

EXCAVATIONS AT OLD DOWN FARM, ANDOVER. PART I: SAXON

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SUMMARY

During excavation of an Iron Age enclosure, six early Saxon *grubenhäuser* were discovered. No other Saxon buildings or features were recognised. Finds included a small quantity of pottery, bone and metalwork.

INTRODUCTION

An Iron Age enclosure site at Old Down Farm, Andover (SU 356465), was first recognised on an aerial photograph taken by Major G. W. Allen in 1938. In the early 1970s the site came under threat of Greater London Council development and subsequently, in 1974, immediately before a road was cut through the southern third of the area, small exploratory rescue excavations were carried out by Mr. Shahad Power for the Andover Excavations Committee, financed by the Andover Borough Council. These excavations confirmed the existence of at least two phases of Iron Age occupation—a large early enclosure with a deep ditch, and a late sub-division of it—and examined some of the internal structures. Following the establishment of the Test Valley Archaeological Committee, excavations were resumed in 1975 by the Field Director, Mr. Kevin Stubbs, working at weekends with volunteers from local societies. The work, financed by the Department of the Environment, continued until November 1977, when the GLC housing development commenced.

My own involvement with the site was initially as a volunteer, and then as site supervisor. I was subsequently commissioned to prepare the report and archive by the Test Valley Archaeological Committee, on behalf of the Department of the Environment.

EXCAVATION

SITE LOCATION AND GEOLOGY (Figs. 1 and 2)

The site lies to the north-west of modern Andover, on a spur of Upper Chalk just above

a narrow tributary of the river Anton, at a height of some 74 m (240 ft) O.D. It is probably adjacent to an east-west trackway, the Harroway, and is close to a Roman road, the Portway, which runs SW-NE from Old Sarum to Silchester. The precise lines and junction of trackway and Roman road in this area are uncertain; the fording-place of the river is much debated. The East Anton crossroad, where the Winchester-Cirencester road crosses the Portway, lies approximately 1 mile to the north-east of Old Down.

The site has been ploughed for many years, and a 30–40 cm topsoil of broken chalk and loam has developed. Below this, over most of the site, was hard chalk bedrock with periglacial involutions in the south. The site sloped approximately 1.5 m from south to north, towards the river valley, the main slope being to the north of the *grubenhäuser*.

METHOD OF EXCAVATION

Some 30 cm of ploughsoil were removed from the site by machine, and the underlying chalk surface and archaeological features cleaned by hand. All large features thus revealed—pits, ditches and quarries—were at least sampled and several were completely excavated. Numerous postholes and gully features were also excavated. Standard excavation and manual retrieval techniques were used, except that soil from two of the *grubenhäuser*, F621 and F225, was sieved to see if there was differential recovery. No appreciable difference was observed.

The majority of features were of Iron Age or Roman date, but unexpectedly six were early Saxon—all sunken-featured buildings (*grubenhäuser*). These last are described in this report, and the Iron Age and Roman features will be discussed in Part II, to be published in the next *Proceedings*. The site plan (Fig. 3) shows the Iron Age ditches, the Roman

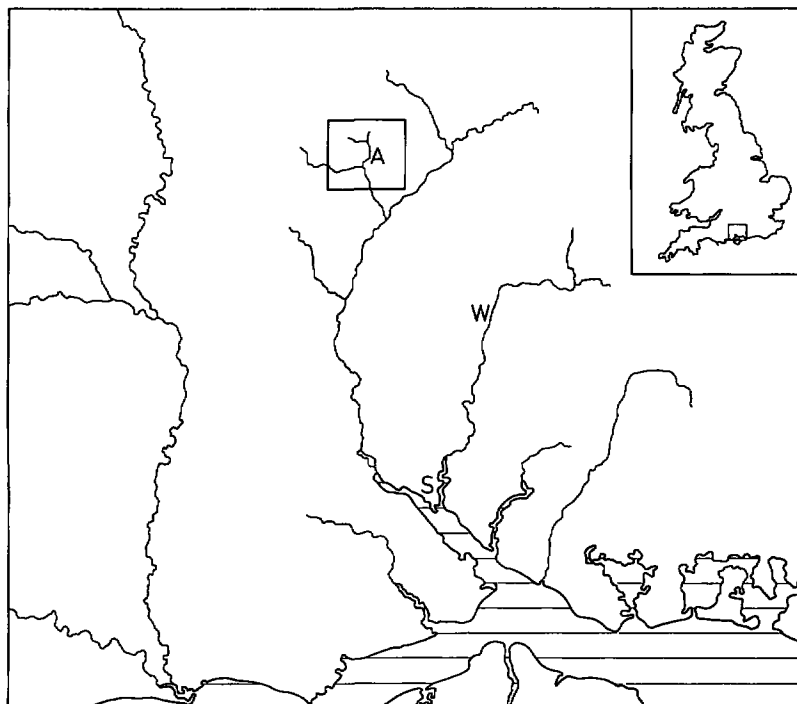


Fig. 1. Location of Figure 2 within Hampshire. A – Andover, S – Southampton, W – Winchester.

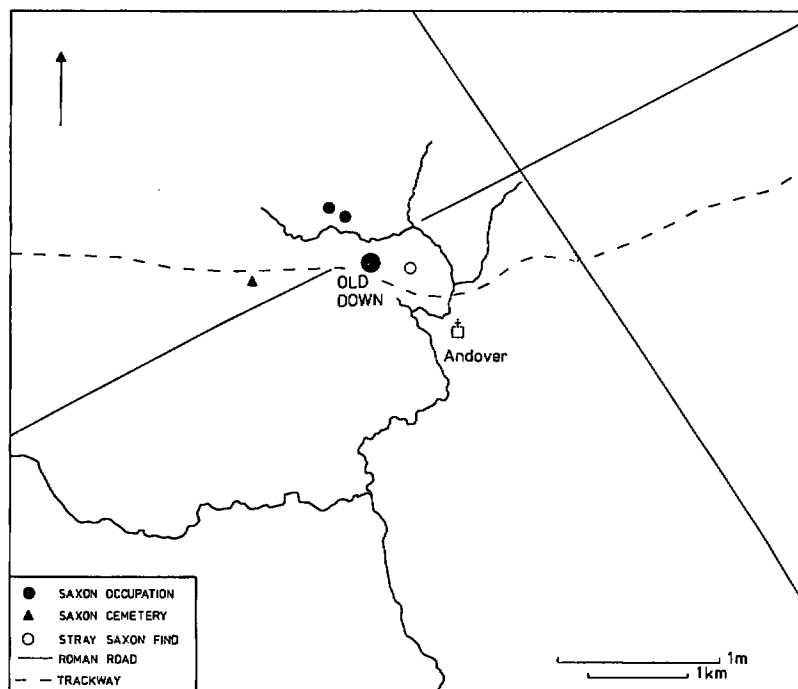


Fig. 2. Old Down Farm and related archaeological sites around Andover.

gullies, and the Saxon *grubenhäuser*, so that it will be possible to relate the Saxon to the earlier features. It also shows all post-holes for which there is no direct dating evidence. By including these latter, all possible as well as probable Saxon features are shown, although it must be stressed that only six sunken-featured buildings are here ascribed to the early Saxon period. It is probable that most, if not all, the postholes are earlier in date (for example, traces of what is probably an Iron Age round-house can be seen in the east of the site, near F2740), but they have been included to avoid biasing the evidence.

DESCRIPTION OF THE SAXON BUILDINGS (Figs. 4 and 5)

All the identifiable early Saxon buildings on Old Down were sunken-featured, dug into the chalk to depths varying from 20 cm to 40 cm. Two (F621 and F225) were built over Iron Age pits (Fig. 5), two (F490 and F548) were on the outer edge of the enclosure ditch, and two (F2041 and F2740) were on the edges of pits. The original depths of the buildings cannot be estimated, but since stakehole buildings of Iron Age date did survive (and will be discussed in Part II), it may be supposed that little of the original chalk surface has been lost. Measurements given in the detailed descriptions refer to depth below the extant chalk surface.

The buildings were scattered irregularly across the site, both inside (F225, F621, F2041 and F2740) and outside (F490 and F548) the enclosure ditch (Fig. 3). All were rectangular or subrectangular in plan, with the exception of F225, the outline of which was distorted by its placing over two earlier Iron Age pits (Fig. 5). The buildings fell into two size categories, either greater than 3.5 m in length or less than 2.7 m. No evidence remained for the material used in the roof construction or in the walls. There would, however, have been no lack of suitable local materials such as wood, turf, chalk or cob. All buildings except F548 contained central postholes at either end to support a ridgepiece for the roof. F548 had

no central post at its northern end, though there was one at the northern corner (Fig. 4). It may be that the eastern edge of F548 was not recognised during the machine-stripping because of the similarity of the building's fill to that of the enclosure ditch into which it was cut. The outline of F490 was also obscured in this way.

