Fieldwork at a Prehistoric, Iron-Age and Roman Site at Hurst Hill, Cumnor, Oxford

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with a contribution by BOB EELES

SUMMARY

Fieldwalking in a recently ploughed field east of Cumnor located a scatter of prehistoric worked flint and Iron-Age, Roman and medieval pottery. Analysis of the pottery finds indicates that the site may have been occupied from the seventh to the second century BC and then again in the Roman period. Evidence of iron-working, cloth production and cereal cultivation was obtained. It is probable that most of the pottery was made in or near the settlement. Repeated gridded fieldwalking also sheds some light on the survival rates for prehistoric pottery in ploughed areas. A magnetometer survey undertaken in 2012 of part of the area indicates roundhouses surrounded by pits.

In 1981 an area of Iron-Age occupation was located on the south-east shoulder of Cumnor Hurst at NGR SP 4783 0398 (Fig. 1). This was fieldwalked by members of the Abingdon Area Archaeological and Historical Society in 1982 and 1983. It was also fieldwalked as part of Robin Holgate's research into prehistoric settlement patterns.[1] The site was then noted in South Midlands Archaeology.[2] Little else was done until the advent of computers and reliable geophysics equipment enabled the society to carry out more work and bring the site to publication.

LOCATION

Cumnor Hurst is some 2.5 miles (4 km) west of Oxford. The site is on the south-eastern spur of the Hurst and is close to one of the relatively few sources of water in the area, a spring in the corner of the field at NGR SP 4769 0391. The south-eastern slope of the hill may have been a preferred settlement site for climatic reasons as the evidence of the positioning of doorways in Iron-Age round houses indicates that the south-east was by far the preferred side.[3]

The geology is Coral Rag, which outcrops at approximately 120 metres OD. It is overlain by Kimmeridge Clay, which outcrops on the lower side of the survey area at about 140 metres OD. Over this is Lower Greensand, which itself has patches of Plateau Gravel on top of it. The survey area is mainly on Lower Greensand although there are also patches of Northern Drift in the area.

In the survey area the soil is a light grey-brown sandy loam with sandier patches on the slopes and occasional patches of cobbles and coarse gravel of the Northern Drift. Lower down the slope the silt content of the soil increases, making it heavier and more able to contain

[1] R. Holgate, 'Mesolithic, Neolithic and Earlier Bronze-Age Settlement Patterns South-West of Oxford', *Oxoniensia*, 51 (1986), pp. 1–14.
[2] J. Wallis, 'Cumnor: Hurst Hill', *SMidlA*, 13 (1983), p. 124.
[3] G. Guilbert, 'Double-Ring Roundhouses', *Proceedings of the Prehistoric Society*, 47 (1981), pp. 299–317.

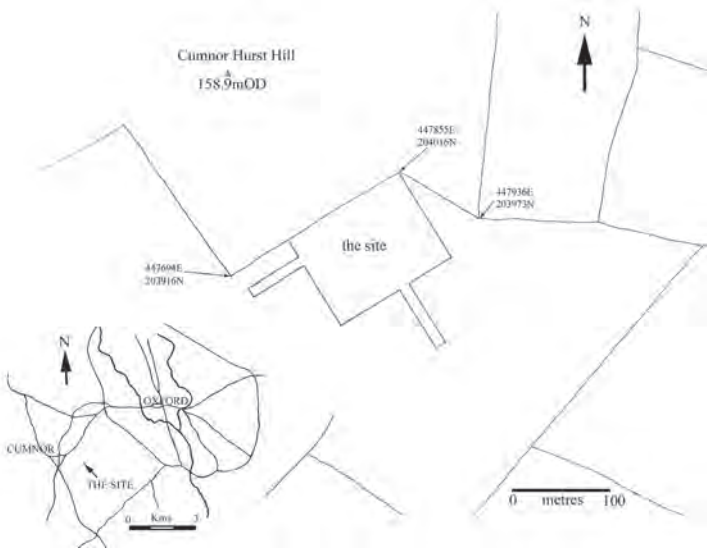

Fig. 1. Site location plan.

moisture. There was no evidence of ridge and furrow in the survey area or in the fields adjoining it.

The Lower Greensand soils are slightly acidic, with a pH of between 5.6 and 6.7, and are very free draining. Their free-draining character limits their usefulness for arable agriculture on hilltop sites such as that at Cumnor. Today most of the land in the area with this soil type is wooded, and this was probably the case in the Iron Age. The soils lower down the slope on the clay and, more particularly the limestone, are better suited to arable crops.

Ordnance survey maps show a progressive encroachment of the Hurst by fields since 1876. The field in which the pottery scatter was found was taken into agricultural use between 1922 and 1937. Mrs Carter of Henwood Farm, who farmed this land, stated that this field was under grass until 1975, since when it has been ploughed. Air photographs of 1945 show that this area was then in the uncultivated part of the Hurst. The area was used for military training during the Second World War,[4] which may account for apparent zig-zag ditches in the currently wooded area and the military related fieldwalking finds.

Further air photographs taken in July 1983 showed nothing of archaeological interest. This may indicate that the Lower Greensand is too free-draining to retain enough moisture to cause the differences in vegetation which reveal archaeological remains. At nearby Chilswell, Lower Greensand geology produced no cropmarks yet magnetometry revealed extensive settlement remains.[5]

The HER shows several other finds of archaeological material in this area. Generally these show Mesolithic and other flint implements found on Boars Hill and Hurst Hill above 130 metres OD. In the saddle between the hills is a Roman road and where this goes downhill to the north-east Roman pottery has been found.[6] The Oxford University Archaeological Society excavated Romano-British features at Chilswell Farm,[7] and also found early Iron-Age

[4] Information from Basil Turton.

[5] Abingdon Archaeological Geophysics, 'Chilswell Geophysics', Archaeology Data Service OASIS grey literature report, ref. Abingdon1–108851–1pdf.

[6] T. Allen, 'South Hinksey, Hinksey Hill Farm', *SMidlA*, 23 (1993), p. 77.

[7] N. Donald and S. Crawford, 'A Roman Villa at Chilswell Farm, Hinksey Hill, Oxon', *Oxoniensia*, 51 (1986), pp. 189–93.

occupation on nearby Wytham Hill.[8] At Tubney OA has excavated Mesolithic, Iron-Age and Roman remains.[9]

SURVEYS

Augering

Augering was carried out every 10 metres in a single line down the area from grid A6 to O6. This usually produced a dark-grey sandy silt for approx 28 cm depth after which coarser, presumably natural, sand was located, although in grid I6 clay was located at 30 cm depth. Outside the survey area, further up the slope, the topsoil was shallower to the extent that at approximately 50 metres uphill from the survey area only some 10 cm of topsoil and turf covered Lower Greensand.

Contour

A contour survey was carried out (Fig. 2).

