

A MIDDLE BRONZE AGE BURNT MOUND AT GREYWELL ROAD, HATCH, BASINGSTOKE

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ABSTRACT

New development on a site believed to be on the line of a Roman road was preceded by a desk-based assessment and an evaluation. The evaluation did not convincingly locate the road, but did reveal a deposit of burnt flint that appeared to be a prehistoric burnt mound. A small excavation tested the nature of this deposit and determined its context. Although a Roman ditch crossed the site on the projected line of the road, there was no sign of the road itself. Pottery, flintwork and radiocarbon dating converged to confirm that the flint was the remains of a mound created in the middle Bronze Age.

INTRODUCTION

The site (SU 67830 52085) is located on the south side of Greywell Road, to the east of the hamlet of Hatch, south-east of Old Basing (Fig. 1). The development area consisted of disused fields on the floor and side of the valley of the River Lyde, which flows to the north. The land slopes down gently from south to north from around 76m to 73m above Ordnance Datum. The underlying geology is low-level terrace deposits (valley gravel) in an area largely dominated by Upper Chalk (BGS 1981) close to its junction with London Clay. The bedrock encountered on site was a complex gravel and clay.

The most notable feature previously known in the vicinity of the site is the projected course of the Roman road from Silchester to Chichester which crosses the site NW–SE (Fig. 1). No physical remains of the road have been located in the immediate area but it

was traced at Chineham not far to the north (Moore 2001).

Archaeological investigation was carried out by Thames Valley Archaeological Services Ltd, 24 Jan – 14 Feb 2005. Planning consent had been granted by Basingstoke and Dean Borough Council to develop the site for housing and commercial use, subject to a condition requiring archaeological work in accordance with the Department of the Environment's Planning Policy Guidance, *Archaeology and Planning* (PPG16 1990), and the Borough's policies on archaeology. A desk-based assessment was followed by field evaluation, designed to include trenches intersecting the projected course of the Roman road, but no convincing trace of it was discovered. Instead, a spread of burnt flint was revealed, together with Bronze Age and Roman pottery and prehistoric struck flints. This feature was thought likely to be a prehistoric burnt mound, and its discovery prompted the excavations reported below.

The purpose of the excavation was to examine the burnt flint spread and determine whether it definitely was a prehistoric burnt mound, or part of the Roman road, and if the former, to establish whether any trace of the Roman road survived. This involved the excavation of an area roughly 30m × 28m, centred on the evaluation trenches (15 and 16) that located the original deposit. Overburden was removed by a 360°-type machine under archaeological supervision and then all features were hand cleaned and excavated. Soil samples were taken for environmental analysis and to enhance finds recovery. The site code is GRH03/77, and the archive will be deposited at Hampshire County Museum Service, with accession code A2004.59.