Some of the *grubenhäuser* (F490, F548, F621, F2740) had stakeholes and postholes in their floors, sometimes apparently randomly spaced (e.g. F2740), sometimes aligned with the end posts for the ridgepieces (F490). No hearths or other internal features were observed, and no evidence for specialist activities, such as weaving, was found. No external post-holes or pits can be definitely related to the *grubenhäuser* (Fig. 3).

Generally, the *grubenhäuser* were orientated east-west or almost so. There were no steps or extra postholes to indicate the position of the entrances in any building, so gable entry may reasonably be assumed.

A small gully (F71, Fig. 3) cutting through the enclosure gate and apparently surrounding both buildings F490 and F548 may be connected with them, possibly as a fence line or boundary ditch, but it contained only early Roman pottery. F71 is similar to two other gully features on the site, F194, which appeared to surround building F225, and F2761 (Fig. 3); these also produced only Roman material, and it is considered that these features are more likely to have been Roman than Saxon, although two happened to surround *grubenhäuser*.

Building F490 (Figs. 3 and 4)

This building lay outside the Iron Age enclosure on the west side, south of the gateway, close to building F548. The gable ends of the building lay to east and west, and it contained a central line of three postholes and one stakehole.

Dimensions: E-W 2.68 m; N-S 2.24 m; depth c. 20 cm.

Fill: dark brown loamy soil with chalk fragments of varying size, usually under 4 cm, scattered throughout, with little chalk in the postholes.

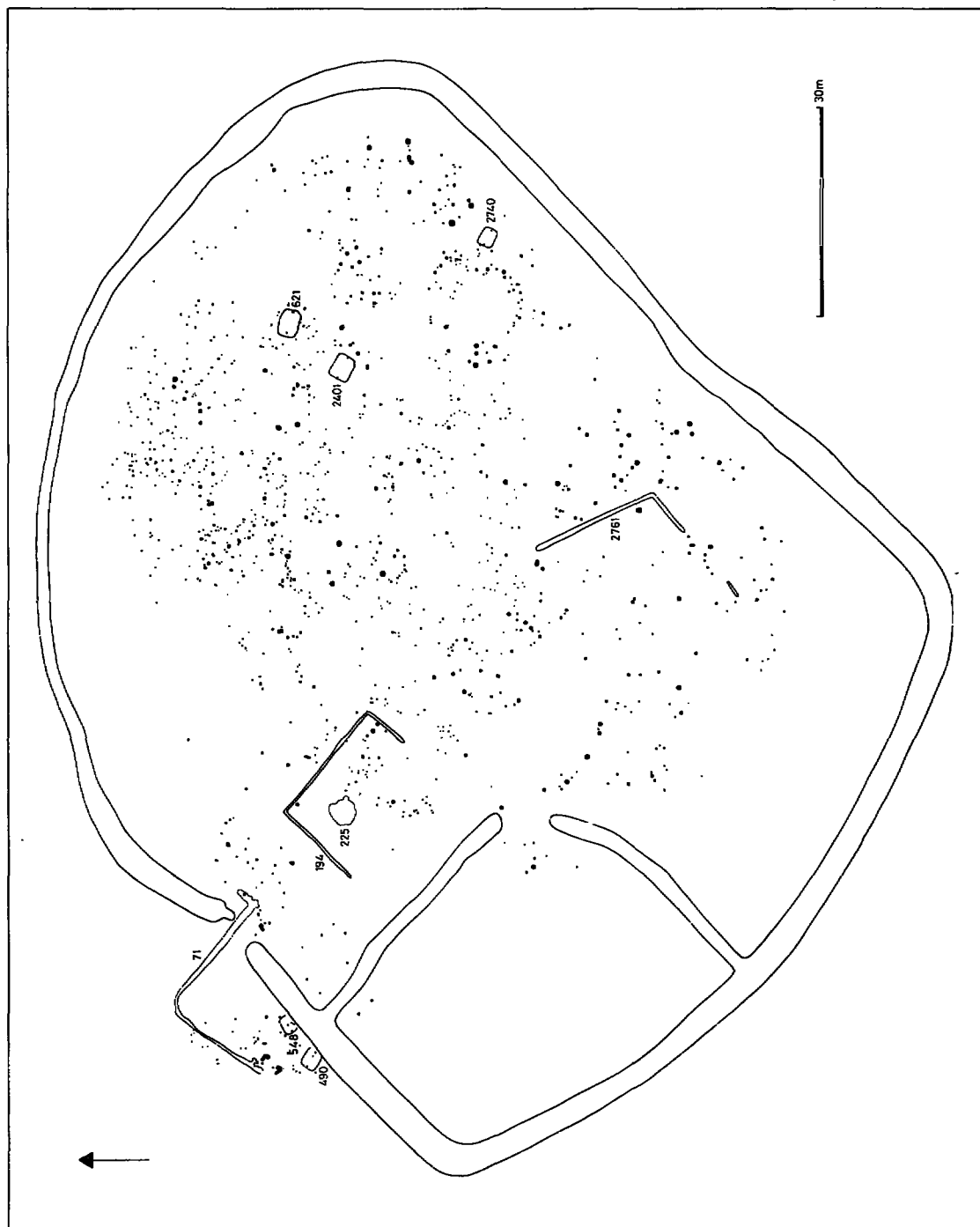


Fig. 3. Plan of the Old Down Farm Site showing (a) Iron Age enclosure ditches, (b) Roman gullies (F71, F194 and F2761), (c) Saxon *grubenhäuser*, (d) all undated postholes.

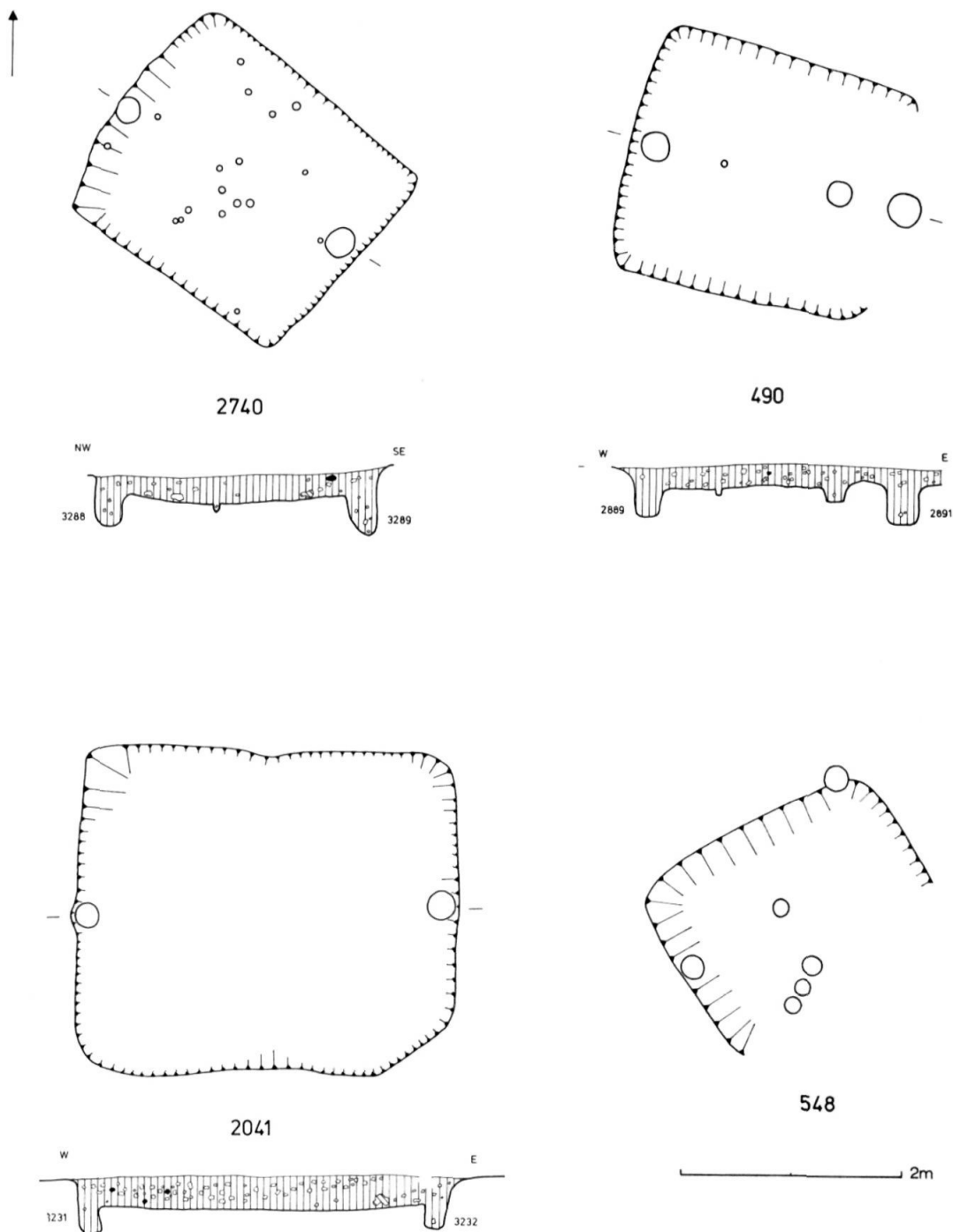


Fig. 4. Plans and sections of *grubenhäuser* F2740, F490, F2041 and F548. For the plans, north is always to the top of the page.

