Understanding Iron Age Norton

by Mike Seager Thomas

Excavations by the Society at Norton in Bishopstone, East Sussex, revealed a pit complex, a working hollow, a grave, a stove filled with burnt stones, a midden and a horizontal terrace of Middle Iron Age (MIA) date. The evidence suggests, in addition, that a non post-built house may have been located within the area of the excavation. Traces of Late Iron Age (LIA) activity were also found. Among the finds made were two chronologically sequential groups of saucepan pottery, a potin coin (from a MIA context), a sherd of Campanian amphora, and an assemblage of non-local stone. By adding to our knowledge of the form and chronology of the Sussex Iron Age, the understanding of Iron Age Norton that these discoveries make possible clarifies the county's relationship to the period outside Sussex — and to other periods within it — and in so doing develops our knowledge of the period as a whole.

INTRODUCTION

The Bishopstone Valley, within which Norton is located, has long been known to have been occupied during the Iron Age, significant finds of this date having been made on Rookery Hill and in the vicinity of Bishopstone village (Bell 1977; S. Hamilton pers. comm.). It is also known for its medieval archaeology; and, ironically, it was during the investigation of a group of earthworks thought to belong to this later period that the present site was discovered. Located under pasture immediately to the east of the hamlet these comprise several hollows, a series of interconnecting banks, ditches and lynchet-like features, and two horizontal terraces (Fig. 1). The hollows are almost certainly of Second World War date and were not investigated but small excavations were carried out on two linear features and on one of the terraces. In chronological terms the results of the excavation of the two linear features were inconclusive but the terrace yielded clear evidence of prehistoric activity including a burial and pottery analogous to that from Rookery Hill (Thomas 2001, 5).

It was on the terrace, around the site of the trial excavation, that the excavations described here took place. They identified an MIA pit complex, a working-hollow containing a midden, and a stove-like feature which suggested that the site was covered during the period (Fig. 2). The terrace, which also proved to be of MIA date, cut these earlier features. The trial excavation, which measured 2 × 2 metres only, had cut no less than five different Iron Age features!

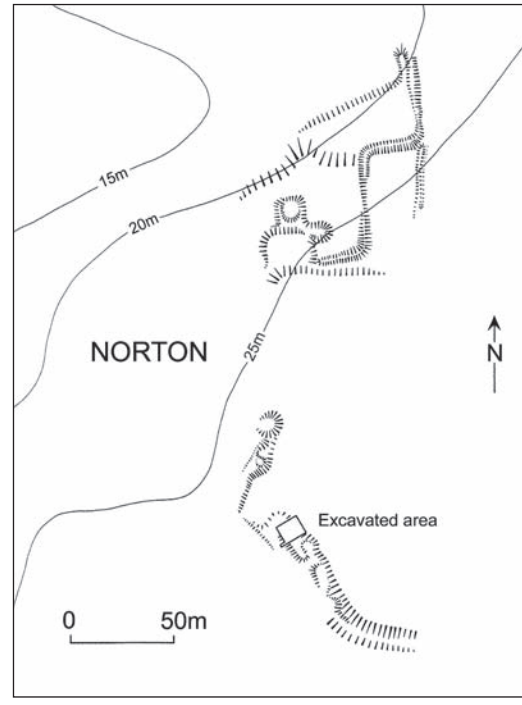

Fig. 1. The 'medieval' earthworks at Norton showing the excavated area.

Excavation took place in an environment of renewed interest in the minutiae of the archaeological record occasioned by, and required to meet the demands of an interpretative tradition within Iron Age archaeology of ever increasing sophistication (Gwilt & Haselgrove 1997, 2). It is no longer good enough simply to say that a feature

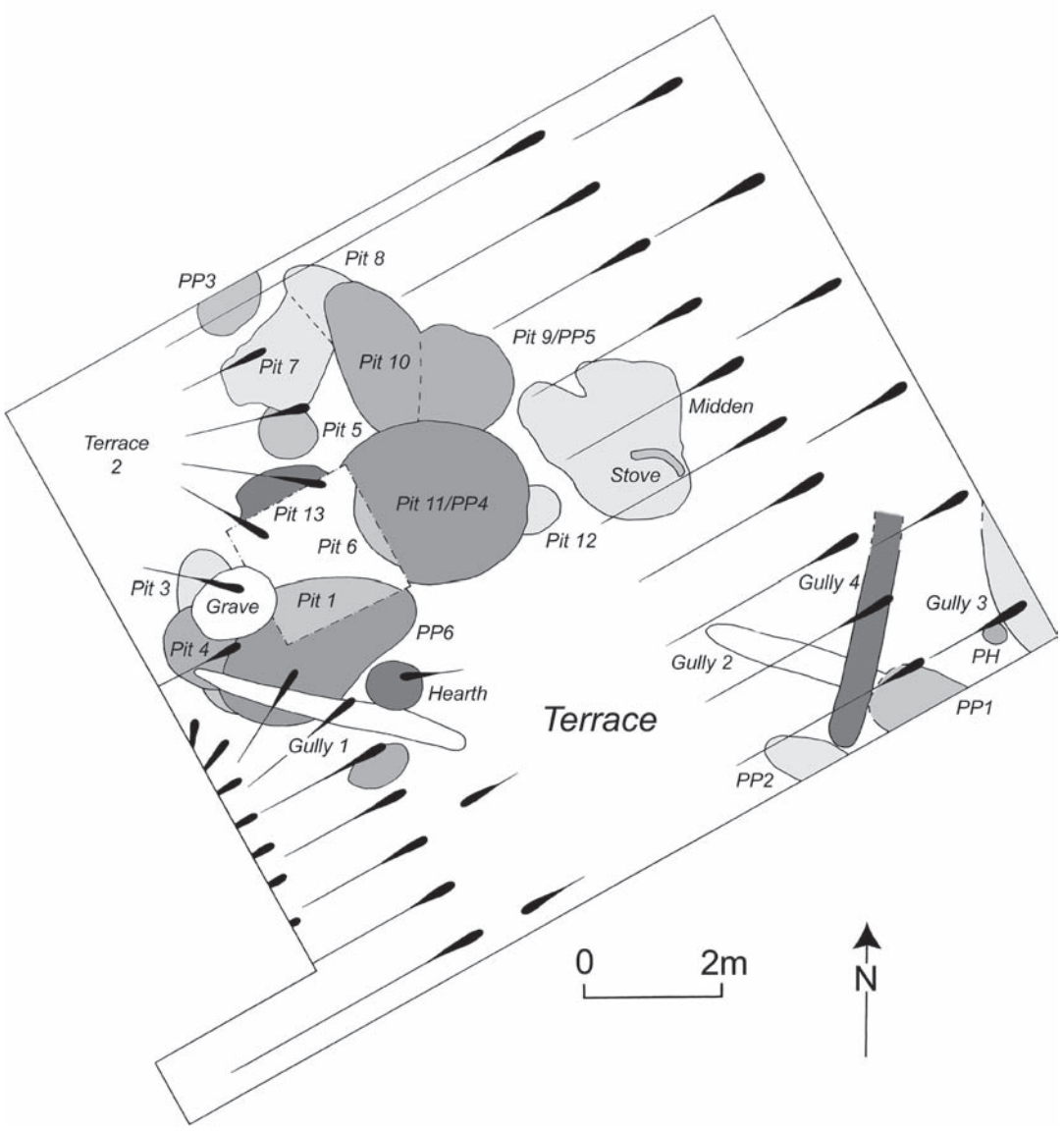

Fig. 2. Plan of the trench showing Iron Age and undated features.

is a feature; rather, it is necessary to demonstrate from its relationships why it is a feature and what this means. The project's response to this was essentially sedimentological. In addition to employing a conventional archaeological methodology to investigate feature relationships very close attention was paid to the sediments comprising them and in particular to the nature, orientation and relationships of the material within them. This approach stands in marked contrast to most developer-funded excavation, which, owing to the constraints placed upon it by time and a bureaucratically imposed strategy, continues to be characterized by the partial sampling of features and the bulk retrieval of material from them. The difference in the results produced by the two strategies remains the primary justification for research excavation today.

Following a recent report on the future of research into the British Iron Age this paper

Fig. 3. Sussex Middle Iron Age sites/findspots (see Table 1 for key to sites).

concentrates on the site's chronology, the nature of its occupation and its position, socially and economically, in relation to other Iron Age sites in the region (Haselgrove *et al*. 2001). It begins by considering our current knowledge of MIA Sussex; and then, turning to the excavation itself, considers the data from it and their interpretative implications in detail. It concludes with a summary of results, a discussion of the impact of these upon the foregoing, and some suggestions for further research.

SUSSEX IN THE MIDDLE IRON AGE

SAUCEPAN POTTERY

Typology

MIA Sussex pottery is dominated by, but does not consist exclusively of, a tradition of upright or slightly convex-sided 'saucepan' pots with simple or slightly developed rims. These can be divided into a series of increasingly localized style groups. Undecorated wares and wares decorated with zones of tooled horizontal lines below the rim and immediately above the base occur across the county. The St Catherine's Hill-Worthy Down style, characterized by oblique tooled lines between rows of dots, is concentrated on the west of the county; and the Caburn-Cissbury group, characterized by curvilinear decoration, is concentrated on the east of the county (Cunliffe 1991, 80–81, fig. 4.6). Within these groups particular decorative elements display marked concentrations. Vessels with tooled scrolls for example are concentrated on the Ouse valley (Hamilton 2002, fig. 5.7). This suggests that while the county belonged to a broad regional pottery tradition production itself was localized. Evidence from Norton, where tooled scrolls occur late in the pottery sequence, adds to this picture by showing that *stylistically* localization increased through the MIA. This appears to imply a degree of cultural fragmentation. The overlapping distributions of the Caburn-Cissbury style of saucepan pottery, in particular this late sub-group, and of the succeeding tradition of grog-tempered Eastern Atrebatic pottery suggests that these relationships continued uninterrupted into the LIA.

Chronology

Owing to uncertainties regarding the longevity of other elements of the MIA ceramic repertoire it is upon saucepan pottery that the identification of a Sussex MIA rests (Table 1). Wessex radiocarbon dates suggest a life-span for the tradition of around 300 years. At its earliest these place undecorated saucepan pottery in the fourth century cal. BC and the floruit of decorated saucepan pottery in the third or even the second century cal. BC (Cunliffe & Orton 1984, fig. 5.1). It is unlikely that it impinged much on the following century but the co-occurrence of the latter with Atrebatic wares or early amphorae on sites such as Hengistbury Head (Cunliffe & Brown 1987, 305), Torberry (Cunliffe 1976, fig. 20) and, possibly, Oving (Hamilton 1985, 220) indicate that it continued up to it. Data from Norton — pottery, numismatic and radiocarbon — confirm this chronology.

Table 1. Sussex Middle Iron Age sites/findspots.

