

ARCHAEOLOGICAL EXCAVATION AND WATCHING BRIEFS AT ELLINGHAM FARM, NEAR RINGWOOD, HAMPSHIRE, 1988-1991

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ABSTRACT

An evaluation and series of watching briefs were carried out in advance of and during gravel extraction at Ellingham Farm, Blashford, Hampshire, between 1988 and 1991. Features ranging in date from Middle Bronze Age to Roman were investigated and finds dating from Late Neolithic/Early Bronze Age to Saxon periods recovered from unstratified deposits. A significant concentration of features dating to the Late Bronze Age/Early Iron Age and Roman periods was recorded at the northern end of the site.

INTRODUCTION

An archaeological evaluation of land at Ellingham Farm, Blashford, near Ringwood, was commissioned by Tarmac Roadstone Ltd. in 1988, at the request of Hampshire County Council, before the determination of a planning application for gravel extraction. Planning permission was subsequently granted, with a condition that a watching brief be carried out during the removal of topsoil. A watching brief was also undertaken at the northern end of the site, which had not previously been evaluated and which was not subject to the planning condition.

THE SITE

The site, consisting of three contiguous fields to the south and one field almost 600 m further to the north, lies within a long, narrow strip bounded to the west by the River Avon and to the east by the A338 Salisbury to Ringwood road (Fig. 1). On Lower and Middle Terrace Gravels, the area lies at c 22 m OD, up to 3 m above the river, and is generally quite level. A slight north to south ridge

runs through Field 1, to the east of which the ground is slightly higher, as it is in Field 4.

ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

Evidence of archaeological activity from early prehistoric through to Saxon times has been recorded in the area around Ellingham and Blashford, and the Avon valley as a whole is an area of high archaeological potential.

The Hampshire County Sites and Monuments Record lists a series of previous discoveries in the immediate vicinity of the site. Palaeolithic and Neolithic flints have been found to the south and east of Ellingham Farm. A Bronze Age cremation burial, axes, worked flints and pottery, together with Iron Age and Roman pottery have been found approximately 250 m south of Ellingham Church. A Bronze Age settlement and burials lie slightly further afield, to the east on Rockford Common and to the west in Ringwood Forest. Evidence of Saxon activity was recorded during excavations at Hucklesbrook, about 1.5 km north of the site in an identical topographic position (Davies and Graham 1984). Stray finds of early Saxon date have also been made in the area.

Field survey and partial surface collection in and immediately around the site by the Avon Valley Archaeological Society produced a small quantity of Roman and early medieval pottery, a Roman coin and a number of worked flints of Neolithic and Bronze Age date (T Light, pers. comm.). The Hampshire Sites and Monuments Record suggested, from documentary evidence, that the remains of the deserted medieval village of Ellingham and an alien priory might lie within the proposed extraction area.

EVALUATION AND WATCHING BRIEF METHOD

The evaluation and first two phases of the watching brief covered the three southern fields near Ellingham Church (centred on SU 145 084: Fig. 1 – Fields 1 to 3). The third phase of the watching brief took place in the northern field (centred on SU 147093: Fig. 1 – Field 4).

The evaluation was carried out in February and March 1988 to a specification drawn up by Hampshire County Council which required the investigation of the extent, nature and integrity of any archaeological remains, with particular reference to the possible deserted medieval settlement and alien priory. As a first stage of the evaluation, fieldwalking was carried out in Field 1, the only field where this was possible (Fields 2 and 3 being under grass). Collection units were 20 m long and in transects set 20 m apart, aligned on the National Grid. Fifteen machine trial trenches were subsequently excavated, aligned east–west: seven in Field 1; five in Field 2; three in Field 3. The trenches, excavated with a toothless bucket, were 2 m wide and varied in length between 46 m and 99 m. Each trench was cleaned and recorded and any exposed features were excavated by hand. A further 16 trenches, each one 2 m², were also excavated by hand. Altogether, c. 1950 m², approximately 1.8% of the application area, was examined. Full details of the methods and results are held in the project archive.

The first stage of the watching brief was carried out between December 1988 and January 1989, during which much of the overburden was stripped from the southern parts of Fields 1 and 2 by box-scraper; as the weather and ground conditions deteriorated stripping was done by excavator and dump-trucks. For the second and third phases of the watching brief, in the northern part of Fields 1 and 2 between September and December 1989, and in Field 4 in May and June 1991, box-scrapers were again used. The exposed surfaces were of variable quality for the observation of archaeological features; box-scrapers produced a level surface but these were often artificial, the result of redistribution of the gravel to provide a good working surface, and features were thus almost certainly obscured. The

majority of potential archaeological features were examined during the first two phases of the watching brief but visits were limited in 1991 and only the most clearly visible features were planned and a sample investigated.

ARCHAEOLOGICAL PRESERVATION

During the evaluation of Fields 1–3, it was noted that the surface of the gravel undulated considerably, often lying immediately below topsoil at a depth of about 0.25 m but in some places being as much as 1 m below the modern ground surface. In the areas of deeper overburden a subsoil horizon of homogeneous sandy loam was observed, up to 0.72 m deep (e.g. Fig. 2, S.2, layer 80). Finds of worked flint and prehistoric pottery appeared to be spread sparsely but evenly throughout this layer. Field 4 appeared to show no significant variation, but was not subjected to the controlled archaeological excavation and recording of the evaluation. A homogeneous, yellowish brown subsoil filled the depressions in the gravel, occasionally overlying a thin layer of orange, sandy silt in the deeper hollows.

Over much of the area where gravel lay directly below topsoil, no archaeological features were recorded, nor were they, with one exception, seen to cut the subsoil, although finds of all periods were recovered from it. The majority of features appeared to survive, or perhaps more accurately could only be recognised, where they cut into the deeper and therefore better-protected gravel below the subsoil horizon. Many features appeared to be truncated. Overall it appears that archaeological survival was limited to discrete 'islands' coinciding with the areas of deeper overburden which perhaps filled natural hollows or depressions.

SUMMARY OF RESULTS BY PERIOD (features located on Fig. 1)

Late Neolithic / Early Bronze Age

Although no features were recognised, 25 worked flints, including part of an arrowhead of Late Neolithic or Early Bronze Age date were

