

THE ROMANO-BRITISH VILLAGE AT CHALTON, HANTS

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INTRODUCTION

THE downland parish of Chalton lies adjacent to the Hampshire-Sussex border some 8 miles (13 km) north of Portsmouth and $4\frac{1}{2}$ miles (7 km) south of Petersfield (Fig. 1). The Roman site, here considered, is situated in the north-west corner of the parish a little less than a mile (c.1 km) north of the present village, at SU 734173. Until the early 1950s a strip of uncultivated downland fringed the parish, lying between the intensively

ploughed fields to the south and the parish boundary to the north, which here forms the southern limit of Holt Down Plantation (now Queen Elizabeth Forest), an artificial creation of the 1920s. That part of the settlement which lay within the uncultivated area survived unnoticed as scrub-covered earthworks until the farmer, Mr. John Budden, began to clear the land in 1953. The first archaeological discovery to be made by Mr. Budden, in bulldozing scrub from a lynchet,

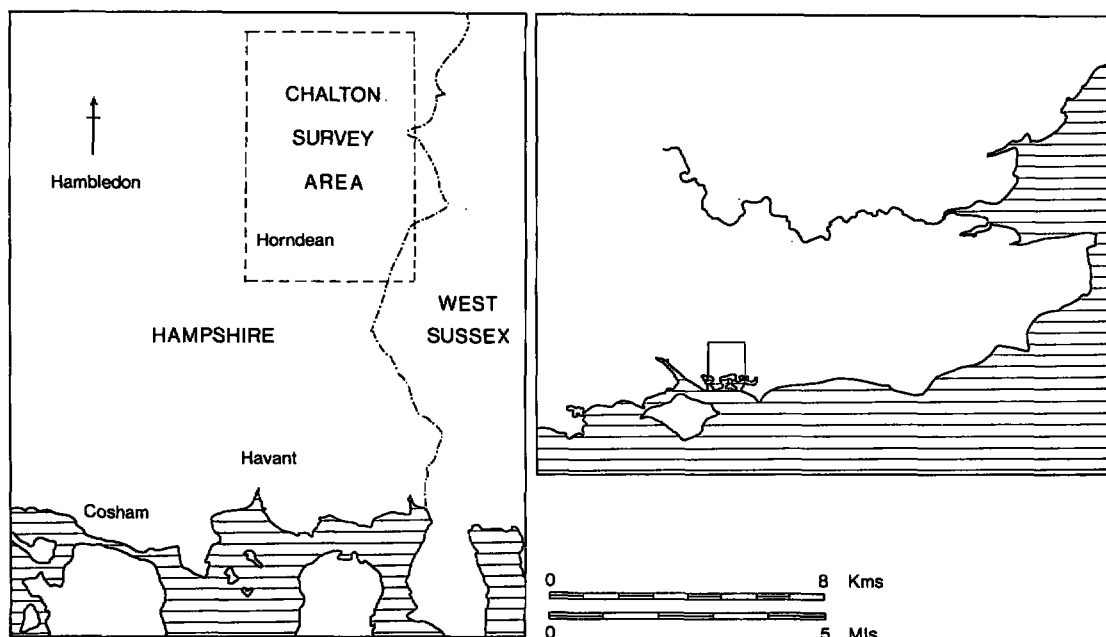


Fig. 1. Chalton: Location Map.

was a small colour-coated beaker of the late third or early fourth century, containing six toothed bronze implements (Frere 1957). Mr. Budden realized the potential interest of the site and accordingly invited the Portsmouth Museum Society to undertake an excavation. Work began in 1954 under the direction of Mr. Arthur Corney and Mr. Dick Wade, and continued each week-end into the following year.

In 1964 Mr. Budden and the present writer began a programme of intensive field work in the Chalton area, as the result of which 120 archaeological sites have been discovered (Cunliffe 1973): the Romano-British village is listed as site 16. As part of the survey policy it was decided to excavate a small sample of site 16 in order to ascertain the types of structure represented and the date range of the settlement. This work was carried out by the writer, with the help of Mr Budden, in 1964 and 1965, and the results are recorded below.

Since villages of this kind represented by well-preserved earthworks are rare in southern Britain, Mr. Budden has decided to use the site as permanent pasture, thus protecting the earthworks from the kind of erosion which would inevitably have accompanied constant ploughing.

The archaeological material recovered from the original clearance work and from the excavations of 1954-5 is housed in Portsmouth City Museum. The finds from the work undertaken in 1964-5 are retained by Mr. Budden at Manor Farm, Chalton.

THE SITE (Figs. 2 and 3)

The earthworks which constitute the village lie on the shoulder of an east-facing slope just above the 400-ft. (122 m) contour, and occupy an area 500 ft. (150 m) wide and in excess of 1000 ft. (300 m) long. The limits of the site

are apparent to the north, east and west sides, but the southern boundary is undefined since medieval and more recent ploughing has obliterated all trace of earlier structures. Scatters of potsherds, however, suggest that the settlement did not extend far south of the present limit of intensive cultivation (Fig. 2).

On the east side of the village the land falls steeply to the bottom of a dry valley over 120 ft. (37 m) below. Lynchet systems show that the sides of the valley were cultivated in the Roman period and perhaps earlier. To the north and west of the village the land is more level. Here, too, extensive traces of contemporary field systems survive, but little survey work has yet been carried out in the densely wooded area of Queen Elizabeth Forest. South of the village medieval and later ploughing have destroyed all trace of earlier earthworks, but field-walking has brought to light a number of Iron Age and Roman settlements, all of which tend to occupy positions similar to that of site 16, just above the shoulder of the valley-side. Evidently, locations of this kind were preferred for settlements. An Iron Age settlement (site 15) dating to the second to first century BC lies less than 1000 ft. (300 m) to the south of the village (Cunliffe 1976) and may indeed have been its predecessor.

Each of the settlements on the ridge was approached by a trackway leading up from the valley bottom. The trackway belonging to site 16 is particularly well preserved and appears to define the northern limit of the settlement. Surface indications suggest that another track, probably of earlier date, may have led towards the centre of the settlement, but its full extent cannot now be traced.

The earthworks of the village need not be described in detail, since their general form should be apparent from the plan (Fig. 3). Two points, however, deserve emphasis: first, the excavations have shown that the site was used for a considerable period of time, and

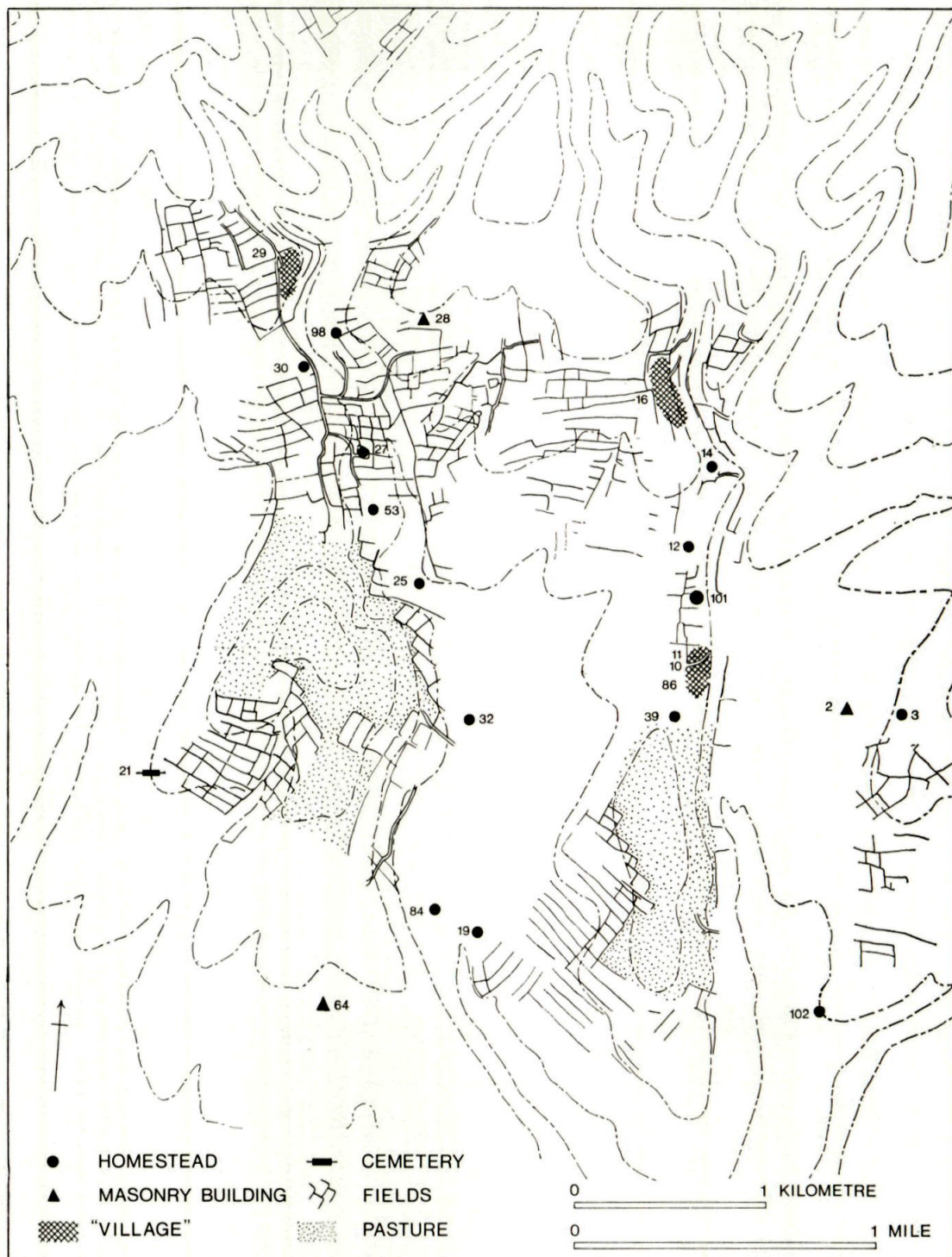


Fig. 2. Chalton: Roman settlement in the Chalton region. The village here described is site 16.