Site	Map no.	Hill-fort	Enclosure ditch	Pits	Other features	Residual	Reference
Tote Copse, Aldingbourne	13					P	Pitts 1979
Angmering	20					P	M. Seager Thomas unpublished
Grevett's Lane, Bilsham	15					P	RPS Consultants unpublished
Rookery Hill, Bishopstone	30		?	P		P	Bell 1977
Ounces Barn, Boxgrove	12					?P	Bedwin & Place 1995
Elm Grove, Brighton	27		No stratigraphic information				Curwen 1954
Bullock Down	35					P	Drewett 1982
Caburn	29	P		P		P	Curwen & Curwen 1927
Carne's Seat	5		P				Holgate 1986
Charleston Brow	32			?P			Parsons & Curwen 1933
Chilgrove	2				Hearth, ?occupation surface		Down 1979
Cissbury	21	P		P			Williamson & Curwen 1931
Eridge Park	34		No stratigraphic information				Money 1979
Findon	22			P			Fox & Wolseley 1928
Ford	16					P	C. Place unpublished
High Rocks	33	?P					Money 1968
Lavant	3			?P	?4-post structures, roundhouses		Kenny 1993
Godsden Road, Littlehampton	18				gully	P	Gilkes 1993
Wickbourne, Littlehampton	17			P			Gilkes 1993
Newhaven	28	? P					Hawkes 1939
North Bersted	14			P	Ditches, roundhouse gully		Bedwin & Pitts 1978
Norton	31			P	See below		
Copse Farm, Oving	9		P	P	4-post structure	P	Bedwin & Holgate 1985
Park Brow	23			P			Wolseley & Smith 1924
Patcham-Fawcett	26			P			C. Greatorex unpublished
Rustington	19					P	Rudling 1990
Selsey	11		No stratigraphic information				White 1934
Shopwyke	10			P		P	M. Seager Thomas & S. Hamilton unpublished
Slonk Hill	24			P	Graves, ?roundhouse gullies		Hartridge 1978
Torberry	1	P					Cunliffe 1976
Trundle	4	P		P			Curwen 1929; 1931
West Blatchington	25			P			Norris & Burstow 1950
Dairy Lane, Westhampnett	8			P	ditch		Browse & Kenny 1991; Kenny 1992
Old Place Farm, Westhampnett	6		?P				Bedwin 1984; Bedwin & Holgate 1985
Westhampnett, area 5	7				Gully, 4-post structure		Fitzpatrick 1997

Pottery and settlement

Saucepan pottery has been found at at least 35 different Sussex locations, 15 on the West Sussex Coastal Plain, eight on the Downs west of the River Adur, 10 on the Downs east of the River Adur and two in the Weald (Fig. 3; Table 1). There are gaps in this distribution, notably in the Weald and on the Downs to the east of the Cuckmere, but except for the latter it so closely follows the distribution of earlier first millennium BC findspots (*vide* Hamilton 2003, fig. 6.3) that it can be assumed that bar the usual excavation bias it accurately reflects MIA settlement in the county. Two things characterize Sussex MIA findspots: the small size of most of the pottery assemblages from them and the lack of evidence for associated settlement features such as roundhouses and enclosure ditches. In part the small size of the assemblages can be attributed to the nature of the pottery comprising them, the way it was produced, and the way it was deposited. When compared to those of earlier and later first-millennium BC traditions, which tend locally to be associated with much larger pottery assemblages, the range of MIA forms and sizes is tiny and it would appear that either pottery was used for fewer things during the MIA or individual vessels were used for more things. Less pottery was required, produced and therefore deposited (cf. Hill 2002, 154). In part they can be attributed to the lack of deep settlement features in which to deposit them. Unlike neighbouring Wessex with its Little Woodbury-type settlements of post-built roundhouses surrounded by pits and enclosure ditches (all excellent finds traps), Sussex MIA settlement comprised mostly superficial features: there are no certain enclosures east of the Arun, except for hillforts, and there were no post-built round houses at all. In this it resembles earlier Sussex first millennium BC traditions. Despite the obvious difference in ceramic traditions this strongly suggests continuity between the two periods.

CONTACT

Sussex MIA pottery is dominated by four fabric groups: flint-tempered concentrated to west of the Arun, shelly fabrics and glauconitic or pisolithic iron oxide fabrics concentrated to the east of the Arun, and 'calcite' tempered mostly identified to the east of the Adur but also present in assemblages from Cissbury and Ashtead, Surrey (Fig. 4). Flint-tempering corresponds with the St Catherine's Hill-Worthy Down style group and pisolithic iron oxide fabrics and calcite-tempered fabrics with the Caburn-Cissbury group. Because the most common of these, flint-tempered, utilized a material which was available close to most of the sites on which it has been identified, it has been assumed to have been locally produced (Morris 1994, 381). The possible origins of the glauconitic or pisolithic iron oxide and 'calcite' tempered fabrics however are restricted and it is likely that they were centrally produced. This parallels similar fabric distributions in Wessex and north Surrey (Morris 1994, tables 3 & 4; Seager Thomas forthcoming a). Evidence for the movement of individual Sussex vessels comes from a MIA settlement at Ashford, Surrey, which yielded a vessel in a non-local a flint-tempered fabric belonging to the St Catherine's Hill-Worthy Down style group (Seager Thomas forthcoming a) and Norton which provides a parallel for a 'calcite' tempered saucepan pot from nearby Newhaven so like it that it must have been made by the same hand. Similar contacts are indicated by the distribution of three stone types, one from West Sussex (Lodsworth Stone) which occurred in MIA contexts at Danebury, the Trundle and Holmbury in Surrey (Peacock 1987, 78–82), one from the West Country (Kimmeridge Shale), the MIA distribution of which includes Slonk Hill (Hartridge 1978, 80), and one from Kent (Folkestone Stone) which occurred at Norton (Table 2). In the latter Norton provides a rare glimpse of MIA contacts beyond the saucepan pot continuum. While fluctuating in terms of the commodities exchanged, in Sussex centralized procurement of, or trade in clay/pottery and stone runs through the Iron Age.

DEATH AND BURIAL

The only human remains from Sussex which can be reliably dated to the MIA are a crouched inhumation from Slonk Hill (Hartridge 1978, 80–81), part of a femur from the early enclosure ditch at Copse Farm, Oving (Bedwin & Holgate 1985, 226, 232), fragments of a skull, a femur and an ulna from pits at the Trundle (Curwen 1929, 45, 67), the Norton burial and nine cremations from Westhampnett cemetery which were associated with MIA vessel types (Fitzpatrick 1997, 204, fig. 113), including one very similar to the vessel exported to Ashford (Fitzpatrick 1997, fig. 75, grave 20148). The rest of the MIA dead were disposed of in a way which left no traces visible to us.

Given the sudden appearance of cremation

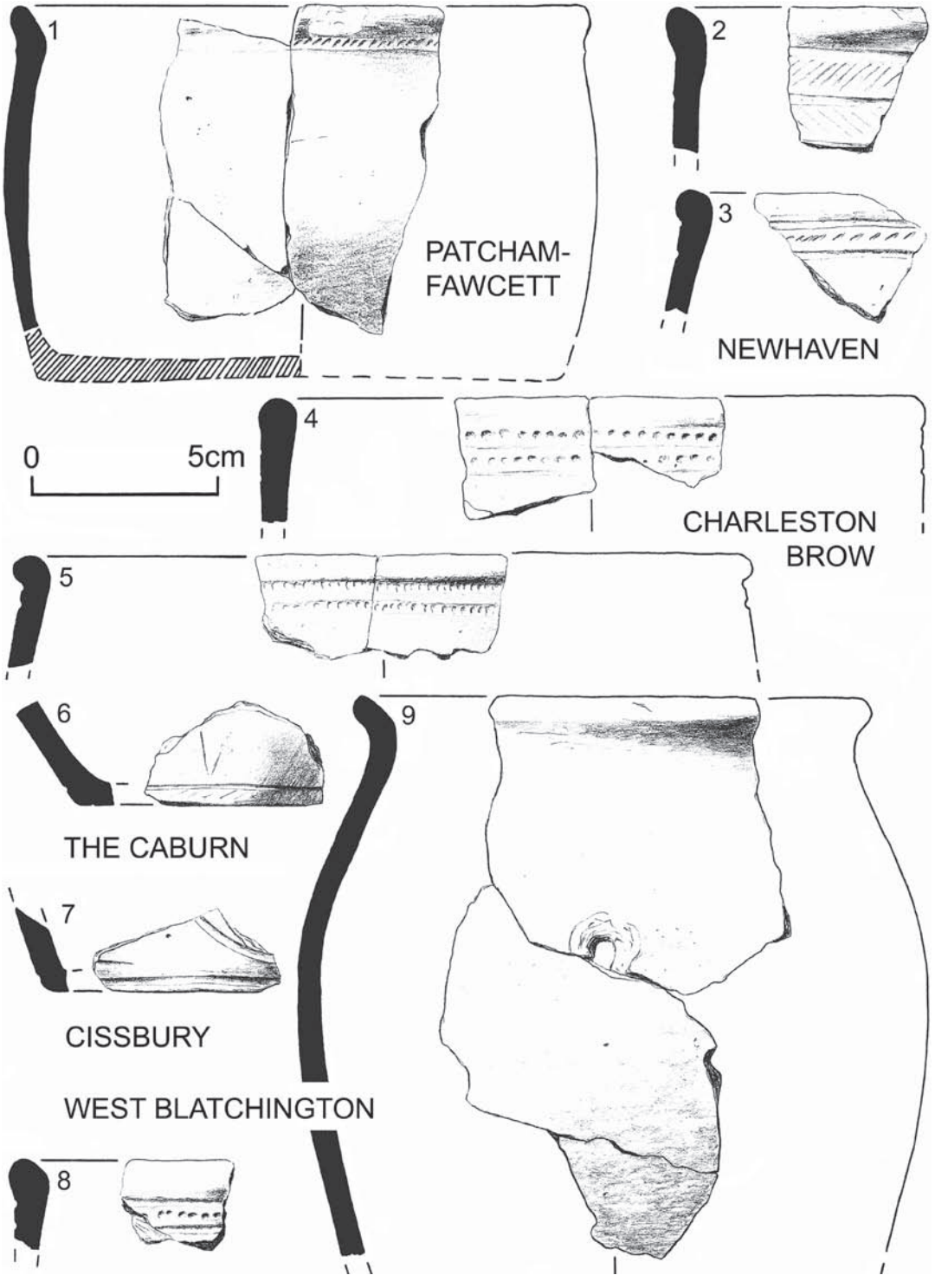

Fig. 4. Pottery in Norton fabric C from other Sussex sites (1, 3, 5, 7 and 9 previously unpublished).

in Sussex during the LIA, distinguishable as such because of its occurrence in association with LIA pottery, the best explanation for this invisibility is a tradition of unfurnished cremation. As for the inhumations it is widely held that they represent social outcasts and fall outside everyday tradition. This interpretation rests upon the idea that they were atypical and occurred in non-ritual contexts when in fact they clearly reflect a coherent rite (Wait 1985, 119–21; Whimster 1977, 317–19). This is demonstrated locally by a close similarity between burials from Slonk Hill and Norton.

