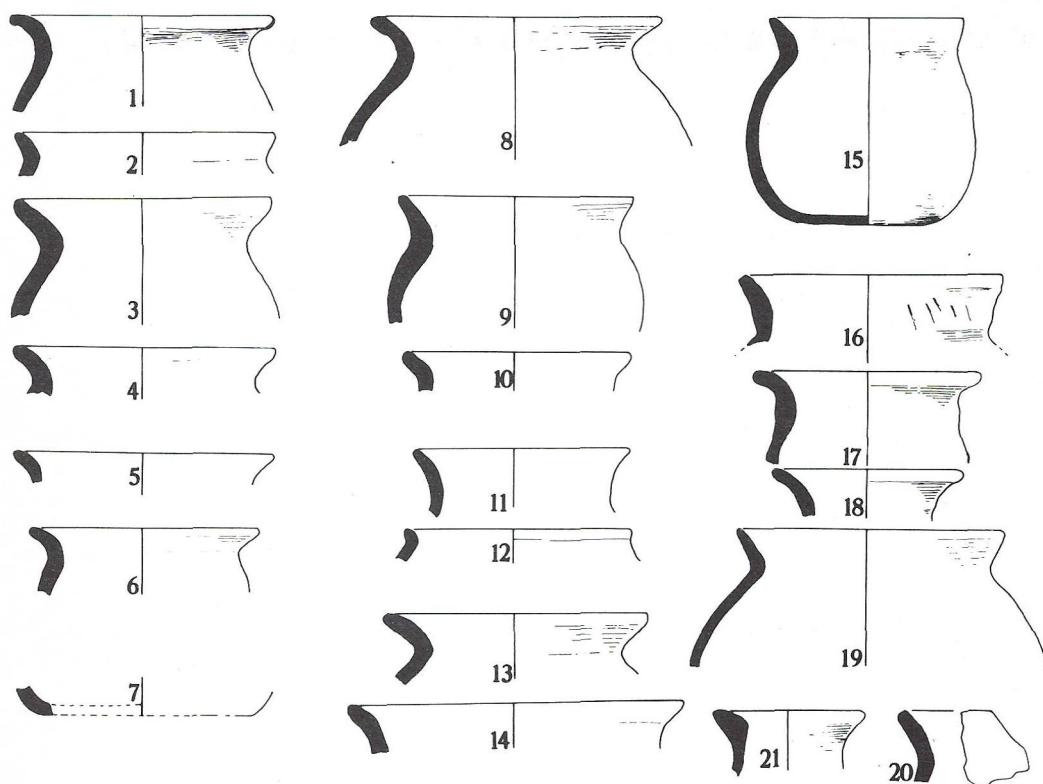


Fig. 20 Gosport: Pottery (Scale $\frac{1}{4}$)

Not illustrated:

- | | | |
|--------|---------|---|
| Site 1 | Layer 1 | 2 unstratified sherds of pottery tempered with chaff, soapy and abraded, thin-bodied. |
| Site 1 | | 1 sherd chaff-tempered ware. |
| Site 6 | F3 | Rim sherd of Samian, type Drag.44 A rivet hole shows it had been repaired in antiquity. |
| Site 4 | | Unstratified. Abraded fragment of Samian. |

DISCUSSION

The pottery recovered mainly derives from Site 1 (Fig. 20 Nos.1-14), although sufficient evidence was found to show that the other sites were of the same period (Nos.15-21). Site 1 could be roughly phased on the field evidence, but this alone gives little indication of the duration of occupation on the site. The initial impression is that occupation here spanned only a few years and therefore the pottery could be regarded as broadly contemporary. However, in contradiction to this view, the form and fabric of the ware is markedly variable within Site 1 and throughout the other sites.

There are three types of ware represented which are distinguished by their tempering or fillers. In some, small rounded chalk fragments have been used almost exclusively (Fig. 20 Nos.1, 8, 17, 18), or mixed with sand (Nos.10, 11); and a sparsely-filled ware is found which contains large fragments of crushed flint (Nos.3, 21). There is in addition one fabric which appears in only one vessel (No.9) which is finely made, tempered with chalk and crushed shell. One pot (Fig. 20 No.3) is exceptional in that it clearly post-dates the rest of the pottery in Site 1, by virtue of being discarded in the ditch after the abandonment of the site.

RESCUE EXCAVATIONS ON A SAXON SETTLEMENT SITE AT ROWNER, 1971

In form, most of the pottery appears to be of the usual late Saxon type of cooking pot, with flattish bases (Nos.7 and 15) and everted rims. The rims vary from a marked rolled or carinated type (with a thickening of the rim in Nos.1 and 17, such as occurred at Hamwih), to a smooth even profile (Nos.9, 11, 15).