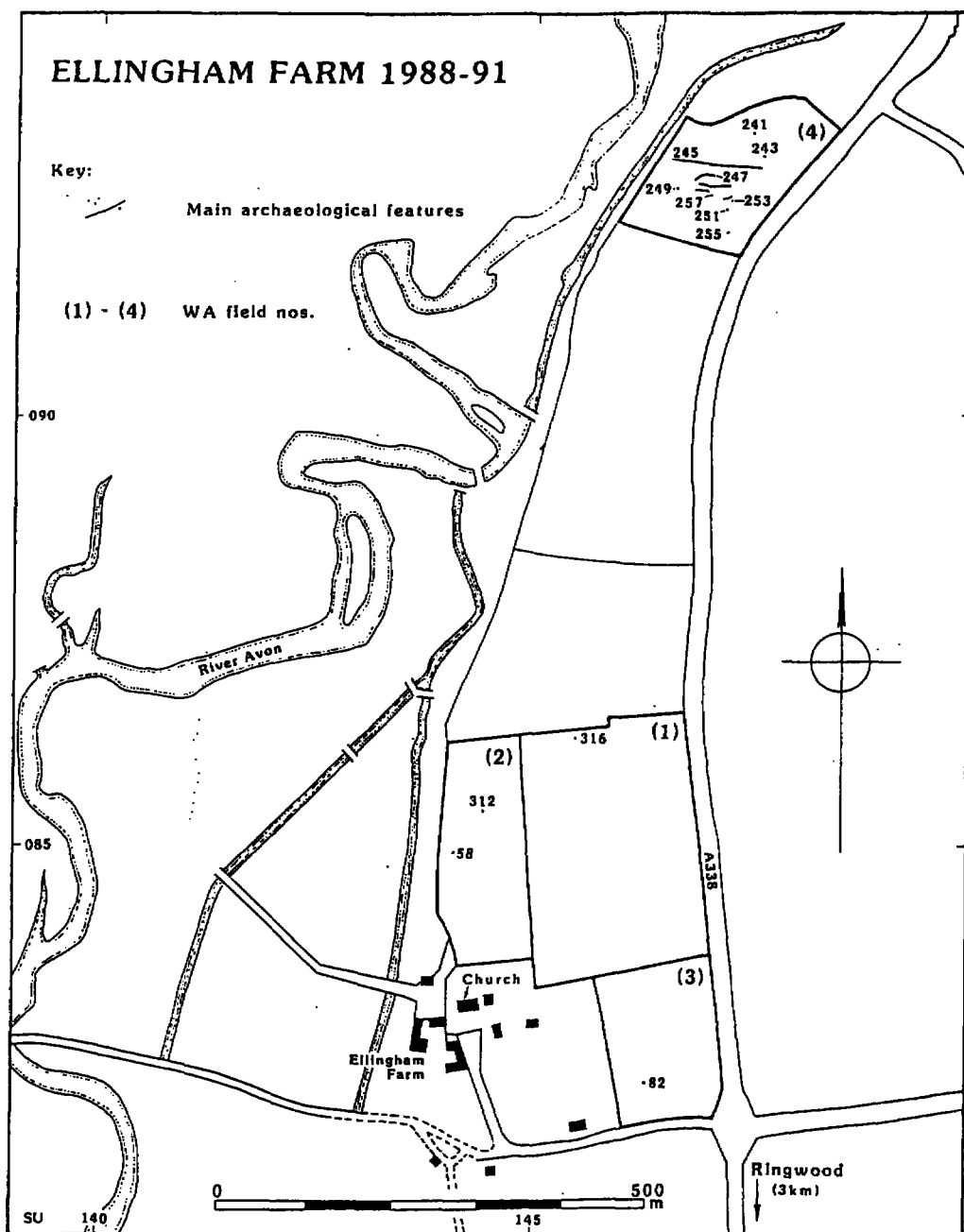


Fig. 1 Site location plan, showing Fields 1-4 and main archaeological features.

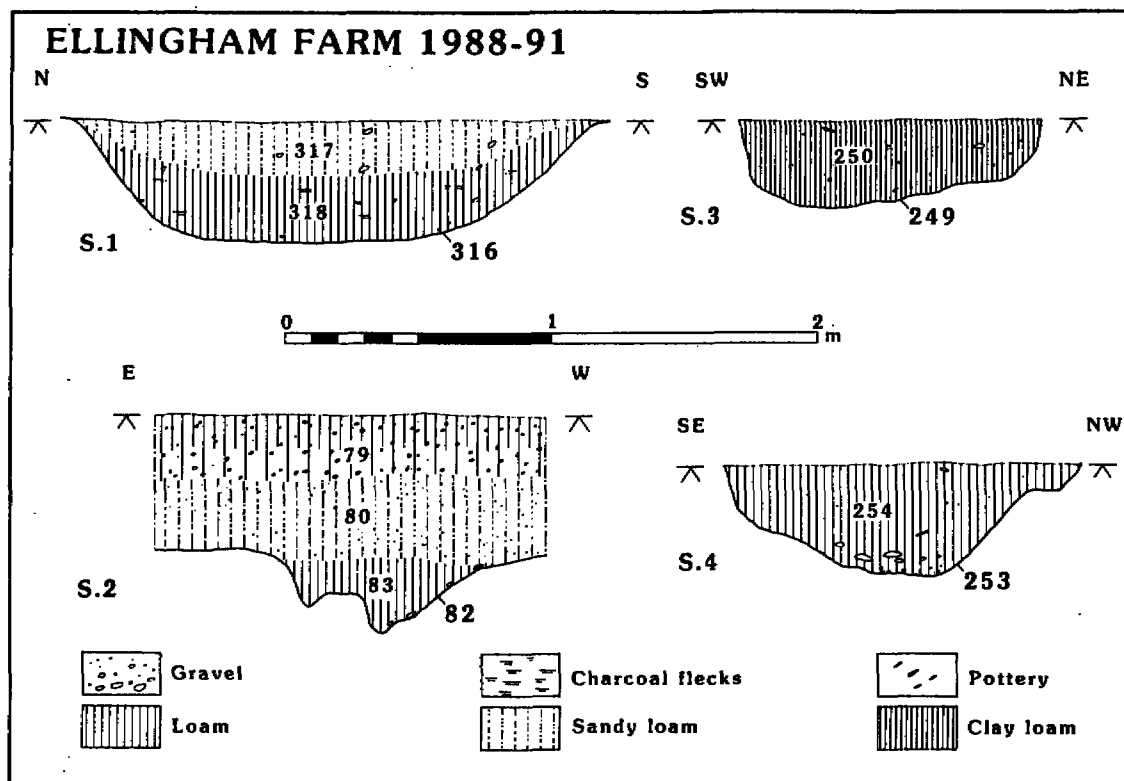


Fig. 2. Sections through some of the excavated features: Middle Bronze Age pit 316 (S.1), late Bronze Age/early Iron Age pits 82, 249 (S.2, S.3), Romano-British pit 253 (S.4).

recovered from the subsoil in an evaluation trench in Field 1. Fieldwalking recovered 40 worked flints – mostly undiagnostic flakes but including a scraper. Some of these flints may be of Late Neolithic/Early Bronze Age date.

Middle Bronze Age

Two possible features of Middle Bronze Age date were recorded in Fields 1 and 2 and residual sherds of Middle Bronze Age pottery were found in several Roman features in Field 4. Two clusters of potential but undated archaeological features were noted in the area between pits 312 and 316, described below.

Pit 316, near the northern edge of Field 1,

was oval in plan, 1.9 m by 1.3 m and 0.45 m deep (Fig. 2, S.1). The pit was filled with loose light brown silty loam from which 54 sherds of Middle Bronze Age pottery, representing at least ten vessels (Fig. 3), and three pieces of worked flint were recovered. Six possibly related features were investigated not far to the south of pit 316, but no finds were recovered and the features remain undated (details in archive).

The second pit, 312, was, with seven other features, in a natural hollow towards the northern end of Field 2. No feature was more than 0.8 m in diameter or 0.25 m deep and all were filled with light brown silty sand. Two sherds of Middle Bronze Age pottery were found in pit 312.