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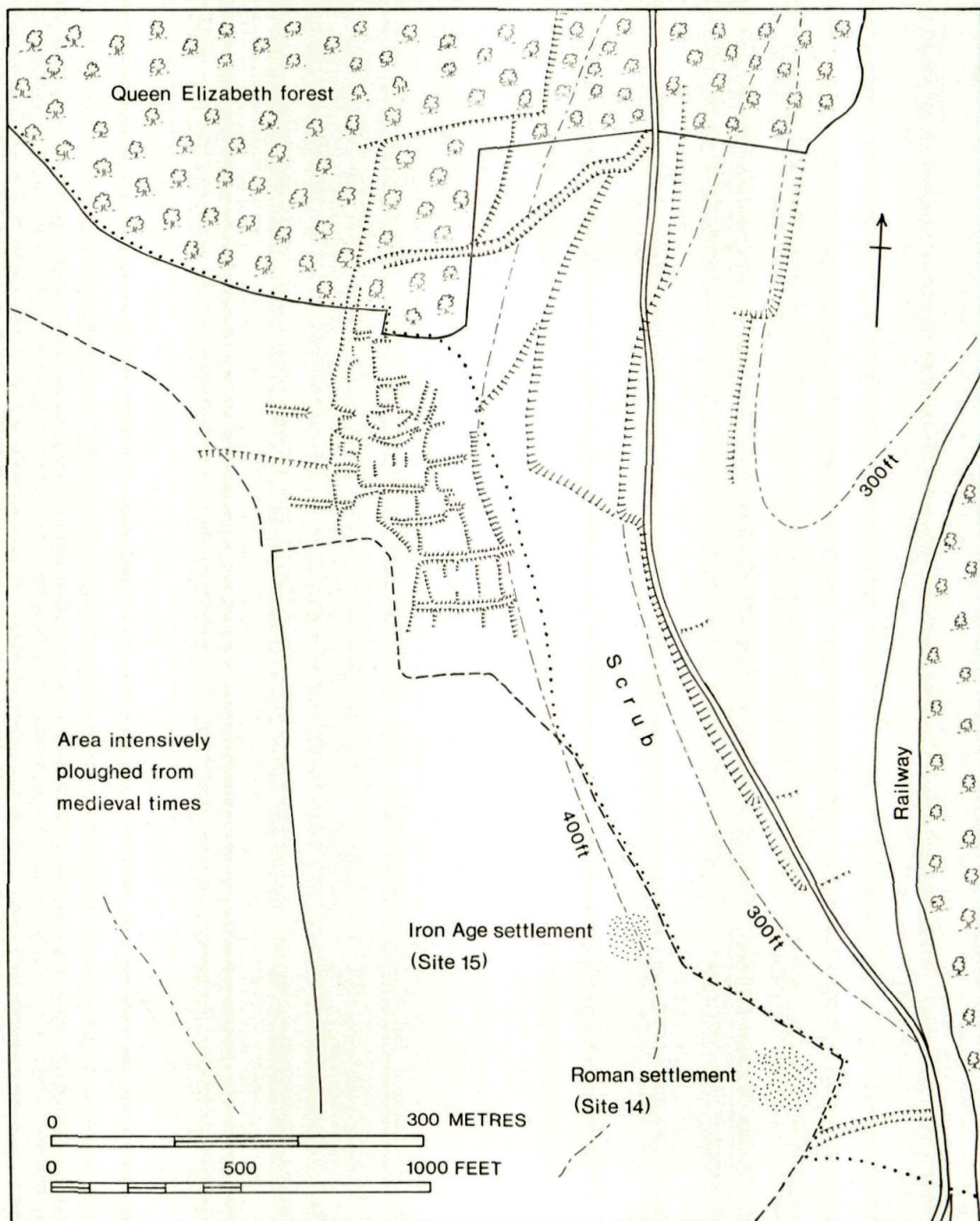


Fig. 3. Chalton: The Roman village and its surroundings.

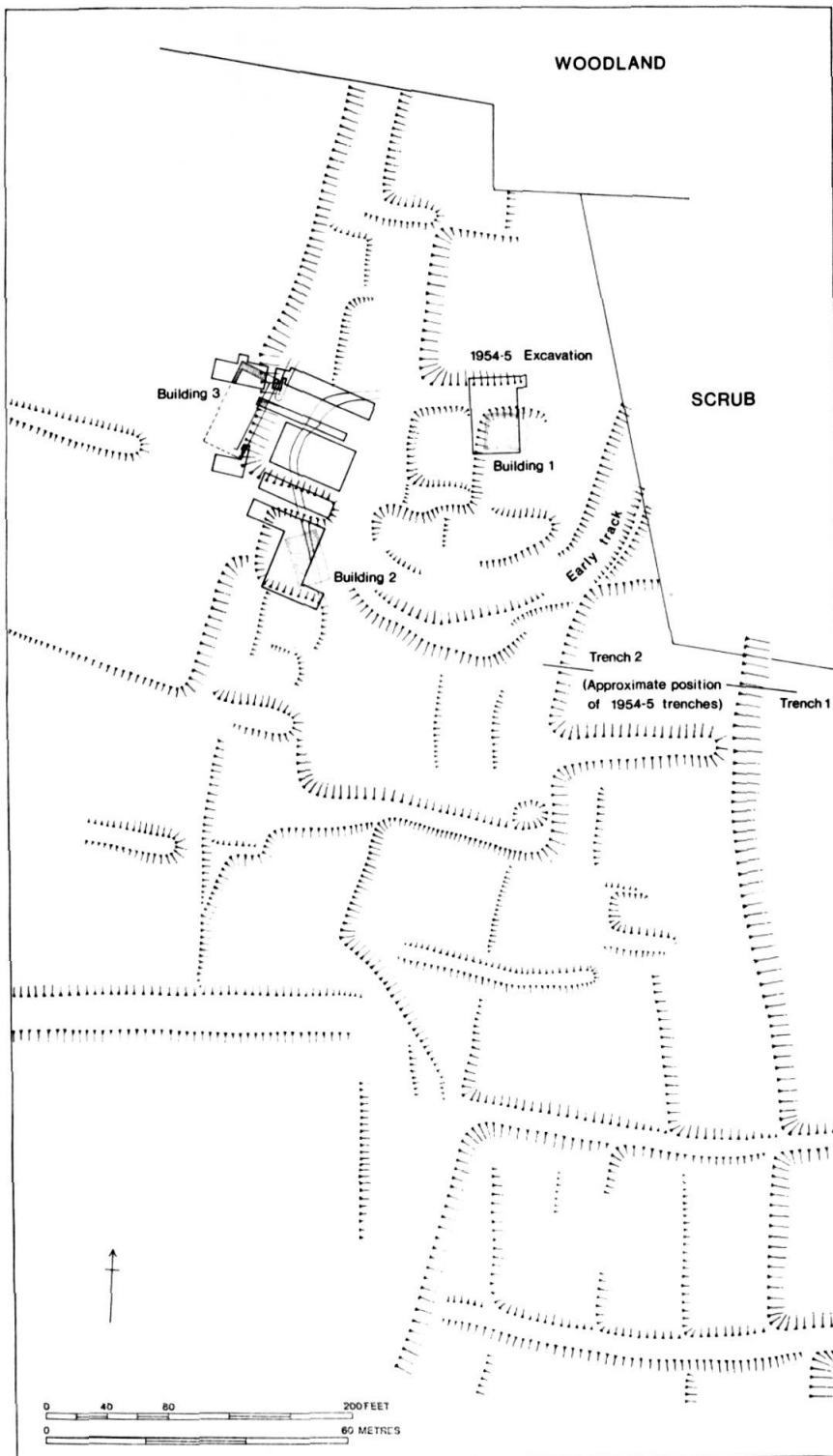


Fig. 4. Chalton: Plan of the Roman village.

it is likely, therefore, that the surviving earthworks represent activity at different periods. Second, the site appears to have been divided at one stage into a number of compounds, within each of which terraced platforms of rectangular shape can be traced. The two examples which were tested by excavation proved to be hut sites of the mid-late Roman period. It is probable, therefore, that the village took on its final appearance some time in the second or third century.

THE EXCAVATION OF 1964-65 (Figs. 4, 5, 6)

The area sampled in 1964-65 lay towards the western limit of the site. Eight trenches, representing an area of c.5000 sq. ft. (c.470 sq. m) were dug to the natural chalk bed-rock. The features discovered will be described in chronological order.

Period 1

The earliest substantial feature on the site is the curved ditch (ditch 2). Its profile varied slightly (Fig. 6) but it was V-shaped and cut to an average depth of 3 ft. (1 m) below the surface of the natural chalk. In width it varied from 5 to 8 ft. (1.5 to 2.4 m). The filling invariably consisted of a primary silting of loose frost-shattered chalk with occasional large flints mixed with a loamy brown silt. This was followed by an upper filling of brown clayey soil containing smaller fragments of chalk and flint, together with patches of occupation debris. The overall impression given by the silting pattern is that the ditch had been allowed to silt naturally, the primary silt representing one or two years of weathering at the most. Thereafter silting continued at a slower rate, during which time rubbish from a nearby occupation area was occasionally thrown into the hollow, particularly in the region of trench 7, where a thick deposit of black soil, burnt flints and pottery was recovered (Fig. 6, section B-B).