Finds: a small quantity of pottery (Table 1), including one rim (Fig. 7.32), and some animal bone. One fragment of Roman tile was recovered.

Building F548 (Figs. 3 and 4)

Dimensions: SW–NE 2.4 m; NW–SE *c.* 1.7 m (SE edge lost in fill of enclosure ditch).

Depth uncertain because of salvage conditions of excavation which prevented recording of the section.

Five internal postholes were found, three in line, of unknown purpose, probably not structural.

Fill: as F490.

Finds: very small quantity of pottery (Table 2).

Building F2041 (Figs. 3 and 4)

This building lay east of the centre of the Iron Age enclosure, on the flat plateau above the slope down to the river. Subrectangular in shape, with gable ends to east and west.

Dimensions: E–W 3.5 m; N–S 2.8–2.84 m; depth averages 30 cm. No stakeholes.

Fill: overlying the floor surface was a thin band of dark brown clayey silt with no chalk, over which was a layer of brown loamy soil containing many chalk fragments. The top layer, probably residual ploughsoil, also contained little chalk. The fill of the postholes was less chalky.

Finds: a small quantity of pottery (Tables 1–3, and Fig. 7. 33–42), and animal bone, together with fragments of a simple bone comb—three plates rivetted together with iron rivets (Fig. 9. 7).

Building F2740 (Figs. 3 and 4)

F2740 was on the east side of the enclosure, close to the Iron Age ditch. Gable ends faced northwest and southeast.

Dimensions: NW–SE 2.56 m; NE–SW 2.16 m; depth of floor, 26 cm.

Eighteen small stakeholes, averaging 6 cm in diameter, were recorded, mainly in a group in the centre of the floor, with one or two scattered around the edge or near the ridge posts. The function of these stakeholes, which may be up to 10 cm deep, is uncertain.

Fill: dark brown soil with chalk fragments, varying in density across the building. Less

chalk in postholes and stakeholes.

Finds: a large quantity of pottery relative to the size of the *grubenhaus* (Tables 1 and 3, Fig. 7. 43–52), including several sherds with simple stamp decoration (Fig. 7. 50–2), similar to those from F621. Some animal bone and a few scraps of metal (Fig. 8) were also recovered.

Building F621 (Figs. 3 and 5)

Building F621 lay to the north of F2041; it completely overlay a late Iron Age pit (F979) containing first-century AD burials of a young female and an infant, and half overlay an early Iron Age pit (F895). This did not affect the general shape of the *grubenhaus*, which was subrectangular, with a posthole at either end. The western posthole was cut through chalk, while the eastern one cut through the fill of the underlying Iron Age pit. A line of four small stakeholes was recorded in the fill. The building was oriented northwest-southeast.

Dimensions: NW–SE 3.76 m; NE–SW 2.90 m; depth of floor (defined by a thick, hard-packed layer of pea gravel), 46 cm.

The postholes were 97 cm (west) and 89 cm (east) deep, much deeper than the other buildings, possibly to counter the effects of building over a pit.

Fill comprised three major layers: the bottom was hard-packed pea-gravel chalk in dark brown soil, above which was another hard layer of dark brown soil with many small chalk fragments and areas of charcoal and burnt flints. The top layer was fine dark brown soil with little chalk, rather like the ploughsoil. The fill of the postholes was similar to the middle layer.

Finds: this building was by far the most prolific in terms of all finds, pottery (Tables 1–3, Fig. 6), bone (Fig. 9. 8) and metal (Fig. 8. 3 and 5). The pottery included jars and bowls in all fabrics, with several stamped, decorated pieces. It also produced three pottery 'counters' (Fig. 9. 9–11) made of shaped sherds of coarse Roman greyware, all of similar size. A few residual pieces of Roman pottery also occurred, including a small New Forest colour-coated base.

Metalwork included a bronze toilet instru-

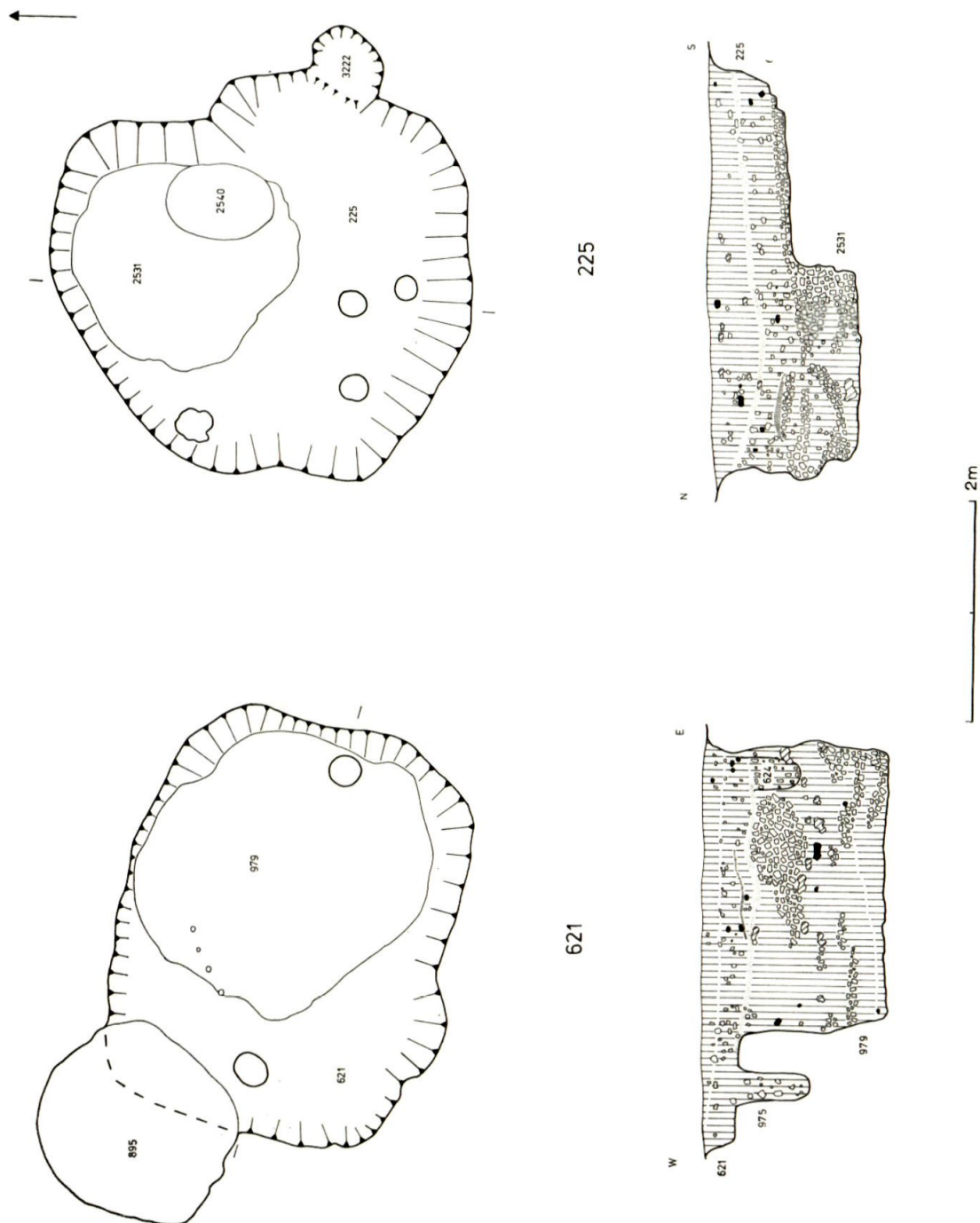


Fig. 5. Plans and sections of *grubenhäuser* F621 and F225.

ment and a ring (Fig. 8. 3 and 4), two small pieces of iron and a small fragment of sheet bronze (not illustrated). A fragment of residual Roman whetstone (Fig. 9. 13) was also found.

Building F225 (Figs. 3 and 5)

This building lay on its own within the gully F194, which is thought to be of Roman date. Unlike the other *grubenhäuser* which were of classic rectangular or sub-rectangular shape, with ridge posts and identifiable early Saxon domestic pottery, this building was something of an enigma. The shape was distorted by its position over two earlier pits (F2531 and F2540); it had one internal and one external post for the roof and it produced no definite Saxon material. The majority of the pottery was residual, abraded Roman and Iron Age, though some of the flint-tempered body sherds may have been Saxon. The building has, however, been included in this report because of its physical characteristics which make an early Saxon date probable.

Dimensions: E-W (excluding external post-hole) 3.7 m; N-S probably 2.9 m; depth 72 cm.