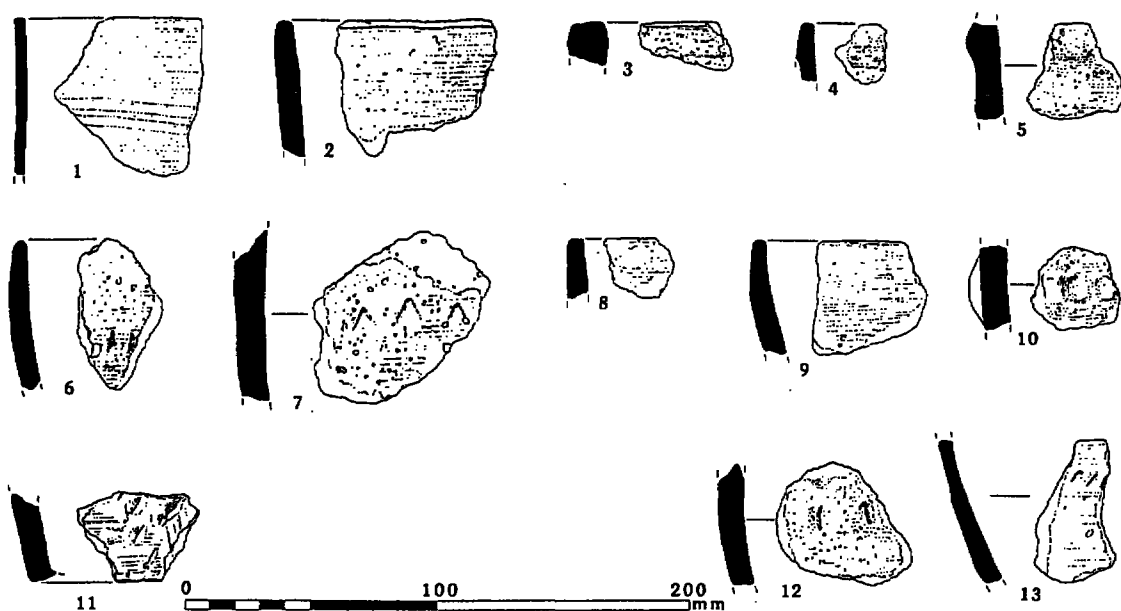


Fig. 3 Middle Bronze Age pottery from pit 316.

Late-Bronze Age/Early Iron Age

Five features of Late Bronze Age/Early Iron Age date were investigated; two pits in Fields 2 and 3 during the evaluation and three in Field 4 during the third phase of the watching brief.

Pit 82 (Field 3) was 0.78 m in diameter, had a maximum depth of 0.28 m and was irregular in profile (Fig. 2, S.2). It was filled with very dark brown loam. The pit contained a truncated Late Bronze Age jar (Fig. 4, 14) set upright and apparently *in situ* resting in a step in the side of the pit. Other finds included a clay spindle-whorl (Fig. 4, 15), three flint flakes and animal bone fragments. A further 116 sherds of Late Bronze Age pottery were recovered from the subsoil horizon in the adjacent area (including Fig. 4, 16–20) but no other features were recognised.

Predominantly Late Bronze Age pottery was also recovered from a small pit, 58, in Field 2 (Fig. 1), although here only eight sherds of pottery and a few fragments of fired clay were found. The

pit was 0.5 m in diameter and 0.23 m deep, filled with very dark greyish brown sandy loam.

Pit 255 in Field 4 (Fig. 1), cut into subsoil and sealed by topsoil, was seen only because it was at the edge of the stripped area at the time of a site visit. The pit was 0.52 m long, 0.39 m wide and 0.14 m deep. Filled with dark greyish brown to black loam with much charcoal, 93 sherds of pottery (including Fig. 4, 22–25), burnt animal bone, burnt flint, a single worked flint and parts of a fired clay weight (Fig. 4, 21) were found in the feature.

Not far to the north of 255 lay pit 251, 1.51 m in diameter and 0.52 m deep. It was filled with friable dark greyish brown loam which contained four sherds of pottery and some burnt flint. A number of other features were noted nearby, but there was insufficient time for their investigation.

Pit 249 lay toward the western side of Field 4. Steep-sided, the pit was 1.12 m in diameter and 0.32 m deep (Fig. 2, S.3), filled with greyish brown sandy clay loam from which 93 sherds of pottery (including Fig. 4, 26–28), pieces of fired

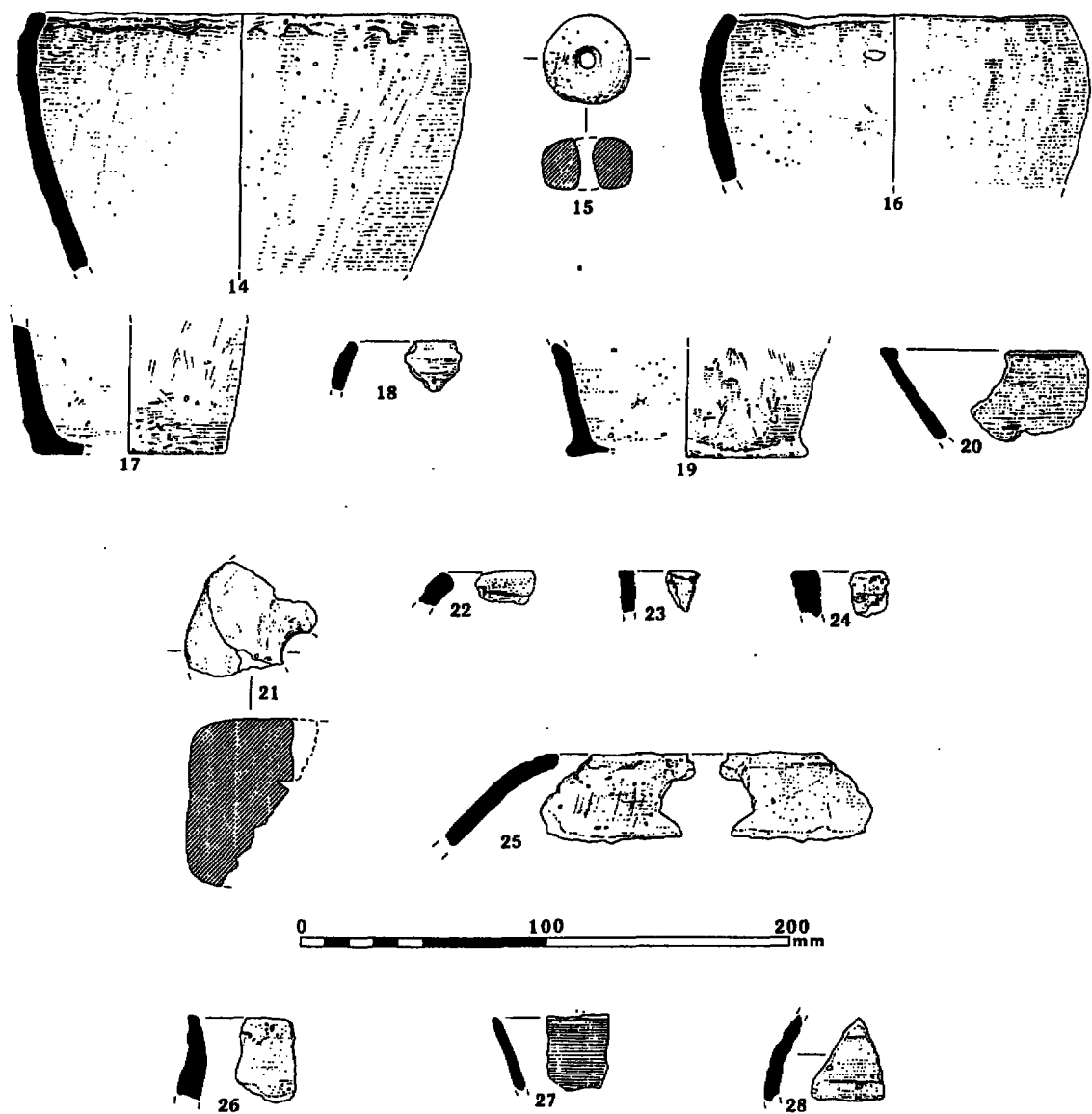


Fig. 4 Late Bronze Age pottery (14, 16–20, 22–25), Early Iron Age pottery (26–28), fired clay objects (15, 21).

clay, burnt flint and one worked flint were recovered. At least two other potential features, one apparently a very large pit, lay to the north and north-east of pit 249 but were not investigated.