Ditch 2 was observed in relationship to three other features. In trench 4 the ditch appears to have cut through an earlier pit filled with black soil and small fragments of chalk (Fig. 6, section C-C layer 5), but no dating evidence for the earlier feature was recovered. In trenches 6 and 8 the ditch was sealed by a lynchet bank composed of flinty clay, the ditch having silted almost to the top before the lynchet formed. Finally in trench 8 the upper part of the ditch had been cut away by the floor of a late Roman timber building (building 2).

No structures or contemporary occupation layers were found to the east of the ditch, with the exception of a single undated post-hole (ph.9), 13 ins. (33 cm) in diameter and 9 ins. (23 cm) deep.

Ditch 1 must also belong to an early period of occupation. A short length only was examined, but in profile it was closely similar to ditch 2, measuring 5 ft. (1.5 m) wide by 3 ft. (1 m) deep. Its filling, however, consisted of a deliberate tip of black soil containing large flint nodules, masses of burnt flint, and some pottery (Fig. 6, section A-A, layer 6). This filling was similar in appearance to layer 3, which was seen on the west edge of the ditch sealing the natural turf-line (layer 4), and sealed in turn by a tip of chalk rubble (layer 2). Their relationship is obscure: either the ditch was cut from the level of the original turf and layers 3 and 6 accumulated together later, or the ditch was dug after layer 3 had been deposited, layer 6 perhaps being partially composed of soil eroded from layer 3. If this were so, then the chalk (layer 2) could be interpreted as upcast from the ditch. The top of the ditch was filled by a mass of loose flints (layer 5).

The dating of ditches 1 and 2 depends upon the pottery found within them which is described in detail below (pp. 56-9). In summary it may be said that the main filling of ditch 2, above the primary shatter, contained

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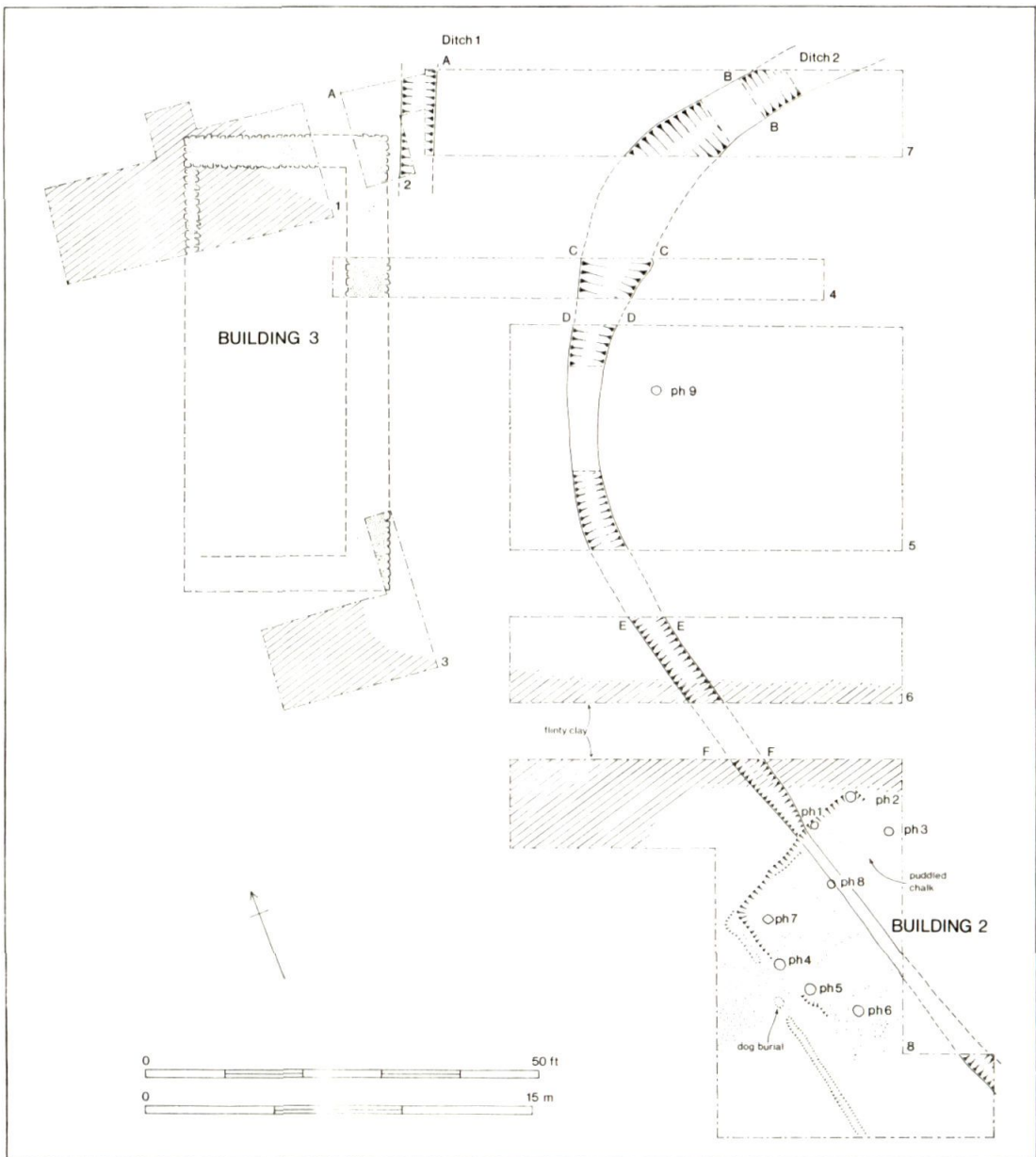


Fig. 5. Chalton: Plan of excavated area 1964-5.

a consistent group of pottery broadly datable to the period AD 1-40. In trench 7, however, this was overlaid by a tip of occupation rub-

bish containing pottery of the late first or early second century. A single vessel of the same date was found low in the soil filling

ditch 1. The only sherds from trench 2, layer 3, belonged to the pre-conquest period.

The sequence is therefore clear. Ditch 2 was dug first and left open for a short period. After frost-shattered chalk had accumulated in the bottom, pottery of the early first century AD was thrown into the partially silted ditch, while nearby an occupation layer (trench 2, layer 3) developed. A little later, probably towards the end of the first century AD, ditch 1 was dug, only to be filled almost immediately with tips of occupation rubbish, some of which was also thrown into the unsilted hollow in the top of ditch 2 in trench 7.

Period 2

The second period, discernible in that part of the site which has been examined, was represented by a phase of cultivation which led to the creation of a series of clearly defined fields or cultivation plots, one of which contained trenches 7, 4, 5, and part of 6. Because of the natural slope of the land a slight negative lynchet was created east-west along trench 6 and north-south from trench 3 to trench 2. Within the area thus defined the breaking of soil not only removed the superficially stratified levels, including the natural flinty clay which rested on the chalk, but also cut into the natural chalk bedrock by several inches. To the south of this plot lay another, partially sectioned by trench 8. Between them was an undisturbed baulk represented now by a bank composed of large flints in brown loamy soil, in total about 1 ft. 3 ins. (38 cm) thick. The bank must represent flints which had been picked off the plots and dumped along the unbroken strips between one plot and the next. A similar north-south bank, accentuating the lynchet, was traced in trenches 1 and 3, and presumably represents the downhill (eastern) boundary of another plot which lay to the west.

The cultivation phase can be dated only by its relationship to other features. It follows the filling of ditch 1, but precedes the construction of the masonry and timber buildings described below (and there dated to the late third or early fourth century). This being so, the cultivation phase must lie between the early second and the late third centuries.

To refer to period 2 as a phase of cultivation might give the impression that the site was abandoned and totally converted to arable farming. While this may be so, it is not necessarily the case. The plan of the village (see in particular Fig. 3) suggests that many of the larger enclosure banks may have been caused by cultivation, but if so then the individual plots would have been markedly smaller than the contemporary fields to the north and east of the site. One plausible explanation is that the cultivation plots on the village site were not arable fields but were the private 'gardens' belonging to individual households, in other words the Romano-British equivalent of the medieval 'toft'. This possibility is to some extent strengthened by the discovery, on the house site excavated in 1954-55, of material dating to the second and third century, and by the occurrence of pottery of a similar date range at all levels in a section cut in 1954 through the bank which represents the eastern limit of the settlement. These discoveries imply that occupation was continuous throughout the second and third centuries. We may tentatively, therefore, interpret the cultivation plots excavated in 1964-65 as the rear ends of gardens belonging to houses sited further to the east.

Period 3

Two structures belonging to the third period lie within the area excavated: a timber building partially examined in trench 8 (building 2), and a masonry structure noted in trenches 1-4 (building 3).