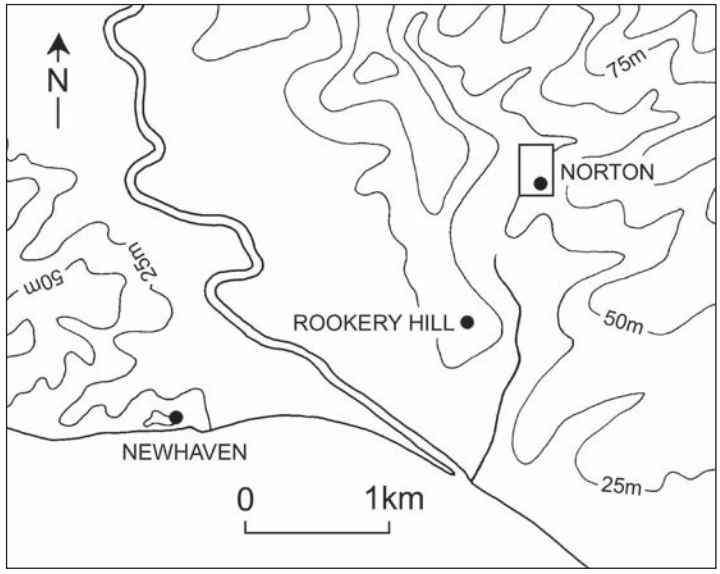

Fig. 5. Norton in the Bishopstone Valley; Middle Iron Age sites/findspots in the vicinity.

Finally the presence of partially articulated skeletons on sites outside the county such as Danebury hillfort (Cunliffe 1984), a lack of disarticulated small bones, and occasional finds of human bones which appear to have been gnawed by animals has led some to believe that individual bones from Iron Age sites, including perhaps Sussex's Copse Farm and the Trundle, come from excarnated bodies; and the apparent selection of particular categories of bone for special placement at the base of pits, around the periphery of sites and in association with particular artefact types that these were ritually deposited (Carr and Knüsel 1997, 170–71; Fitzpatrick 1997, 225; Hill 1994, 6, fig 2.3; Poole 1995; Hamilton 1998, 32, fig. 6). Neither however can be demonstrated with certainty for Sussex.

STRUCTURED DEPOSITION

In much contemporary archaeology the interpretation of finds of all types is coloured by a ritual theory which holds that everyday life during the period was symbolically charged through the incorporation of domestic material in ritually structured deposits. While no overall trend is discernable locally possible individual examples of this have been identified at the Caburn, Rookery Hill and some other later Iron Age sites (Hamilton 1998; 2003, 79). Apart from the grave Norton yielded no unequivocal evidence for structured deposition but 'ritual theory', like the belief system it conjures up, rejects contemporary common-sense (Hill 1994, 6) and thus is impossible to rule out for any site or region. Nonetheless it is arguable that in an Iron Age that appears not to be characterized by the features — pits, postholes and ditches — with which this type of activity is usually associated it is better sought elsewhere.

THE EXCAVATION

The specific objective of the present excavation was to put into context the traces of prehistoric activity thrown up by the trial excavation. A trench was positioned in order to investigate the relationship between the features identified in the trial excavation, the terrace, and two other negative features visible prior to excavation, a hollow way and a sub-circular hut-like terrace (Fig. 2). Over two hundred individual contexts were excavated which for the purposes of this paper have been grouped by feature. Details of individual contexts and their relationships will be found in the site archive.

THE GEOMORPHOLOGY OF THE SITE

The site is located on sloping ground between the 25 and 35 metre contour, close to the foot of a downland spur (Fig. 5). It is underlain by coombe deposits. In the area of the excavations these comprised 'upper coombe deposits', up to half

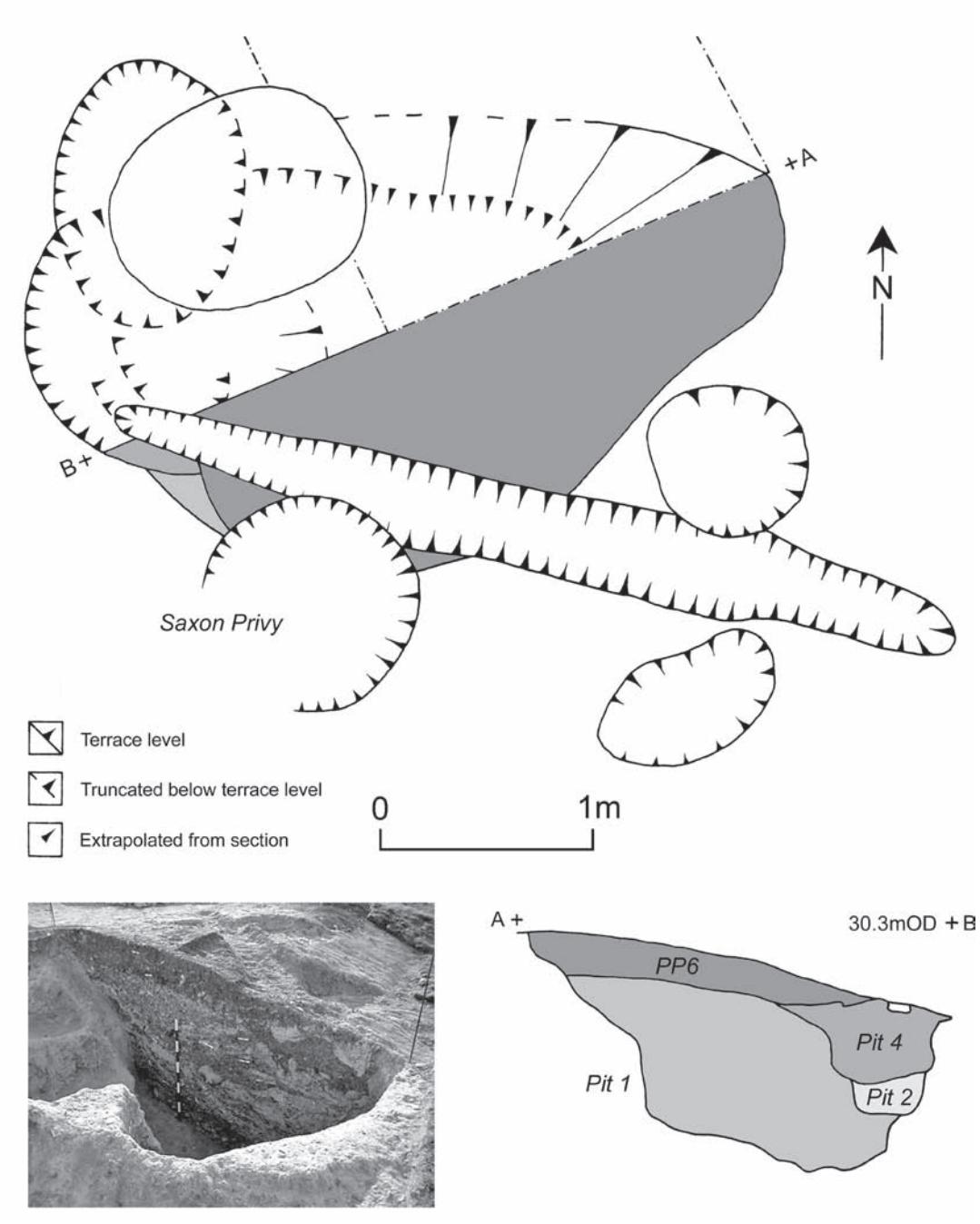

Fig. 6. Pits 1–4, possible pit 6, gully 1, the grave, the hearth and test pit E (the trial excavation).

a metre of yellow-brown clayey silt and deeply patinated matrix/clast supported chalk flint, and an unknown depth of cemented coombe rock consisting of finely comminuted chalk rock and a much smaller fraction of similar matrix-supported chalk flint. Between these, running diagonally

Table 2. Saucepan pottery fabrics and non-local stone from Sussex Middle Iron Age sites. Key P = present; * = from LIA context; † = two sherds misidentified as flint-tempered by Curwen and Curwen (1927).

Site	**Fabrics**					**Stone**				**Source**
	flint-tempered (*F*)	Glauconitic (*J*)	Shelly (*S*)	calcite tempered(*C*)	Greensand	Kimmeridge shale	Kentish greensand	Lodsworth greensand	shelly sandstone	
Tote Copse, Aldingbourne				?						Pitts 1979
Angmering	P									M. Seager Thomas unpublished
Bishopstone		P								Hamilton 1977
Grevett's Lane, Bilshan	P									M. Lyne unpublished
Ounces Barn, Boxgrove	P									Bedwin & Place 1995
Caburn	†	P	P	P			*			Curwen & Curwen 1927; Hamilton 1993; archive, Lewes Museum
Carne's Seat	P									Hamilton 1986
Charleston Brow		?		P	P					Archive, Lewes Museum
Chilgrove	P									Cunliffe 1979
Cissbury	P			P						Hamilton 1993; archive, Lewes museum
Findon		P								Hamilton 1993
Ford	P									M. Lyne unpublished
Godsden Road, Littlehampton	P									Archive, Littlehampton Museum
Wickbourne, Littlehampton	P									Archive, Littlehampton Museum
Lavant	P									Archive, Chichester Museum
Newhaven		P	P	P						Archive, Lewes Museum
North Bersted	P									Bedwin & Pitts 1978
Norton		P	P	P	P		P		P	Archive, Lewes Museum
Copse Farm, Oving	P									Hamilton 1985
Park Brow		P								Hamilton 1993
Patcham-Fawcett		P	P	P						Archive, CG Archaeology
Rustington	P									Rudling 1990
Selsey	P									Hamilton 1993
Shopwyke	P									M. Seager Thomas & S. Hamilton unpublished
Slonk Hill	P	P				P			P	Morris 1978; Hamilton 1993; archive, Brighton Museum
Torberry	P									Archive, Chichester Museum
The Trundle	P							P		Curwen 1929; 1931; archive, Lewes Museum
West Blatchington				P						Archive, Lewes Museum
Westhampnett, area 5	P									Hamilton 1993

across the trench, were a series of parallel 'frost stripes' formed by freeze-thaw processes during the Ice Age. The fills of these consisted of pale or dark yellow silt derived from a former covering of wind-blown silt or loess, a little granular chalk, and a small number of frost-shattered flints, some *in situ* but most dispersed through them and orientated downwards. Surface hollows such as the surface of the terrace and the hollow way were filled with grey silty colluvium. Both the 'upper coombe deposits' and the colluvium supported shallow *brown calcareous soils* comprising a dark

Table 3. Middle Iron Age pits. EFM = early first millennium BC; G = gully; GR = grave; P = pit; PP = possible pit; S = metalled surface; T1 = terrace.