Romano-British

Six features, two ditches and four pits, of Romano-British date were excavated in Field 4 and it is probable that other observed but uninvestigated features in the area were of the same period. One possible stone-built structure, perhaps (since some of the stones were burnt) an oven, corn-drier or kiln, was noted in the southern part of the site.

The main concentration of features in Field 4 was south of a west-east aligned ditch, 245 (see Fig. 1). The full extent of the ditch was not established, the eastern end having been truncated during stripping and the western end running into an area which had not been stripped. An excavated section showed the ditch to be 1.55 m wide and 0.64 m deep with a V-shaped profile. It was filled with homogeneous, compact, reddish brown, sandy loam from which seven sherds of Roman pottery and six worked flints were recovered.

Ditch 247 was one of several linear features to the south of 245. Again the full extent of the feature was not seen. Initially on the same alignment as ditch 245, the western end of the ditch turned to the south-west and may have turned again to a south-north alignment, although its course was not certain. The ditch, which had a shallow but sharply defined V-shaped profile, was 1.1 m wide, 0.46 m deep and was filled with very compact, reddish brown loam. Six sherds of Roman pottery, three residual sherds of Bronze Age pottery and three worked flints were found in the excavated section.

Pit 253 and a probable pit, 257, were south-east of ditch 247. Pit 253 was 1.3 m wide and 0.41 m deep (Fig. 2, S.4) and was filled with charcoal-flecked dark greyish loam which became increasingly gravelly toward the base. Much burnt flint and 211 sherds of Roman pottery together with one residual Middle Bronze Age sherd and three worked flints were found in the

pit. Probable pit 257, west of 253, was destroyed during stripping but 49 sherds of Roman pottery were salvaged from its surface.

Two pits were excavated in the area north of ditch 245. Pit 241, which had been severely truncated, was 0.9 m in diameter and 0.11 m deep. It was filled with charcoal-flecked, reddish brown clay loam from which 28 sherds of Roman pottery and two iron nails were recovered. Pit 243 was 1.3 m in diameter, 0.42 m deep, and was filled with dark reddish brown sandy clay. Although three sherds of Middle Bronze Age sherd pottery were found in the pit, they are thought to be residual; one sherd of Roman pottery was also recovered from pit 243.

Saxon

No features of Saxon date were observed during the evaluation or any phase of the watching brief, but two conjoining sherds of Saxon pottery were recovered from the ploughsoil in an evaluation trench in the western part of Field 1.

THE FINDS

Middle Bronze Age Pottery by R M J Cleal

Sixty one sherds of Middle Bronze Age pottery were recovered from Fields 1, 2 and 4. Nearly all of this collection (54 sherds) was recovered from pit 316 (Field 1) and included sherds from at least ten vessels, all but two of which may be assigned to the Deverel-Rimbury tradition. The remainder of the group comprises two small sherds from pit 312 (Field 2) and three sherds from pit 243 and two from ditch 247 in Field 4. The pottery from Field 4 appears to represent residual material in Romano-British features – details of this group are held in the archive. The featured sherds from Pit 316 are illustrated in Fig. 3 (1–13).

Fabrics

The sherds were examined following standard Wessex Archaeology procedures and assigned to fabrics mainly on the basis of inclusion frequency and size. Fabrics were defined using a binocular

Table 1 Overall quantification of stratified finds

Feature/ deposit	Field	MBA Pottery	LBA/EIA Pottery	Roman pottery	Fired clay	Worked flint	Burnt flint	Other finds
Pit 137	1				5			
Pit 316	1	54				3		
Ditch 24	2					2		
Pit 312	2	2						
Pit 58	2		8		3			
Pit 82	3		35		2	3		14 g animal bone
Pit 241	4			28				3 pieces iron nail
Pit 243	4	3		1		1		
Ditch 245	4			7		6		
Ditch 247	4	2		6		3	3 g	
Pit 249	4		42		5	1	498 g	
Pit 251	4		4				228 g	
Pit 253	4			211		3	1141 g	1 frag tile
Pit 255	4		93		5	1	532 g	7 g animal bone
Pit 257	4			49				
Totals		61	182	302	20	23	2402 g	

microscope at $\times 20$ magnification, but subsequently sherds were mainly assigned to fabric by eye. Eight fabrics were defined: quantification by feature is shown in Table 2. The fabrics all contain some flint, and five are dominated by it. The flint is almost certainly added as prepared temper, and a local source is likely. The combination of grog and flint in the vessel illustrated as Fig. 3, 10, is not unusual in the Deverel-Rimbury tradition, occurring for instance in the assemblage from the Middle Bronze Age enclosure at Down Farm, Woodcutts (Barrett 1991, 211), although it may also occur in Beakers. The sandy fabric of vessel Fig. 3, 13, is, however, atypical of Deverel-Rimbury pottery, and it is possible that this vessel may be of Late Bronze Age date.

Flint-tempered

- F1 a hard fabric with a hackly fracture, containing common flint ($\approx 20\%$, < 2 mm, most < 1 mm); moderate voids ($\approx 10\%$, < 2 mm, most < 1 mm) and rare mica and quartz sand.
- F2 a hard fabric with a hackly fracture, containing sparse flint ($\approx 7\%$; < 2 mm, most < 1 mm); sparse voids ($< 5\%$; < 3 mm, most < 1 mm), and $\approx 5\%$

clay pellets or carbonaceous material, or both, which may be the same material as has caused the voids. There is no hint of a reaction to dilute HCL from the fabric.

- F3 a hard fabric with a hackly fracture, containing common flint (20–25%, < 5 mm, most < 3 mm) and rare mica and quartz sand.
- F4 a hard fabric with a hackly fracture, containing moderate to common flint (10–20%; < 2 mm) and rare mica. This fabric is similar to F3, but with a more restricted temper size range.
- F5 a hard fabric with a hackly fracture, containing moderate flint (10–15%; < 2 mm, most < 1 mm) and moderate to common voids (15–20%; < 3 mm). The voids are varied in shape, ranging from sub-angular to sub-rounded. There is no trace of a reaction with dilute HCL (10%) and it seems likely that they represent either a soft naturally occurring inclusion such as mudstone which has weathered out, or a carbonaceous one which has burnt out. The fabric is similar to F2, but with a higher frequency of voids.

Grog-tempered

- G1 a soft fabric with a hackly fracture, containing moderate to common grog (10–20%; < 9 mm, most < 5 mm) and sparse flint (7%; < 6 mm).

Table 2 Middle Bronze Age Pottery, occurrence by fabric (number of sherds/weight in grammes)

Feature	Context	F1	F2	F3	F4	F5	G1	G2	Q1
Pit 316	317	5/58 g	4/26 g	16/225 g	13/324 g	1/22 g	13/195 g	1/18 g	1/14 g
Pit 312	341	—	—	2/3 g	—	—	—	—	—
Pit 243	244	—	—	2/11 g	—	—	1/1 g	—	—
Ditch 247	248	—	—	2/8 g	—	—	—	—	—
Totals		5/58 g	4/26 g	22/247 g	13/324 g	1/22 g	14/196 g	1/18 g	1/14 g

G2 a soft fabric with a hackly fracture, containing sparse to moderate grog (c 10%; <3 mm); sparse flint (c 7%; <4 mm, most <2 mm), and rare quartz sand.