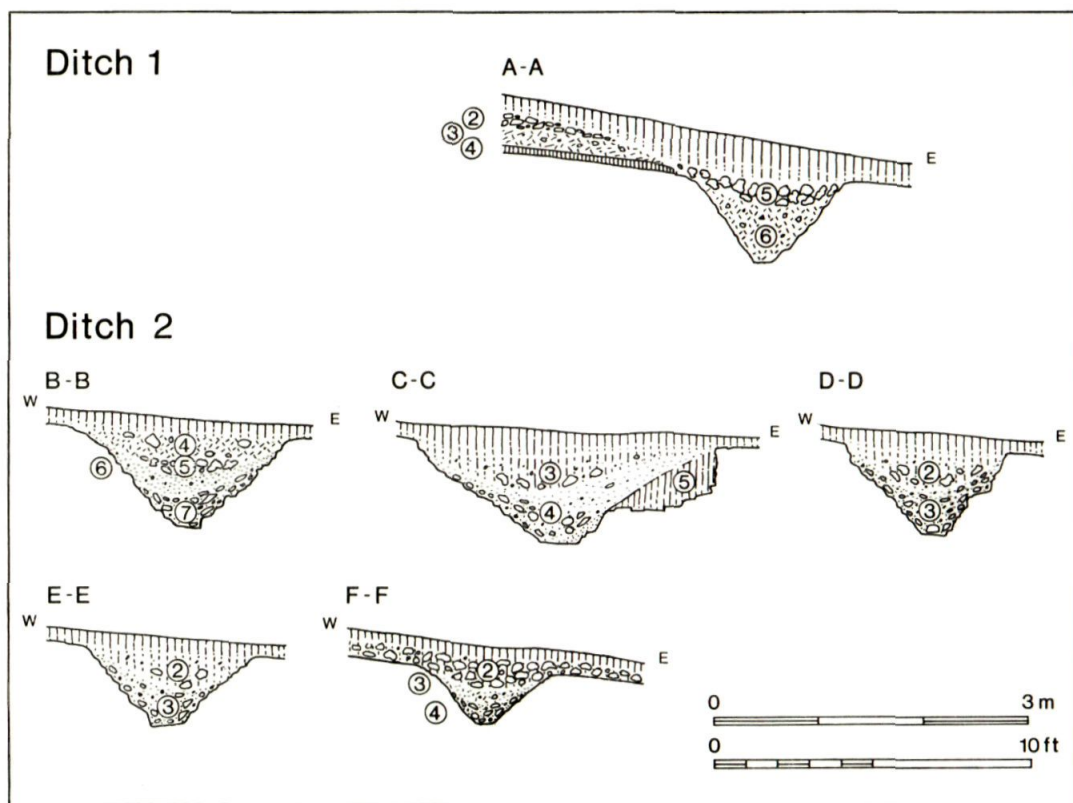


Fig. 6. Chalton: Sections of ditches 1 and 2.

The timber building (building 2) was represented by a floor measuring 22 ft. by approximately 25 ft. (6.7 m by 7.6 m), terraced slightly into the natural chalk. The surface within the building had been puddled by intensive wear. Seven posts were found within that part of the hut which has been excavated: they varied in size but averaged 10–15 ins. (25–38 cm) in diameter and 4–12 ins. (10–30 cm) deep, with the exception of ph. 7 which was only 2 ins. (5 cm) deep. While there is no proof that they were contemporary with the building, phs. 1–5 appear to relate to the wall line and are best interpreted as the emplacements for vertical supports in the wall structure. By virtue of their positions, phs. 4 and 5 are likely to have taken the frame posts for a doorway placed centrally

in the south side. A pathway, represented by puddled chalk, can be traced leading south-west from the door: close to one side of it a dog had been buried in a shallow pit. Just outside the south wall of the building, and diverging slightly from it, was a discontinuous shallow gully 2–4 ins. (5–10 cm) deep, which may have served to drain off surface water.

The date of the building depends partly on its stratigraphical position and partly upon a few stratified potsherds. In terms of sequence the building was cut into both ditch 2 and the edge of the lynchet bank immediately to the north of it, and its floor was partially sealed by clay and flints which had washed down off the bank. The building must therefore post-date period 2. The few potsherds

from its floor indicate a date in the late third or early fourth century (below p. 60).

The masonry building (building 3) was partially set into the north-south lynchet which bounded the site to the west. Its foundation consisted of courses of flint nodules, set in a soft chalky yellow mortar, built in shallow foundation trenches cut approximately 12 ins. (30 cm) deep into the clay of the lynchet. No superstructure survived and no floor levels were traced. As the plan (Fig. 4) will show, the foundation varied in width from 5½ ft. (1.7 m) to 1½ ft. (0.46 m), the narrow western wall making a butt joint with the northern wall. The reason for this variation in thickness is not immediately apparent, but it is possible that the narrow footing was the cill of a doorway.

The only dating evidence available for the building comes from a consideration of its stratigraphical relationship. Since it is cut into the lynchet bank it must post-date period 2, and may therefore be broadly contemporary with timber building 2.

surface had been worn and puddled by heavy use.

Little evidence of superstructure survived, but two post-holes, found on the line of the western wall, may have served as wall or roof supports, while 40–50 iron nails, presumably from the superstructure, were found in the vicinity of the building. The only other feature worthy of note was two Roman hypocaust tiles, of the kind used to build pilae, which were set together in a shallow scoop in the floor of the building.

In 1954 two trial trenches were cut through lynchet banks south of the main area excavations (for approximate positions see Fig. 4). Trench 1 sectioned the main eastern bank which here consisted of a mass of flints and soil surviving to a height of 4 ft. (1.2 m) above the original ground surface. Pottery of the second and third century was found throughout. Trench 2 sectioned the negative lynchet which corresponded to the positive lynchet in trench 1. No structural evidence was recorded in these trenches.

THE EXCAVATIONS OF 1954–5¹

The principal area excavation of 1954–5 lay to the east of the 1964–5 excavations: its position is shown as accurately as possible on Fig. 4. In all, an area of some 1,500 sq. ft. (140 sq m) was excavated to the natural chalk. The site was crossed, east-west, by a wide lynchet bank composed largely of flints and clayey soil resting on the natural surface of the chalk. To the south of this, and immediately adjacent to it, was the terraced platform for a rectangular building (building 1) measuring 25 ft. (7.6 m) north-south by approximately 20 ft. (6.1 m) east-west. At its western limit the floor had been terraced as much as 2 ft. (0.61 m) below the natural level, but to the east the floor merged with the natural slope of the hill. The entire floor

POTTERY (Figs. 7–10)

The pottery from the excavation of 1964–5 can be divided into five stratified groups. Each will be described and discussed in turn.

Group 1: pottery from an occupation layer, trench 2, layer 3

1. Bead rimmed jar: black sandy ware.
2. Bead rimmed jar: black sandy ware.
3. Bead rimmed jar: soft grey/brown ware with flint grits.
4. Bead rimmed jar: grey brown/sandy ware.

The forms and fabrics are closely similar to vessels from *Group 4* (below p. 56) and probably therefore belong to the same period in the first half of the first century AD.

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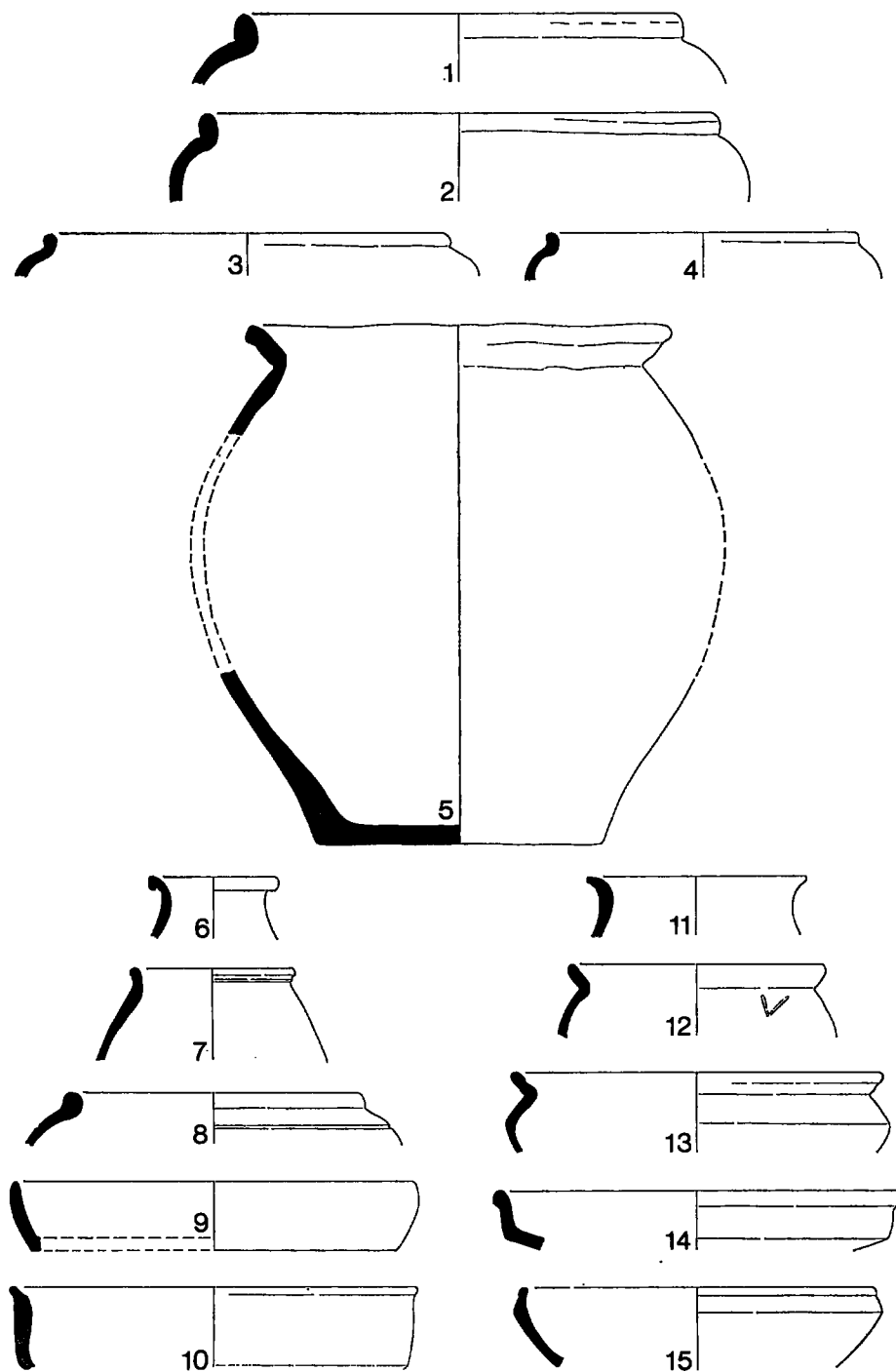


Fig. 7. Chalton: Pottery: Scale $\frac{1}{4}$.