Pit no.	Maximum dimensions (m)		Stratigraphic relationships		Pottery group	Special finds	Figure no.
	depth	long axis	above	below			
P1	1.6	3.0	natural	P2 and P3	MIA 1/2	None	6
P1/PP6	0.35	2.9	P4	G1 and GR	MIA 2	None	6
P2	0.95	0.6	P1	P4	MIA 1/2	None	6
P3	1.06	1.2	P1	P4	MIA 1/2	None	6
P4	0.7	1.2	P2 and P3	PP6	N/A	None	6
P5	0.3	0.65	natural	P7	N/A	None	6
P6	1.4	2.4	natural	P11	MIA 1/2	None	7
P7	0.52	1.2	P5	?T1	N/A	None	7
P8	0.8	2.0	natural	P10	MIA 1/2	None	7
P9	0.68	1.4	natural	PP5 and P11/PP4	MIA 1/2	Cattle jaw	7
P9/PP5	0.26	1.3	P9	?T1	EFM	None	7
P10	0.45	1.45	P8	? P11/PP4	MIA 1/2	None	7
P11	1.55	2.6	P6	PP4	MIA 1/2	None	7
P11/PP4	*c.* 0.45	2.6	P12 and P9	?P13	MIA 2	Potin coin	7
P12	0.35	0.7	P6	PP4	MIA 1/2	None	7
P13	1.09	1.8	? PP4	S	MIA 2	None	7
PP1	c. 0.6	N/A	G2	?T1	MIA 1/2	None	11
PP2	0.42	1.1	natural	?T1	MIA 1/2	None	11

grey brown upper layer from which clastic material had been worm-sorted and a lower layer to which clastic material had been worm-sorted. All of the archaeological features identified had been cut through the 'upper coombe deposits' and into the underlying frost stripes or coombe rock and most of their fills had been derived unaltered from one of these three deposits.

THE PIT COMPLEX

In all 18 pits and six possible pits, divisible into those whose identification was uncertain owing to their location at the edge of the excavated area (possible pits 1 to 3) and those whose identification was uncertain because of their location on top of another pit (possible pits 4, 5 & 6), were identified and excavated. Three proved to be Saxon and will be discussed elsewhere (pits 14 to 16), one was modern (pit 17) and two were undated (pit 18 and possible pit 3); the remainder were MIA, had MIA *termini post quem*, or are dated to the MIA on morphological grounds. These latter range in size from shallow scoops, only a few centimetres deep, to very big pits the shape and size of Iron Age features conventionally associated with grain storage. One was up-slope of the terrace on which the excavations were focused and can be assumed to survive to its original depth (possible pit 1); otherwise all were located on the terrace. Their phasing within the MIA and their relationship to other features on site is based on a combination of stratigraphy and the pottery recovered from them (Table 3; Figs 2, 6 & 7). The indications are that most pre-date the terrace and belong to the earlier part of the MIA. The exceptions are possible pit 4, which contained a potin coin and material possibly derived from the working-hollow (numerous fragments of baked chalky clay from the stove and a sherd which joined with one from the midden: vessel 14), and pit 13 which cut possible pit 4 and had on its base a sherd from possible pit 4's vessel 22. It can be assumed therefore that none of those located on it, except perhaps for those on its lip, survived to their original depth.

Most of the fills comprise material freshly dug from one or more of the geological facies described above — chalk coombe rock, loess, upper coombe deposits. These formed layers which at first sight seemed to represent a multitude of different fills but a lack of evidence for hiatuses between these, their cleanness and, in the case of three of the larger pits, their common fill-direction (pits 1 and

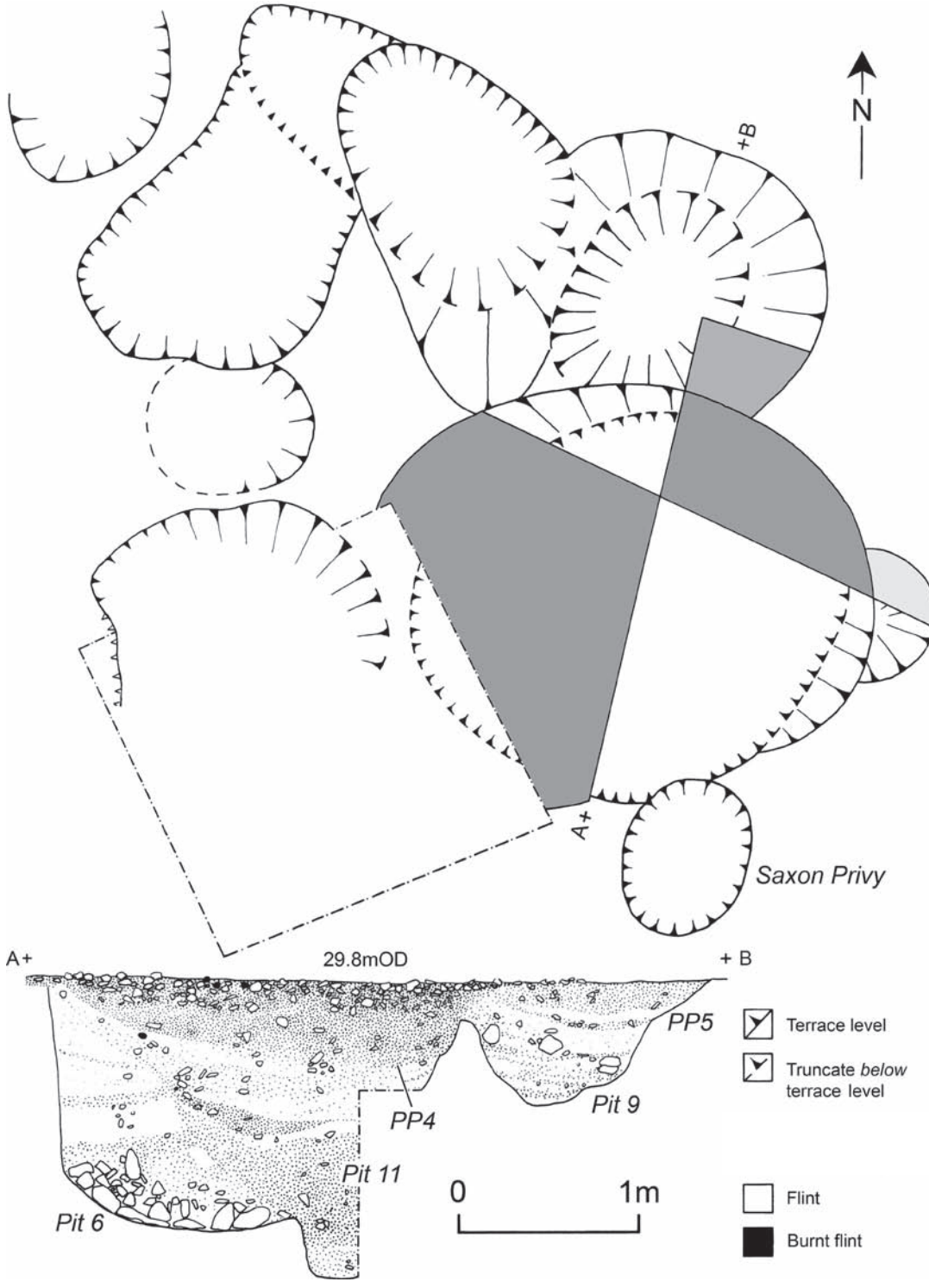

Fig. 7. Pits 5–13, possible pits 4 and 5, the metalled surface and test pit E.

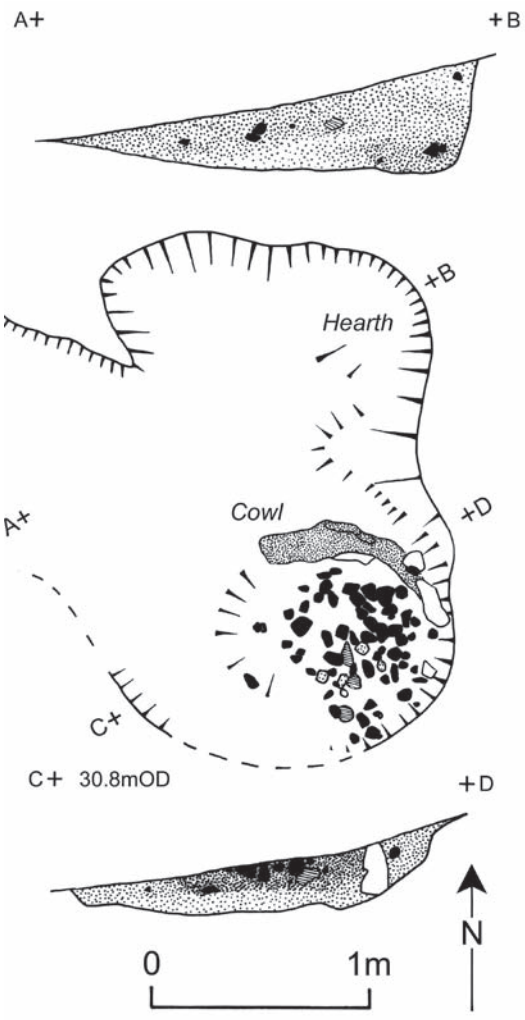

Fig. 8. The working hollow, the surface of its primary fill and the stove (upper section reconstructed post-excavation from measurement taken in the field).

13 were filled from up-slope and pit 6 was filled from downslope) showed most to result from a few episodes of filling only (Fig. 6). Few of these contained finds. The remaining fills comprised material derived from occupation deposits or dumps of fresh nodular flint. Layers derived from occupation deposits tended to be of a dark colour, reflecting a source in a dirty deposit or in a developed soil, contained finds, and much burnt material. These were present only in pits 1, 6 and the two possible pits overlying them. None contained anything approaching the number and density of finds recovered from the midden. Dumps of flint occurred in pits 1, 3, 6 and 9. Most of these comprised a few nodules only but the lowermost fill of pit 6 had a volume of around a cubic metre (Fig. 7). The size of the stones in it decreased upwards suggesting that it had been collected prior to dumping (the smaller stones being shovelled in last). Given that it was discarded, it was presumably an unwanted bi-product of something else, perhaps chalk procurement, perhaps clearance or perhaps surface levelling.

The purpose of the pits was irrecoverable but there were clues to the *manner* of their use and the context within which they were used. To start they clearly had a variety of uses: this is indicated by the range of sizes and shapes. The drum-shape of pit 6 for example is very similar to that of pits interpreted elsewhere as grain storage pits (Reynolds 1974, 118) while some with shallower profiles would have been quite unsuitable for such a purpose (e.g. pit 10) (Table 3). Next all were concentrated in a restricted area and most were cut by one or more other pits. This shows that not all the pits were open at the same time, that the area was not reserved for a single activity and that a cut through natural was not thought necessary for their use. Additionally, their fills comprised almost exclusively freshly dug material — there was evidence neither for extended silting nor directly associated finds use/disposal (in the rare instances where finds-rich layers occurred they are all at the tops of features). As one pit was being dug, another was being filled. Pits were always available, but, unless there are more in an undiscovered location, they were not left open. Finally, two pits yielded special finds but none yielded unambiguous evidence for ritual deposition (such as 'individual layers dominated by a single category of find', whole pots, metalwork, special placements/structured deposition or deliberately slighted objects) (cf. Hill 1994, 4; Hamilton 1998, 31–2).

HEARTH

A hearth, identified as such because of the presence in it of an *in situ* baked clay lens, was located on the terrace close to the main pit complex (Figs 2 & 6). It contained a sherd of MIA pottery and a sherd of early first-millennium BC flint-tempered pottery.