Sandy

Q1 a hard fabric with a smooth fracture, containing moderate quartz sand (10–15%; <1.0 mm, most <0.5 mm). Also rare fine angular flint (<0.5 mm) and a single piece of rounded, patinated flint measuring 4 mm across.

Forms and decoration

Little survives of each vessel, and it is not possible to reconstruct the form of any of them with confidence. Fig. 3, 1 clearly belongs to a Globular Urn, on the grounds of fabric, decoration, and what little remains of the vessel profile. The remaining sherds are probably from bucket-shaped vessels. One, or possibly two vessels, represented by Fig. 3, 9, show a slight change of angle to the profile, but this is not marked and may not be an intentional carination.

Twelve of the sherds from Pit 316 (22%) are decorated, including shallow tooled horizontal lines (Fig. 3, 1); fingernail impression, both plastic and non-plastic, and single and paired (Fig. 3, 6, 7, 10, 11, 12 and 13); an applied lug (Fig. 3, 10); and a probably worked-up cordon (Fig. 3, 5).

Discussion

Two vessels, represented by single sherds each, are difficult to place confidently within the same ceramic tradition as the remainder. These are the base-angle sherd Fig. 3, 11, and the decorated sherd Fig. 3, 13. The former is flint and grog

tempered, and is decorated with plastic fingernail decoration. In isolation it could confidently be assigned to the Beaker tradition, as representing a coarse, rusticated vessel. The smooth exterior surface, the oxidised orange exterior, and the sparse flint temper combined with grog, are entirely typical of that tradition. However, given that the Middle Bronze Age pottery from feature 316 includes both fingernail decoration and fabrics which include both grog and flint as a temper, it would seem to be unnecessarily complicated to identify this as Beaker, in view of the absence of any certain Beaker material from the immediate area.

Fig. 3, 11 is not the only sherd in pit 316 which does not fit easily into a Middle Bronze Age assemblage. The sherd illustrated as Fig. 3, 13 is more problematic, as its affinities appear to be with the later Bronze Age pottery from the site, rather than with earlier material. Its presence in pit 316, therefore, throws doubt on whether the Middle Bronze Age assemblage is *in situ*. This sherd is abraded and the upper surface, although possibly a rim, is considered more likely to be a break along a coil. Both the fine sandy fabric and the fingernail decoration would not be out of place in the Late Bronze Age. The slightly sandy fabric with rare fine flint is not dissimilar to the Late Bronze Age and Early Iron Age fabrics from the site (see below, fabric Q2).

The majority of the assemblage from pit 316, however, does fit within the Middle Bronze Age Deverel-Rimbury ceramic tradition. Fig. 3, 1 belongs to a Globular Urn which can, on the grounds of its flint-tempered fabric and shallow tooled decoration be assigned to Calkin's type 1 (Calkin 1964, 24). The remaining vessels appear

to be bucket-shaped, and both Fig. 3, 5 and 10, with, respectively, a plain cordon and an applied lug with a row of finger-tipping, are typical of the tradition. The preference for fingernail decoration, which is quite marked, given the small size of the assemblage, is slightly unusual, but there seem to be no grounds, given the consistency of the fabrics, to doubt that these sherds are contemporaneous with the rim sherds. Fingernail decoration, including both plastic and non-plastic, is well-represented, for instance, in the assemblage from the Middle Bronze Age enclosure at Down Farm, Woodcutts, approximately 15 km to the north-west (Barrett 1991).

List of Illustrated Middle Bronze Age Pottery – Pit 316 (context 317) (Fig. 3)

- 1 Fabric F1. Rim sherd of a Globular Urn; four other sherds probably belong to this vessel. Decorated with two shallow tooled lines. Exterior and core dark grey, interior mid-grey.
- 2 Fabric F2. Rim sherd; three body sherds also probably belong to this vessel. Surfaces mid-grey, core black.
- 3 Fabric F3. Rim sherd. Exterior and rim top pale orange; interior grey, core black.
- 4 Fabric F3. Rim sherd. Surfaces buff, core black.
- 5 Fabric F3. Body sherd with cordon. There is no join visible between body wall and cordon, so it is possible that the cordon is formed of a larger than usual ring, not smoothed down. Exterior pale orange, core black, interior grey.
- 6 Fabric F3. Rim sherd with row of single, non-plastic fingernail impressions.
- 7 Fabric F3. Body sherd with an irregular row of paired non-plastic fingernail impressions.
- 8 Fabric F4. Rim sherd. Exterior grey-brown, core dark grey, interior patchy, orange and black.
- 9 Fabric F4. Rim sherd with slight change of wall angle just below rim. Angle of lie of rim not certain. Buff throughout, but probably leached.
- 10 Fabric G1. Body sherd, with an applied lug and a row of round fingertip impressions. Black throughout, except for a red-brown exterior margin.
- 11 Fabric G2. Sherd from just above base angle of a vessel decorated with single plastic fingernail impressions. Pale orange exterior, black core and interior.
- 12 Fabric F5. Body sherd with plastic fingernail impressions, probably single. Surfaces buff, core pale grey, but probably strongly leached: the breaks are buff in places.
- 13 Fabric Q1. Sherd with row of single oblique non-plastic fingernail impressions. Exterior pale orange-brown, core and interior black. Carbonised residue adhering on interior. The sherd may be a flat-topped rim of a bowl, but is more likely a very abraded broken edge, probably along a coil line.

Late Bronze Age and Early Iron Age pottery by E L Morris

A total of 306 sherds (2218 g) of Late Bronze Age pottery and Early Iron Age pottery was recovered from Fields 2, 3 and 4. The stratified collection comprises 182 sherds from five separate features; the remainder was recovered from top- and subsoil layers (Table 3). This assemblage consists of a minimum of ten jars and one bowl of Late Bronze Age type (Fig. 4, 14, 16–20 and 22–25) and possibly three jars and three bowls of Early Iron Age type (Fig. 4, 26–28).

Three main concentrations of material were recovered:

- Field 3 – pit 82 (35 sherds) and adjacent area (116 sherds)
- Field 4 – pit 249 (42 sherds)
- Field 4 – pit 255 (93 sherds)

Elsewhere the stratified Late Bronze Age and Early Iron Age pottery comprises very small groups (up to 8 sherds) from pit 58 (Field 2) and pit 251 (Field 4).

Fabrics

A range of fabric types has been defined amongst this small collection (methodology as for Middle Bronze Age pottery), including four flint-tempered or gritted fabrics, four sandy fabrics

Table 3 Late Bronze Age/Early Iron Age pottery, occurrence by fabric (number of sherds/weight in grammes)

Feature	Context	D1	F6	F7	F8	F9	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q5
Pit 58	57	3/2 g	2/37 g	2/13 g	—	—	—	1/2 g	—	—
Pit 82	83/140	—	34/521 g	1/4 g	—	—	—	—	—	—
Pit 249	250	9/19 g	6/38 g	—	—	1/3 g	11/49 g	12/38 g	—	3/17 g
Pit 251	252	—	—	—	—	—	—	1/21 g	3/18 g	—
Pit 255	256	29/136 g	49/374 g	15/146 g	—	—	—	—	—	—
Unstratified	all	7/21 g	110/682 g	3/32 g	1/7 g	—	2/34 g	2/4 g	—	—
Totals		48/178 g	201/1652 g	21/195 g	1/7 g	1/3 g	13/83 g	16/65 g	3/18 g	3/17 g

and an unusual vesicular fabric. The flint-tempered and vesicular fabrics are typical examples of coarsewares for this period, but too few sherds of the quartz-bearing or flint-gritted fabrics are present to determine whether these are examples of finewares, with one exception. Fabric Q5 is extremely similar if not identical to the scratched-cordoned bowl fineware fabric defined at Danebury (Cunliffe 1984, 245). The occurrence of fabrics by feature is shown in Table 3.