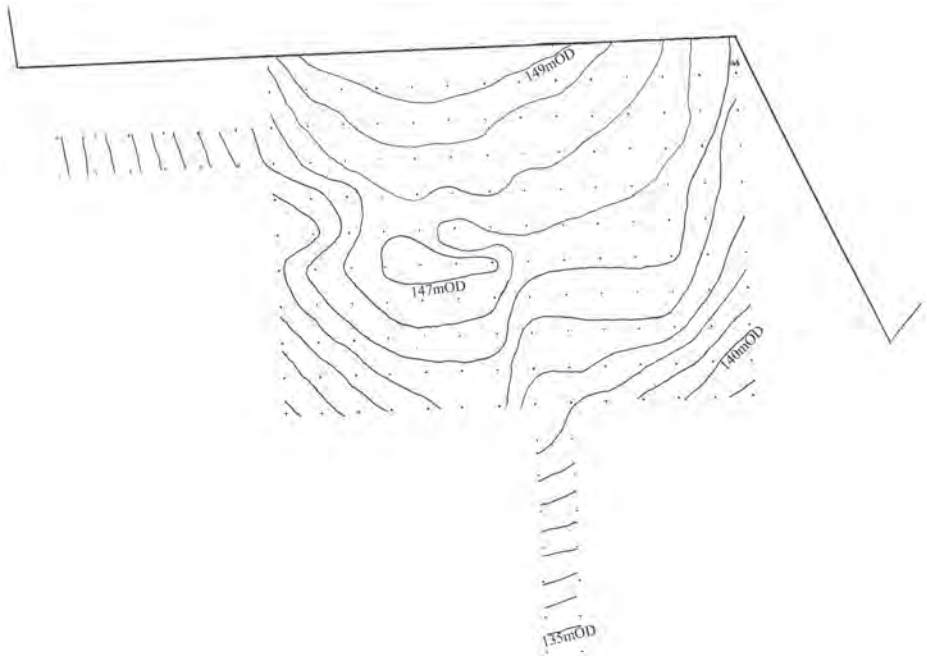

Fig. 2. Contour survey.

Magnetometry and Earth Resistance

A magnetometer survey was carried out over an area of 120 by 60 metres using a Bartington Grad 601/2 gradiometer in 30 metre grids with lines 1 metre apart and 8 readings per metre. A resistivity survey was also carried out. A report on these surveys has been submitted to the Archaeology Data Service.[10]

[8] H. Mytum, 'An Early Iron-Age Site at Wytham Hill, near Cumnor, Oxford', *Oxoniensia*, 51 (1986), pp. 15–25.
[9] A. Simmonds et al., 'Excavations at Tubney Wood Quarry, 2001–9', *Oxoniensia*, 76 (2011), pp. 105–73.
[10] Archaeology Data Service, report no. Abingdon 1–146290.

Interpretation of magnetometer survey:

1. High magnetic anomalies. These could possibly be deeply buried large pieces of iron but are more likely to be kilns or furnaces.
2. Curved positive anomalies. Some of these could be the ditches around circular huts.

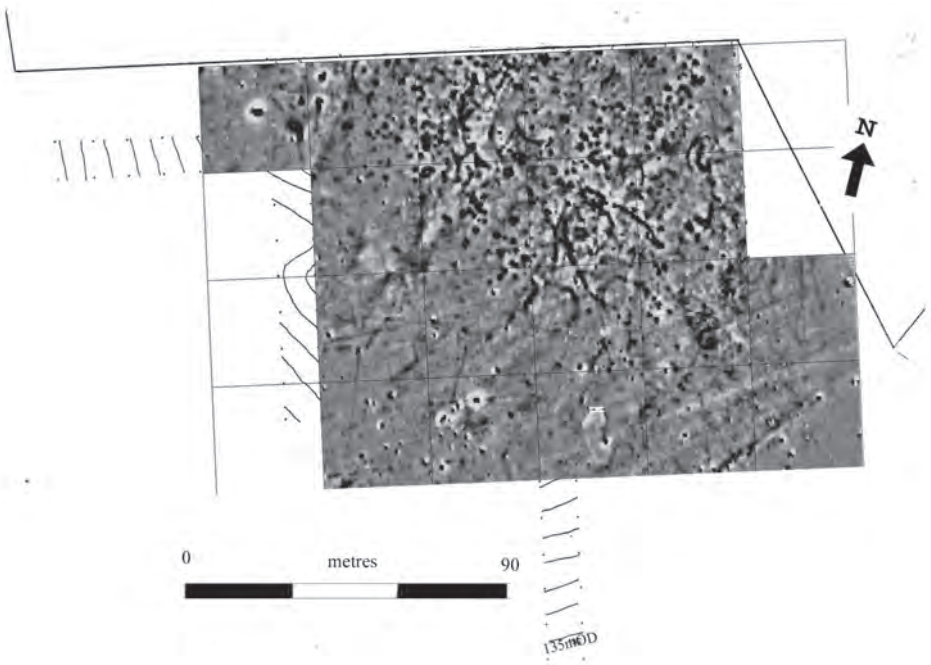

Fig. 3. Magnetometry survey on contour plot.

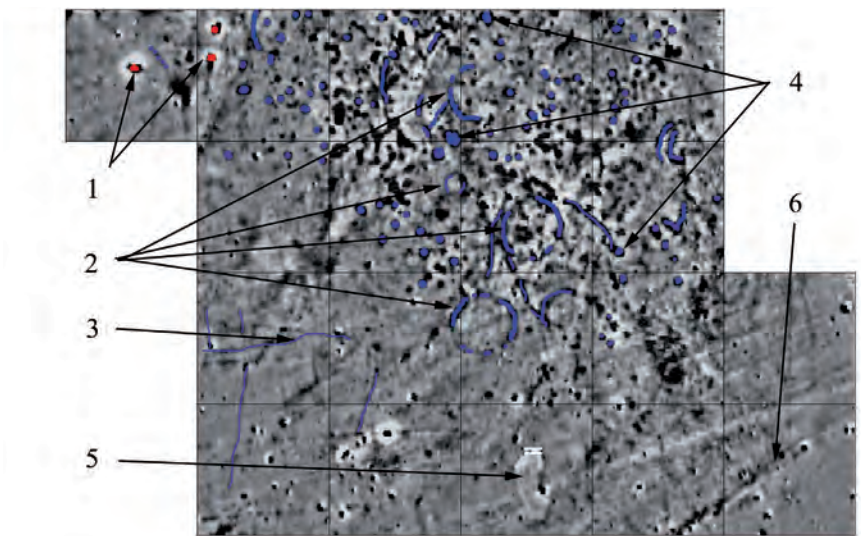

Fig. 4. Magnetometry interpretation.

3. Narrow positive anomalies. These could be a field system of unknown date.
4. Many small positive anomalies. These could be pits but many could also be tree-throw holes.
5. Modern animal scrape.
6. Former field boundary.

The resistivity survey of the area only located the differing geologies, showing the Lower Greensand cut by strips of Northern Drift. It appears that the pits are more prevalent in the Lower Greensand areas than on the Northern Drift gravels.