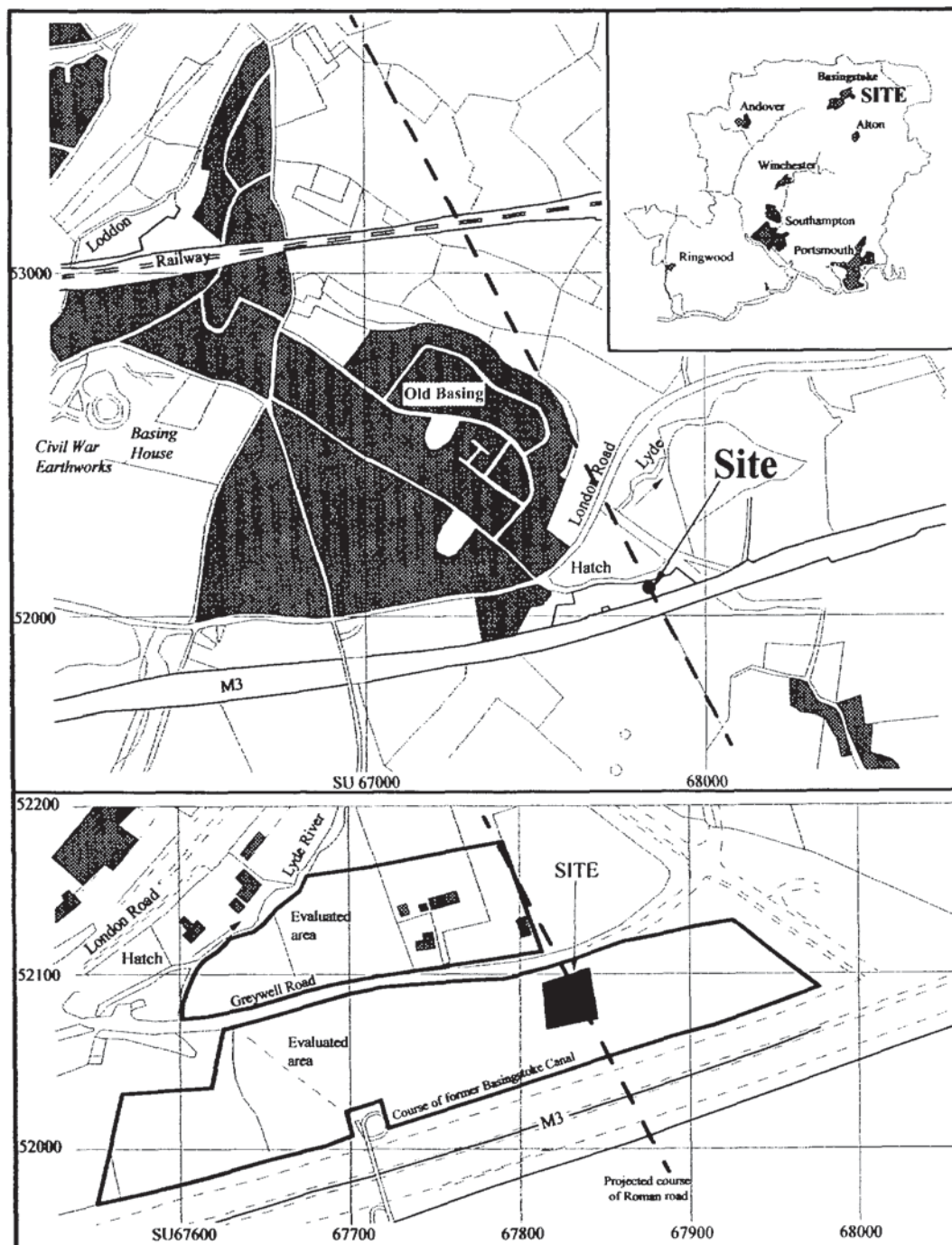


Fig. 1 Location of the site. Based on Ordnance Survey Pathfinder SU 65/75

RESULTS

The archaeological deposits uncovered comprised ditches of various dates, and a spread of burnt flint which partly occupied a large hollow (Fig. 2). The archaeological deposits were buried by 19th-century dump layers up to 0.5m thick. A small number of isolated features and finds from the evaluation, away from the excavated area, and modern features are not discussed here; details are in the archive.

The large hollow

The earliest feature on the site was a shallow elongated hollow (1000), 9m wide and 30m long tapering to the east and extending beyond the western margins of the site. The hollow was only 0.46m at its deepest point (Fig. 3). It is considered that this is a natural formation and is likely to be some form of subsidence from a solution hollow in the underlying chalk. The hollow would have acted as a natural trap for discarded material but it is quite clear that the burnt flint deposit was deliberately placed. It is probable that the former extent of the burnt flint deposit was larger but marginal areas beyond the limits of the hollow had been removed by later ploughing.

The lowest layers of the hollow (e.g., 164: Fig. 3) which were a yellow/brown silty clay with some flint nodules, did not contain much burnt flint and were probably natural accumulations. These contained four sherds of Neolithic pottery, and twelve sherds of Neolithic to later Bronze Age pottery, along with 72 struck flints.

The burnt mound

The eastern end of the hollow was occupied by a dense deposit (e.g., 155: Fig. 3) composed predominantly of burnt flint in a matrix of brown silty clay with some charcoal. Deposit 1003 was an elongated oval on an east-west orientation, 6.5m at its widest and 16.5m long. It was no more than 0.26m deep. Usually it consisted of a single layer, but was recognizable as two deposits in places (Fig. 3: 103: 179 and 180).

The deposit filled the full extent of the natural hollow (1000) at the eastern end but petered out to the west. The surface of deposit 1003 was level, presumably flattened by later ploughing. Its former eastern extent was unclear beyond the protection afforded by the underlying hollow.

The deposit contained 68 struck flints and fifteen sherds of early and middle Bronze Age pottery with nine small rolled sherds whose date is uncertain (see below). A radiocarbon date was obtained on charcoal from slot 103 (179) with a most likely date of 1454–1370 cal BC, i.e. middle Bronze Age (Table 4 below).

Bronze Age ditch

To the north of the burnt flint deposit was a ditch (1001). This was investigated in four slots (105, 106, 118, 120) and was 1.8m wide and 0.74m deep. The ditch contained three or four fills, typically red-yellow or blue-grey silty clays. Pottery recovered consisted of just a single large sherd of a middle Bronze Age bucket urn in good condition but there were also 57 struck flints. Although these finds could be residual, the pottery sherd is in good condition and, with the quantity of flints recovered, suggests that this ditch is of Bronze Age date. A slot (2) excavated in the evaluation trench in an area of complexity, now seems most likely to have been dug through part of ditches 1001 and 1002. Six sherds of Roman pottery (and two flint flakes) produced by this slot are more likely to belong to Roman ditch 1002 which was not recognized at the time of the evaluation.

Bronze Age scoops

Three small amorphous pits (114, 115 and 117), little more than shallow scoops, lay north of ditch 1001, and two more (4, 5) to the south of the burnt mound. These contained no datable finds other than a single struck flint from 115, and some unidentifiable crumbs of pottery from 4, but 117 included a small dump of burnt flint suggesting a relationship with the nearby burnt mound.