This last measurement was taken to the chalk 'shelf' (Fig. 5) and is rather greater than the average depths of buildings on Old Down, but is not excessive when compared to other sites where sunken-featured buildings occur, e.g. Bishopstone, Structure VI (Bell 1977, 200, Fig. 89). This shelf depth coincided with a hard-packed chalk layer over the Iron Age pit, F2531. There was also a thick pea-gravel layer within the fill of building F225 (section, Fig. 5), similar to that of the floor of building F621 (section, Fig. 5) which may indicate a re-cutting or at least a secondary floor level.

Fill: the entire fill of building F225 was packed very hard, contrasting with the pit underneath. It was consistent with most of the buildings on Old Down and other chalk sites, and comprised a bottom layer of packed weathered chalk, overlain by dark brown soil with varying quantities and size of chalk fragments, burnt flints and small lenses of charcoal, a pea-gravel layer, and a layer of brown soil with chalk fragments at the top.

The fill of the postholes was also dark brown loamy soil with small chalk fragments. The bases of three other postholes showed up in the packed chalk layer as round, shallow, dark brown stains some 25 cm across.

Finds: mainly early Roman and Iron Age pottery—beadrim jars, samian etc.—and also a Roman whetstone (Fig. 9. 12). None of the pottery is reported on in detail here, but will be discussed in Part II. The animal bone recovered from the building will also be included in Part II, because of its uncertain dating and associations. A few small fragments of metal were recovered, including an iron ring.

THE FINDS

POTTERY (Figs. 6 and 7)

Some 7 kg of early Saxon pottery were recovered from the sunken-featured buildings, mainly from F621 (Tables 1 and 2, Fig. 6). The larger part of it was undecorated domestic material, predominantly standard ovoid or globular jar forms, well paralleled at Portchester Castle (Cunliffe 1976, 128–94) and Bishopstone, Sussex (Bell 1977, 227–35), with a few bowls and one strainer. The last is a rare form, but appears to be paralleled at Bishopstone (Bell 1977, Fig. 103. 28 and Fig. 104. 38), though the examples there are fragmentary and unstratified, coming from the ploughsoil. The few decorated sherds—generally small body sherds—have only grooves or stamp decoration which is discussed in more detail below.

The domestic and fragmentary state of the assemblage, and the small quantity of decorated material, makes dating difficult, but Myres (1969, 34) states that stamped decoration does not come into common use until the sixth century. The types of stamp which occur at Old Down are paralleled by examples at Bishopstone (Bell 1977, Fig. 102. 17 etc.) and Portchester (Cunliffe 1976, Fig. 113. 179 etc.). At Bishopstone they are dated by Myres to the sixth century (in Bell 1977, 235); and the dating of the Portchester examples to the sixth century is by stratigraphic association. This, and the lack of any distinctive fifth-century

pottery forms or metalwork, would suggest that a sixth-century date for the Old Down material and occupation would be acceptable, at least by present dating methods.

Forms

As mentioned above, the forms of the vessels recovered are generally of standard pattern, though one or two of the bowl and dish forms seem slightly unusual. The forms have therefore been divided into the following categories, which will be used in the descriptive catalogue below. These categories have been created for ease of description and are not intended as definitive for early Saxon pottery in Hampshire. There are obvious cases where the categories overlap—e.g. A3 could be A1 if the rim alone survived—but in view of the fragmentary nature of most of the sherds, the categories have not been curtailed.

A1—shouldered jars, probably globular or ovoid, though none survive in a complete enough state to verify this, with everted rims.

A2—shouldered jars, globular or ovoid, with upright rounded or slightly pointed rims.

A3—small carinated jars with everted rims.

A4—jars with a less pronounced shoulder, possibly carinated, with everted rims.

A5—jars with a distinct neck angle, often with a slight groove between body and everted rim.

B—'bead rim' jars, probably Saxon, though possibly residual.

C1—steep-sided bowls with rounded, slightly expanded rims.

C2—steep-sided bowl with rolled rim. The example illustrated (Fig. 7. 28) has a hole made under the rim before firing, presumably for suspension.

D—small strainer or colander.

E—straight-walled dishes or bowls, usually in fine grass or chaff-tempered fabric (Fabric 3). The bases are missing but several sherds suggest a flat base.

F—bases of jars with footings.

Decoration

Decoration is limited to simple stamps or incised grooves around the neck or on the

shoulder area of the pot. Two types of stamp are used, plain circles and four-part rosettes (Fig. 6. 17, 18 and 19; Fig. 7. 50 and 51). There is one example of short vertical grooves incised on the shoulder of the pot (Fig. 7. 52). Because the decorated sherds were usually small and abraded, it is difficult to generalise about decorative techniques, but on one sherd (Fig. 6. 19) three types—grooves, circles and stamps—all occur. The stamps are well paralleled at the other early Saxon sites mentioned above.

The decoration occurs mostly on body sherds which cannot be assigned to a form category, although A1 or A4 (Fig. 6. 17 and 18, and Fig. 7. 50) would seem the most suitable.

TABLE 1. Vessel Form per Feature

	F490	F621	F2041	F2740
Type A1	1	9	5	5
A2		14	3	3
A3		1		
A4		6		1
A5		4		
B				1
C1		2	1	
C2		1		
D		1		
E		8		
F		2		
Decorated body sherds		4		2
TOTALS	1	52	9	12

Fabrics

The Saxon pottery fabrics fall into three basic categories which are used in the catalogue. Visual identification of inclusions, using a hand lens with 10× magnification and binocular microscope, was confirmed by limited petrological examination. All the fabrics are probably of local origin and there is no reason to think that the pottery was made anywhere except on or near the site, though no physical evidence for this remains. The relative frequency of fabrics per feature is fairly consistent (Table 2), with Fabric 1 (sandy fabrics) being the most important, followed by Fabric 3 (chaff-tempered) in most buildings. It is difficult to say, with such a small assemblage, dominated by jars, that one vessel form 'prefers' a particular fabric, though the

straight-walled dishes (Form E) occur most often in Fabric 3. Decorated pottery occurs in Fabrics 1 and 2, and it may be noted that all sherds in Fabric 1 are from *grubenhaus* F621, and all those in Fabric 2 from F2740. This fabric difference may or may not be of chronological significance.

Fabric 1 – encompasses all sandy fabrics, i.e. containing quartz inclusions of varying size and frequency, without any added material visible, but with occasional reddish-brown or black grains of iron ore. The basic category can be divided into vessels containing fine to medium quartz only—notably the decorated jars from F621, with some iron visible—and vessels with mainly medium quartz and some coarse grains in varying quantity. Grains may be up to 2.5 mm and are usually scattered through the fabric. Occasionally sherds with mainly coarse quartz grains occur.

Fabric 2 – vessels with added flint temper, in addition to visible quartz and sometimes iron inclusions. Again, the amount and size of flint varies from vessel to vessel, though the usual type seems to be finely crushed, calcined flint, well sorted and fairly common through the fabric. The category may be subdivided into fabrics with fine chips of flint, often less than 1 mm, angular and calcined, scattered throughout the matrix; scattered larger grits up to 2.5 mm; and large flint, either calcined or sooted, up to 4 mm, common throughout, sometimes giving a very friable fabric.

Fabric 3 – vessels with added organic tempering—probably grass or chaff—in varying quantity, often giving a laminated appearance to the fracture, or black staining and voids where the temper has burnt out. Vessels in this fabric are usually thin-walled and hard-fired.

Fabric 2/3 – vessels with small quantities of added flint and organic material.

Colours of all fabrics vary from mid-brown to black. The interiors of the vessels are almost always dark grey. Surface colours vary within one vessel, as would be expected on pottery fired in a clamp kiln or bonfire. The

colour of the core also varies within a single vessel, and is sometimes incompletely fired. Munsell Soil Color notation is used in the catalogue for the individual vessels and gives a comprehensive idea of the range produced. The abbreviations used in the colour descriptions are:

- E – exterior surface
- I – interior surface
- F – fracture
- M – margin (EM – exterior margin etc.)
- C – core

The last two are only given where the colours are very distinct.

There is great variety in the texture and hardness of individual vessels so this has not been described unless it affects the appearance of the fabric. Surface treatment, apart from decoration, tends to be limited to smoothing or burnishing.

In the following catalogue, sherds are described and illustrated by feature.

TABLE 2.