Fieldwalking

When the site was first located some 250 g of pottery and flint were found in a dense scatter, representing a much greater concentration than the very occasional waste flake which had been found elsewhere on the hill, even on similar light soils. The area was then systematically fieldwalked in 10 metre squares numbered 1 to 19 aligned approximately east–west along the northern field boundary with square 1 in the north-eastern corner. Grids were labelled A to Q going downhill from north to south with A also being in the north eastern-corner (Fig. 5).

The main survey was over a block of thirteen squares east–west and ten squares north–south with a single line of six grids going west and seven grids going south to sample areas where the surface scatter appeared to have ended. It was not possible to investigate areas to the north-east and north-west of the survey field as these were overgrown.

Each walker spent ten minutes on a square and collected all visible material. They then moved to the next available square. This meant that no line of squares was walked by the same person. This was to minimise differences caused by people having different abilities in identifying finds. The same grids were walked in both September 1982 and in September 1983 in order to compare recovery rates. This method was adopted as Robin Holgate's method of walking separate lines 20 metres apart was considered to be unlikely to produce a good plan of the site and we were trying to understand a single site rather than locating sites.

The fieldwalking team was mainly the same on both occasions and fieldwalking conditions were good. As flint is not naturally found in this area it was relatively easy to recognise this on the surface.

The finds were washed and weighed and the pottery recorded. The pottery classifications are given below (the pottery). As the resulting tabulation is of approximately 100 pages it will be left in that form for archive storage.

Results. Details of the finds collected each year are given below (Figs. 5 and 6 and Table 1). In addition to flint and pottery, pieces of burnt clay and slag were also found. A few other items were discovered such as pieces of field drains and clay pipe stems. A live blank round of .303 ammunition and a piece of mortar bomb were discarded.

Roman pottery was found in grids C13, E5, F12, G5, H10, H12, I8, I10, I11, J7 and K8. Medieval pottery was found in grids H4, I1 and J2.

Whilst fieldwalking it was noticed that some of the pottery fragments were large by fieldwalking standards (6 cm by 5 cm) and that some pottery had nearly turned back into clay as it was so poorly fired. This could indicate that the site had seldom been ploughed or that recent ploughing was going deeper and bringing up material which would soon decay.

DISCUSSION

The fieldwalking results indicate that the flint is more evenly distributed across the site than the pottery. The latter is concentrated at the top of the field. The quantity of flints recovered,

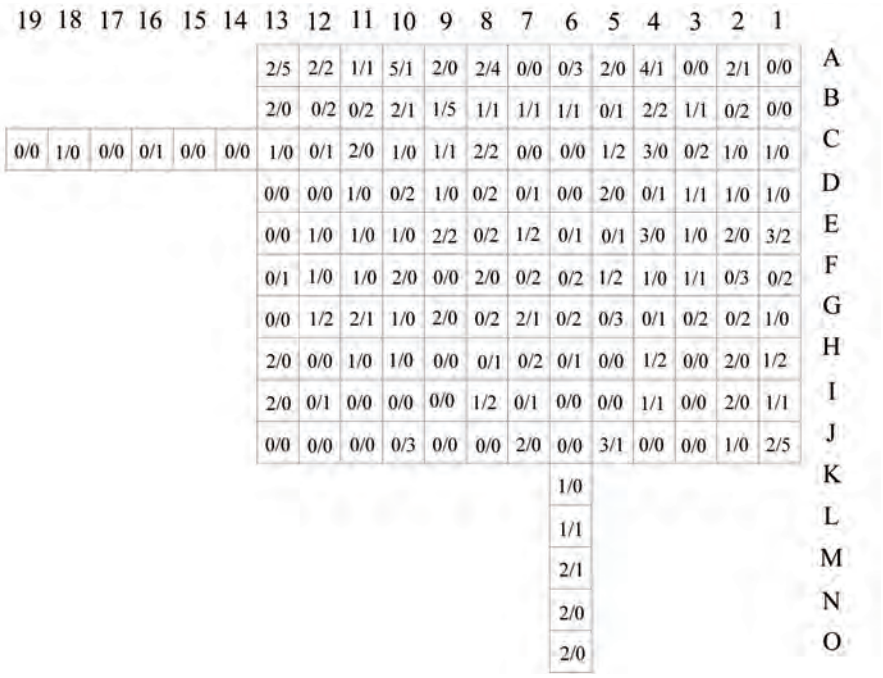

Fig. 5. Number of flints, 1982 (left number in each grid) and 1983 (right number in each grid).

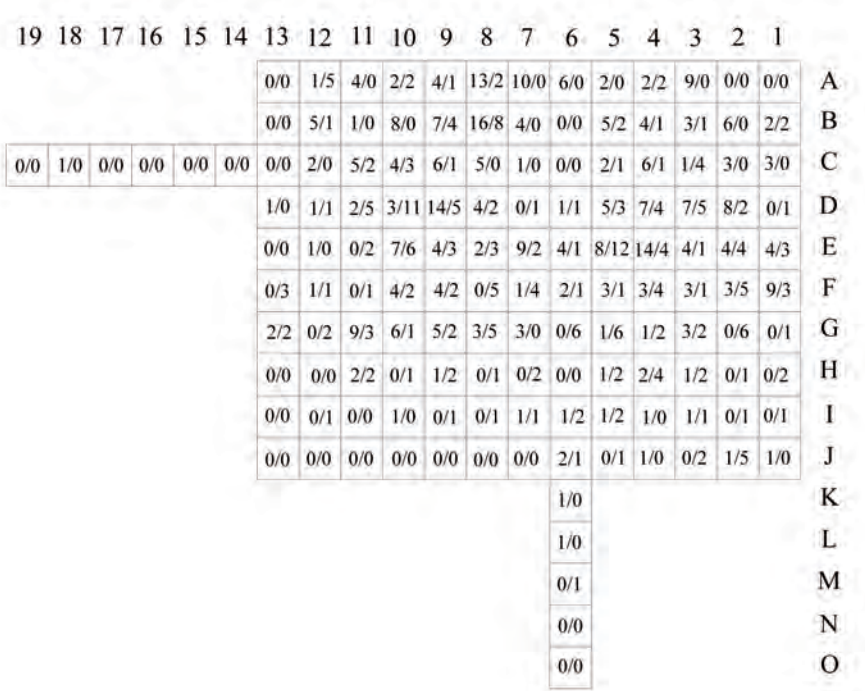

Fig. 6. Pot sherds 1982 (left number in each grid) and 1983 (right number in each grid).