It may be questioned whether the function of these vessels were for cooking or storage; some seem too small to be used as cooking pots (No.15 for example), while others have a tall-bodied, jar-like form (Nos.1 and 17) and No.18 has a tightly constricted neck more suited to holding liquids. One vessel, No.21, seems to have been a lamp or cresset since the internal surface is burnt black and it is too small for other use. Examples of such pottery lamps are found on Norman and Medieval sites.⁷

The relation of the Gosport pottery to the wares found at Hamwih⁸ and Portchester⁹ is the key to any attempt to estimate the age of the site. The presence of three sherds of chaff or straw-tempered ware would indicate, in the light of the Portchester evidence, that there was occupation in the area by the middle of the 8th century. These sherds were however unstratified in a bulk of later material, all of which would seem best fitted to an early ninth century context. In Hamwih, sandy tempered wares are found in early contexts after the foundation of the Saxon town, and disappear by the beginning of the ninth century. In Portchester on the other hand, the ninth century pottery found in pit 135 has sandy inclusions. At Gosport sand tempered pottery is found in association with chalk tempered wares (Nos.10, 11 and 13). Tempering of both chalk and crushed shells are common in the ninth century at Hamwih, but conversely are uncommon at Portchester where grit and flint are the usual materials.

While there is evidence at Portchester and Hamwih that there is some chronological significance to changes in pottery tempering, it would be difficult to endorse this view with the Gosport material, variable as it is, and where the sites are scattered and the areas of occupation confined and congested, probably resulting in the intermingling of pottery of different periods. There are no true closed groups such as are found in the abandoned wells and pits of the two nearest Saxon towns.

It seems reasonable therefore, to suggest on the evidence of the pottery, that the settlement at Gosport began in the last quarter of the eighth century, just as chaff-tempered wares were giving way to sandy wares, and ceased before wheel-turned wares were introduced sometime in the tenth century. None of these latter are represented at Gosport.

⁷ E.M. Jope & W.A. Pantin, 'The Clarendon Hotel, Oxford', *Oxoniensia*, Vol. XXIII 1958, p.46 also (an example from Steyning) *Sussex Archaeological Collections* 103 1965.

⁸ P.V. Addyman & D.H. Hill 'Saxon Southampton, a review of the Evidence' Part II. *Proc. Hants. Field Club* Vol. XXVI 1969.

⁹ B. Cunliffe 'The Saxon Culture Sequence at Portchester Castle', *Antiquaries Journal*, 1970, part 1, Vol. L.

APPENDIX

RESCUE EXCAVATIONS CARRIED OUT BY SOUTH HAMPSHIRE ARCHAEOLOGICAL RESCUE GROUP IN 1971–1972

Date

1971

March	Formation of the Rescue Group		
April–July	Chalton. Chalton Down. Anglo-Saxon	P.V. Addyman, (i) M.F. Hughes	Arch. Review. 1971 (ii) Med. Arch. (forthcoming)
April–June	Gosport. Late Anglo- Saxon	E.R. Lewis John Martin	(i) Arch. Review 1971 (ii) <u>Resc. Arch. in Hants. No. 1.</u>
August–October	Brownwich Farm. IA and Med.	M.F. Hughes	(i) Arch. Review 1971 (ii) <u>Resc. Arch. in Hants. No. 1.</u>
December	South Front, Southampton Anglo Saxon	M.F. Hughes (for S'oton Res. Committee).	(i) <u>Report to S'oton Res. Comm.1971</u>

RESCUE ARCHAEOLOGY IN HAMPSHIRE – 1973

1972

February–March	Botley. Rom. Rd. and RB site.	M.F. Hughes	(i) Hants. Newsletter Autumn 1972. (ii) Arch. Review 1972 (iii) Britannia 1973 (Roman Britain in 1972)
February–July	M27, Portsdown Hill. (a) IA site. (b) Meso site.	M.F. Hughes	(i) Arch. Review 1972 (ii) <u>Resc. Arch. in Hants. No. 2.</u> 1973 (forthcoming)
September–December	Chalton. Manor Farm Late AS site	P.T. Oborn M.F. Hughes	(i) Arch. Review. 1972 (ii) Med. Arch. (forthcoming)

All the publication entries underlined indicate a full report.

Abbreviations. Arch. Review. Archaeological Review. C.B.A. Groups XII and XIII.
Resc. Arch. in Hants. Rescue Archaeology in Hampshire.
Med. Arch. Medieval Archaeology.
Hants. Newsletter. Hampshire Newsletter. Hampshire Field Club.