Fabric no.	Total weight of Saxon pottery recovered (in grammes)				Total
	1	2	2/3	3	
F490	24	17	—	52	93
F548	6	12	—	—	18
F621	2025	1094	164	1672	4955
F2041	563	455	36	332	1386
F2740	220	53	3	202	478
TOTAL	2838	1631	203	2258	6930
% of total	40.95%	23.54%	2.93%	32.58%	

TABLE 3. Vessel type by fabric

Fabric no.	1	2	2/3	3
Type				
A1	14	1		5
A2	11	5		4
A3		1		
A4	4	1	1	1
A5	2			2
B	1			
C1	3			
C2		1		
D	1			
E	3			5
F	2			
TOTALS	41	9	1	17

THE CATALOGUE

- F621 (Fig. 6)

1. A2 rounded rim, Fabric 1, medium quartz common with a few grains of iron. E light orange-brown (5YR 6/6). I and F dark grey (5YR 3/1). Surface smoothed.
2. A1 rim, Fabric 3, only small amount of organic material. E and I dark grey (5YR 4/1). F black (5YR 2.5/1).
3. A1 rim, Fabric 3, small quantity of grass or chaff. E and I dark grey (5YR 4/1). F black (5YR 2.5/1).
4. A1 rim and upper shoulder, Fabric 3, occasional voids and grass-marked surface. E dark grey (10YR 4/1). I mid-brown (5YR 5/3). F dark grey to mid-brown.
5. A2 rounded rim, Fabric 1 with smoothed surface. E and I dark grey (5YR 4/1). F black (5YR 2.5/1).
6. A2 slightly rounded rim, Fabric 1. Surface smoothed slightly. E and I mid grey-brown (10YR 5/2). F grey-brown (7.5YR 4/2).
7. A2 rim, slightly flattened, Fabric 1, mainly medium quartz with occasional coarse grains. E and I mid-brown (10YR 4/1). F black (5YR 2.5/1).
8. Large A2 storage jar with flattened rim expanded slightly outwards. Fabric 3, fine quartz and much organic residue causing lamination and streaking in fracture. E mid yellow-brown (10YR 5/3). I dark grey-brown (10YR 3/2). M mid-brown (10YR 5/3). C light to mid grey-brown (10YR 5/1) with black organic streaks.
9. A2 rim, rounded, and shoulder, Fabric 1, medium quartz common. Surface smoothed. E light orange-brown (5YR 6/6) to light grey-brown (10YR 5/2). I and C dark grey (5YR 3/1). EM light orange (5YR 6/6).
10. A2 rim internally expanded below top, Fabric 2, many small (2 mm or less) chips of angular, calcined flint and some fine quartz. The exterior surface of the vessel has been smoothed to disguise the flints, but the interior surface has not, giving a rough appearance and feel. E dark grey (10YR 4/2). I orange brown (2.5YR 6/6). F dark brown (5YR 3/2).
11. A1 rim, Fabric 1, mainly medium quartz with rare coarse grains. E and I dark grey (10YR 3/1). F black (10YR 2/1).
12. A4 rim and upper body, Fabric 1, fine and medium quartz common. E and I dark grey-brown (10YR 3/1). F black (10YR 2/1).
13. A5 rim and upper body, Fabric 3, much organic matter and fine quartz. Surface smoothed horizontally. E and I dark grey-brown (10YR 3/2). F. dark grey (10YR 3/1), and laminated.
14. A5 jar; Fabric 3, much organic temper and fine quartz, break laminated. E dark brown to dark grey (5YR 4/1). F dark brown to black (5YR 3/2 to 2.5/1).
15. A5, Fabric 1, medium quartz with some coarse grains. Exterior surface burnished. E dark grey-brown to black (5YR 3/1 to 2.5/2). F dark grey-brown (5YR 2.5/2).
16. A4, Fabric 1, occasional coarse grains. Slight horizontal burnish. E dark brown to dark grey (5YR 4/2 to 3/1). EM mid-grey (5YR 5/1). C dark grey-brown (5YR 2.5/1).
17. A1? jar with 2 grooves below rim. Fabric 1, fine to medium quartz. Surface smoothed, vessel thin-walled and well fired. E and I very dark grey, almost black (10YR 3/1). F black (10YR 2/1).
18. A1? similar to 17, with 2 grooves running around vessel below rim, and a row of circular stamped decoration below them. Vessel again well-finished with surface carefully smoothed and thin walls. Fabric 1 with occasional coarse grains of quartz. E and I black (5 YR 3/1). F also black (7.5 YR 2/1).
19. Decorated sherd, probably from shoulder, Fabric 1, with incised grooves, simple stamped circles and stamped four-part 'rosettes'.
20. Small A4 jar, Fabric 2/3, fine angular flint inclusions with a small amount of organic material. E orange-brown (5YR 6/4). I dark grey (5YR 2.5/1). F black (5YR 3/1).
21. Small A4, Fabric 3, small amount of organic material showing in fracture, but heavily grass-marked surfaces. E and M mid-brown (10YR 5/3-4/2). I dark grey (10YR 3/1). F black (10YR 2/1).
22. Small A2, Fabric 3, little grass temper and fine to medium quartz. Fracture laminated. E and I mid-brown (10YR 5/2). M light orange (5YR 6/6). C mid grey-brown (10YR 5/2).
23. D strainer with holes crudely punched through from outside. Fabric 1, E mid-brown (10YR 5/2). F and I dark grey (10YR 3/2).
24. A3 small jar, Fabric 2/3 with occasional grass or chaff. The flint grits are generally less than 1 mm and angular, though there are some large angular ones up to 3 mm. The vessel is very fine, with walls between 3 and 6 mm thick, and highly burnished exterior surface. E and I dark grey-brown (7.5YR 4/2). F dark grey (10YR 3/2).
25. Type F base, Fabric 1 with grass marks on outer surface and base. Medium rounded quartz with rare rounded black inclusions, probably iron. Presumably base of type A jar. E mid-brown (5YR 5/3). F grey (10YR 3/2).
26. Type F base, Fabric 1, medium quartz common with occasional coarse grains. Small jar base. E, I and C grey-brown (10YR 4/2). M dark grey (10YR 3/1).
27. C1 bowl fragment, Fabric 1, mainly medium

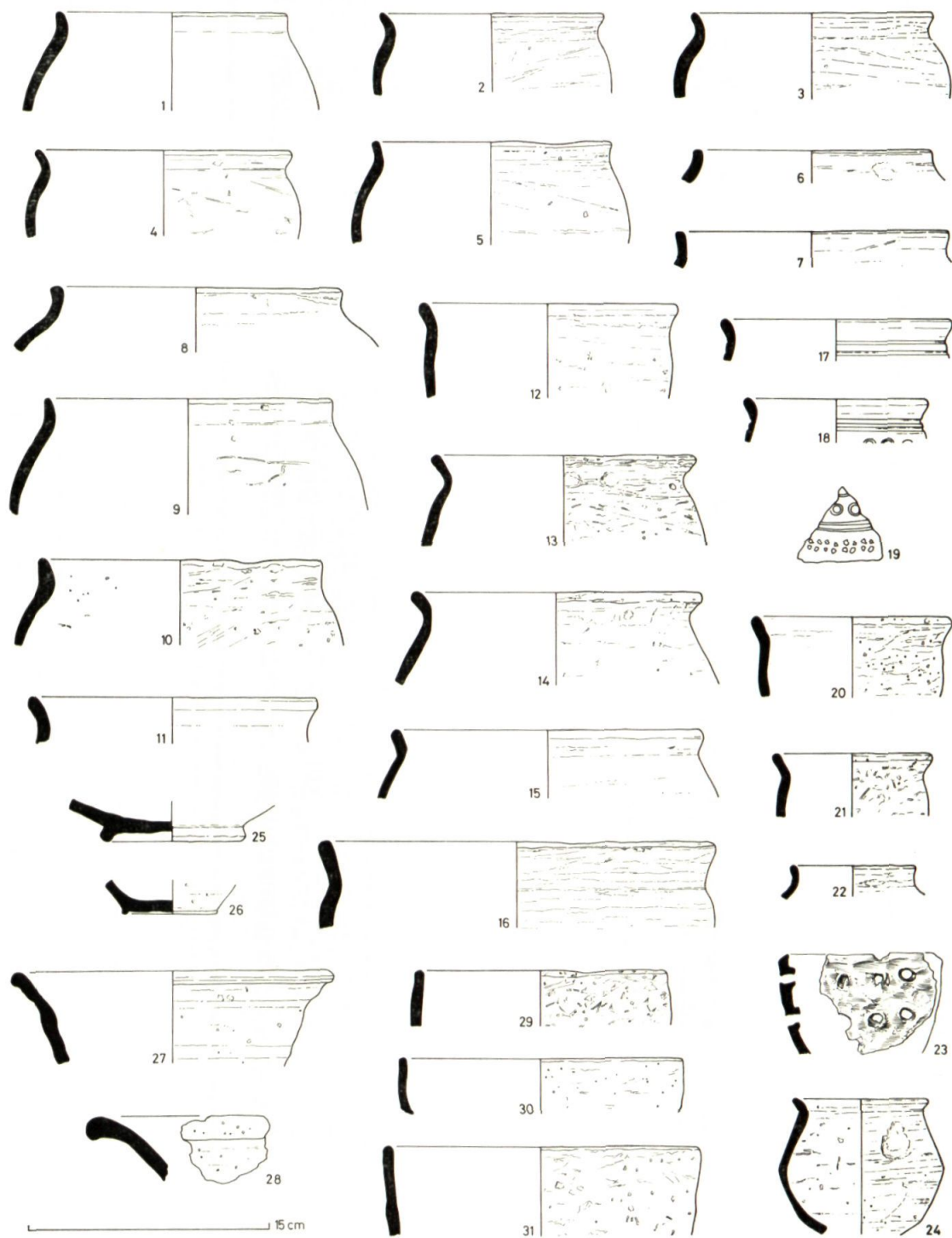


Fig. 6. Early Saxon pottery from *grubenhaus* F621. Scale $\frac{1}{4}$.