Table 1. Finds quantification

	1982			1983		
Flints total (no.)		**109**			**104**	
Iron-Age Pottery	**number**	**(g)**	**mean**	**number**	**(g)**	**mean**
Sand-tempered	279	1972	7.1	169	1150	6.8
Limestone	27	206	7.6	43	318	7.4
Flint	5	16	3.2	6	53	8.8
Grog	11	75	6.8	11	60	5.4
Shell	5	21	4.2	0	0	0
Organic	26	264	10.1	7	69	9.8
Roman pottery	7	140	20	4	24	6.0
Medieval pottery	0	0	0	3	34	11.3
Sand tempered			7.1			6.8
Non-sand tempered			7.9			7.5

approximately 100 each year, can be compared with the fieldwalking conducted by Robin Holgate in 1982 before the main gridded fieldwalking took place. When his team walked over the area walking lines 20 metres apart only 3 flint flakes plus a flint cutting flake or knife were found.[11] This indicates that that method may only be useful for locating sites and even then may miss some smaller sites altogether.

Whilst the amount of flints found in 1983 was approximately the same as was found in 1982, 40 per cent less sand-tempered pottery was found and 10 per cent less non sand-tempered pottery, by sherd number. Peter Reynolds has conducted experiments with 5 cm by 3 cm dummy sherds which indicate that an average of 11–14 per cent of sherds were visible on the surface each year.[12] If this was applied to this site we should expect to have recovered some 14 per cent fewer sherds in the second year, as they had been removed by the first year's fieldwalking, and thus found some 85 per cent in the second year. The reason for our 60 per cent and 90 per cent collection rates may be that our sand-tempered sherds have decayed upon exposure to the elements, whilst his dummy sherds did not, and that non sand-tempered sherds were being brought to the surface by deeper than usual ploughing. Shennan has also found that a second year's fieldwalking only located some 55 per cent of the post-medieval sherds located previously although it recovered some 75 per cent of the previous chipped stone quantities.[13]

Period and Type of Occupation

The flint finds indicate a Mesolithic to Bronze-Age range with the main, albeit probably short, period of occupation being in the late Neolithic. Although scrapers were found, which could indicate an occupation site, their distribution does not assist in defining its location, other than indicating that it was on the eastern part of the survey area.

[11] Holgate, 'Mesolithic, Neolithic and Earlier Bronze-Age Settlement', p. 4.

[12] P. Reynolds, 'Sherd Movement in the Ploughzone – Physical Data Base into Computer Simulation', in *Computer and Quantative Methods in Archaeology* (1988), p. 15.

[13] S.J. Shennan et al., *Experiments in the Collection and Analysis of Archaeological Survey Data: The East Hampshire Survey* (1985), p. 44.

The main period of Iron-Age occupation appears to be middle Iron Age although some pottery sherds could be early Iron Age. The finds from this period include a spindle whorl and a loom weight which indicate some permanence to the occupation. The magnetometry results indicate several round houses and a mass of probable pits which could have been cut into the Lower Greensand rather than the Northern Drift. Pottery may have been produced locally as much of the Iron-Age pottery contains Lower Greensand grains.

A small scatter of pottery and narrow field ditches on the magnetometry plan indicate Roman occupation to the west and south of the area. The iron-working debris may well be from this phase of occupation. The small areas of very high magnetometry readings could be furnaces or kilns. If this is the case then their location, near the junction of Greensand with the underlying Kimmeridge Clay, appears to be similar to that of kilns on Boars Hill.[14] However, no wasters were found to indicate large-scale pottery production here.

Although too little Roman pottery was found to form any meaningful interpretation, the little there was does not appear to have the same distribution as the prehistoric pottery which indicates a break in occupation at some time after the middle Iron Age.

A small cluster of medieval pottery indicates settlement in the vicinity – possibly to the south-east of the survey area.

This work indicates that after Neolithic use of the area the main occupation of this site may have commenced in the late Bronze/early Iron Age and peaked in the middle to later Iron Age. There is then a Roman presence in the vicinity which may have included iron production. By fieldwalking the area twice we may have gained some insight into the rate of decay of pottery in ploughed soils and the content of features disturbed by deeper ploughing.

THE FLINTS by BOB EELES

Table 2 below gives the results of the classification of the flints. A length to width ratio of 3:1 is used here to characterise blades. Several flakes possess blade scars indicating an early date for them. This table includes flints which were found before the gridded fieldwalking took place.

Comparisons are made between the Cumnor Hurst/Hurst Hill flints and mostly unpublished sites in the locality.[15] Inter-site comparisons are difficult as some published sites do not use standardised conventions or do not always differentiate blades and flakes, core types or use a consistent length–width ratio for blades. A few of the sites referred to are in Robin Holgate's article on the settlement patterns in this area, but the data used in this report are original unless stated otherwise.

Eleven flakes are sharp and unpatinated and may have arrived at the site as part of recent liming activities such as observed recently at Culham and Lower Farm, Radley.

Flint Source

Certain flints were probably obtained locally as a few pieces have the appearance of being derived from glacial (gravel) deposits or an unknown source of cherty flint. Avery suggests the Chiltern outwash gravels as a possible source of poorer quality flint and this is one possible area of origin.[16] Many flint reports for this locality speculate a possible source of raw materials from either the Chilterns or Berkshire Downs. If either or both were the source for the Cumnor flints then a riverine mode of transport seems most plausible.

[14] R. Scott, 'Boars Hill Research Project', *SMidlA*, 32 (2002), p. 39.
[15] R.M.G. Eeles, in preparation.
[16] M. Avery, 'The Neolithic Causewayed Enclosure, Abingdon', in H.J. Case and A.W.R. Whittle, *Settlement Patterns in the Oxford Region: Excavations at the Abingdon Causewayed Enclosure and other Sites* (1982), p. 35.

Distribution on Site

With such low numbers of finds statistical analyses within the Cumnor Hurst grid or statistical comparisons between this site and others are not warranted and comments on the assemblage can only be general observations. There is no statistically testable distribution within the Cumnor Hurst scatter, or for that matter the types of artefacts, that can be explained by anything other than vertical or lateral plough-drift.

It is possible that the surface scatter at Cumnor Hurst correlates with worked flint distributions in the subsoil such as is apparent at nearby Tubney Wood but only excavation would confirm this.[17] At Barrow Hills, Radley (a similar ploughed sandy site with shallow topsoils) the surface scatter also apparently corresponded with underlying (excavated) flint distribution suggesting limited redistribution by ploughing from the original source of the material.[18] Thus, it remains a possibility that flints in the topsoils at Cumnor Hurst may correlate with underlying archaeology but additional work would be required to demonstrate this.

Interpretation

Overall, the surface flint assemblage indicates an occupation area of low intensity or short duration of Mesolithic and Neolithic date with only the barbed-and-tanged arrowhead (no. 36) convincingly indicating a late Neolithic/Bronze-Age (hunting?) visit. Many of the flakes could be of the earlier period but they are not diagnostic except for a small number with evidence on their dorsal surfaces of previous blade removals. Edge damage on some flakes may have been caused by plough damage or trampling (some is recent) and only on two is there clear evidence of deliberate retouch.