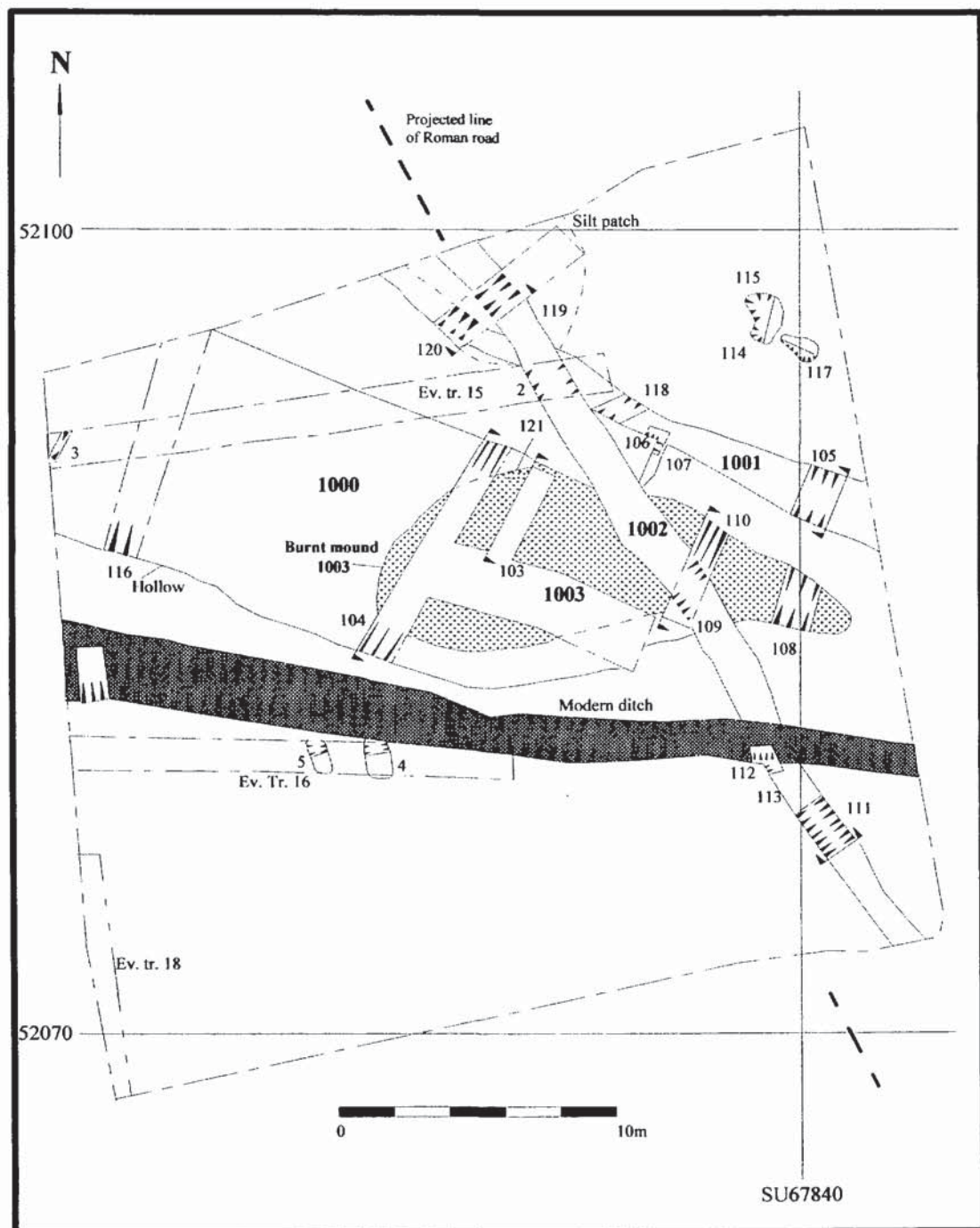


Fig. 2 Plan of the excavated area

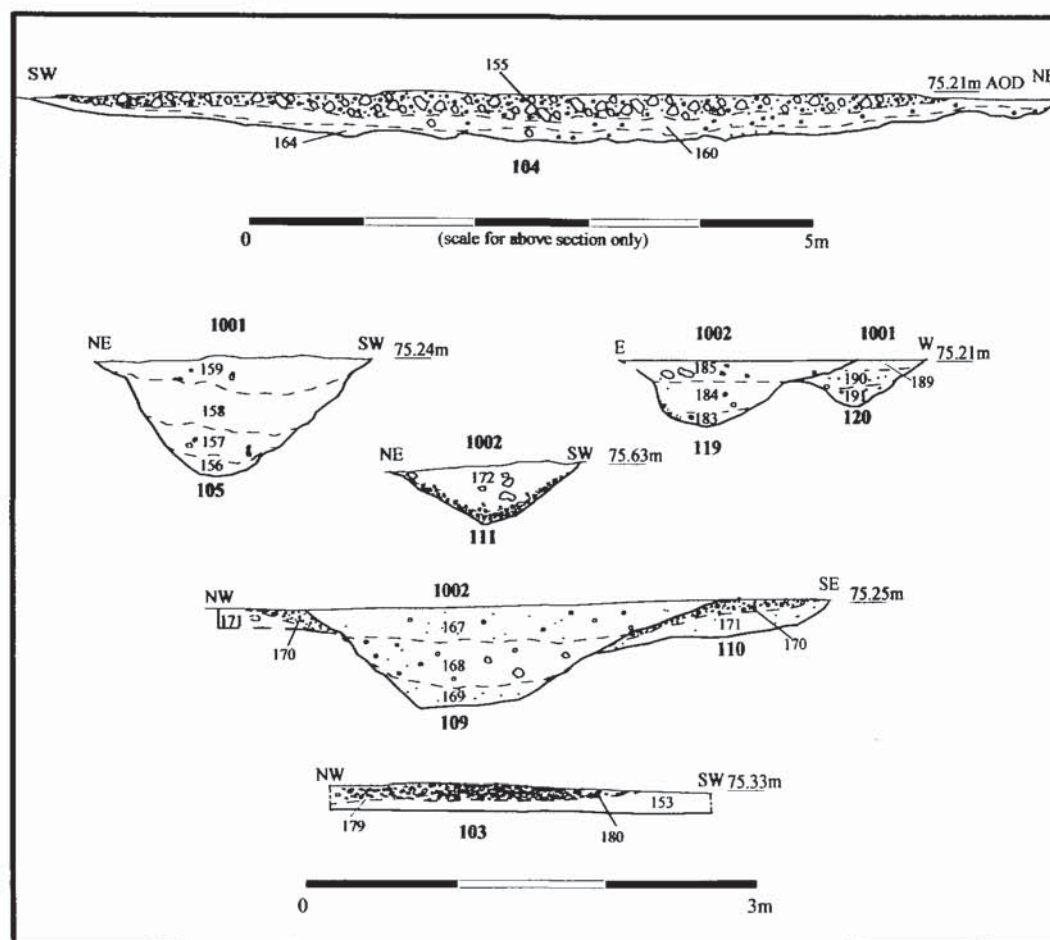


Fig. 3 Selected sections

Roman ditch

A single ditch (1002) which traversed the site NW–SE was investigated by four slots (111, 113, 109, 119) and was typically 1.2m wide and 0.42m deep. The fills were yellow/brown clayey silts and contained twelve sherds of late Iron Age or early Roman pottery. The fill also contained residual prehistoric finds (two sherds of Bronze Age pottery and thirteen struck flints). The ditch cut both the burnt mound and earlier ditch 1001 (Fig. 3).

FINDS

Pottery by Frances Raymond

Seventy sherds (382g) were recovered during the evaluation and excavation (Table 1). These are mostly featureless wall fragments in poor condition, representing various phases of activity from the Neolithic to the Roman period. The pottery has been analysed following the guidelines of the Prehistoric Ceramics Research Group (PCRG 1997). The

sherds were quantified according to fabric, form, decoration, surface treatment, colour, wall thickness, abrasion and size with the aid of a binocular microscope set to a magnification of $\times 20$.

Fabric Descriptions

Unless stated otherwise all of the fabrics are soft with evenly distributed inclusions and hackly fractures.

Neolithic

FS/3 An oxidized laminated fabric containing moderate amounts of unevenly distributed burnt flint (0.5 to 7.0mm) and sparse rounded quartz sand (0.1 to 0.4mm).

Neolithic or late Bronze Age to Early Iron Age

FS/2 An oxidized fabric containing sparse burnt flint (0.5 to 3.0mm) and moderate quantities of rounded quartz sand (0.2 to 1.0mm).

Early Bronze Age

G/1 An oxidized fabric tempered with moderate amounts of grog (0.5 to 2.5mm).

Middle Bronze Age