THE WORKING HOLLOW

Located close to the pit complex the working hollow comprised a two-lobed cut in the back

of and just below the level of the terrace (Figs 2 & 8). On top of its primary fill, a finds-free layer comprising re-deposited 'upper coombe deposits', were a stove and an open hearth overlain by a midden-like deposit. Evidence from both the stove and the midden suggests that they had been truncated by the terrace. Originally therefore the working hollow probably took the form of a shallow pit, similar perhaps to pits 7 and 8. The working hollow is dated to the earlier part of the MIA by two radiocarbon dates, one from the stove (550–200 cal. BC) (GU-11245: 2330±40 BP) and one from the midden (400–200 cal. BC) (GU-11244: 2260±50 BP), and by an assemblage of MIA pottery from the midden.

Table 4. Distribution of burnt flint in the stove.

Spit	Number of clasts	% small pebbles	% medium to large pebbles	% singed only	% wholly burnt
	Centre of fire				
1	40	20	80	10	90
2	36	91	9	58	42
3	27	92	8	55	45
	Periphery of fire				
1	12	33	66	25	75
2	47	82	18	76	24
3	52	94	6	67	33

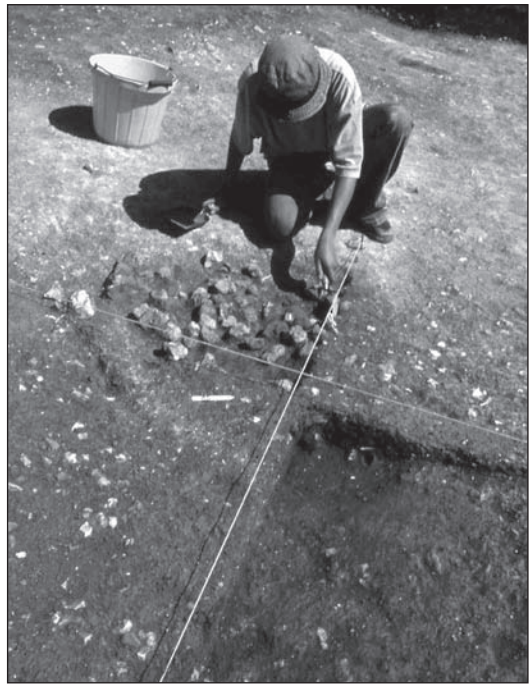

Fig. 9. The stove under excavation.

The stove

The stove was located in one of the working hollow's two lobes. It comprised a thick layer of burnt, clast-supported flint and sandstone surrounded on the higher surviving side of the working-hollow by a curved wall or cowl fashioned from small, flattish nodular flint boulders placed upright and a hard chalky clay aggregate (Figs 8 & 9). Reddening of the cowl's clayey fraction suggested that the structure had been baked. A sharp vertical 'break' at the point where the cowl ceased to be protected by the working hollow suggested that it had been truncated by the terrace, not weathered away, and that formerly it had continued around the burnt layer. Fragments of baked chalky clay from the midden and possible pit 4 are thought to belong to it. The stone layer overlay a domed, dark grey silty layer thought to comprise an ash-bed. *In situ* burning of the burnt stone layer was indicated by the decreasing size of the stones through it and evidence of a heat gradient in the form of stones burnt at a lower temperature or part burnt at its base and around its periphery (Table 4). Charcoal survived under stones, including an unidentifiable hardwood twig (P. Austin pers. comm.) used for radiocarbon dating,[1] and under several sherds which directly overlay these (vessels 1–4).

A fragment of the cowl exposed through the winter almost completely disintegrated. This implies that the structure of which it formed a part did not have to over-winter. In so doing it raises the possibility that it was covered, the principal evidence for a house on the site. Any structural features associated with this were outside the trench, invisible in the 'upper coombe deposits' (*see* Posthole, below), or had been truncated — like the stove itself — by the terrace.

Most probably the role of the stove was to heat this structure. This conclusion is reached through the elimination of other roles attributed to burnt stone from prehistoric sites — saunas, pit-cooking,

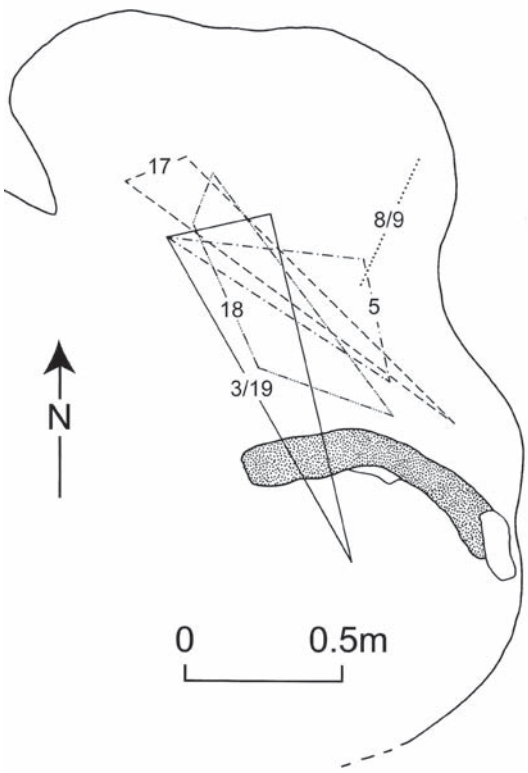

Fig. 10. The distribution of pottery through the midden. Single numbers = joining sherds; double numbers = non-joining sherds from the same vessels. The sherds comprising 5 and 17 were at or close to the same level.

heating, pot-boiling (suggested by pots filled with burnt stone) and pottery temper (Seager Thomas 1999). The cowl did not itself reach a sufficient temperature to generate much steam (only one of the two flint boulders in it was fire-cracked) and thus the sauna hypothesis can be excluded. Pottery vessels filled with burnt stone are unknown from this period and the manufacture of pottery temper is ruled out because the stone types from the stove are not characteristic of East Sussex MIA pottery tempers. Besides, unless they remained in the fire as a result of some catastrophic but otherwise invisible accident there were too many stones to be anything but a by-product. This leaves heating and cooking. These exploited the heat-retentive properties of stone to provide heat after a fire had gone out or to bake or steam food (Ramseyer 1991; Wandsnider 1998, 19, 21). The first of these two options is preferred because cooking with stones usually involves covering them, which creates a reducing atmosphere, and there was evidence — in the form of reddened, iron-rich sandstones amongst the assemblage — that the atmosphere of the fire was oxidizing. The cowl provided an additional heat-store while preventing fire-fractured stone from being ejected into the living or working area.

Hearth

The hearth was located in a separate lobe of the working hollow but was stratigraphically synchronous with the stove. During excavation it could not be distinguished from the midden. It was identified as a hearth because it filled a dip in the primary fill of the working hollow and because burnt stones within it diminished in size down through it (as in the burnt stone layer from the stove). Since it had no cowl, was smaller than and contained fewer burnt stones than the stove, it is assumed to have had a different use.

The midden

The midden comprised a very finds-rich dark grey clayey silt which almost completely filled the working hollow. It was divided vertically by a discontinuous layer of re-deposited 'upper coombe deposits' similar to that comprising the working hollow's primary fill and it both lay against, and comprised the upper fill of the stove (sherds from the same vessels were recovered from both sides of the cowl: 1/12 and 3/19). On its northern side, within the working hollow but away from the stove, it was partially capped by a further layer of relatively finds-free 'upper coombe deposits'. From the upper lip of the working hollow, the upper surfaces of both tapered towards the level of the terrace, indicating that they had been truncated by it (Fig. 8). The survival of the stove beneath the midden suggests that the latter was deposited prior to, or very soon after, the destruction of any structure which protected this. The radiocarbon date on the midden was obtained from a fragment of very small round wood (*Prunus* spp.) (P. Austin pers. comm.) found under a large, unburnt flint nodule.

The finds included pottery, burnt stone, chalk rock, charcoal, baked chalky clay, 'slingstones', marine shell, burnt bone, unburnt struck flint and unburned bone. The distribution of these shows how the midden was formed. Where the shape of the finds was such that it was possible to determine their orientation, the vast majority were either close to horizontal or lay at an angle

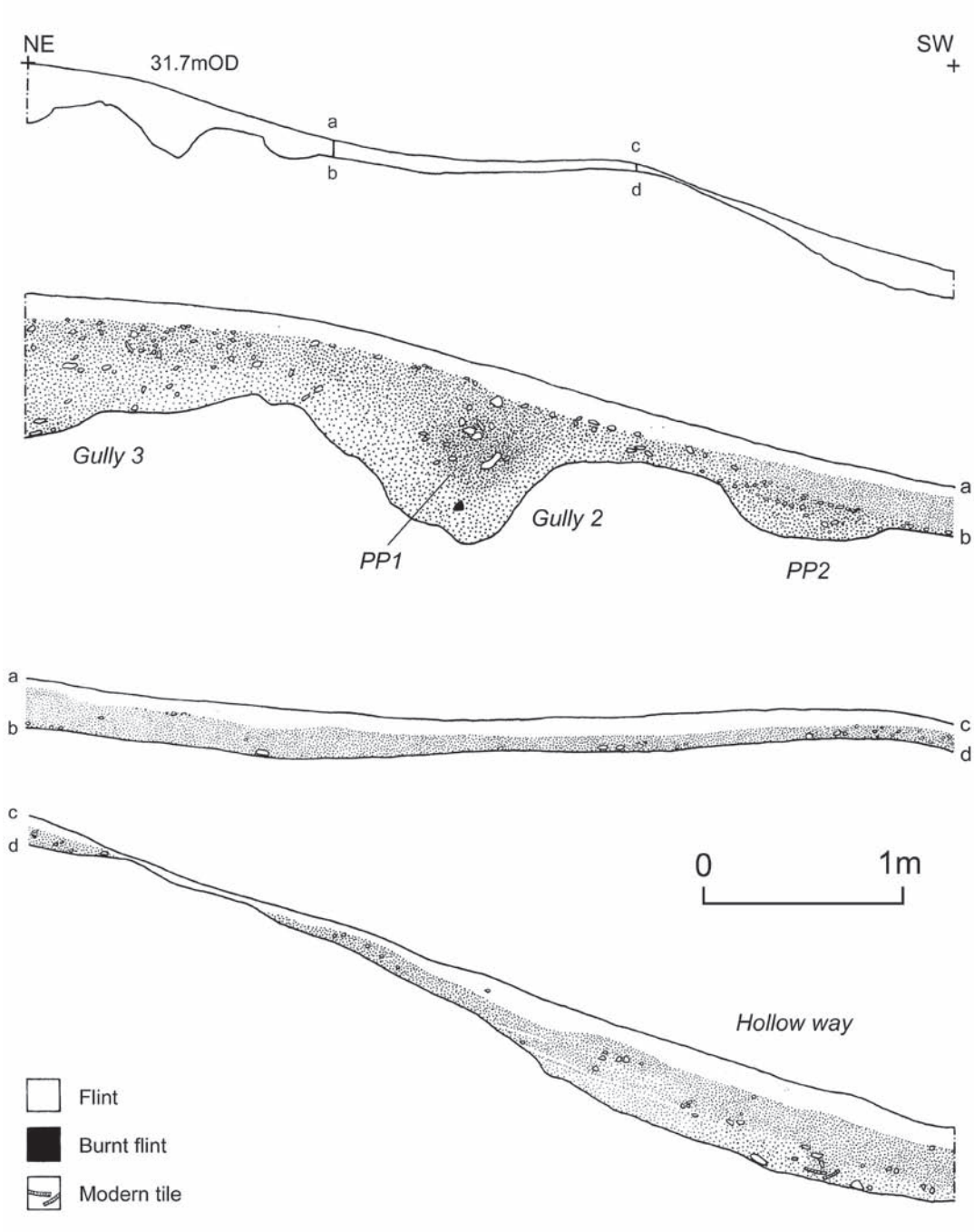

Fig. 11. Section across the terrace and the hollow way showing possible pits 1 and 2 and gullies 2 and 3.

against another find. This suggests piecemeal, rather than bulk deposition. However finds of different categories were intimately mixed and sherds from individual pots were spread through the deposit (Fig. 10), the former indicating that they were gathered together prior to deposition,

Table 5. Linear features. G = gully; PP = possible pit; T1 = terrace.