Compared to the flint types from other early sites in the locality, the relatively low proportion of soft-hammer struck blades at Cumnor Hurst (21.5 per cent) is perhaps atypical unless one considers the apparent limited occupation duration and perhaps that available flint was not of good enough quality (much is cherty) to allow for the production of blades. Curation times may also have been longer and reduction of struck flints and cores may have been more intense if flint was not easily obtained.

Blades are on the small size compared to riverine sites such as Lower Farm, Radley (SU 533000, mean length 68 mm, exactly the same as Tubney Wood) where they are approximately twice the size and weight as those from Cumnor Hurst. It is not certain but likely on current evidence that much of the Cumnor Hurst assemblage can be assigned to the middle to later Neolithic when blades were becoming less common.[19] This seems more plausible if one allows for the small number of diagnostic Mesolithic and earlier Neolithic flints as being indicative of brief visits. The large steeply retouched scraper (no. 17) may be Mesolithic.

This site has a blade proportion of 21.5 per cent. It might be expected that an earlier Neolithic site should have more blades and that a low proportion would indicate a later date or a subsequent prehistoric reoccupation. Mesolithic and earlier Neolithic sites in the locality such as Cothill (SU 998457), Pumney Farm[20] (SU 530974) and Otney[21] (SU 496946 with a small Bronze-Age contribution) invariably produce blade proportions of *c*.50 per cent (of, respectively, 374, 2,224 and 1,134 total finds) and have little evidence for later occupation so any 'dilution' effect on blade proportions is likely to be lower than multi-period sites.

There are parallels with higher gravel terrace sites such as Tithe Farm (SU 483958) and Culham Hill (SU 505960) where blades are relatively uncommon (respectively, *c*.25 per cent of

[17] Simmonds et al., 'Excavations at Tubney Wood Quarry', figs. 15–16; P. Bradley and G. Hey, 'A Mesolithic Site at New Plantation, Fyfield and Tubney, Oxfordshire', *Oxoniensia*, 58 (1993), pp. 1–26.

[18] A. Barclay and C. Halpin, *Excavations at Barrow Hills, Radley, Oxfordshire. Volume 1, The Neolithic and Bronze Age Monument Complex*, Thames Valley Landscapes Monograph, 1 (1999), p. 15.

[19] Holgate, 'Mesolithic, Neolithic and Earlier Bronze-Age Settlement', p. 3.

[20] R. Ainslie, 'Pumney Farm,' *SMidlA*, 32 (2002) p. 38.

[21] R.M.G. Eeles, 'Sutton Courtenay, Sutton Wick Area C', *SMidlA*, 29 (1999), pp. 38–9.

Table 2. Flint descriptions and quantities from Cumnor Hurst obtained by gridded fieldwalking

	ARTEFACT TYPES	**1982 N & % *(in parentheses)***	**1983 N & % *(in parentheses)***
Mesolithic	Microlith cores (small 'bladelet' cores)	1 (0.862)	1 (0.855)
	Microlith (with steep retouch)	1 (0.862)	
	Mesolithic (?) 'shouldered / tanged' point		1 (0.855)
Mesolithic and/or early Neolithic	Blades with no apparent edge use	11 (9.483)	15 (12.821)
	Retouched blades (along edges) where retouch is clear	3 (2.586)	4 (3.419)
	Notched blade, 'shaft scraper' that also seems to have been a perforator	1 (0.862)	
	Denticulate/serrated blades	2 (1.724)	1 (0.855)
	Retouched and pointed blades = likely projectile tips but with shallow retouch	2 (1.724)	
	Blades with edge utilisation damage (?)	6 (5.172)	5 (4.273)
	All blades	25 (21.551)	25 (21.368)
Neolithic and/or Bronze Age	Notched flake 'shaft scraper'	1 (0.862)	
	Scrapers (rounded to ovoid). (One 'chunky' steeply retouched example may be Mesolithic)	6 (5.172)	14 (11.966)
	Leaf-shaped arrowhead broken in antiquity	1 (0.862)	
	Burin		1 (0.855)
Late-Neolithic or Bronze Age	Barbed & tanged arrowhead		1 (0.855)
Undiagnostic	Burned & unclassifiable pieces	14 (12.068)	13 (11.111)
	Flake cores (multi-platform) including one enormous specimen	5 (4.310)	8 (6.838)
	Quartz flake?	1 (0.862)	
	Flakes and chips/uncharacterisable (unburned) debitage	60 (51.724)	54 (46.154)
	Retouched flakes, one pointed example may be a perforator. Only the tip is worked, the rest possesses pot-lid fractures so is a local item	2 (1.724)	
	TOTALS	116	117

225 finds and *c*.25 per cent of 107 finds). It may be coincidental that both these sites also had Iron-Age occupation in the immediate vicinity. The proportion of blades can also be as low as 25 per cent at multi-period occupation sites such as Andersey Island[22] (SU 503963) due to the 'dilution effect' caused by the introduction of artefacts from later occupants whose technology was less reliant on blade production.

The proportion of burnt material at Cumnor Hurst (12 per cent) *may* be characteristic of early occupation, but this observation may be artefactual and is not supported by any incontrovertible evidence from other sources. High numbers of burnt pieces can be characteristic of early sites in the locality such as Pumney Farm (35 per cent) and Otney (13 per cent), both occupation sites sealed by alluvium, revealed by gravel extraction.

Overall conclusions are hampered by small sample sizes, and only a tentative interpretation of a predominantly middle to later Neolithic site is possible. The low diversity of tool forms would be an expectation of a short occupancy or a small sample size. A larger sample would be likely to exhibit the presence of rarer tool forms such as axes, assuming a (statistically) normal distribution. On the available evidence this site appears to have been a 'marginal' one in a landscape generally exhibiting abundant evidence for occupation in this period, particularly on the lower gravel terraces and gravel islands along the Thames.

THE POTTERY

The pottery was washed and then classified on the following basis:

A, firing: 1 oxidised (red), 2 reduced (black), 3 oxidised/reduced/oxidised, 4 oxidised interior/reduced exterior, 5 reduced interior/oxidised exterior
B, surface: 6 burnished, 7 not burnished
C, thickness: 8 thickness (mm)
D, hardness: 9 softer than brass, 10 harder than brass
E, fabric: 12 sand temper (%), 12a greensand grains, 13 flint temper (%), 14 shell temper 15 other temper (named); where a sherd has two or more tempers it is included in the totals of pottery for each temper so the total weight of pottery will include some double counting
F, weight: 16 weight (g)

The accuracy of the classification was variable, the major difficulty being the identification of grog temper; limestone temper was a little easier and was inferred where irregular voids gave sherds a corky appearance. Grass and chaff temper were more easily identified on the surfaces of sherds but sufficient traces were visible in the core of sherds for it to be ascertained that this tempering was deliberately added and was not just the result of wet pots being laid on grass or straw-covered surfaces. Much of the sand-tempered pottery contained large rounded grains indicating that the temper was from the local Lower Greensand. This analysis is in the site archive.