F/4 A dark grey fabric tempered with very common burnt flint (0.5 to 4.0mm). Rare rounded quartz sand (0.2 to 1.0mm) and clay pellets (0.2 to 0.7mm) are also present.

Middle Bronze Age or Middle to Late Iron Age

F/1 An oxidized fabric tempered with common burnt flint (0.5 to 1.5mm).

F/2 A dark grey fabric tempered with common, unevenly distributed burnt flint (0.5 to 3.0mm).

F/3 A fabric tempered with very common burnt flint (0.5 to 2.0mm).

Late Bronze Age to Early Iron Age

FS/1 An oxidized fabric containing sparse burnt flint (0.5 to 2.5mm) and rounded quartz sand (0.2 to 1.0 mm). Rare angular calcareous inclusions (0.6 to 2.0 mm), either chalk or limestone, are also present.

Iron Age

S/6 A fabric containing very common rounded quartz sand (<0.06 to 0.25mm) and rare mica (<0.06 mm).

Late Iron Age

FGS/1 An oxidized fabric containing sparse burnt flint (0.5 to 2.5mm) and grog (0.8 to 1.5mm), together with common rounded quartz sand (0.2 to 1.0mm).

OS/1 An oxidized fabric containing common organic inclusions (up to 5.0mm long) and moderate rounded quartz sand (0.2 to 0.5mm).

S/3 A black fabric containing common rounded quartz sand (0.2 to 0.5mm).

Late Iron Age to Early Roman

FG/1 A dark grey fabric tempered with moderate burnt flint and grog (both 0.5 to 2.0 mm.). Rare rounded quartz sand is also present (0.2 to 0.8mm).

GS/1 An oxidized fabric containing sparse grog (0.5 to 2.0mm) and common rounded quartz sand (<0.06 to 0.5mm). Rare burnt flint (0.5 to 1.0mm) and mica (<0.06 mm) are also present.

MS/1 An oxidized fabric containing abundant rounded quartz sand (<0.06 to 0.5mm) and sparse mica (<0.06 mm).

S/4 A grey-brown fabric containing abundant sub-angular sand (0.1 to 0.5mm) composed of a mixture of quartz and quartzite.