Gully	Maximum dimensions (m)		Stratigraphic relationships		Pottery group	Figure nos.
	depth	breadth	above	below		
G1	0.3	0.44	PP6	T1	MIA 1/2	6
G2	0.85	0.52	natural	G4 and PP1	None	2, 11
G3	0.9	>0.3	natural	Topsoil	MIA 1/2	2, 11
G4	0.5	0.45	G2	Topsoil	LIA	2

Fig. 12. The terrace, the metalled surface and test pit E.

the latter that they were deposited at the same time. Large clusters of sherds from two whole pots (vessels 5 and 18), the downward sides of which were unweathered, show the deposition of these to have been of a primary nature.

There are two ways this can be understood, one of which accords with 'ritual theory' and one of which does not. The first is that it *was* a ritual deposit. A number of characteristics attributed to such deposits are shared by the midden. At its base was one side of a horse (pony) jaw, it was dominated by two categories of find, pottery and stone, and it contained sherds belonging to two whole vessels. All of these are seen in so-called structured deposits elsewhere. Additionally the large number of finds from it, and the fact that these were incorporated in a feature at all rather than dispersed into the landscape, sets it apart from other features on the site. The alternative is that it comprised rubbish scraped together from what was available in the immediate vicinity to fill the working hollow: the contents of a hearth, a few broken pots, an odd shaped flint nodule put aside because it looked useful but was never used — the sort of things that might escape under the eaves of a poorly kept roundhouse. If the latter, in so far as this was not ritually weighted, it should represent everyday activity in the vicinity. The nature of finds indicates that this was essentially domestic.

LINEAR FEATURES

Two parallel linear features dated to the MIA ran diagonally across the trench (Figs 2, 6 & 11). Both tapered to nothing at their interface with the terrace and it can be assumed that they had been cut by it. Gully 1 had two fills. The lowermost of these comprised clayey silt, the uppermost patchy matrix and clast-supported flint. The fill of gully 2 was patchier but downslope was identical to the upper fill of gully 1. The origin of the silty lower fill of gully 1 is unknown but most likely the two stony fills comprise stones dislodged/eroded from the 'upper coombe deposits', through which gully 2 was visibly cut and through which it is assumed gully 1 was cut prior to being truncated by the terrace. These fills indicate that the gullies, unlike the pits, had been left open. Since both ran downhill, this perhaps suggests they were drainage gullies. Gully 2 was cut at right angles by a further gully (gully 4) filled in the same way (Fig. 2). This

contained LIA pottery. A possible gully (gully 3) whose identification was uncertain owing to its location at the edge of the excavated area is undated (Table 5).

THE TERRACE

The terrace comprised a broad platform cut more or less horizontally into the natural slope of the hill (Figs 11 & 12). To the northwest it was truncated by or abutted a lower, sub-circular feature (terrace 2), to the southwest by a hollow way; and to the southeast by a series of irregular artificial hollows which were not investigated but which resembled, and are thought to be post-medieval quarry pits. Its surface comprised coombe rock or, where it cut or was cut by other features, the upper fills of these. A flinty layer which, in places, overlay *both* is thought to have been deliberate metalling (Figs 7 & 12). The purpose of the terrace is unknown but a concentration of mostly horizontally-orientated finds from the metalling (more concentrated than in the underlying fills) which included pottery, daub, 'slingstones', marine shell and animal bone reflects a similar range of activities as the earlier midden. The latest features cut by it are of MIA date while a spread of Ouse Valley Ware from the metalling including several widely separated sherds belonging to a single vessel shows it in use during the LIA. It is the only Iron Age surface feature of this type currently known. Beyond the supposed quarry pits, at the same level as the terrace, was another similar but undated feature.

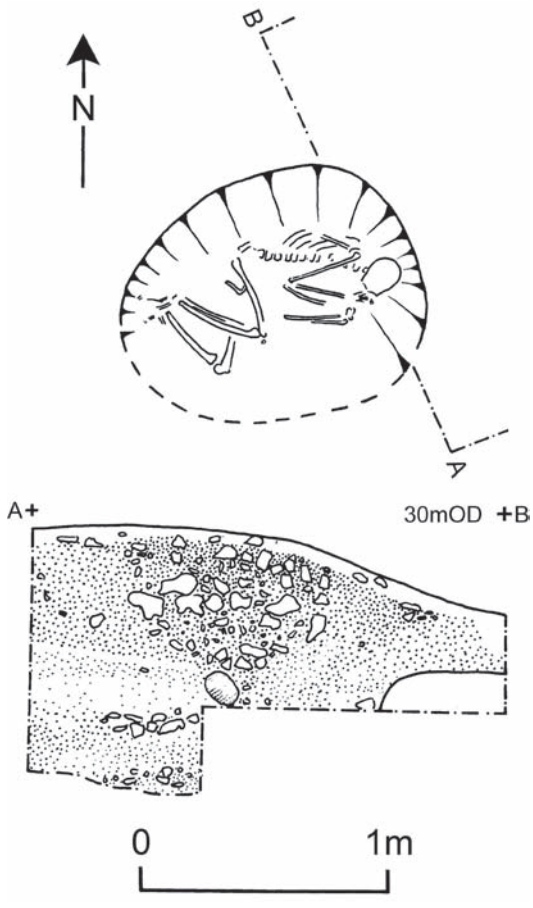

Fig. 13. The grave (the location of the skull, removed during the trial excavation, and the grave cut reconstructed post-excavation from photographs and measurements taken in the field).

THE GRAVE

Prior to excavation the grave was defined by a layer of large nodular flints, which protruded through the modern turf. It cut three or four different pits (Figs 2 & 6). Owing to the inhomogeneity of their fills, its edge was difficult to distinguish during excavation, but the extent of its stony upper layer, and glimpses of it at its northeast and southeast ends, where the former comprised re-deposited coombe rock, and in section, suggest that it was oval in plan and had steeply sloping sides (Fig. 13). On its base lay the crouched skeleton of a woman of between 30 and 40 years old (D. Antoine pers. comm.).[2] She lay on her left side with her hands drawn up beneath her chin and both knees bent, ankles and wrists close together as if bound. Both her head, which was tilted forward awkwardly (Fig. 14), and one of her feet, which remained upright, appeared to have been supported by the grave cut and it is suggested that her body had been squeezed into it. A lack of skeletal movement such as occurs during decomposition in burials placed in a hollow sepulchre (cf. Reynolds 1976, 142) indicates that the fill of the grave was placed directly on the body. This comprised alternating layers of clayey silt and large, clast-supported flints. These were not wholly level, presumably having slumped as the body decayed, but their identification as layers is certain (Fig. 13). A radiocarbon date on the left leg of the skeleton places it in the later part of the MIA (380–60 cal. BC) (GU-11453: 2170±50 BP). The skeleton of a new-born baby in, or cut into, the upper fill of the grave was located approximately over the woman's head.

Fig. 14. The skull *in situ*.

The Norton burial had much in common with the MIA burial from Slonk Hill referred to above (Hartridge 1978, 80). Both were of women, both lay on their left sides on the base of the pits in which they were found, both had their wrists and ankles close together, both had their legs flexed, both were completely articulated and both were overlain by a structured grave fill. A similar theme is evident in separate LIA burials from Slonk Hill and Bishopstone (Hartridge 1978; Bell 1977, 81). These were of men and both lay above the bases of the pits in which they were found and had their hands folded away from each other, but they too were completely articulated and lay on their left sides with their legs flexed. When compared to a second Bishopstone burial which lay on its back with its mouth wide open (Bell 1977, fig. 38), a characteristic of many burials placed in a hollow sepulchre and in this instance probably indicative of a later (Saxon) date, both pairs appear to represent variants of a single tradition. The evidence of all four suggests that this variation reflects either date or sex.

The real question is not, was the Norton burial a ritual deposit, but what was the meaning of that ritual? The answer to this lies in its context. The radiocarbon dates from the midden and the skeleton allow the possibility of a chronological overlap between them but overall the dating evidence, both stratigraphic and radiocarbon, points to a date towards the end of the MIA occupation of the site, possibly as much as a generation later than the midden. It is not therefore a foundation deposit. The obvious alternative — but not the only one — is the opposite, that it marked the closing down of the site, indeed that the woman inhumed was the occupant of the site. A rite which limited inhumation to these two extreme points in the life of a site — or part of a site — would explain both its rarity and its known feature associations. Other evidence for deliberate closing down of Sussex sites during the later Iron Age comes from Copse Farm, Oving, where the occurrence of pottery sherds from the same vessels in widely separated features indicates a single act of site levelling (Hamilton 1985, fig. 8; 2003, 78), North Bersted where a lack of obvious postholes in the county's only dated MIA roundhouse was attributed to their having been removed rather than being allowed to rot *in situ* (Bedwin and Pitts 1978, 301), and Glynde where a woman and child were found inhumed in the upper (LIA) fill of the enclosure ditch (Burstow & Norris 1962, 307–9).

UNDATED FEATURES

Posthole

Up-slope of the terrace, a possible posthole was identified at the point where it projected through the 'upper coombe deposits' into the underlying coombe rock (Fig. 2). At this point it was 0.3 m in diameter and on one side was a single large flint, probably a packing stone. Its depth below the modern landsurface was 0.8 m.

Terrace 2

The sub-circular feature which cut or abutted the terrace (Fig. 2) proved to have been massively truncated and perhaps shaped or re-shaped by a modern feature at its inner edge (pit 17). Where it survived, its surface was horizontal and comprised a layer of flint impressed into the underlying coombe rock.

Table 6. The quantification and distribution of Iron Age pottery with fabric and feature dates. EFM = early first millennium BC; G = gully; GR = grave; H1 = hearth; H2 = stove; M = midden; P = pit; PP = possible pit; S = metalled surface; T = terrace.