At the time of its discovery, much attention was paid to see whether the pottery was Iron Age or Saxon as these often have similar fabrics.[23] To enable a view to be taken of the date of the pottery, six sherds with chaff impressions were given to Dr Mark Robinson, who identified a *Triticum* sp. glume base in a sherd from C4, a *Triticum* cf. *spelta* glume base in a sherd from Cl and a *Triticum* cf. *dicoccum* spikelet in a sherd from B5. Although the sample was very small he suggested a Bronze-Age to Roman date rather than a Saxon one for the sherds.

Since then organic-tempered pottery has been more widely recognised on Iron-Age

[22] R. Ainslie, 'Andersey Island', *SMidlA*, 21 (1991) pp. 111–12.
[23] P.V. Addyman, 'Dark Age Settlement at Maxey, Northants', *MedArch*, 8 (1964), p. 50.

sites and at Tubney, some 9 per cent of the pottery on a middle Iron-Age site was vegetable tempered.[24]

The small size of the sample and the few base and rim sherds found makes it difficult to say anything useful about the pottery forms. Virtually all the pottery types can be paralleled by examples from Farmoor and most by examples from Ashville and Appleford.[25] Here the globular bowl forms tend to have sand temper whilst other forms often have limestone and vegetable temperings. This could accord with the transition towards sand tempering seen at other sites but it could also be influenced by sand-tempered pottery surviving longer in topsoil once it is ploughed up whilst other softer fabrics may decay more quickly.

A late Bronze-Age or early Iron-Age phase is indicated by thumbed rims such as no. 5 (Fig. 7, below), which had a limestone temper but can be paralleled with shell-tempered examples from Farmoor and Segsbury, where it was given an early Iron-Age date.[26] Number 52 (Fig. 10) has a similar form but is sand tempered and can be compared with quartzite and sand-tempered examples from Castle Hill, Little Wittenham where it was allocated to the late Bronze Age.[27]

Similarly the vertical sided vessel 24 (Fig. 8) can be compared with sherd no. 26 from Gravelly Guy,[28] which was given a late Bronze-Age to Iron-Age date, and the organic-tempered sherd 14 (Fig. 8) can be compared with shell-tempered examples at Mingies Ditch.[29] Most of the pottery would appear to be round-shouldered vessels and globular bowls. The lug handle 4 (Fig. 7) has parallels at Ashville,[30] and round-shouldered vessels nos. 37 and 38 (Fig. 9) have parallels at Gravelly Guy,[31] where they have been attributed to the middle Iron Age. Globular bowl forms 29 and 30 (Fig. 9) have parallels at Mingies Ditch where they are given a middle to later Iron-Age date.[32]

It may be that this site was not occupied during the late Iron Age when wheel-made products were available. An alternative could be that the site continued in the later Iron Age and just did not acquire the pottery which is indicative of that period. This could be supported by results from Basingstoke where grog, sandy and flint-tempered pottery was still being hand made in the late Iron Age and first century AD.[33]

[24] P. Booth, 'Iron-Age and Roman Pottery', in Simmons et al., 'Excavations at Tubney Wood Quarry', p. 151.

[25] G. Lambrick and M. Robinson, *Iron Age and Roman Riverside Settlements at Farmoor, Oxfordshire*, CBA Research Report, 32 (1979); M.J. Parrington, *The Excavation of an Iron-Age Settlement, Bronze-Age Ring Ditches and Roman Features at Ashville Trading Estate, Abingdon (Oxfordshire) 1974–6*, CBA Research Report, 1 (1978); J. Hinchliffe and R. Thomas, 'Archaeological Investigations at Appleford', *Oxoniensia*, 45 (1980), pp. 20–4.

[26] G. Lock et al., *Segsbury Camp: Excavations in 1996 and 1997 at an Iron-Age Hillfort on the Oxfordshire Ridgeway*, Oxford University School of Archaeology Monograph, 61 (2005), p. 78, no. 21.

[27] T. Allen et al., *Castle Hill and its Landscape: Archaeological Investigations at the Wittenhams, Oxfordshire*, Oxford Archaeology Monograph, 9 (2010), p. 50, no. 4.

[28] G. Lambrick and T. Allen, *Gravelly Guy: Excavations at Stanton Harcourt*, Thames Valley Landscapes Monograph, 21 (2004), p. 292, no. 26.

[29] T.G. Allen and M. A. Robinson, *The Prehistoric Landscape and Iron-Age Enclosed Settlement at Mingies Ditch, Hardwick-with-Yelford, Oxon*, Thames Valley Landscapes Monograph, 2 (1993) p. 73, no. 16.

[30] Parrington, *The Excavation of an Iron-Age Settlement,* p. 188.

[31] Lambrick and Allen, *Gravelly Guy*, p. 297, no. 111.

[32] Allen and Robinson, *The Prehistoric Landscape and Iron-Age Enclosed Settlement at Mingies Ditch*, p. 75, no. 25.

[33] J. Wright et al., *Excavation of Prehistoric and Romano British Sites at Marnel Park and Merton Rise (Popley) Basingstoke 2004–8* (2009), p. 30.

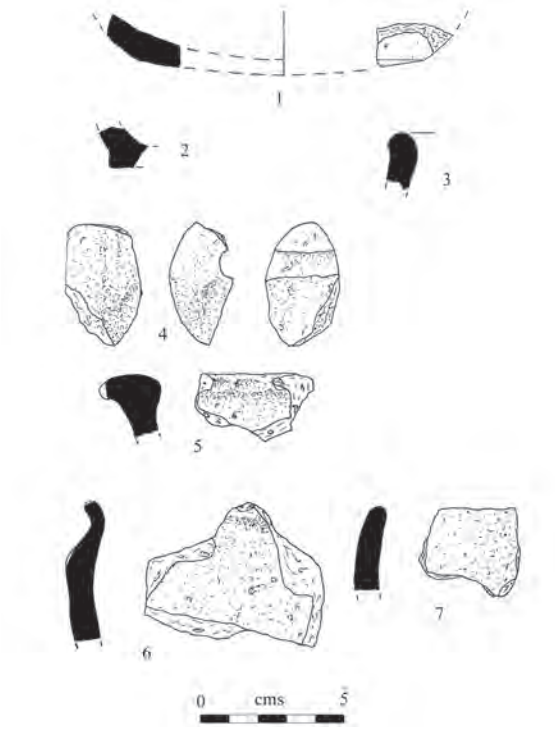

Fig. 7. Pottery sherds 1–7.