Early Roman

gls/1 A wheel-thrown mid-brown ware containing abundant rounded quartz sand (0.1 to 0.5mm) and sparse glauconite (<0.06 to 0.2mm).

S/1-2 A wheel-thrown grey ware containing very common sub-rounded quartz sand (0.3 to 1.0mm)

S/5 A reduced ware containing common well rounded quartz sand (0.3 to 2.0mm) composed of a mixture of quartz and quartzite. Rare grog (up to 2.0mm) is also present.

The Prehistoric Pottery

The prehistoric assemblage is composed of 50 sherds (216g). For the most part the pottery has been phased tentatively according to fabric characteristics because of the small fragment size and abraded condition.

Hollow 1000

The lower levels of the large hollow produced

Table 1 Pottery catalogue

<i>Cat</i>	<i>Context</i>	<i>Group</i>	<i>Fabric</i>	<i>No.</i>	<i>Wt. (g)</i>	<i>Date</i>	<i>Comments</i>
6	58		FGS/1	1	4	LIA	
6	58		OS/1	2	8	LIA	
6	58		S/4	1	5	LIA to Early Roman	
6	58		S/3	2	2	MIA to LIA	Both from same vessel
4	55		F/1	1	4	MBA to IA	Fabric could be MBA or LBA or MIA/LIA
104	160	1000	FS/1	2	64	LBA to ELA	Both from a single vessel
104	160	1000	FS/3	4	7	Neo	Either early Neolithic or Peterborough Ware
104	160	1000	FS/2	5	12	Neo or LBA	
108	166	1000	G/1	1	1	EBA	Probably urn rather than beaker. ?one vessel
108	165	1000	F/1	1	1	MBA to IA	Fabric could be MBA or LBA or MIA/LIA
118	182	1001	F/4	1	74	MBA	Bucket Urn
2	53	1002	S/1	6	42	Roman	Single wheelmade vessel with two shallow tooled lines
109	168	1002	glS/1	4	25	Roman	Wheelmade
111	172	1002	F/2	2	2	MBA to IA	
111	172	1002	S/5	1	70	Roman	Complete flagon rim and neck with cordon ?Alice Holt
119	185	1002	FG/1	1	5	LIA	
119	185	1002	GS/1	2	5	LIA	
119	185	1002	S/4	2	3	LIA to Early Roman	
119	185	1002	MS/1	1	3	LIA to Early Roman	
119	184	1002	Greyware	1	2	Roman	
103	188	1003	Unident.	2	1	Indeterminate	Crumbs
104	155	1003	G/1	3	11	EBA	Probably urn fabric rather than beaker. ?one vessel
104	155	1003	F/3	11	9	MBA to IA	All part of a single vessel
108	166	1003	S/6	9	4	IA	Very rolled
U/S			S/2	1	8	Early Roman	
U/S			S/3	1	1	MIA to LIA	
U/S			F/2	1	6	MBA to IA	
U/S			Ox Red CC	1	3	Late Roman	

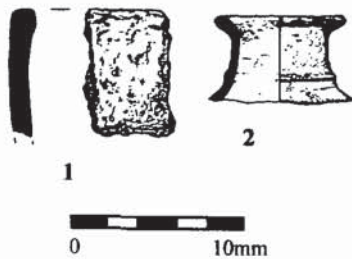


Fig. 4 Selected pottery, see text for details

twelve sherds of pottery (84g) of Neolithic and Bronze Age dates (Table 1). The four Neolithic sherds are in fabric FS/3. Wares of this type were used throughout the period and cannot be dated closely. Five other fragments of pottery in a sandier fabric (FS/2) may be contemporary, or could equally have been produced during the late Bronze Age or early Iron Age. Three sherds made from a fine fabric (F/1) may be of middle to late Iron Age date, but could equally have been produced during the middle Bronze Age.

The burnt flint deposit (1003)

The burnt mound produced 25 sherds of prehistoric pottery (25g) dating between the Bronze Age and the Iron Age (Table 1). The attribution of the four early Bronze Age sherds is certain. These are made from a relatively fine ware tempered with moderate amounts of grog (G/1) which is typical of the fabrics used for the various urns of the period. Eleven tiny sherds made from a fine fabric (F/3) may again be of middle Bronze Age date, but could equally have been produced during the middle to late Iron Age. The nine other fragments of possible Iron Age date are in a fine micaceous sandy ware (S/6). These are extremely rolled, pointing to an extended period of weathering prior to burial, raising the possibility that they are intrusive.

Ditch 1001

A single rim sherd from a middle Bronze Age bucket urn (74g) came from ditch 1001 (Fig. 4, 1). This is in fresh condition and is black with

untreated surfaces. The relatively hard fabric is tempered with very common medium sized burnt flint (F/4).

The Late Iron Age to Roman Pottery

The late Iron Age to Roman assemblage comprises 20 sherds (166g) mostly from the main excavation. The largest group (12 sherds, 113g) is derived from ditch 1002. Ditch 1002 also produced two residual sherds of prehistoric pottery (2g). These are either of middle Bronze Age or middle to late Iron Age date and are made from flint tempered fabric (F/2). The six sherds from slot 119 are either in sandy (MS/1 and S/4) or fine grog-tempered wares (FG/1 and GS/1) which have an origin in the late Iron Age and continued in production after the Roman conquest. The rest of the pottery from this ditch consists of sandy wares (glS/1 and S/5) which are probably from the Alice Holt kilns, post-dating AD 60. These sherds include the complete rim and neck from a flagon of the late 1st to early 2nd century AD (Fig. 4: 2), which is so abraded that the surfaces no longer survive.