The likely sources for most of these fabrics are difficult to determine without the aid of petrological analysis. Nevertheless, it is not inappropriate to suggest that a local source within the Barton and Bracklesham Beds (Chatwin 1960, 63–67) could have provided the iron oxide-bearing, sandy clay matrix found in the most frequent fabrics (F6, F7, and Q2), and that the flint temper or grit is also available in the gravels of the Avon valley. Fabric Q5 is likely to originate from the brickearth clays just north of Salisbury which have been identified as the most likely source for the fine fabric used to make the red-slipped, scratched-cordoned bowls found just to the north of this area (Cunliffe 1984, 245 and 254, figs. 6.14, 6.22, 6.57–6.58), at least one of which has been identified at Ellingham (Fig. 4, 27; see below). The vesicular fabric is the most unusual of the types identified and further research is required to determine the source of this fabric.

Vesicular Fabric

D1 coarse vesicular fabric: a common amount (20–25%) of poorly-sorted, rounded to subrounded, irregularly-shaped voids <8 mm across with the majority of voids <5 mm across; in some sherds it is

possible to identify remnants of clay pellets which have partially dissolved out of the clay matrix; confirmation of this identification requires petrological analysis; no evidence to suggest that the original inclusions in this fabric were fragments of shell; it is likely that this is a naturally-gritted fabric; Late Bronze Age and Early Iron Age (similar to the matrix of Middle Bronze Age fabric F2 above)

Flint-Tempered or Flint-Gritted

F6 flint-tempered fabric with iron oxides: a moderate to common amount (15–25%) of calcined and crushed flint, <3 mm across with rare larger pieces, in a clay matrix with a sparse to moderate amount (7–15%) of poorly-sorted subrounded pieces of iron oxides up to 3 mm across and a sparse amount of subrounded quartz grains <0.5 mm across; this is a naturally sandy, iron oxide-bearing clay matrix with added flint temper; Late Bronze Age

F6 very coarse flint-tempered fabric: a common amount of flint-temper, <10 mm across with the majority of pieces <4 mm, in a slightly sandy clay matrix containing a rare to sparse amount (2–7%) of quartz grains, <0.5 mm across, and a sparse to moderate amount of iron oxides <2 mm across; this is a coarser fabric but similar to F6; Late Bronze Age

F8 sparse to moderately flint-tempered fabric: a smooth clay matrix containing a sparse to moderate amount (5–10%) of poorly-sorted angular flint <5 mm across with many pieces in the large range; no quartz or iron oxides visible with a ×20 power microscope (unstratified)

F9 slightly flint-tempered, or flint-gritted fabric: a sparse to moderate amount of moderately well-sorted flint, <3 mm across with the majority of pieces less than 2 mm in a slightly sandy clay matrix containing a

sparse amount of well-sorted subrounded quartz grains <0.2 mm in size; it is not possible to determine whether this is a tempered or naturally gritted fabric; Early Iron Age due to presence of red-slip surface treatment on both surfaces of single sherd

Sandy

Q2 slightly sandy fabric with sparse iron oxides and rare flint: a sandy fabric containing a sparse amount (5–7%) of moderately well-sorted quartz, <0.5 mm across, and a sparse to moderate amount (7–15%) of poorly-sorted iron oxides <2 mm across and a rare amount (1%) of patinated flint <2 mm; this fabric has the appearance of being the clay matrix component for fabric F6; Late Bronze Age and Early Iron Age (similar to fabric Q1 above but not identical)

Q3 sandy with rare flint: a common amount of coarse to medium-grained quartz, <0.7 mm across, in a clay matrix with rare pieces (1–2%) of flint, <3 mm across, but no obvious iron oxides; Late Bronze Age and Early Iron Age

Q4 sandy fabric: a common to very common amount (20–30%) of quartz usually <0.5 mm across; Late Bronze Age or Early Iron Age due to absence of any featured sherds in the single context containing this fabric type.

Q5 dense, fine sand or silty fabric: a moderate amount (10–15%) of well-sorted, subrounded grains of quartz, <0.25 mm across and a rare to sparse amount (2–7%) of poorly-sorted subrounded to rounded quartz <1 mm across in a clay matrix containing very rare pieces of organic matter and iron oxides; Early Iron Age

Forms, surface treatments, and decoration

Only two types of jars and one bowl form have been identified amongst the Late Bronze Age material, which is characterised by the rough exterior surface treatment of the jars. The first type is an ovoid profile vessel form with a bevelled-edge rim (Fig. 4, 14, 16 and 22), or a slightly more rounded-edge rim. Many examples of this ovoid vessel type were recovered and the majority of sherds display obvious vertical finger-wiping on the exterior. This surface treatment and vessel form are typical of the Late Bronze Age period, from the end of the second millennium through the early first millennium BC (Barrett 1980; Bradley, *et al.* 1980, figs. 12–14).

Examples have been found in Hampshire at Kimpton (Dacre and Ellison 1981, fig. 19, E4–E5) and Winnall Down (Hawkes 1985, fig. 51, 4–6, 9), and in Dorset amongst the Period 1 assemblage at Eldon's Seat, Encombe (Cunliffe and Phillipson 1968, figs. 13, 47–48, and 14, 82, 91).

The second Late Bronze Age vessel form is a thin-walled open bowl with flat-topped rim (Fig 4, 20). Bowls are a component of later Bronze Age assemblages (Barrett 1980), and this example is similar to ones from Aldermaston Wharf (Bradley, *et al.* 1980, fig. 13, 27, 30–31, 42, and 14, 52, 55).

The third Late Bronze Age form is the vertical, flat-topped rim (Fig. 4, 23–24) which may have originated from a long-necked jar or other indeterminate vessel form. These would not be out-of-place in a Late Bronze Age assemblage (cf. Cunliffe and Phillipson 1968, fig. 14, 84, 87).

Early Iron Age material is represented by the assemblage from pit 249 which consists of at least one (Fig. 4, 26) and possibly two other slack-shouldered jars, and three bowls, two of which are illustrated (Fig. 4, 27–28). This group is well-dated by the decorated bowl (Fig. 4, 28) which is, as mentioned above, an example of a red-slipped, cordoned, round-bodied bowl dated at Danebury to ceramic phases 3–4, from about the mid-sixth to fifth centuries BC (Cunliffe 1984, 242, 281). The two other bowl sherds, one a flared rim and the other a round-bodied but undecorated sherd, are both red-slipped and burnished at least on the exterior surface. The rim may also have been burnished on the interior surface which is now rather abraded. Similar undecorated red-slipped, flared rim round-bodied bowls have been found in Hampshire at Danebury (Cunliffe 1984, fig. 6.56), Quarley Hill (Hawkes 1939, fig. 15, 5) and Meon Hill (Liddell 1933, fig. 11, P.30, P.71; 1934, plate 27, P.100, P.123, P.124, P.126).

The slack-shouldered jar is a vessel form often found at Danebury in features similarly dated to those with the cordoned and round-bodied bowls, ceramic phases 3–4 (Cunliffe 1984, 314, figs. 6.84–6.86), and is a common form in other late Early Iron Age assemblages, such as Gussage All Saints, Dorset (Wainwright 1979, fig. 44, 870 and 872). This vessel, in association with the two round-bodied bowls, strongly suggests that the pit may have been filled in with material derived from occupation dated to the fifth century BC.