- grains, some coarse. E and I dark grey (5YR 4/1). F dark brown (7YR 3/2).
28. C2 bowl fragment, Fabric 2, crammed with flint grits and quartz grains. Hole approximately 8 mm across under rim, made before firing. E and I dark grey to dark brown (5YR 4/1 to 4/3). F dark grey (5YR 3/1).
 29. Type E bowl, Fabric 3, much grass temper with fine quartz, and many voids on outer surface where the organic material has burnt out. Outer surface also smoothed. E mid yellow-brown (10YR 5/3-4/2). I dark grey (10YR 3/1). M yellow-brown to dark grey. C black (10YR 2/1).
 30. Type E bowl or dish, Fabric 3, with rare fine flint chips up to 1 mm, and fine quartz. Surface again smoothed. E and I dark grey (10YR 3/1). F black (10YR 2/1).
 31. Large fragment of type E bowl, Fabric 3, heavily grass-tempered with laminated fracture showing few other inclusions. Surfaces also grass-marked and have voids. Smoothed externally. E and I dark grey (10YR 4/1). F dark grey to black (10YR 2/1).
- F490 (Fig. 7)**
32. A1 jar with smoothed surface. Fabric 1 with quartz grains up to .75 mm. Surfaces grass-marked. E and I dark grey (10YR 4/1). F black (10YR 2/1).
- F2041 (Fig. 7)**
33. Small fragment A1 rim, Fabric 1. E and I mid-brown (10YR 5/2). F dark grey (10YR 3/1).
 34. A1 rim of small vessel, Fabric 1, fine to medium quartz common. E and I dark grey (10YR 3/1). F black (10YR 2/1).
 35. A1 rim, Fabric 3, heavily grass-tempered, fine to medium quartz. E and I dark grey (10YR 3/1). F black (10YR 2/1).
 36. A2 rim fragment, slightly beaded. Surface smoothed horizontally. Fabric 2, small angular calcined flint, up to 1 mm, some coarse quartz. Also thin white inclusions, possibly shell, scattered throughout fabric. E and I mid grey-brown (10YR 4/2). M mid-grey (10YR 5/2). C dark grey-brown (10YR 4/1).
 37. A2 rim, inclining and slightly flattened. Fabric 1, fine quartz with some grey rounded inclusions, probably iron. E and I buff to grey (10YR 6/4 to 4/1). M buff. C light grey (10YR 6/1).
 38. A2 rim, Fabric 2, angular calcined flint up to 2 mm common, with fine and coarse quartz. E and I mid-brown (5YR 5/3). F mid grey-brown (10YR 5/3 to 5YR 4/1).
 39. C1 bowl rim, Fabric 1, medium and coarse quartz grains common. E and I dark grey (10YR 3/1). M mid-grey (7.5YR 4/1). C reddish-brown (5YR 3/2). Rim smoothed.
 40. A1 rim, Fabric 1, mainly fine quartz with occasional inclusions up to 2 mm. E and I dark grey (10YR 3/1). F black (5YR 2.5/1).
 41. Small A1 jar with beaded rim, Fabric 3, some voids and little organic matter. E and I dark grey (5YR 4/1). M also dark grey. C light blue-grey (7.5YR 5/1). Surface smoothed or burnished.
 42. Large A1 jar, rounded rim. Neck and upper shoulder smoothed. Fabric 1, mainly medium quartz with some grains up to 3 mm; fired very hard. E and I mid to dark grey-brown (10YR 5/3-3/1). M dark grey (10YR 3/1). C mid blue-grey (2.5YR 4/1).
- F2740 (Fig. 7)**
43. Small fragment A1 rim, Fabric 2, crammed with angular calcined and 'sooted' flint up to 2.5 mm and medium quartz. Some small voids. Surface smoothed and possibly slipped. E and I yellow-brown to grey (10YR 7/4-4/1). F dark grey (10YR 4/1).
 44. A2 rim, Fabric 2, crammed with fragments of 'sooted' flint, up to 1.5 mm, and fine quartz, also rare rounded fragments of red grog. E and I yellow-brown (10YR 6/4). F black (10YR 2/1).
 45. Small A1 jar rim, Fabric 1, fine quartz. Surface smoothed. E and I mid-brown (10YR 5/4-4/2). F dark grey (10YR 4/1).
 46. A2 rim, slightly beaded, Fabric 1, grains up to 2 mm common, with some up to 5 mm. Surface smoothed. E and I dark grey (10YR 3/1). F dark grey to black (10YR 2/2).
 47. Small A2 jar, Fabric 1, fine quartz with occasional medium grains. No surface treatment. E and I mid-brown (10YR 5/2-4/2). F dark brown-black (10YR 4/1).
 48. Small fine A1 jar with burnished surface. Fabric 1, mainly fine grains. E and EM mid grey-brown (10YR 5/3). I dark grey to black (10YR 3/1). C black (10YR 2/1).
 49. B1 jar with bead rim, Fabric 1, medium quartz common. Exterior surface smoothed carefully. E and I dark grey (10YR 3/1). F dark grey-brown (7.5YR 3/2).
 50. A4 rim and neck fragment. 2 grooves below rim and part of a four-petal rosette, very similar to other decorated fragments from Old Down. Fabric 2, with small amount of angular calcined flint up to 0.75 mm, and medium quartz. Surface smoothed. E and I brown (7.5YR 4/2). F grey (10YR 4/1).
 51. Decorated body fragment with 2 incised grooves and parts of 2 rosettes. Fabric 2, with few angular calcined and sooted flint chips

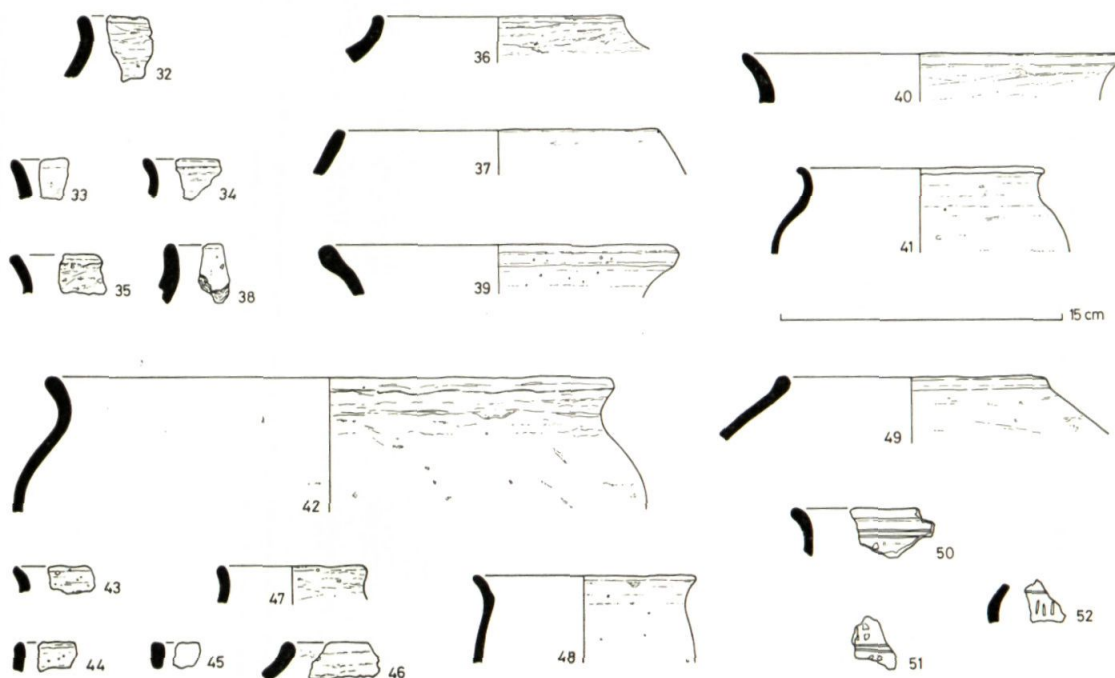


Fig. 7. Early Saxon pottery from *grubenhäuser* F490 (32), F2041 (33–42) and F2740 (43–52). Scale $\frac{1}{4}$.

up to 1 mm, and fine quartz. E and I brown (7.5YR 4/2). F dark grey (10YR 4/1).

52. Decorated shoulder fragment with 1 incised line and 3 vertical or almost vertical short lines below it. The fabric is similar to 50 and 51, with small flint and fine quartz. Surface smoothed. E and I brown (7.5YR 4/2). F mottled light and dark grey (10YR 4/1).

It is conceivable that the last three sherds may all be part of the same vessel, but too few sherds were recovered to be certain.

METAL FINDS (Fig. 8)

The majority of the metalwork recovered from the *grubenhäuser* was extremely fragmentary and often unrecognisable, being mainly scraps of iron and bronze. The only object which is certainly early Anglo-Saxon, the arrowhead, was recovered from the top of the Iron Age ditch.