Slot 2 in the evaluation (reinterpreted as part of ditch 1002), produced six moderately abraded sherds of early Roman pottery from the shoulder of a single vessel. This is decorated with two shallow tooled horizontal girth grooves and is made from a wheel-thrown coarse sandy ware (S/1). The only late Roman pottery from the site is a single unstratified heavily abraded fragment of Oxfordshire red colour coated ware.

Worked Flint by Steve Ford

A small collection of 241 struck flints was recovered during the course of the excavation and the corresponding evaluation trench, with a further 5 flints from other evaluation trenches. All pieces are generally large with few flaws and from the presence of remaining cortex appear to have been derived from the local chalk. A number of the pieces show some patination with a larger number indicating iron staining. Apart from these post-depositional changes, the flintwork is in a fresh condition and does not show evidence

Table 2 Summary of the flint

	<i>All</i>	<i>Hollow 1000</i>	<i>Burnt mound</i>	<i>Ditch 1001</i>
Flakes and blades	192	61	50	43
Core fragments*	7	3	2	1
Spalls	29	3	12	10
Scrapers	2		1	
Denticulate scraper/core	1	1		
Serrated flakes	5	2	2	1
Utilized flake with gloss	1	1		
Retouched flake	1	1		1
Notched flake	1		1	
Arrowhead fragment	1			1
Flakes (evaluation trenches)	5			

*No cores were recovered but 7 pieces are regarded as fragments from shattered nodules.

of excessive disturbance. Although several pieces appear to have been made from the same nodule, no refits could be established. The majority of the stratified flintwork came from three contexts; the infill of hollow 1000, the burnt mound and ditch 1001 (Table 2).

The purpose of the following analysis is to characterize the nature of the flint collection, to define its chronological attributes and to determine the broad range of flint-using activities that may have taken place. Most of the lithic material is derived from three Bronze Age contexts, none of which is of sufficient size in itself to merit detailed metrical analysis. However, there are grounds for considering that the majority of the collection belongs to one broad episode and therefore some useful information might be obtained from metrical analysis.

Metrical analysis

A total of 163 flakes was analysed metrically. The 102 intact flakes were measured following the method of Saville (1980) and the 61 broken flakes after Ford (1987). These figures can be compared with the summarized data from other stratified assemblages (Ford 1987).

For the intact flakes, 11.8% of the pieces exceeded a length:breadth ratio of 2:1 which is a characteristic more typical of earlier Neolithic or Mesolithic assemblages. Similarly, for the broken flakes 13.1% are of certain or possible blade-like form and when these two categories are combined, 12.3% are of blade-like form. Some of the pieces are certainly of blade production tradition, i.e., of Mesolithic date, whereas the remainder of the material, with an emphasis on hard hammer manufacture and lacking characteristics such as blade scars on the dorsal surface is more indicative of later (Neolithic or Bronze Age) periods. The impression gained is that the collection is largely of this later date but with a proportion of residual Mesolithic material present.

The functional data (Table 3) show the proportions of cortical and waste material are not high enough to show an emphasis on procurement and within a Bronze Age context would not be out of place in a domestic setting.

Serrated flakes

Five flakes had been serrated, variously showing utilization damage and possibly retouch. None

Table 3 Summary of metrical data for the flint collection

A) Intact flakes

Length:Breadth ratio:	≥ 2.5	$\geq 2 < 2.5$	$> 1 < 2$	≤ 1	Total
	5	7	64	26	102
	4.9	6.9	62.7	25.5	%
Functional analysis:	<i>Waste</i>	<i>Cutting</i>	<i>Awls</i>	<i>Other</i>	<i>Total</i>
	54	21	8	19	102
	52.9	7.8	20.6	18.6	%
Thickness	Mean	Std Dev			
	8.0mm	3.73			
Remaining cortex:	$< 1/3$	$> 1/3 < 2/3$	$> 2/3$	Total	
	66	13	23	102	
	64.7	12.7	22.5	%	

B) Broken flakes

Shape analysis:	<i>Broken blade</i>	<i>Possible Broken Blade</i>	<i>Broken Flake</i>	<i>Total</i>	
	3	5	53	61	
	4.9	8.2	86.9	%	
Functional analysis:	<i>Waste</i>	<i>Cutting</i>	<i>Awls</i>	<i>Other</i>	<i>Total</i>
	30	15	1	15	61
	34.3	24.6	1.6	24.6	%
Remaining cortex:	$< 1/3$	$> 1/3 < 2/3$	$> 2/3$	Total	
	42	8	11	61	
	68.9	13.1	18.0	%	

C) Combined figures of intact and broken flakes

Functional analysis:	<i>Waste</i>	<i>Cutting</i>	<i>Awls</i>	<i>Other</i>	<i>Total</i>
	84	36	9	34	163
	51.5	22.1	5.5	20.9	%
Remaining cortex:	$< 1/3$	$> 1/3 < 2/3$	$> 2/3$	Total	
	108	21	34	163	
	66.2	12.9	20.9	%	

showed any gloss visible to the naked eye. The flake blanks were of variable shape and seemed to have been selected casually. Four of the pieces were serrated down one edge only.