Group 2: single vessel from the fill of ditch 1, trench 7, layer 3

5. Jar with everted rim: even grey sandy ware with lighter grey external slip. In form and fabric this vessel must be Roman, probably of first or second century date.

Group 3: from the upper fill of ditch 2, trench 7, layer 4

6. Neck of flagon or jug: grey sandy ware.
7. Jar: sandy ware fired red/brown and burnished externally.
8. Bead rimmed jar: soft grey sandy ware.
9. Dish: grey sandy ware.
10. Dish: fine grey sandy ware.
11. Jar: hard grey sandy ware.
12. Jar with everted rim and batch mark on the shoulder: light grey sandy ware.
13. Carinated bowl: grey sandy ware.
14. Dish: grey sandy ware.
15. Bowl: hard grey sandy ware.
16. Jar with everted rim: hard black sandy ware.
17. Jar with everted rim: grey sandy ware.
18. Storage jar: coarse grey ware with flint grits.
19. Storage jar: coarse grey ware with large flint grits.
20. Storage jar: coarse grey ware with large flint grits.
21. Storage jar: coarse grey ware with large flint grits.

The group represents a full range of types which were in use in the late first or early second century. The fabrics are all romanized, although some of the forms, e.g. Nos. 8 and 15, are of pre-Roman origin. Nos. 10, 13 and 14 are distinctive types which occur locally usually in late first and second century contexts (Cunliffe 1971, 161). The jars, Nos. 12, 16-19, are typical of the products of the Rowlands Castle kilns, which were probably in production from the late first to late third century (Cunliffe 1971, 237; Hodder 1974). The two coarse storage jars, which were possibly used for the storage of grain, Nos. 20

and 21, are of a type common on downland sites in the region. The kiln at Hallcourt Wood, Shedfield, is known to have been producing similar vessels in the late first century (Cunliffe 1961a).

Group 4: pottery from the lower filling of ditch 2, trench 6, layer 2 and trench 8, layer 3

22. Bowl: hard grey sandy ware.
23. Bowl: hard grey sandy ware with traces of pinkish/white external slip.
24. Bowl: soft grey sandy ware.
25. Bowl: smooth light grey sandy ware, fired darker grey on the surfaces and burnished externally.
26. Bowl: grey brown sandy ware fired dark grey on the surfaces.
27. Jar: grey sandy ware fired black on the surface, with external burnished decoration.
28. Bowl: grey brown sandy ware fired black and burnished.
29. Bowl: grey brown sandy ware fired black and burnished.
30. Bowl: grey sandy ware fired darker grey on external surface and lightly burnished.
31. Bowl: grey brown sandy ware fired black on surfaces and burnished externally.
32. Bowl: hard light grey ware.
33. Bowl: fine light grey sandy ware fired darker on external surface.
34. Jar: sandy ware fired to red/grey.
35. Bead rimmed jar: black sandy ware.
36. Bead rimmed jar: dark grey ware with coarse flint gritting fired black and smoothed on the surfaces.
37. Bead rimmed jar: grey/brown sandy ware fired black on the surfaces.
38. Bead rimmed jar: grey sandy ware.
39. Bead rimmed jar: grey sandy ware fired on the surfaces.
40. Bead rimmed jar: dark grey sandy ware.
41. Bead rimmed jar: fine grey sandy ware, fired black externally and burnished.
42. Bead rimmed jar: fine grey sandy ware with burnished external surface.

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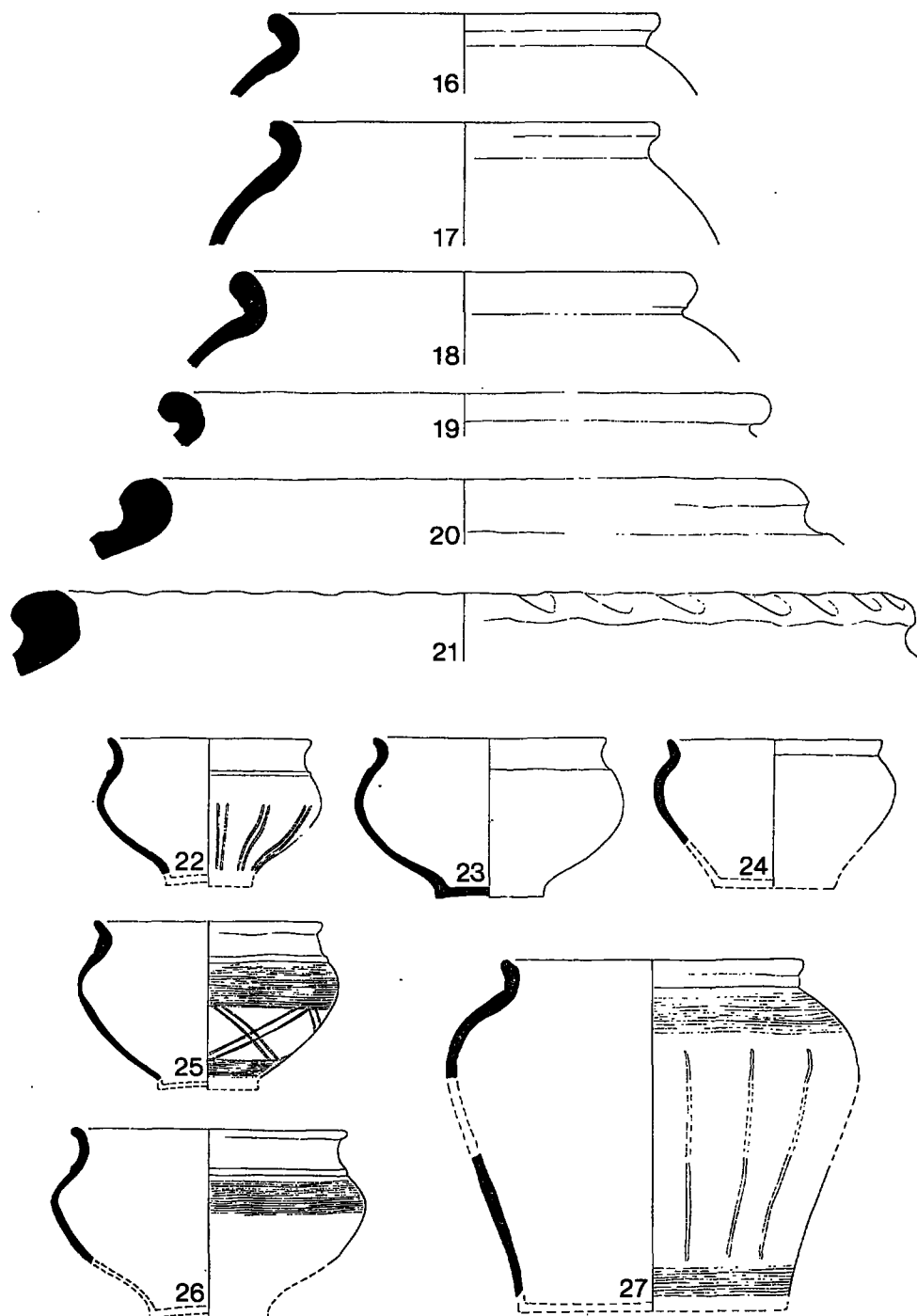


Fig. 8. Chalton: Pottery: Scale $\frac{1}{4}$.

43. Bead rimmed jar: black sandy ware.
44. Bead rimmed jar: red/brown sandy ware fired black on the surfaces.
45. Bead rimmed jar: fine grey sandy ware with occasional large flint grits, fired darker on the surfaces.
46. Bead rimmed jar: fine grey sandy ware with occasional large flint grits, fired darker on the surfaces.
47. Bead rimmed jar: grey/brown sandy ware with some flint grits, fired darker grey on the surfaces.
48. Bead rimmed jar: grey sandy ware fired black on the surfaces.
49. Bead rimmed jar: dark grey sandy ware fired black on the surface and roughly burnished externally.
50. Jar: grey sandy ware fired light brown externally.
51. Jar with outcurved rim: grey sandy ware.
52. Jar: grey sandy ware.
53. Bowl or dish: grey sandy ware.
54. Neck of(?) beaker: fine grey sandy ware.
55. Jar: grey sandy ware fired grey/brown on the surfaces.
56. Neck of beaker: grey sandy ware with lightly burnished external surface.
57. Jar: grey sandy ware.
58. Storage jar: grey/brown ware with large flint grits.
59. Storage jar: red/brown ware with large flint grits.
60. Storage jar: grey/brown ware with medium flint grits.
61. Base: black sandy ware.
62. Pedestal base: black sandy ware with a burnished exterior and a roughly burnished cross under the base.
63. Base: hard grey sandy ware.
64. Base: fine black sandy ware burnished externally.
65. Storage jar: coarse red/brown ware with large flint grits.