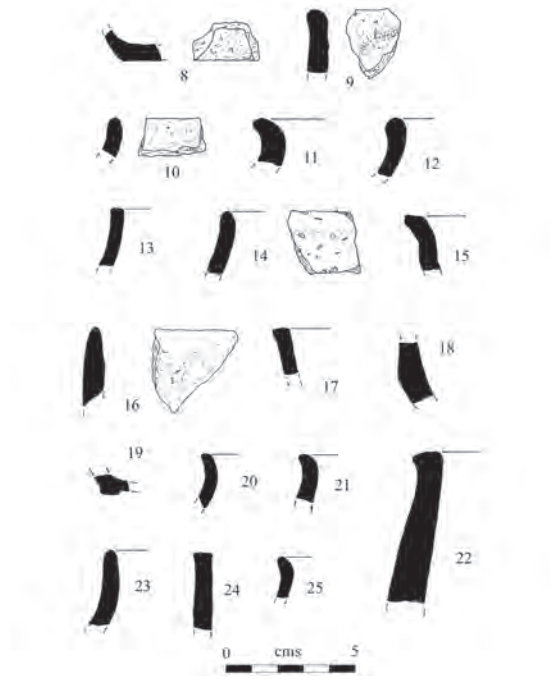

Fig. 8. Pottery sherds 8–25.

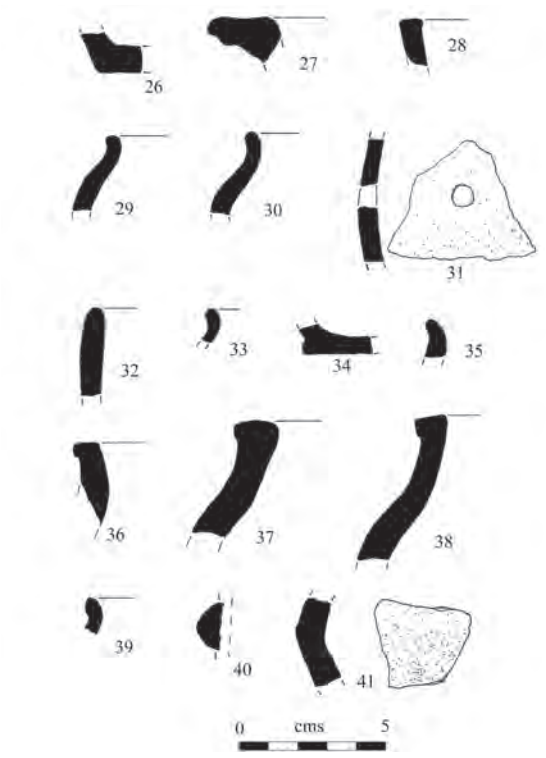

Fig. 9. Pottery sherds 26–41.

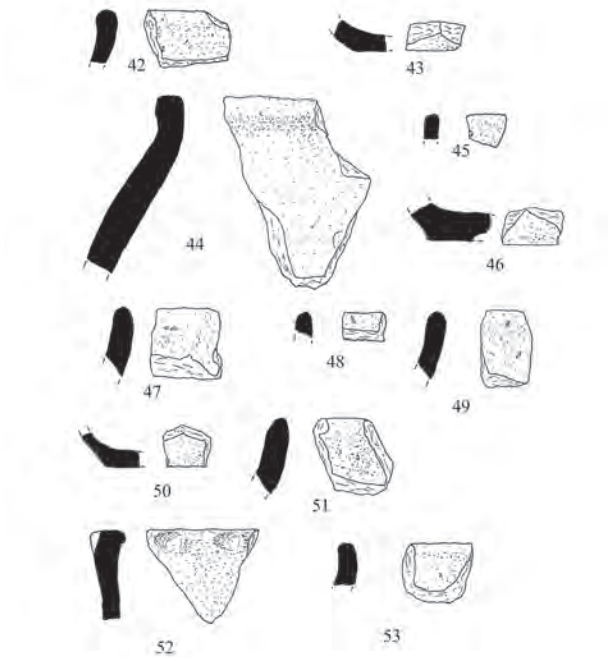

Fig. 10. Pottery sherds 42–53.

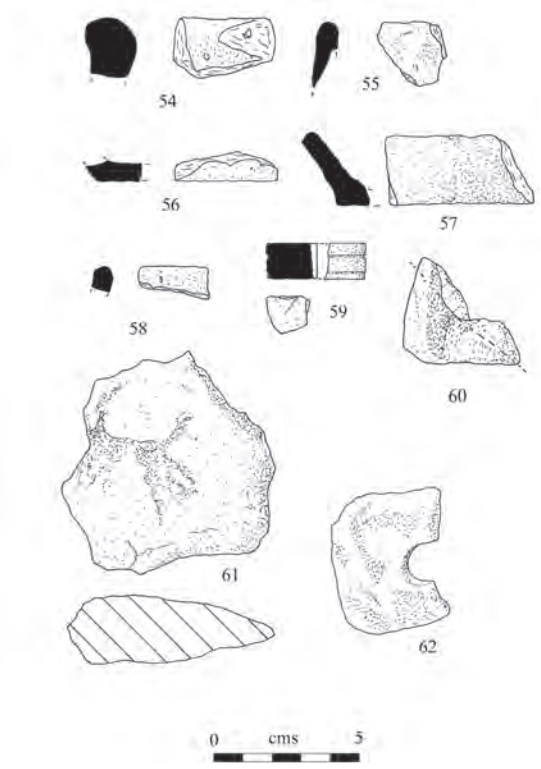

Fig. 11. Pottery sherds 54–8 and other fired clay.

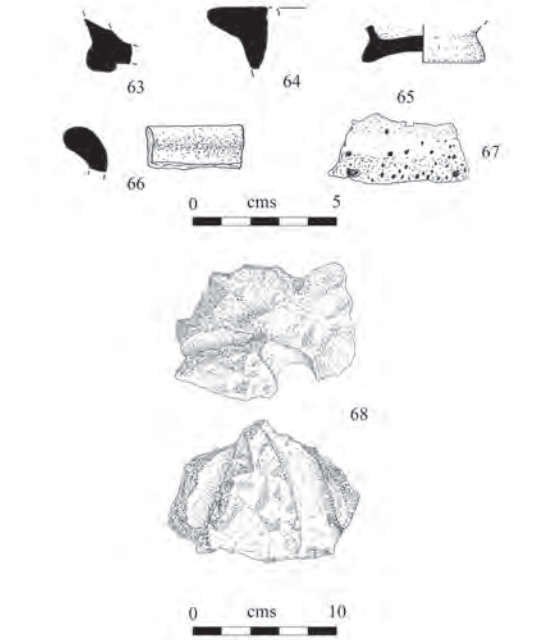

Fig. 12. Roman pottery, slag and possible furnace structure.

OTHER FINDS

Bone

The acid soil has resulted in the destruction of prehistoric bone. Only one burnt piece and a boar's tusk were recovered that could be of any age.