The fifth was serrated down one edge with utilization damage down the other. Two of these pieces were recovered from the middle Bronze Age burnt mound. It is usually considered

that more specialized tools, such as serrated flakes are no longer produced once bronze tool use becomes common (Ford *et al.* 1984). It is possible that these few finds are residual, although it is assumed that there would be a period of transition as new tools and working methods became established.

Utilized flake with gloss

One large flake 50mm wide and in excess of 50mm in length possessed utilization edge damage accompanied by a band of gloss along one edge. The band of gloss was present on the ventral side only and was 2mm wide and extended to the very edge of the flint. Two other flakes may also have utilization damage but these are included in the total for flakes (above).

Arrowhead

A single broken piece with invasive retouch from the Bronze Age ditch 1001 appears to be an arrowhead of leaf-shaped or barbed and tanged form, but with insufficient remaining to distinguish between the two types.

Discussion

Taking into account the shape of the flakes and the repertoire of retouched tools, the collection overall suggests a date in the later Neolithic or earlier Bronze Age, but with some earlier material as residual finds. Once the contexts and associated pottery finds are considered, an earlier Bronze Age chronology is preferred.

The collection appears to reflect a use assemblage, i.e. one that does not include procurement or manufacture to any great extent. The latter activities usually produce much larger quantities of material which include significant proportions of unused and unusable flakes, large numbers of cortical flakes and spalls, micro-debitage, and, if the flint source is poor and frost damaged, much irregular workshop waste. The proportions of retouched material would also be low whereas the proportion of retouched material here at about 5% (excluding spalls) is modest (cf. Healey & Robertson-Mackay 1983, 21). The number of spalls is low. The collection here has produced

only a modest quantity of material and does not include a significant proportion of knapping debris, despite a sieving programme.

Other finds

One fragment of a sedimentary stone weighing 556g was recovered from the upper fill of Roman ditch 1002. This was 100mm long by 80mm wide and is polished smooth on one side. The other side has a groove running parallel to the outer rim. Its use is uncertain but could be a quern or a whetstone. A small, large headed nail (4g) and a fragment of iron slag (less than 2g) also came from ditch 1002. A tiny animal bone assemblage (8 fragments, 8g) was recovered from the surface of the same ditch. All fragments were poorly preserved and no close identification could be made.

Charcoal by Lucy Cramp

Nine samples of sediment were taken for environmental analysis. Only three contained identifiable charcoal. Two samples from ditch 1001 and gully 121 (which may be just a depression in the top of the burnt mound) contained low concentrations of charcoal. In ditch 1001 hazel (*Corylus* sp.) and hawthorn (Pomoideae) were present, whilst in 121, these species were joined by oak (*Quercus* sp.) and alder charcoal (*Alnus* sp.). This indicates a mixed fuel economy, probably using locally-growing trees and shrubs. Hollow 1000 contained two fragments of alder.

Radiocarbon Dating

A sample of oak charcoal from the burnt mound (slot 103, 179) was processed by the Leibniz Laboratory at the University of Kiel. Details of methodology are in archive; in summary the result is considered reliable. The calibrated age is determined according to Stuiver *et al.* 1998. Table 4 gives the statistical summary; the most likely date range is 1454–1370 BC. This dates the formation of the top layer of the burnt mound to the middle to late Bronze Age, which accords reasonably well with the ceramic chronology.

Table 4 Radiocarbon date and calibration

KIA26695	<i>Conventional Age</i>	<i>Corrected pMC</i>
layer 179, burnt mound 1003	3135 ± 25 BP	67.70 ± 0.23
Radiocarbon Age:	BP 3134 ± 27	δ ¹³ C(‰)
Calibrated Age:	cal BC 1410	-27.87 ± 0.14
	<i>Calibrated age (years BC)</i>	<i>Probability</i>
One Sigma Range: Probability 68.3 %	1433–1390	62.2%
	1329–1323	6.1%
Two Sigma Range: Probability 95.4 %	1493–1477	3.8%
	1454–1370	77.3%
	1358–1350	1.0%
	1342–1317	13.4%

CONCLUSION

by Richard Oram and Steve Ford

The main outcome of this small excavation has been the investigation and recording of a burnt mound. However, initial activity on the site predates the formation of the burnt mound. Survival of the burnt mound as a stratified entity rather than a plough-dispersed spread of burnt flint may be largely due to its location within the upper fill of a natural hollow. The hollow is considered to have acted as a trap for cultural material. This material, which contains a few fragments of Neolithic pottery and a few flints of Mesolithic or possibly earlier Neolithic date, is likely to have accumulated in the early Bronze Age, and in all probability did not predate use of the site as a burnt mound in the middle Bronze Age to any great extent. It is not possible to determine if the Bronze Age ditch (1001) reflects this phase of activity or that of use of the burnt mound.