This group, of some 44 vessels, is illustrated here in full because comparatively few good associations of the kind are known in central southern Britain. For reasons given below it

can be dated to the first half of the first century AD and in all probability predates the Roman conquest of AD 43.

The most distinctive type is the small bowl, often with a well defined neck and sometimes provided with a cordon at the junction of the neck and shoulder. Tightly moulded bowl forms were already developing at the end of the 'saucepan pot' phase of the middle pre-Roman Iron Age. Indeed, several vessels of this kind were found in a large well-stratified group only a few hundred yards south of the present site on site 15 (Cunliffe 1976, 42-5), in contexts which might be dated to the early part of the first century BC. The types from our group 4, however, owe their precision of form, the use of cordons and their decoration to continental influences. These were first discernible in the region as Hengistbury Class B ware (Bushe-Fox 1915, Pl.XVII-XVIII), which was imported to the Dorset port of Hengistbury from Northern France, and there copied in the first half of the first century BC. The improved technology and change of fashion which ensued influenced native traditions over much of central southern Britain and gave rise to a distinctive local assemblage which has been referred to as Atrebatian (Cunliffe 1974, 89-92), characterized by the two principal forms, necked bowls and bead rimmed jars. Both types, which are well represented at Chalton, are best regarded as local developments, rooted in the indigenous saucepan pot tradition, but strongly influenced by the opening up of trade relations with northern France, and the introduction of the potters' wheel.

Precise dating evidence for pottery of this 'Atrebatian' style is sparse. At Horndean, Hants. (Cunliffe 1961b), a similar group was found associated with a small fragment of an imported amphora which Peacock (1971, 181) would date broadly to the first century BC, while at Danebury, Hants., early forms of Atrebatian pottery have been found stratified

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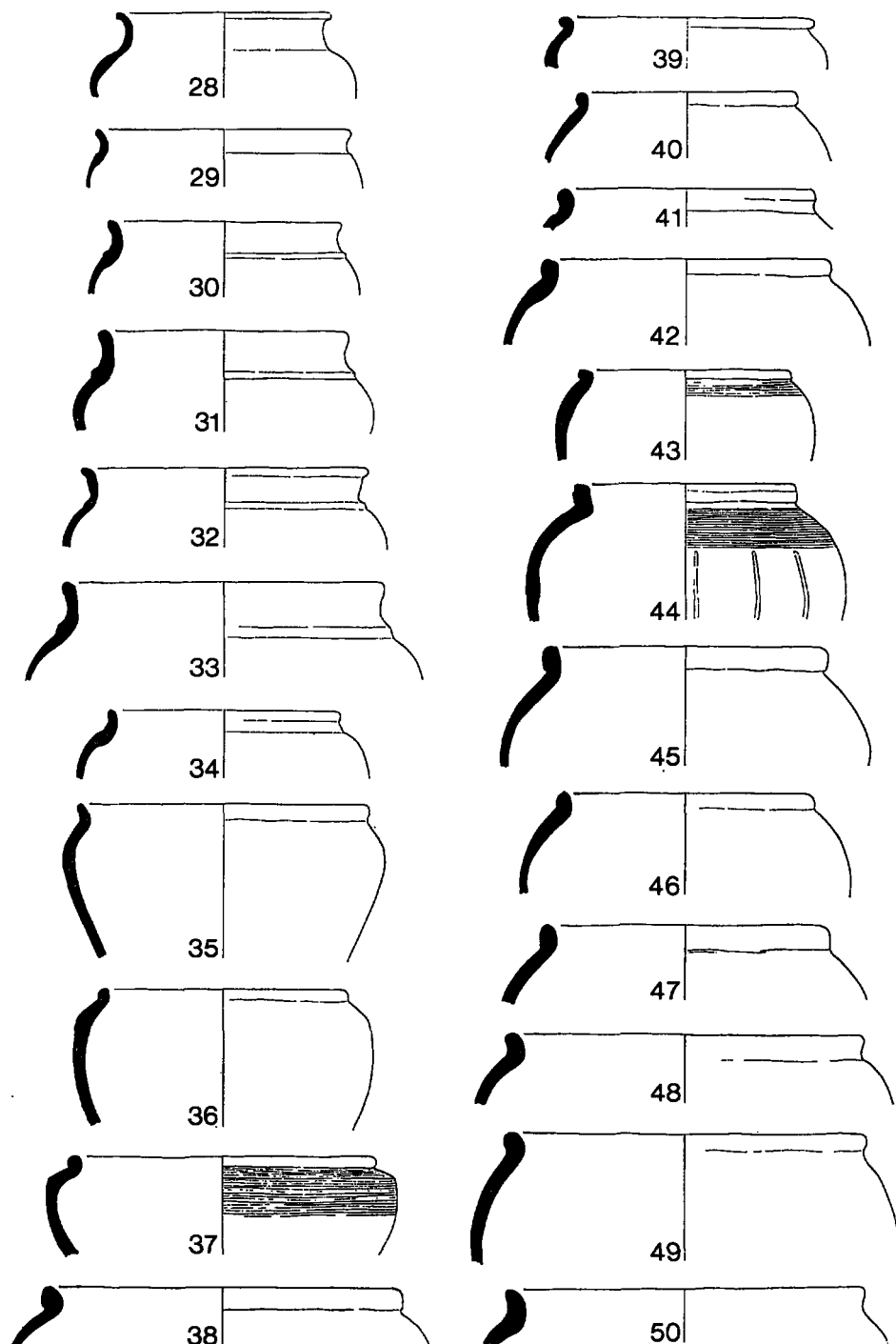


Fig. 9. Chalton: Pottery: Scale $\frac{1}{4}$.

in the tops of several pits, the lower fillings of which contained pottery in the saucepan pot tradition (author's unpublished excavation). A similar stratigraphical relationship is recorded at Micheldever Wood (Fasham 1976). Thus on present evidence all that can be said is that pottery of the Atrebatian style probably developed in the period 100–50 BC and thereafter remained in common use, the principal types continuing to be made, but in a romanized fabric, into the late first or even second century AD, as, for example, at Hallcourt Wood (Cunliffe 1961a).

Returning to the Chalton group, it can be said that the earliest Atrebatian types found at Danebury do not appear here. Moreover, the fabrics are purely native and show no Romanizing influences. Closer dating is difficult, but if it is accepted that the two necked vessels, Nos. 54 and 56, are local copies of imported Gallo-Belgic girth or butt beakers, the group cannot date much before the first decade of the first century AD. It is for these reasons, tenuous though they are, that a date within the range AD 1–40 is preferred.

Group 5: pottery from the floor of building 2

66. Dish: grey sandy ware.
67. Dish: dark grey sandy ware.
68. Dish: soft grey sandy ware.
69. Beaker: smooth grey sandy ware with a black slipped surface, highly polished.
70. Base: smooth pinkish orange ware, probably once colour coated.
71. Bowl: smooth pinkish orange ware, probably once colour coated.
72. Dish: black sandy ware.
73. Dish: fine grey sandy ware.

With the possible exception of No. 69, which may be earlier, all the other vessels are consistent with a date in the late third or fourth century.

Pottery from building 1 excavated in 1954–55

A selection of the pottery recovered from in and around building 1 is preserved in Portsmouth City Museum. It includes a dish, probably of first century type; 12 sherds of heavily abraded samian ware of the second century; five sherds of New Forest colour-coated beakers of the late third or fourth century and a range of local coarse wares typical of the second to fourth centuries. Among the local wares large storage jars with finger impressions inside predominate, and Rowlands Castle jars are common. The collection of samian and the high percentage of Rowlands Castle jars would suggest that occupation centred upon the second and third centuries. Nothing was found which demanded a fourth century rather than a late third century date.

Since the collection cannot be regarded as a closed group, it has not been illustrated or described in full.

SMALL FINDS (Figs. 11–12)

From a lynchet bank along the east side of the site. Accidental find by Mr. John Budden in 1952.

1. Six toothed bronze plates found in a colour-coated vessel. Described in detail by Professor S. S. Frere (1957, Pl. xxvii), with a further note by Dr. A. Roes (1958). The function of the plates is still obscure, but the suggestion that they were used to pierce holes in leather for stitching is not unlikely. For a similar example from Portchester Castle see Webster 1975, 214–15.

From trench 1 cut through the eastern lynchet in 1954.

2. Socketed iron knife (Frere 1957, Fig. 2, C).

From the floor of building 1 excavated in 1954–55.