Discussion

The later prehistoric pottery can be dated to two different phases, the Late Bronze Age from about the 12th to 9th centuries BC and the end of the Early Iron Age from the 6th to 5th centuries BC. The former consists of only undecorated material and is dominated by jars which suggests that it belongs to Barrett's undecorated phase of the later Bronze Age (1980). Pottery of this period is rare in this immediate area (Barrett 1980, fig. 1), although more recently Late Bronze Age pottery has been identified nearby at Hucklesbrook (Davies and Graham 1984). The later phase, represented by a single pit group, is more tightly dated to the end of the Early Iron Age period. Occupation of this period, usually characterised by the presence of the red-slipped, scratched-cordoned ware, is continually being discovered in Hampshire with a new find in Romsey at La Sagesse Convent (Morris, forthcoming), in addition to Ellingham. The period from the 8th to 7th centuries is not represented among the Ellingham Farm assemblage, but diagnostic pottery of this period, the red-slipped furrowed, carinated bowls, has been found nearby at Godshill (Tony Light, pers. comm.), and is well known from all over east and north east Hampshire as well as Wiltshire.

It is likely that the majority of the pottery was made from local resources, at least in the Late Bronze Age phase of occupation, but that by the end of the Early Iron Age there is evidence to suggest that the occupants were able to obtain their finer pottery bowls from further afield.

20. Flat-topped bowl; fabric F6, abraded exterior; context 101, subsoil, trench AA.
22. Ovoid jar; fabric D1; context 256, pit 255.
23. Vertical rim jar; fabric F6; context 256, pit 255.
24. Indeterminate vessel; fabric F7; context 256, pit 255.
25. Ovoid jar; fabric F7; vertical finger-wiping on exterior; context 256, pit 255.
26. Slack-shouldered jar; fabric Q2; context 250, pit 249.
27. Flared rim bowl; fabric Q5, red-slipped exterior; context 250, pit 249.
28. Cordoned bowl; fabric Q5, red-slipped exterior; context 250, pit 249.

Romano-British pottery by R H Seager Smith

A collection of Romano-British pottery (302 sherds) was recovered during the watching brief in Field 4. The assemblage is quantified by number of sherds and fabric type in Table 4. The collection is dominated by the products of the nearby New Forest pottery industry (Fulford 1975, fabrics 1a, 2a and sandy greywares). Also present are Black Burnished wares, from the Wareham/Poole Harbour region of south-east Dorset, miscellaneous, unprovenanced greywares, grog-tempered coarsewares and red colour-coated wares from the Oxfordshire region. None of the assemblage is illustrated.

Roller rims from a large New Forest greyware storage jar (Fulford 1975, 103, type 40), together with a sherd from a Black Burnished ware dropped flanged bowl/dish (Seager Smith and Davies 1993, type 25, 235), occur amongst the material from pit 241 and sherds from a New Forest greyware jug (Fulford 1975, 98, type 20), were found in the boundary ditch 245. On present evidence, the New Forest storage jar would appear to predate c AD 350 (Fulford 1975, 103). In addition to two redeposited prehistoric sherds, only undiagnostic fine or sandy greyware body sherds were found in ditch 247 and two New Forest greyware sherds together with 46 sherds from an oxidised, thick-walled grog-tempered jar form were found in the subsoil. All the grog-tempered sherds recovered are hand-made and derived from jar forms. These fabrics

List of Illustrated Later Prehistoric Pottery (Fig. 4)

14. Ovoid jar; fabric F6, vertical finger-wiping on exterior; context 83, pit 82, trench R.
16. Ovoid jar; fabric F6; vertical finger-wiping on exterior; context 80, subsoil, trench R.
17. Ovoid jar; fabric F6; context 101, subsoil, trench AA.
18. Simple jar base; fabric Q2; context 80, subsoil, trench R.
19. Flared jar base; fabric F6, vertical finger-wiping on exterior; context 101, subsoil, trench AA.

Table 4 Field 4 – numbers of Roman pottery by ware and by feature

Feature	Context	New Forest Parchment or Stoneware	New Forest Sandy or Fine Greywares	Oxfordshire Colour-Coat	Black- Burnished Ware	Grog- Tempered Fabric	Other Fine or Sandy Greywares
Pit 241	242		22		2		4
Pit 243	244				1		
Ditch 245	246		3		2	2	
Ditch 247	248						6
Pit 253	254	8	170	8	20	5	
Pit 257	257		3			46	
Total		8	198	8	25	53	10

probably belong to the Wessex grog-tempered ware tradition which formed part of the ceramic assemblage available in south Wiltshire and central and southern Hampshire from the later 3rd to 5th centuries AD.

The largest group of New Forest wares was recovered from pit 253. Greyware vessel forms from this feature include a shallow, straight-sided dish (Fulford 1975, 96, type 19) and a variety of everted rim jar (Fulford 1975, 100, type 30) forms. These forms were produced throughout the life of the New Forest pottery industry, but there is some evidence to suggest that the occurrence of decoration on jar forms was phased out after *c* AD 350 (Fulford 1975, 100). The presence of body sherds with burnished-line, acute-angled lattice and rusticated decoration amongst this collection may therefore indicate it pre-dates this decline. Other coarsewares were represented by Wareham/Poole Harbour Black Burnished ware sherds from 3rd–4th century AD – heavily-wiped jar forms with obtuse-angled lattice decoration and five undiagnostic body sherds of grog-tempered ware.

Finewares in this group are represented by a single sherd of colour-coated stoneware (Fulford 1975, 24, fabric 1a) with incised concentric circle decoration and sherds from at least two Parchment ware internally flanged bowls (Fulford 1975, 72, type 89). Curiously, no New Forest red-slipped ware was found, although three Oxfordshire red colour-coated ware vessels were identified. These comprise a hemispherical bowl

with a bead rim (Young 1977, 160, type C55), a bowl with splayed out sides reminiscent of Drag. 33 (Young 1977, 170, type C88) and an unidentifiable rim fragment. Neither of the identifiable vessel forms are common within the repertoire of the Oxfordshire potters, and, as such, are not closely datable. Similar forms were, however, produced by the New Forest potters from the beginning of the production period in this area *c* AD 270 (Fulford 1975, types 60 and 67).

Thus the presence of the Oxfordshire vessels in an area so close to the New Forest kilns and on a site where the nature of the archaeological evidence suggests a small-scale, 'rural' community of the sort one would expect to be utilising the local resources, is a highly surprising and interesting feature of this assemblage. It could be speculated that the reason for the presence of the Oxfordshire vessels is chronological – although our knowledge of the precise dating of the New Forest pottery industry is comparatively poor, there is some evidence to suggest that the assemblage from this site belongs to the earliest period of production in this area, contemporaneous with the Crook Hill and Lower Sloden kiln groups. Production in the Oxfordshire region pre-dates that in the New Forest, beginning in earnest around *c* AD 240 (Young 1977, 237), and it could be suggested that the Oxfordshire vessels were imported at a time prior to full production in the New Forest, when competition between the two centres was at a

minimum and thus indicating that the entire Romano-British collection from Ellingham is of middle to later 3rd, rather than 3rd–4th century AD in date.