Burnt Clay

Approximately 70 pieces of burnt clay were found, weighing some 1.9 kg. These were untempered and are therefore unlikely to be pottery but could be pieces of hearths, loomweights and other clay items which have deteriorated in the topsoil. The triangular shape of the loomweight fragments recovered indicates a middle Iron-Age date. A large piece of fired clay, no. 68 (Fig. 12), is approximately 1 kg and has holes through it. This may be related to iron working as to fire clay of over 10 cm in thickness implies a prolonged high temperature. Dr Salter suggests that it may be part of a furnace structure. Another, no. 62 (Fig. 11), could be part of a loom weight but could equally be part of an oven since oven plates with similar holes have been found at Danebury.[34]

Iron-Making Waste

Approximately 370 g of slag-like material was found, its distribution generally being similar to that of the non sand-tempered pottery, although two of the largest pieces (65 and 100 g) were on the edge of that area. Another 560 g of iron-ore like material was also found. The slags ranged from greenish frothy looking to dense and heavy. One was a plano-convex bun shape, which may indicate smithing rather than iron production.[35] Dr Chris Salter has also seen the iron-working waste and considers that one of the slag lumps could be smelting slag of late Iron-Age or, more probably, Roman date.

Catalogue of Illustrated Finds:

Pottery

Limestone Temper

1 A3/82 Base; limestone temper; reduced core with oxidised surfaces.
2 B8/82 Base; reduced outside oxidised inside; limestone and fine sand temper.
3 E3/82 Rim; oxidised exterior, reduced interior; limestone temper.
4 G13/82 Lug; reduced core with oxidised surfaces; limestone temper.
5 B8/83 Rim; oxidised; limestone temper; diameter 24 cm.
6 B9/83 Shoulder angle; reduced core with oxidised surfaces; limestone temper; diameter 26 cm.
7 D3/83 Rim; oxidised with reduced core; limestone temper; diameter 12 cm.
8 D10/83 Base angle; oxidised; limestone temper.

Shell temper

9 C18/82 Rim; reduced; shell temper.

Flint temper

10 E7/83 Rim; reduced; flint temper; diameter 12 cm.

Vegetable temper

11 A5/82 Rim; reduced; sand and vegetable temper.
12 A8/82 Rim; reduced core with oxidised surfaces; sand and vegetable temper.

[34] B. Cunliffe and C. Poole, *Danebury: An Iron Age Hillfort in Hampshire* (1995), vol. 1, p. 119.
[35] C. Salter and R. Ehrendreich, 'Iron Age Metallurgy in Central Southern Britain', in Cunliffe and Miles, *Aspects of the Iron Age in Central Southern Britain* (1984), p. 149.

13 C9/82 Rim; oxidised exterior, reduced interior; grog and vegetable temper; diameter 30 cm.
14 D9/82 Rim; reduced core with oxidised surfaces: vegetable temper; diameter 14 cm.
15 E5/82 Rim; reduced, sand and vegetable temper; diameter 12 cm.
16 D11/83 Rim; oxidised with reduced core; vegetable temper; diameter 15 cm.

Sand temper
17 A4/82 Rim; oxidised outside, reduced inside; sand temper
18 A7/82 Side angle; reduced; sand temper; diameter 18 cm.
19 A9/82 Base; reduced core with oxidised surfaces; sand temper; diameter *c.*10 cm.
20 A10/82 Rim; reduced interior with oxidised surfaces; sand temper; external diameter 10 cm.
21 B1/82 Rim. reduced core with oxidised surfaces; sand temper; diameter 14 cm.
22 B2/82 Rim; oxidised exterior, reduced core; sand temper; diameter 30 cm.
23 B5/82 Rim; reduced; sand temper; diameter 16 cm.
24 B8/82 Rim; reduced outside, oxidised inside; sand temper.
25 B9/82 Rim; reduced core with oxidised surfaces; sand temper.
26 C5/82 Base; reduced core with oxidised surfaces; sand temper; diameter 10 cm.
27 D3/82 Rim; reduced core with oxidised surfaces; sand temper.
28 D5/82 Rim; reduced exterior, oxidised interior; sand temper.
29 D9/82 Rim; reduced; sand temper; diameter 18 cm.
30 E1/82 Rim; oxidised; sand temper; diameter 22 cm.
31 D2/82 Shard with hole; reduced; sand temper.
32 E3/82 Rim; reduced; sand temper.
33 E4/82 Rim; reduced core with oxidised surfaces; sand temper; diameter 16 cm.
34 E4/82 Base; reduced; sand temper, diameter 12 cm.
35 E7/82 Rim; reduced; sand temper.
36 E10/82 Rim; reduced; sand temper; diameter 18 cm.
37 F1/82 Rim; reduced; sand temper; diameter 28 cm.
38 F4/82 Rim; reduced; sand temper.
39 G11/82 Rim; reduced; sand temper.
40 H5/82 Possible lug; reduced; sand temper.
41 A9/83 Side angle; reduced; sand temper; diameter 18 cm.
42 B1/83 Rim; oxidised; sand temper; diameter 16 cm.
43 C3/83 Base angle; reduced; sand temper.
44 C10/83 Rim; reduced with oxidised surfaces; sand temper; diameter 18 cm.
45 D7/83 Rim; reduced; sand temper; diameter 8 cm.
46 D10/83 Base angle; reduced; sand temper.
47 D11/83 Rim; reduced; sand temper; diameter 18 cm.
48 E1/83 Rim; oxidised; sand temper; diameter 16 cm.
49 E4/83 Rim; oxidised; sand temper; diameter 16 cm.
50 E5/83 Base angle; reduced; sand temper.
51 F4/83 Rim; reduced; sand temper; diameter 16 cm.
52 F8/83 Rim; reduced inside and oxidised outside; sand temper; diameter 24 cm.
53 F8/83 Rim; reduced; sand temper; diameter 10 cm.
54 F9/83 Rim; reduced; sand temper; diameter 32 cm.
55 F13/83 Rim; oxidised; sand temper.
56 G2/83 Base angle; reduced; sand temper; diameter 8 cm.
57 H2/83 Base angle; reduced; sand temper; diameter 14 cm.
58 J2/83 Rim; reduced; sand temper; diameter 16 cm.

Other clay finds
59 E6/82 Possible spindle whorl; reduced; sand tempered; diameter 4 cm.
60 C3/83 Probable loom weight with 15 mm diameter hole; oxidised.
61 E3/83 Clay lump; reduced core with oxidised surfaces; no temper but some vegetable impressions on surface.
62 J10/83 Clay with hole; oxidised; no temper; approximately 2 cm thick.

Roman pottery
63 F12/82 Base: Roman, grey with pink core; fine sandy fabric; diameter 14 cm.
64 G10/82 Rim; possibly Roman; oxidised, sparse sand temper; diameter 14 cm.
65 J6/82 Base; Roman; reduced; no temper; diameter 4 cm.
66 I10/83 Rim; probably Roman; oxidised; sand temper; diameter 18 cm.

Iron-working remains
67 G7/82 Piece of slag; approximately 100 g.
68 A8 (approximately). Found in initial site discovery. Piece of clay hard fired, oxidised, no temper but has small pebbles. Has remains of 2 holes each approximately 25 mm diameter but one widens to *c*.40 mm at one end. Approximately 1 kg.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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