Burnt mounds are a monument type relatively infrequently recorded in the literature for southern Britain and with an uneven distribution countrywide (Ehrenberg 1991, fig. 1). They are more frequently encountered in the highland zone of Britain and Ireland where

they have been well studied and characterized (Buckley 1990), and some southern British monuments seem to be closely comparable to the highland zone types (Pasmore & Pallister 1967; Shennan 1999). They are, at the most generic level of description, simple dumps of fire cracked flint or stone, and are being increasingly recognized in southern Britain, mostly as a consequence of development-led investigations over the last 15 years or so (cf. Beamish & Ripper 2000). Numerous theories on the function of these deposits include their use as saunas (Barfield & Hodder 1989) or for fulling (Jeffery 1991), but it is likely that one main use is for the efficient cooking of large amounts of meat by boiling, hot stones being used to heat the water (O'Driscoll 1988; Barber 1990, 101).

Yet many of the local examples with which the site here draws close comparison seem to differ from the classic highland zone types, which typically comprise a substantial crescentic mound surrounding a trough and sited very close to water. Lowland zone examples even fail to meet the English Heritage Monument Protection Programme definition in full (Raymond 1987). For Scottish sites, Barber (1990, 98) has recognized variation in the context of burnt

stone deposition, with burnt mounds proper (*fulachta fiadh*) at one extreme and occupation sites at the other. Indeed Cunliffe (1973, 178) used surface distributions of burnt flint as indicators of Bronze Age occupation at Chalton, Hampshire. The site here at Greywell Road does not easily fit into any of Barber's categories.

The mound here comprises an elongated dump 17m × 7m but with no more than 0.26m thickness. No structural remains were observed in the excavation or in nearby evaluation trenches and few contemporary prehistoric finds or deposits were noted elsewhere. Bronze Age ditch 1001 may predate the burnt mound and some possible treeholes are only associated due to their burnt flint content. Conspicuously absent are any features that might have functioned as a trough. In this respect it is broadly comparable to sites found in the Thames and Kennet Valleys as at Turnpike School, Newbury (Pine forthcoming), Anslows Cottages, Burghfield (Butterworth & Lobb 1992, 90), Green Park, Reading (Brossler *et al.* 2004, 39–41) and Barkham Square, Wokingham (Torrance & Ford 2003). The site is not located adjacent to water (i.e. not on the banks of a stream) though it does lie on the valley floor of the River Lyde, with water not far distant. It is similar in location to Turnpike School, Newbury and other sites discussed in Torrance & Ford (2003, 95).

Unlike most comparable sites, however, it should be noted that at Greywell Road recovered artefacts (flint and pottery) were moderately abundant, with the flintwork indicative of domestic use. Of the mounds mentioned above, only Green Park contained any quantity of finds (Brossler *et al.* 2004, 39). As use of the site commenced in the earlier part of the Bronze Age, it should not be of no great surprise that subsoil deposits indicative of occupation are absent (cf. Healy 1983).

Chronology

Burnt mounds are regarded as a predominantly Bronze Age phenomenon with an emphasis on the later Bronze Age. The few English radio-

carbon dates available to Brindley and Lanting (1990, fig. 25) agree with this date-range, and further corroboration comes from more recently acquired dates from Turnpike School, Newbury (996–807 cal BC; Pine forthcoming) and Barkham Square, near Wokingham (two dates centred on 900 cal BC; Torrance & Ford 2003). The sites at Green Park, Reading (Brossler *et al.* 2004, 39–41) and Harbridge, Hampshire (Shennan 1999, 177) are dated by association with late Bronze Age pottery. A burnt flint spread at Anslows Cottages, Burghfield is not itself dated but is thought likely to be contemporary with features yielding late Bronze Age pottery and a 7th- or 8th-century BC radiocarbon date (Butterworth & Lobb 1992, 85–90; 166–7). Recent reports continue to document sites with late Bronze Age dates from further afield (Leah & Young 2002; Beamish & Ripper 2000).

The single radiocarbon date for Greywell Road of 1454–1370 BC places the site firmly in the middle Bronze Age. This date is somewhat earlier than the conventional dating discussed above but is not regarded as unreliable, nor need it be considered exceptional. A burnt mound excavated at Phoenix Wharf in London is dated to 1690–1490 BC (BM 2766: Sidell *et al.* 2002, 28), and a date of 1640–1522 BC (KIA26310) has recently been obtained on another small mound in the Ravensbourne Valley at Deptford, London (Hammond forthcoming), while a site at Bestwall Quarry, Dorset is firmly associated with middle Bronze Age pottery (Ladle & Woodward 2003). Sites further afield, as at Feltwell Anchor, Norfolk where the associated pottery is Beaker (Bates & Wiltshire 1992) and at Willington, Staffs where the associated material is late Neolithic (Beamish & Ripper 2000) indicate an even longer tradition.

The only Roman feature found on the site was ditch 1002. Its position and orientation match the projected course of the Roman road from Silchester to Chichester via Neatham (Alton). The road was identified on its predicted path, during a watching brief 3km to the north of the site where it comprised a metalled gravel surface about 6m wide with

flanking ditches (Moore 2001). At Greywell Road, however, enough was stripped either side of ditch 1002 to show that there was no other related feature such as a parallel ditch or metalled surface. No traces of the road were found in the evaluation trenches and its nature and course in this vicinity remain a question for future researchers. Only a slight deviation (perhaps to a ford of the Lyde, or more likely the Loddon) would be needed for it to bypass the site.

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