Feature	Fabric and fabric date											Likely feature date
	F1	*U*	*S*	*I*	*C*	*B*	*Q*	*H*	*QS*	*G1*	*G2*	
	EFM											
		MIA group 1										
		MIA group 2										
										LIA		
	Number of sherds/weight in grams											
P1	1/2	1/1	5/63									MIA group 1 / MIA group 2
P1/ P2/P4			10/24	4/19								
P1/ P4				1/7								
P1/GR				2/5								
P1/P4/GR			2/98	1/2								
P2				4/4								
P3			2/35	10/2								
P6			2/9	1/80								
P8		1/1	1/2									
P9	1/3		10/19	1/6								
P10			5/25	1/2								
P11			22/82	2/55								
P12			3/63									
P13			6/23		1/3							
PP1		1/1	4/49									
PP2			1/1									
H1	1/1		1/1									
H2/M			32/603									
M			239/1113	9/145	40/501							
G1			1/1									
GR	1/10		3/9	1/6								
PH					1/1							
T2					1/1							
P1 or PP6			1/11	1/1				3/36				
P1/P13			6/8				1/1					
P11 or PP4			117/252	3/57	8/72	2/50	2/58					
G3			1/1			1/15						
PP1/G4		1/1		4/56						1/14	3/8	LIA
G4			7/24	1/11							3/29	
S	1/5		20/124	2/58					1/11	11/29	3/16	

ARTEFACTS

POTIN COIN by Michael Donne

A much corroded Class 1 potin coin was found lying horizontally at the interface between the uppermost surviving fill of pit 6 and possible pit 4. It is one of 23 potins from the county (Haselgrove 1987, 350–51; Rudling 1999, 28). Most of these are from LIA or later contexts but three from the Caburn, which has yielded more potin coins than any other Sussex site, are from contexts which yielded MIA or earlier pottery only — the Curwens' pits 48 and 106 (Curwen & Curwen 1927) and Drewett and Hamilton's pit 8 (1999, 28). The Norton coin, the associations of which are wholly MIA, is thus the third or possibly the fourth potin coin of MIA date from Sussex. Other early potins are known from Surrey and Greater London (Haselgrove 1987, appendix 5; Greenwood 2002, 207).

Possibly MIA traditions in these areas were longer-lived than in other areas where potin coins are known. However, the radiocarbon dates from Norton do not support this view. Two alternatives are suggested. The first is that the absence of, or the failure to recognize, a clearly definable MIA pottery tradition in other regions which have yielded potin coins has caused them to be wrongly attributed to the LIA (Kent is the obvious example) (M. Seager Thomas pers. comm.). The other is that their dating reflects deposition practices in the areas where they are found. Either they went out of use in the LIA, and, rather than being deliberately deposited were discarded,

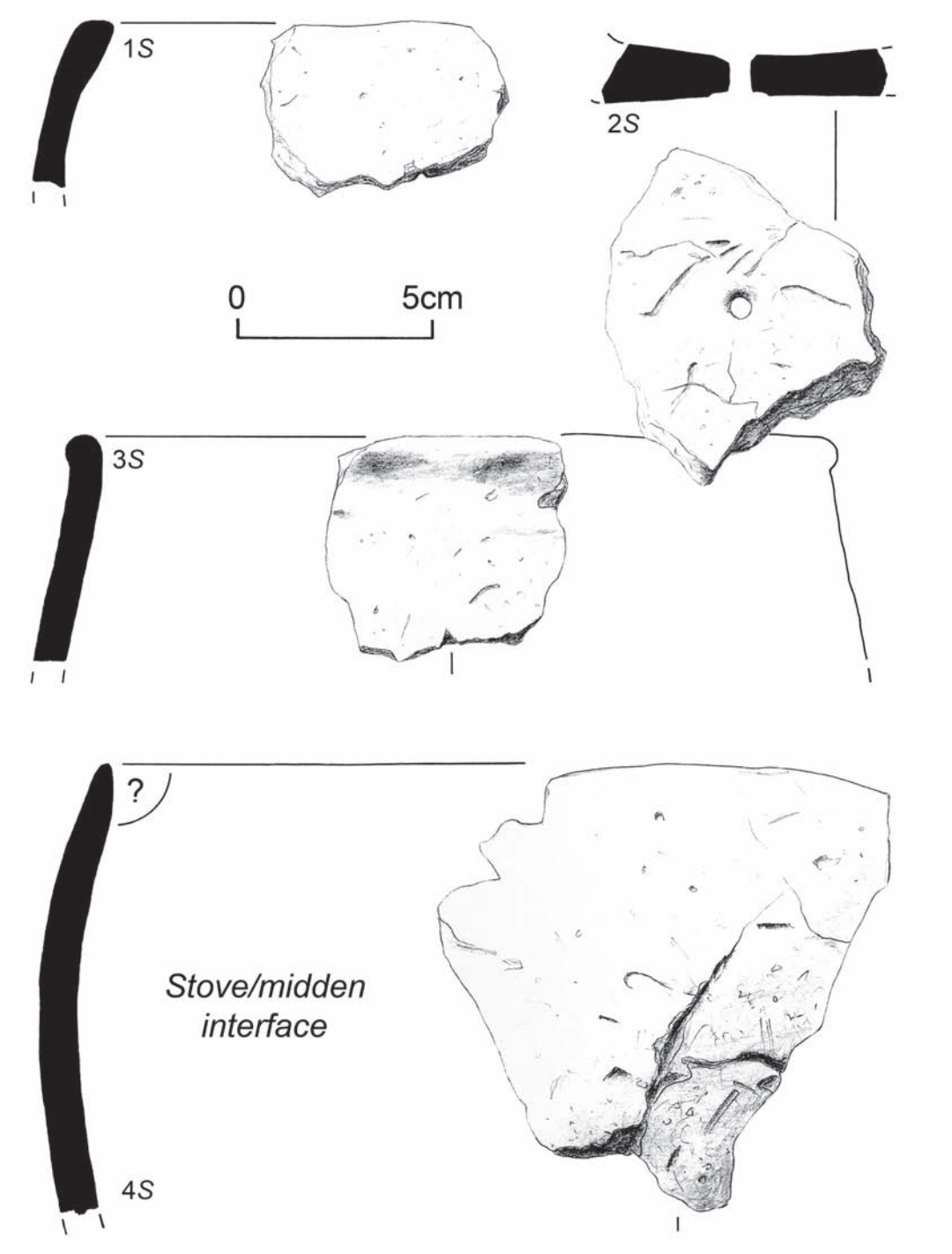

Fig. 15. Pottery from the interface between the midden and the layer of burnt stone filling the stove (Middle Iron Age group 1).

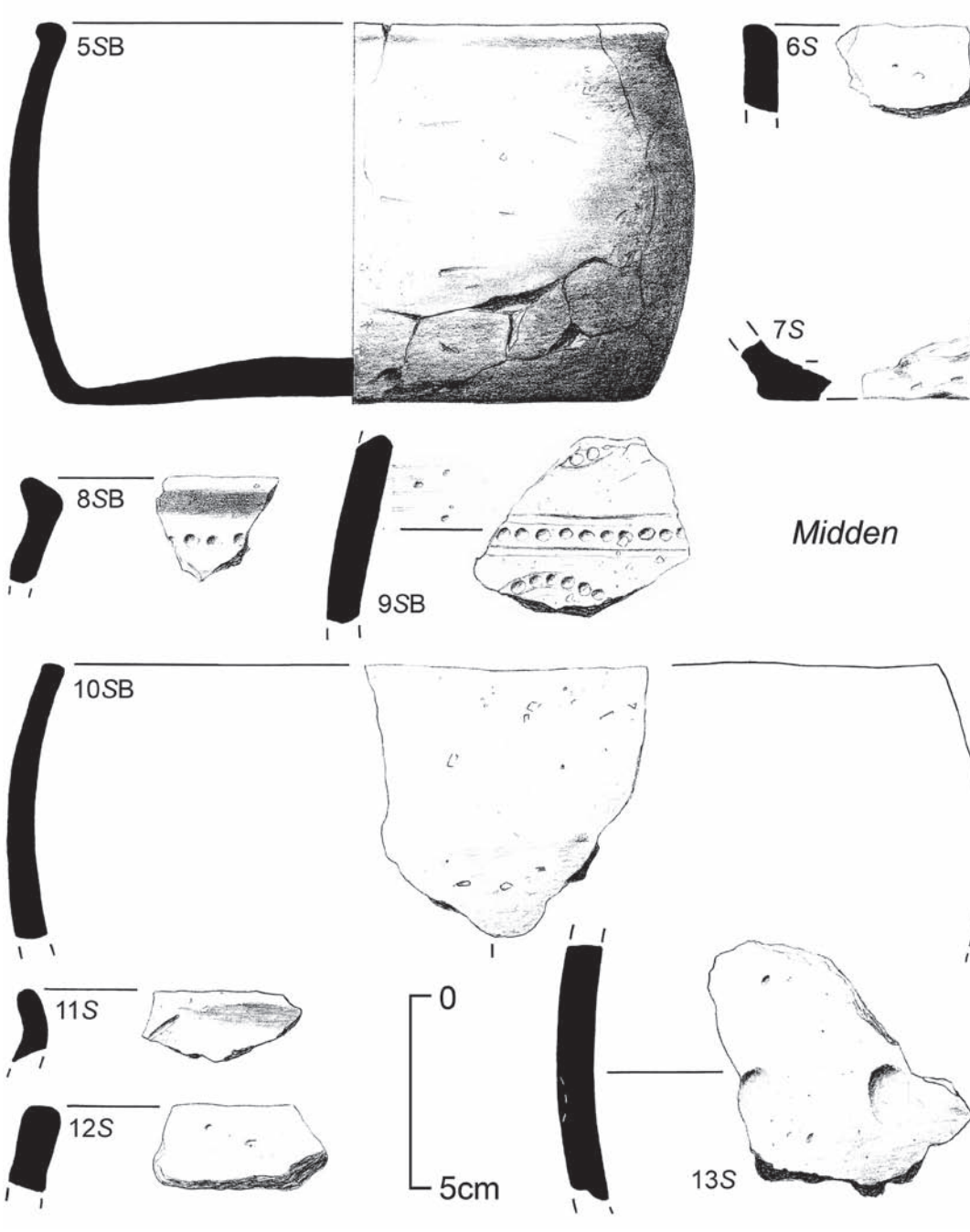

Fig. 16. Pottery from the midden (Middle Iron Age group 1).