3. Silver denarius of Gordian III (AD 238–244).

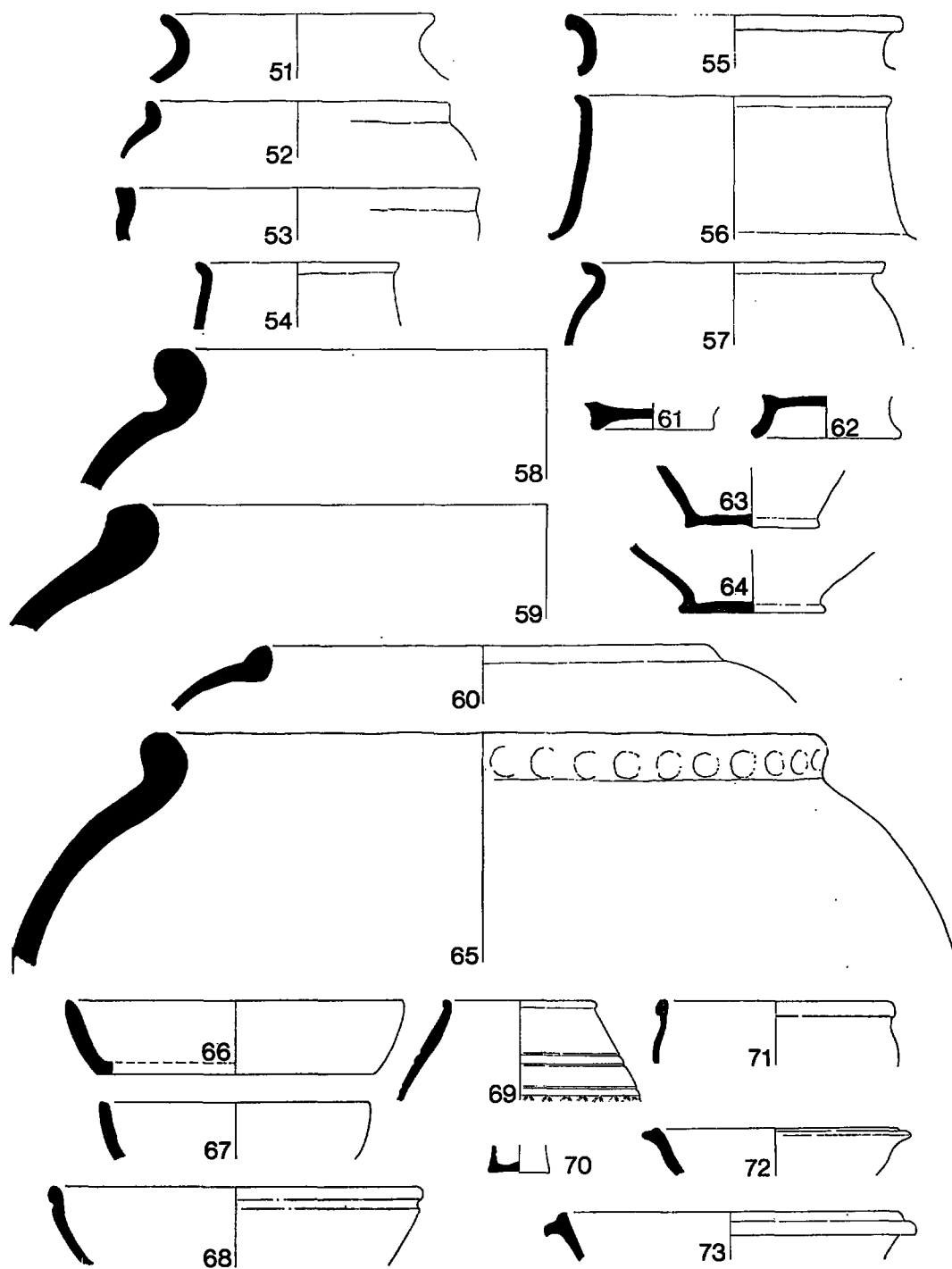


Fig. 10. Chalton: Pottery: Scale $\frac{1}{4}$.

4. Bronze casting decorated with a human head. The following note is contributed by Dr. Martin Henig: 'Clean-shaven male head with prominent hair-line and lentoid eyes. Height 32 mm. It is a hollow casting and the neck is pierced by two holes (each with a diameter of c.5 mm) in order to facilitate mounting onto a wand or staff. A broken cast-loop at the back of the head is a complicating factor. Frere, who first described the piece (1957, 218-19, No. 2) states that this loop renders use as a sceptre head unlikely and he suggests that it might have been the cap of a riding-whip. A mounting of somewhat larger size in the Rouen museum (Esperandieu and Rolland 1959, 79; Pl. liv No. 178) which was affixed to a pole but also has a rear-loop is described as a cart-fitting.

If it is not a sceptre-head, it is nevertheless related in form to such objects. A rather crude example of sheet gold from Gloucester was excavated from a first-century level (Green 1976, 171; Pl. xxv, c). Two finer heads of bronze found at Worlington and Willingham Fen in Cambridgeshire (Toynbee 1962, 124; Nos. 2 and 3; Pls. 2 and 3) are bearded and appear to date from the second century. Like the Chalton head they have lentoid eyes which are modelled to show the pupils. In metropolitan Roman art this feature appears first in the House of the Vettii at Pompeii and becomes almost *de rigueur* from the reign of Hadrian (Lawrence 1972, 35). It is not seen in association with clean-shaven adult male portraits until the custom of wearing beards fell into decline in the late third century. It is true that, as Frere says, 'the wide lentoid eyes recall those of the Belgic masks from Welwyn' (Frere 1957, 219) two of which have clearly marked pupils, perhaps once filled with enamel (Megaw 1970, 141 No. 230) but these are exceptional. The heads themselves more

clearly recall the anthropomorphic bucket mounts from late La Tène burials at Baldock and Aylesford (Stead 1971; Megaw 1970, 119-120, No. 187). They are clean-shaven and in the case of the Aylesford masks, a fringe above the brows, perhaps part of the helmet, deepens the resemblance to the Chalton head. However, the eyes are unmodelled and it would seem that the general treatment of the physiognomy is more abstract. In fact the Chalton head belongs to quite a different cultural milieu.

Frere drew attention to a certain likeness between the head and the coin-portraits of fourth-century emperors. This is undeniable, and the close physical resemblance between it and certain sculptural representations of the Tetrarchs, clean-shaven or lightly bearded (Delbrueck 1932, Pl. 33; Haynes 1976, 226-7, Pl. 552) is even more striking. An early fourth century date would allow for the considerable handling and wear suffered by the object before its putative loss some time later in the century.

5. Bronze brooch of Hod Hill type. The brooch was examined by M. R. Hull who commented: 'A rather large Hod Hill brooch which has probably been tinned. The prominent edges of the mouldings are injured throughout so that it is not possible to see whether they were knurled, nor is it possible to be sure whether there was a raised outer edge on the ends of the transverse panels. There are bold and tall mouldings at the head and foot accompanied by rectangular panels bordered by very finely beaded or knurled bands. In each panel is a number of vertical strakes in black niello. The bow is flat and decorated with three spots and two lozenge-shaped leaves in black niello. It is thrice transversely pierced by iron bars which carried knobs on the outside. One knob remains on the end

THE ROMANO-BRITISH VILLAGE AT CHALTON, HANTS.

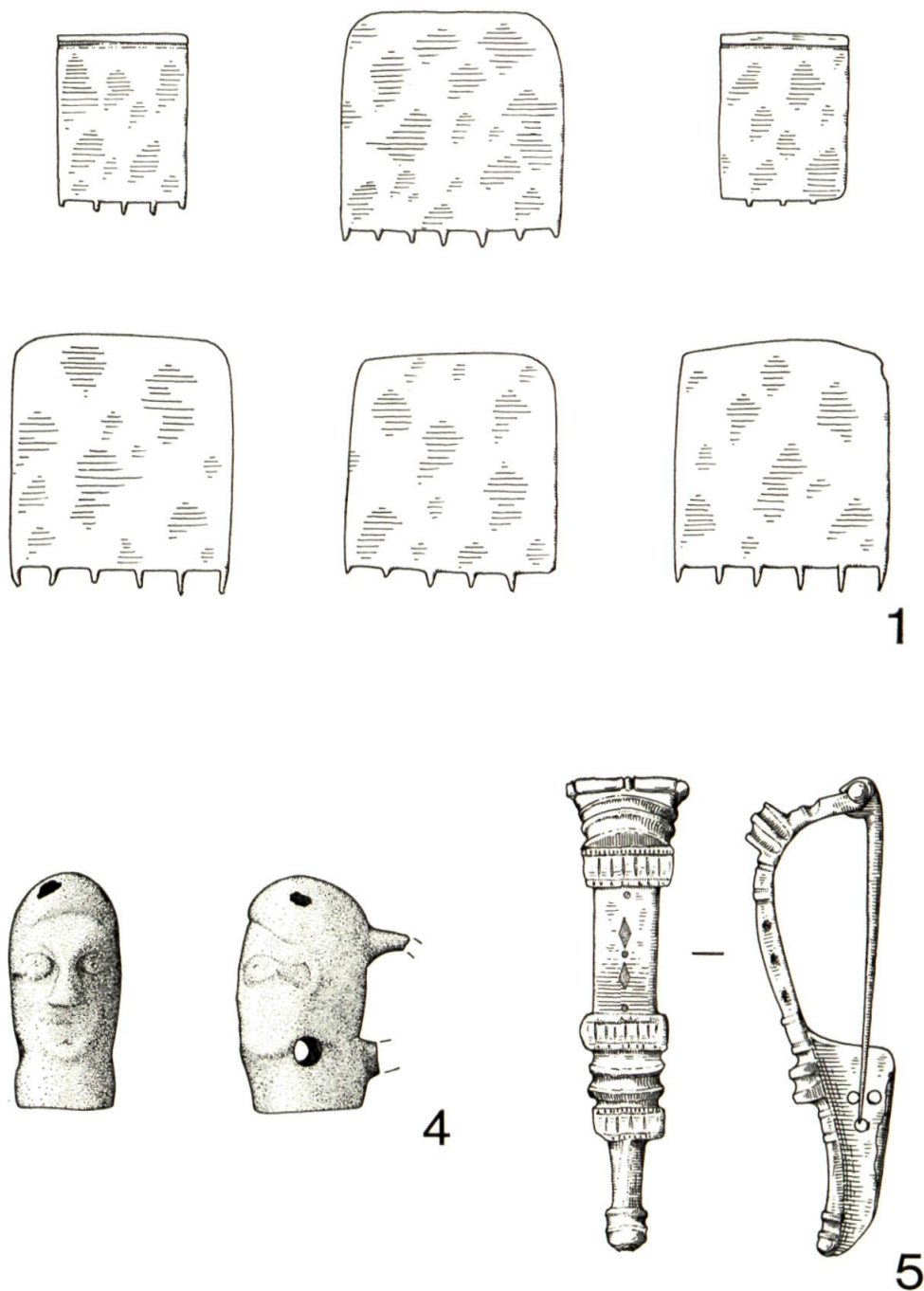


Fig. 11. Chalton: Small finds of bronze: Scale 1/1. Drawings by Mike Rouillard.

of the axis pin. The foot is knobbed and carries a cast catch-plate which has a partly raised rim on both sides of the broad end of the plate. There are three small round holes in it. The brooch is without close parallel; two Colchester brooches (a pair) however, resemble it. Since the Colchester brooches are mid-first century and have fully open through catch plates, I would put this brooch, with its three round holes, as earlier but not much'.