Description

1. Lozenge-shaped iron arrowhead with central midrib, giving a Z-section. The split socket at right-angles to the plane of the blade

has one small rivet hole. L. 105 mm. W. 23 mm. Socket diam. 9 mm. Socket L. 40 mm. Rivet hole diam. 1.75 mm.

The shape and section of the arrowhead make it similar to, though less than half the length of, spearheads of Swanton's Group L (Swanton 1973, 135 and Fig. 53).

Despite their apparent rarity, iron arrowheads are known from early Saxon settlements at Chalton, Hants (Addyman *et al.* 1972, 30); and Maxey, Northants. (Addyman 1964, 60, Fig. 16. 5), as well as several cemetery sites such as Chessell Down and Bowcombe Down, Isle of Wight, and Spong Hill, Norfolk, where four split-socketed ones were found (Arnold 1979, 143). Their rarity is perhaps a reflection of the small number of excavated early Saxon settlements. The length of such iron arrowheads varies from 56 mm to 114 mm (Arnold 1979, 143), so that the Old Down example falls well within the higher bracket. The phenomenon of a split socket, set at right-angles to

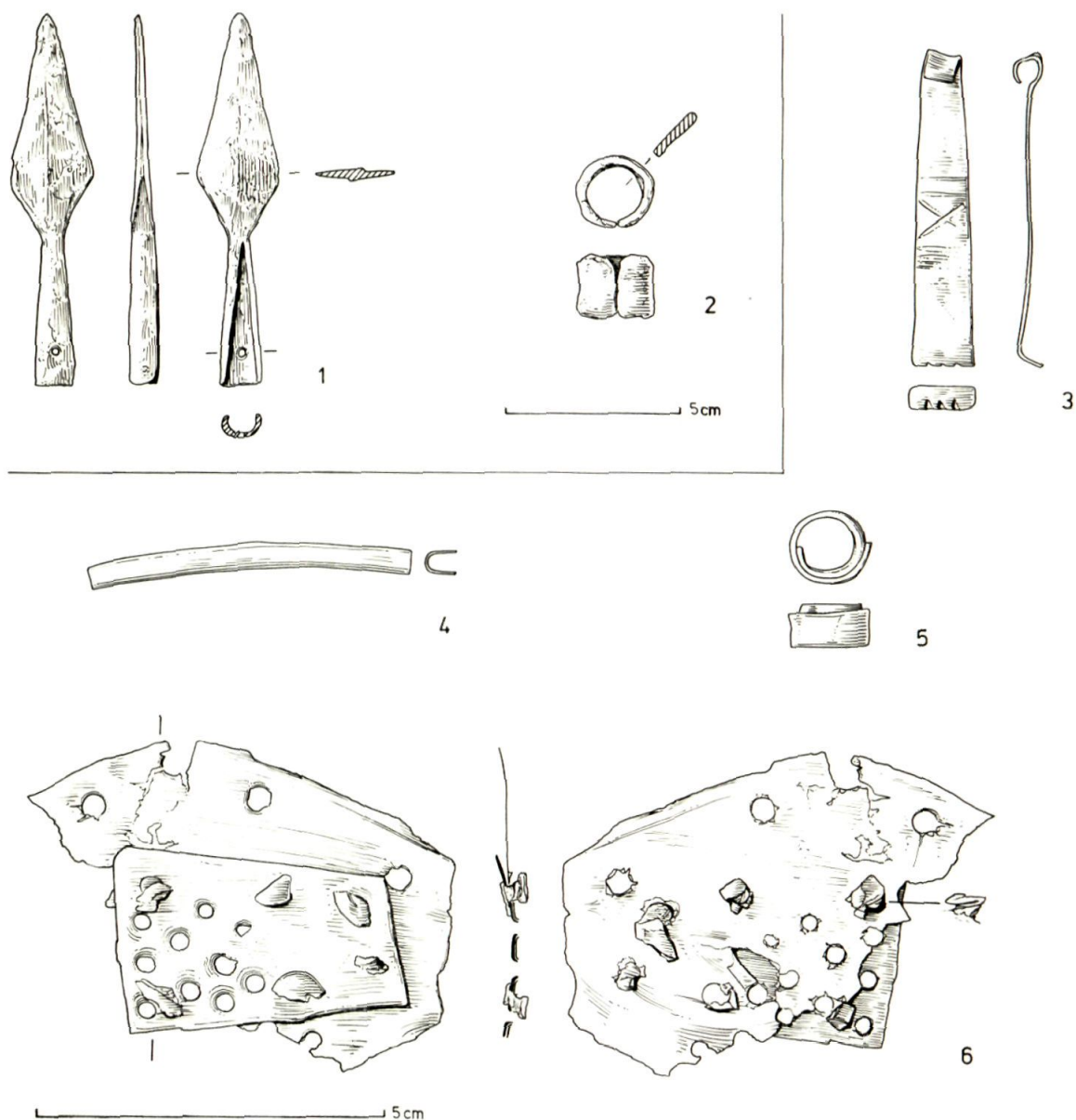


Fig. 8. Metal finds. Iron objects 1 and 2, scale 1/2; Bronze objects 4-6, scale 1/1.

the plane of the blade, appears to be a uniquely early Saxon feature (T. C. Champion, pers. comm.), and it is not impossible, though not provable, that the arrowhead from Old Down may be of similar date to the occupation.

2. Small iron binding ring. L. 17 mm. Diam.

22 mm. Context: F225.

3. Small bronze toilet instrument with one toothed end and one hooked end. Simple linear decoration on one side. L. 44 mm. W. (tooth end) 9 mm. Context: F621.

4. Small plain bronze binding strip. L. 48 mm. W. 3 mm. Ht. 4 mm. Context: F2740.

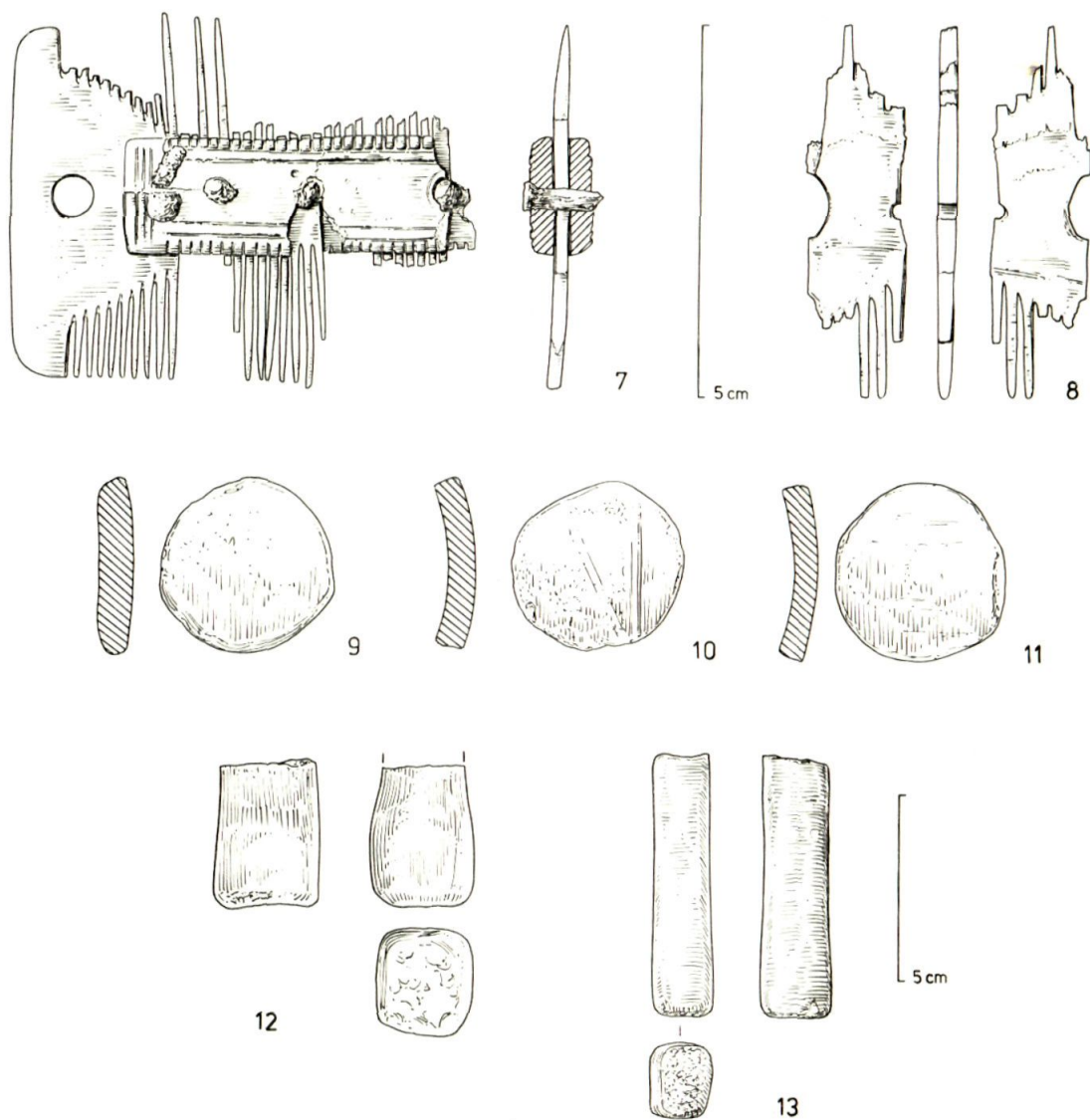


Fig. 9. Bone, pottery and stone objects. Bone and pottery objects, 7–11, scale 1/1; stone objects, 12 and 13, scale 1/2.