Anglo-Saxon Pottery by E L Morris

Two joining body sherds from a thick-walled, coarse vessel, tempered with abundant amounts of organic matter, were recovered during the evaluation from Field 1 (trench G, context 13), in association with three small fragments of redeposited later prehistoric pottery. The organic-tempered sherds (30 g) are from a handmade vessel typical of the 5th to 7th century (or later) Saxon period. The vessel is 12 mm thick, oxidised on the exterior only, and was made from a fabric with a very common to abundant amount (35–40%) of grass-like fragments, up to 10 mm long, which have been burnt out leaving linear voids and a single large piece of flint detritus.

These sherds are not the first archaeologically recorded occurrence of early Saxon activity in this part of the lower Avon Valley. An early Saxon sunken-featured building was discovered nearby at Hucklesbrook (Davies and Graham 1984), a pit containing Saxon pottery was found at Verwood to the north-west of Ellingham (M. Brisbane, pers. comm.), and Saxon cemeteries have been excavated at Charlton Plantation, near Downton (Davies 1984) and at Christchurch (Jarvis 1983). The descriptions of the grass-tempered pottery from Hucklesbrook and Christchurch are similar to that from Ellingham Farm.

Fired Clay Objects and Material by E L Morris

A small collection of burnt or fired clay material was recovered from five features (Table 1) and from unstratified contexts (details in archive). Only two objects were identified amongst this material and are worthy of further discussion – a spindle whorl from pit 82 and parts of a weight from pit 255. Both features also contained quantities of Late Bronze Age pottery.

The whorl is complete and D-shaped in profile (Fig. 4, 15). It weighs 28 g, measures 37 mm in diameter, is 18 mm thick and has a spindle hole measuring 7–8 mm across. The fabric of this

object is slightly sandy and has iron oxides visible; it is not dissimilar to pottery fabric Q2.

The fragments of clay weight can be suitably reconstructed to indicate that the form was once cylindrical in profile and c 67 mm tall (Fig. 4, 21). The fabric is ungritted, lacking even the sparse amount of quartz visible in the whorl, but contains large pieces of iron oxides and is poorly-wedged. A single, large well-rounded piece of flint detritus bearing cortex is still contained in the clay matrix of the object. The cylindrical form of this weight is typical of the Late Bronze Age and the Iron Age generally (Bradley, *et al.* 1980, fig. 19, 5; Bates and Winham 1985, 90, fig. 70, 2).

List of Illustrated Fired Clay Objects (Fig. 4)

15. D-shaped, clay spindle whorl, complete; context 83, pit 82, trench R.
21. Cylindrical loomweight, incomplete; context 256, pit 255.

Worked and Burnt Flint by W Boismier

Low levels of worked flint were recovered from the site – 105 pieces in total. Of this only 23 pieces were stratified (Table 1). The remainder was recovered by fieldwalking (Field 1) and from top- and subsoil contexts during evaluation trenching. The fieldwalking recovered 40 pieces of worked flint (all flakes with the exception of one scraper) and large quantities of burnt flint (17.294 kg). Trial trenching produced similar quantities of unstratified worked flint comprising 17 pieces from topsoil contexts and 28 pieces from the subsoil horizon. The latter included part of the point from a bifacially worked arrowhead.

Most of the stratified flint was recovered from pits and linear features in Field 4 (Table 1). Two utilised flakes and one core fragment are among those recovered from the two linear features. The condition of the individual artefacts is relatively poor; they are probably residual elements in most features. Remnant cortex on a number of pieces indicates that the locally available river gravels were, not surprisingly, the prime source of raw material for the manufacture of flint artefacts on the site. One unstratified piece from Field 4, however, is diagnostically chalk-derived flint.

A Bronze Age date for the majority of the stratified pieces recovered is indicated by the presence of squat and irregularly shaped flakes.

Other Finds

Other finds from the site comprised small quantities of ceramic building material, iron and animal bone (Table 1). A single fragment of roofing tile was recovered from the late Roman pit 253. It is made from a smooth fine, pale cream and light orange, ungritted clay which is poorly-wedged. One iron nail, two probable nail shanks, and one piece of undiagnostic slag were found in the late Roman pit 241.

Fragments of burnt bone were confirmed as being of animal origin by J. McKinley. These were recovered from pit 82 (including from within the vessel) and pit 255. The bone fragments were all associated with Late Bronze Age pottery and are likely to represent food remains from several meals.

Discussion by C. A. Butterworth, R M J Cleal and E L Morris

Although comprehensive interpretation of the observations and excavated features is precluded by the partial nature of the investigated sample, influenced as it was by both the intermittent nature of the watching brief and local topographical variation and therefore preservation, some observations can be made.

Evidence of a broad but discontinuous span of archaeological activity ranging from the Neolithic to Saxon periods was recovered from the site, but not all periods were represented by recognisable features or deposits. The recovery of quantities of finds, including worked flint and Late Bronze Age/Early Iron Age pottery from areas of manually excavated subsoil in the evaluation trenches, together with the truncation of many of the excavated features, suggest that archaeological levels were much disturbed or eroded, most probably by cultivation. Whatever the cause, archaeological features were relatively scarce in Fields 1-3, with few of those investigated being securely dated. A more coherent and better dated focus

of activity was recorded in the northern part of the site, Field 4. The variation may perhaps in part have been the result of better archaeological preservation in the northern area, although there were no obvious indications of deeper subsoil, or of different, less intrusive methods of cultivation having been carried out there.

The site lies within a region in which Middle Bronze Age activity is well-attested, both in terms of domestic sites and burials. The lower reaches of the Avon and Stour valleys are extremely rich in sites (Barrett and Bradley 1980, 183), and Ellingham lies towards the northern edge of this concentration. Although the nature of the use of the site in this period is difficult to assess, it is clear that the deposit in pit 316 is extremely unlikely to represent a former cremation, even if the material is not *in situ*. This seems evident from the fact that a number of vessels are represented, each by not more than a few sherds at most. The most reasonable interpretation of the assemblage may be that it represents domestic occupation of Middle Bronze Age date, although the presence of the possibly later sherd (Fig. 3, 13) throws doubt on whether this is *in situ*, or has been disturbed and/or redeposited during later activity.

One major significance of the site lies in the unexpected discovery of occupation dating from the Late Bronze Age and the end of the Early Iron Age, although, again, the sparse nature of the evidence means that the use of the site in that period cannot be securely established. Prehistoric activity dated to the 7th-8th centuries BC is known at a site near Godshill located c 3 km to the north (T. Light, pers. comm.) and the evidence from Ellingham Farm expands occupation along the lower Avon valley to include both slightly earlier and slightly later activity. For the Late Bronze Age, the recovery of additional evidence for the location of textile production on a river terrace settlement rather than the customary chalk downland sites is notable.

Activity of the Roman period presents the most obvious and greatest concentration of archaeological features, closely confined at the northern end of the site, in Field 4. Although only

a few of the observed features were excavated and therefore dated, it is not unreasonable to assume that the majority of all features in Field 4 may have been of the Roman period. The density of features almost certainly indicates an occupation site, possibly lying within an enclosure represented by angled ditch 247. Other ditches or sections of ditches south of 247 may have formed part of the enclosure; the majority of observed features lay to the south of ditch 247. With the exception of the possible stone-built structure, no structural evidence was recorded, although a number of potential post-holes were seen which may have indicated the presence of timber buildings.

Analysis of the pottery indicates activity dating to the 3rd and 4th centuries AD, which, further consideration suggests, may be more closely refined to the 3rd century. This is of some significance for studies of the Roman period in this area, particularly with regard to the development of the New Forest pottery industry, its economic development and contribution to the local hinterland.

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