6. The upper end of an iron brooch of simple pattern. Mr. Hull reported: 'There is nothing distinctive about it. These iron safety pin brooches are normally of about mid-first century date or earlier. It is obvious, however, that they might easily occur later. The bar is more often rounded in section than flat like this.' The brooch cannot now be traced. (Not illustrated.)
7. Tanged iron implement with a wide curved blade. Possibly a scraper for leather working. (Frere 1957, Fig. 2B).
8. Fragment of an iron horseshoe.
9. Bone pins. Two bone pins were recovered, one with a simple roughly carved knob head, the other represented only by a shaft. (Not illustrated.)
10. Glass. Five small fragments of green glass vessels were found. One was part of a square-sectioned bottle, another was a part of a handle attached to the body of a vessel. (Not illustrated.)
11. Whetstone: calcareous sandstone from the Hythe beds of the Lower Greensand. (Not illustrated.)
12. Querns. Fragments of five topstones and three bottom stones were found. Of the top stones one had a central hopper. (Not illustrated.)

DISCUSSION

Although the 1964-65 excavation was of limited extent, its main aims, to discover the nature of the site and to assess its chronological range, have been satisfactorily accomplished. It is now clear that the settlement began in the early first century AD and seems to have remained in use, probably continuously, until the fourth century. During this time certain changes of plan took place, the most significant being the laying out of cultivation plots, probably some time during the second century, which it is suggested, belonged to the individual homesteads which comprised the village. Building 1, by virtue of its associated finds, may well have been in use in the second or third century, while building 2 was probably constructed quite late in the development of the site, and may have continued in use into the fourth century.

The timber buildings are of some considerable interest, not least because plans of such structures are hardly known from excavations. The two Chalton examples were of comparable size and appeared to have incorporated vertical posts in their superstructures. Since insufficient post-holes were found to account for all the vertical timbers which would have been necessary, it must be supposed that some of the timbers stood on pads, sole plates or simply on the ground surface. The only buildings with which the Chalton timber houses can be compared are those found at Park Brow, Sussex (Wolseley, Smith and Hawley 1927), and at Overton Down, Wiltshire (Fowler 1967, 26-30). At Park Brow, five rectangular buildings were excavated varying in size from 32 by 25 ft. (9.7 by 7.6 m) to 28 by 22 ft. (8.5 by 6.7 m). Although the published plans are only schematic, it appears that no post-holes were found, yet to judge from the finds, which included painted wall plaster and latch-lifters, the houses were comfortable and presumably well-built. At Overton Down, two houses were found, the larger measuring 34 by 28 ft. (10.4 by 8.5 m). Both were represented only by a scatter of

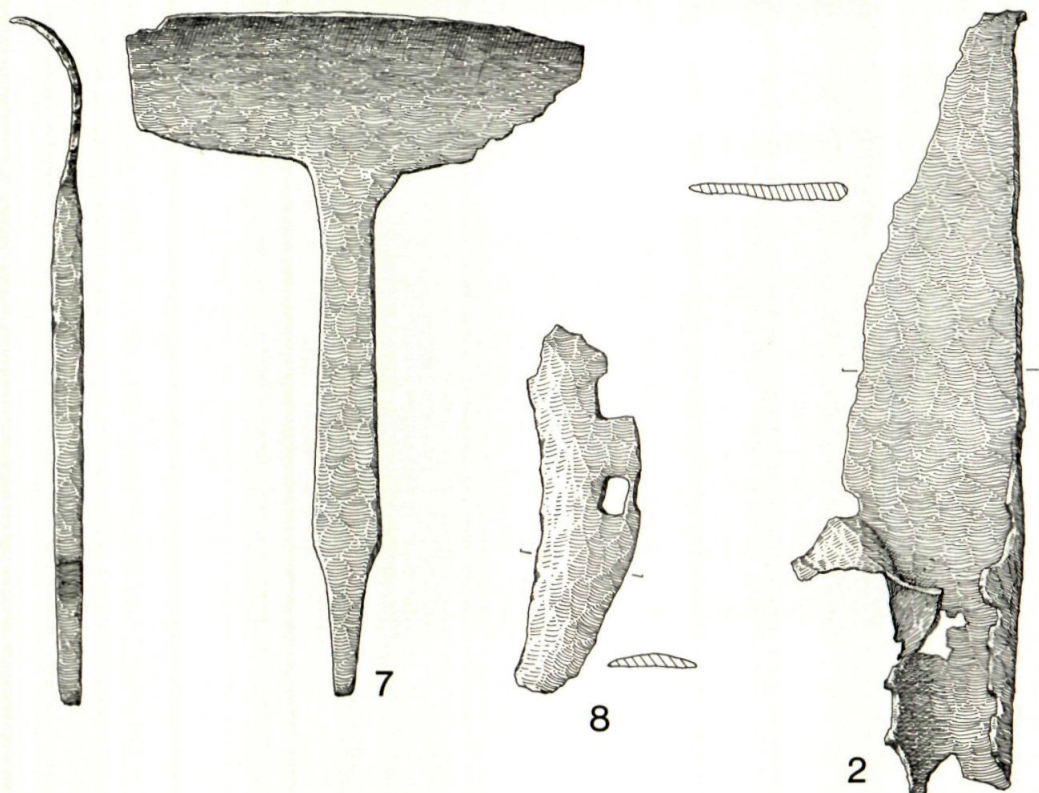


Fig. 12. Chalton: Small finds of iron: Scale $\frac{1}{2}$. Drawings by Mike Rouillard.

sarsen blocks which appear to have formed ground cills for timber superstructures. The absence of structural evidence, apart from terraced floors and stone scatters, is a salutary reminder of the difficulties involved in recognizing such buildings on level sites or in areas which have been subjected to extensive ploughing.

The masonry building at Chalton, building 3, is only a little larger than the timber structures. Although the width of some of its footings give the impression of considerable size, there is no evidence to suggest that the shallow flint-built footings supported a

masonry superstructure. Indeed it is probable that they were constructed to serve as foundations for a timber-framed structure. If so, building 3 may have been little more than a superior version of its wholly timber-built neighbours.

Comparison should be made with the rectangular houses found at Studland, Dorset (Field 1966), which were represented by well-built stone footings, in this case unmortared, up to 3 ft. (1 m) in thickness. The Studland houses were smaller than building 3 but comparable in size to the Chalton timber houses.

From the brief survey of the evidence offered here it may be said that although rectangular timber framed houses of Roman date have rarely been excavated in Britain, there can be little reasonable doubt that the type was widely distributed and, indeed, may well prove to be the normal type of rural peasant house.

So far we have been concerned to discuss the individual buildings, but it is clear from the surface features that the three excavated structures formed part of a much larger settlement, within which there appears to have been some semblance of organized layout. Although some allowance should be made for a shift of focus during use, it seems fair to conclude that in its second and third century form the Chalton settlement may have been of village proportions. Romano-British villages are not unknown in Southern Britain. Several have been recognized in Wessex, e.g. at Overton Down, and Chisenbury Warren in Wiltshire, and on Berwick Down and Meriden Down in Dorset (Bowen and Fowler 1966), and to these should be added Hamshill Ditches, Wilts, (Bonney and Moore 1967) and Studland, Dorset (Field 1966).

The linear arrangement of the Chisenbury Warren and Overton Down villages is comparable in many details to the Chalton site, and there can be little doubt from the surface indications at Chisenbury Warren and Hamshill Ditches that rectangular house platforms formed a normal component of such sites. That Romano-British villages are seldom mentioned in the archaeological literature is more a feature of their extensive destruction by ploughing and the comparative lack of interest shown in them than their actual rarity. In all probability, villages were a consistent part of the Roman rural scene.

The economic and social status of the Chalton village is difficult to assess from the small sample of material available. Animal bones were not systematically saved during the 1954-55 excavations, and the quantity recovered in 1964-65 was far too small to be significant. The pottery, however, is of some interest, in showing how little imported material reached the site. Samian was restricted to a few scraps, while mortaria, flagons and colour-coated wares were equally rare, the overwhelming bulk of the pottery in the second and third centuries coming from the Rowlands Castle kilns which lay a few miles to the south. While it is understandable that proximity to the kilns would have encouraged the use of the kiln products, the lack of non-local wares is notable and implies that little direct contact was maintained with the neighbouring market centre at Chichester. Nonetheless, a few exotic objects such as the mid-first century Hod Hill brooch, the glass vessels, and the third century denarius, show that modest personal affluence was not totally lacking.

The Chalton village provides a rare insight into Romano-British peasant settlement on the Downlands – a theme which has been seriously neglected in recent years. While this particular village is now well protected, and need not be further disturbed by excavation, the considerable academic interest to be derived from the total excavation of one of the many threatened sites of this kind should not be overlooked.

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