5. Small bronze ring with overlapping untapered ends. ?Residual Roman. 12 mm × 10 mm. Context: F621.

6. Fragment of strainer made of thin sheet bronze, with punched holes. Patch rivetted on. L. 64 mm. W. 41 mm. Diam. of punched holes: 2 mm–3.5 mm. Context: F2041.

BONE OBJECTS (Fig. 9. 7 and 8)

The only bone objects recovered from the *grubenhäuser* were fragments of combs. The description makes use of Galloway's terminology for such objects (Galloway 1976, 154–6).

7. Fragment of double-sided composite comb, with iron rivets. The coarse teeth are

graduated and irregular. The connecting plates have two incised lines along their length on either edge, and three incised lines at the end. L. 63 mm. W. 49 mm. W. 16 mm. (connecting plates). Context: F2041.

8. Small fragment of presumably double-sided composite comb. L. 14 mm. W. 50 mm. Context: F621.

POTTERY SMALL FINDS (Fig. 9. 9-11)

All three pottery counters, which were roughly circular with a diameter of 22-3 mm, had been made from Roman coarseware. All were found in F621.

STONE OBJECTS (Fig. 9. 12 and 13)

12. Fragment of whetstone, made of glauconitic limestone (identification by Dr. D. P. S. Peacock), considered to be from the Northampton area. Probably Roman. L. 39 mm. W. 27 mm (roughly square section). Context: F225.

13. Fragments of whetstone, as 12. L. 70 mm. W. 15-17 mm (roughly rectangular section). Context: F621.

THE ANIMAL BONE FROM SAXON CONTEXTS by Jennifer Bourdillon

A small quantity of animal bone was found in the Saxon contexts, almost all of it from the *grubenhaus* F621. 3 kg could be identified. There remained a further 1.3 kg of material in fragments which were too small for positive identification, but which on texture and general appearance came from the main domestic animals.

The Species Represented

Horse	8 fragments
Cattle	125
Sheep	140
Pig	25
Domestic fowl	14
Mouse, <i>Apodemus</i> sp.	1
Amphibian, inc. Frog, <i>Rana</i> sp.	20

There was no identifiable goat, nor any dog, cat or wild food animals.

The Main Domestic Animals

(i) *The Relative Frequency of the Species*

What is unusual is the high proportion of

sheep to pig. Judged, for example, by continental standards, pig seems minimal here. However, the area is natural chalkland and—insofar as any inference may be made from so small a sample of bone—one may deduce that the surrounding land was open and largely unforested and that sheep could be kept in good numbers.

Fourteen fragments of domestic fowl to 298 of main domestic animals gives a ratio of 1:21. This is a very reasonable figure for a simple country site.

(ii) *Ageing*

Horse and pig give little information on age. For cattle, there were three mandibles, one in full wear, one with a second permanent incisor erupting, and one where the third deciduous molar was only just coming into wear. For sheep, the preponderance of young mandibles is of great interest (see this volume, p. 184); but it is fair to add that there were also some loose sheep teeth, permanent as well as deciduous and in various stages of wear.

Ageing of Sheep Mandibles

Number with first molar not yet in wear	3
Number with second molar not yet in wear	1
Number with third molar not yet in wear	1
Number with third molar coming into wear	1
Number with third molar in full wear	0

(iii) *Butchery*

The material in general showed both rough deep cuts and also a few lighter surface cuts which had perhaps been made by a knife, but the sample was too small for any clear pattern to be evident. One piece of cattle horn core had been carefully sawn near the base.

The horse bones had been chopped or broken into quite small fragments; they had probably therefore been butchered, and horse may still have been eaten at this time. As well as fragments of bones which are usually considered as waste (lower incisor, mandibular hinge, metatarsus, first phalanx, second phalanx), these bones also included the glenoid end of a scapula and part of a tibia shaft.

(iv) *Measurements*

By the generous standards of Middle Saxon

Hamwih and of Ramsbury (Bourdillon and Coy, 1977), the horse was tiny and the cattle, sheep and pig were all small. Without exception, all the measurements of these species fell below their respective Hamwih means. The domestic fowl was closely comparable to the Hamwih figures, which for this species are unexciting (See Table 4).

(v) *Pathology*

A loose upper permanent molar of Cattle was in full but very uneven wear; its irregularity could well have been caused by an absence of the final cusp of the third molar in the mandible below.

Two halves of a broken coracoid of Domestic Fowl had fused together with a large uneven lump during the process of healing. The bird must have lived for some time after its accident, but would probably have been badly hampered and unable to fly.

TABLE 4. Bone measurements (in millimetres)

	Total Length	Articular Length	Proximal Width	Distal Width
CATTLE				
Scapula	59.2	48.4		
Radius			70.5	
Tibia			80.4	
Tibia				54.9
Astragalus	60.8			38.2
Astragalus	58.0			35.8
Astragalus	56.9			35.1
SHEEP				
Scapula	31.2	24.7		
Humerus				28.1
Radius		27.9		
Tibia				23.2
Tibia				25.5
Astragalus	27.1			16.5
Astragalus	24.7			16.1
Astragalus	23.1			14.6
PIG				
Femur			52.5	
FOWL				
Femur	79.9			
Ulna	73.2			
Femur	69.5			

The Other Species

The amphibian fragments included three tibiofibulae which were definitely of frog, *Rana sp.* The remaining fragments were probably also of frog.

There was a pelvis of mouse, *Apodemus sp.*, which could not be identified more closely. It was certainly not of house mouse, *Mus musculus*, and was probably too large to have come from the wood mouse, *Apodemus sylvaticus*.

GENERAL DISCUSSION

The early Saxon occupation on Old Down follows an apparent gap of several centuries from the early Roman period (first or second century AD). The Saxon arrowhead (Fig. 8. 7) found near the top of the Iron Age ditch suggests that this at least may still have been visible as a shallow depression. No Roman features, however, would have been deep enough to have remained to affect the Saxon settlement pattern.

The site is close to the sixth-century cemetery at Portway, although not in direct association with it, like the settlement and cemetery at Bishopstone (Bell 1977, 193-241). The differences between the natures of domestic and cemetery material are such that it is unlikely that any direct connection between the two Andover sites could ever be established. Nor is the relationship of the Old Down site to the more prolific occupation site only a few hundred metres away across the river at Charlton (Dacre and Warmington 1977, 22) yet clear. It is possible that the river was a boundary between two contemporary communities, but this is only speculation. Certainly the river was not used later in the medieval period as a parish boundary, which might have suggested its earlier usage.

All the Saxon features recognised on Old Down were sunken-featured buildings. There were no post-built 'halls' similar to those at Chalton, Hants (Champion 1977), or Bishopstone, Sussex (Bell 1977). Their absence is real, not merely apparent: the entire site was cleared and this would have revealed them, had they existed, as it revealed the Iron Age stakehole and posthole round-houses. It is also unlikely that such post-built 'halls' would lie to the north of the site, since the ground slopes steeply to the river; and there was no trace of buildings or other features to the east when

the area was carefully observed while it was stripped and developed for GLC housing. The absence of pits and wells, the paucity of finds, and the nature of the structures themselves and their apparently random positioning, all point to a short-lived use of the site. The pottery, all of local manufacture, was the only evidence of craft activity, and presumably was purely for domestic use. The site may have been no more than temporary summer shelter for shepherds or cowherds. To a certain extent this suggestion is borne out by the apparent importance of sheep in the animal bone record (some 45% of the domestic animals) although cattle were also highly represented (40%). It must be remembered, however, that the bone sample is small, and may therefore not be reliable. The location of the site close to a good water source might argue for the importance of cattle rather than sheep, or may merely indicate a convenient site for human occupation. The large number of sheep and cattle may also suggest an open, grassland environment. The low proportion of pig (8%) and domestic fowl (4.5%) found might also be consistent with a small temporary site; the relative lack of pig perhaps indicates that there was little woodland for pannage in the vicinity.

Despite its limitations, Old Down is interesting as a rare example of a totally excavated Saxon occupation site, and for the contrast it provides with the scale of the larger, better organised and presumably permanent chalkland sites at Bishopstone and Chalton. It is likely that many such small sites remain to be discovered, sites with neither Roman antecedents nor later successors, and which are therefore significant in any attempt at interpretation of the fluid pattern of early Saxon settlement.

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