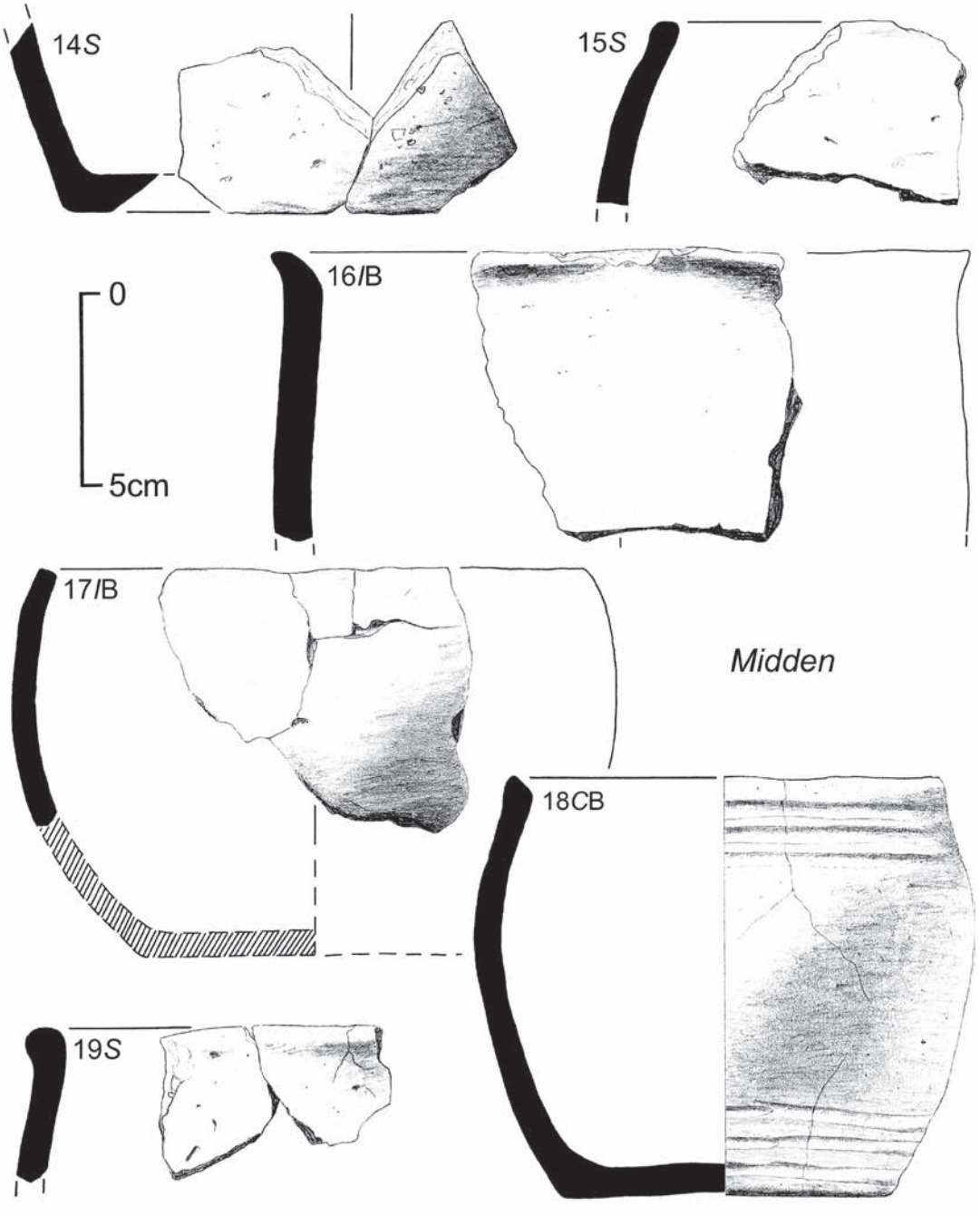

Fig. 17. Pottery from the midden (Middle Iron Age group 1).

Table 7. Norton pottery fabrics.

Category	Code	Inclusions	Sherd thickness in mm	Other	Source	Km to source
		Grain size classification after PPRG 1991, 35				
Untempered	*U*	None	*c.* 7			
Flint-tempered	*F1*	5–15% medium to coarse sand-sized burnt flint	7–8	Probably several different fabrics. Always un-burnished with oxidized surfaces and unoxidized core.	Local	1
Shelly	*S*	3–10% medium to coarse sand-sized shell	5–11	Usually un-burnished with oxidized surfaces and, occasionally, core.	Newhaven/ beach	3
	S2	5% medium to coarse sand-sized shell		Briquetage. Always un-burnished and oxidized throughout.		
Calcite-tempered	*C*	5–10% medium to coarse sand-sized calcareous siltstone and — usually — calcite. Occasional identifiable greensand.	6–8	Always burnished and usually unoxidized throughout. Frequent voids in/on the interior surfaces of vessels.		
Glauconitic	*I*	40–50% round, fine to medium glauconite/pisolithic iron oxide sand, >5% (often unquantifiable) sub-round, medium quartz sand, and occasional rare medium to coarse sand-sized burnt flint and/or shell.	5–10	Usually burnished and unoxidized throughout. A single haematite-coated body sherd was recovered during the trial excavation. It comes from an MIA context but its exact stratigraphic relationships are uncertain.	Weald	15
Ferruginous siltstone	*H*	10–15% medium to coarse sand-sized angular ferruginous siltstone.	6–7	Single burnished vessel unoxidized throughout.		
Sandy	*Q*	30–40% sub-round, medium quartz sand.	8	Usually roughly burnished with oxidized surfaces and unoxidized core.		
	QS	30–40% sub-round, medium quartz sand and 5% medium to coarse sand-sized shell.	8–9	Single sherd with oxidized surfaces and unoxidized core. Hard.		
Grog-tempered	*G1*	5–7% light grey, angular medium to coarse sand-sized grog, and <1% shell	4–7	Always burnished with slightly lumpy surface. Usually unoxidized throughout with light grey core. Harder than G2.	Sussex / Surrey	?
	G2	20–25% light to dark grey, angular to sub-round medium to coarse sand-sized grog.	5–10	Always burnished with slightly lumpy surface. Usually unoxidized throughout with light grey core.		

or their occurrence in one period rather than another indicates a change in deposition practice.

POTTERY

Pottery and feature dating

The pottery from Norton belongs to two sequential Iron Age traditions, one dated to the MIA and characterized by saucepan pottery, and one dated to the LIA and characterized by the presence of a grog-tempered ware known variously as Eastern Atrebatic (Cunliffe 1991, 151), Ouse Valley (Hamilton 1993), East Sussex Grog-tempered (Cotton 2001, 13) and, depending on its precise date, East Sussex 'Eyebrow' or East Sussex Ware (Green 1980). A typologically undiagnostic sherd of imported Campanian amphora with 'black sand' inclusions found in a modern feature immediately downslope of the terrace and perhaps derived from it could be associated with either group. The MIA pottery is divisible into an earlier assemblage (MIA 1) represented by the group from the midden/working-hollow

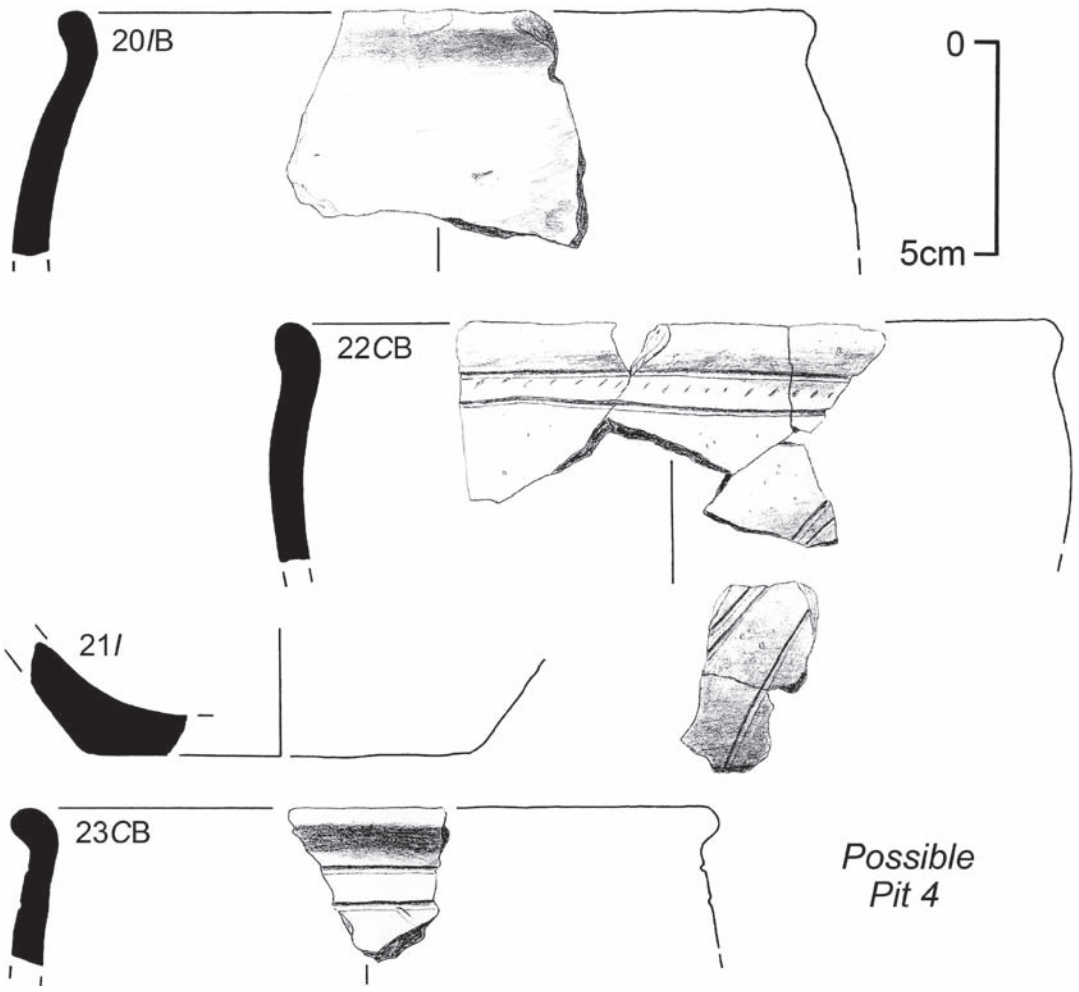

Fig. 18. Pottery from possible pit 4 (Middle Iron Age group 2).

and a later assemblage (MIA 2) represented by the group from possible pits 4 and 6 and pit 13. The radiocarbon dates from the working-hollow are the earliest associated with a Sussex Saucepan pot assemblage (cf. Hamilton 2003, 84). Possible pits 4 and 6 and pit 13 are shown to be later by their stratigraphic relationships, which fall towards the end of the Norton sequence, and the presence in possible pit 4 of material thought to have been derived from the working-hollow, of two fabrics absent from stratigraphically early features on site such as the working-hollow (possible pit 6 contained another *new* fabric), and of the potin, a category of find more usually associated with the LIA. The presence or absence of pottery belonging to these groups provides the principal evidence by which features are dated at Norton (Table 6).

The MIA assemblage

The assemblage from the working-hollow comprised both fine (burnished) and coarsely-finished vessels and included sherds from two complete saucepan pots, one wholly undecorated (5) and one decorated with parallel burnished lines immediately below the rim and above the base (18). Associated with these were sherds from several other undecorated saucepan pots (3/19 & 16), a square-rimmed convex-sided bowl (17), three larger and coarser convex-sided jars (1/11, 4 & 10), and sherds, probably from a saucepan pot, decorated with dot-impressed swags (8/9) (Figs 15–17). Although it lacks analogous convex-sided vessels, the best group parallel for these forms and decorative traits comes from North Bersted (Morris 1978). Additionally individual parallels come from several nearby sites. The complete undecorated saucepan pot, for example, has a close parallel from the Caburn (Lane Fox 1881, pl. 25.56), the convex-sided jars have approximate parallels in the assemblage from the enclosure ditch at Rookery Hill (Hamilton 1977, figs 40.6 & 41.7), and a similar decorated-swag, albeit formed of lines rather than dots, comes from Castle Hill, Newhaven (Hawkes 1939, fig. 4.2). The Norton vessels are in three fabrics, shelly (*S*), glauconitic or pisolithic iron oxide-rich (*I*), and calcareous rock or 'calcite' tempered

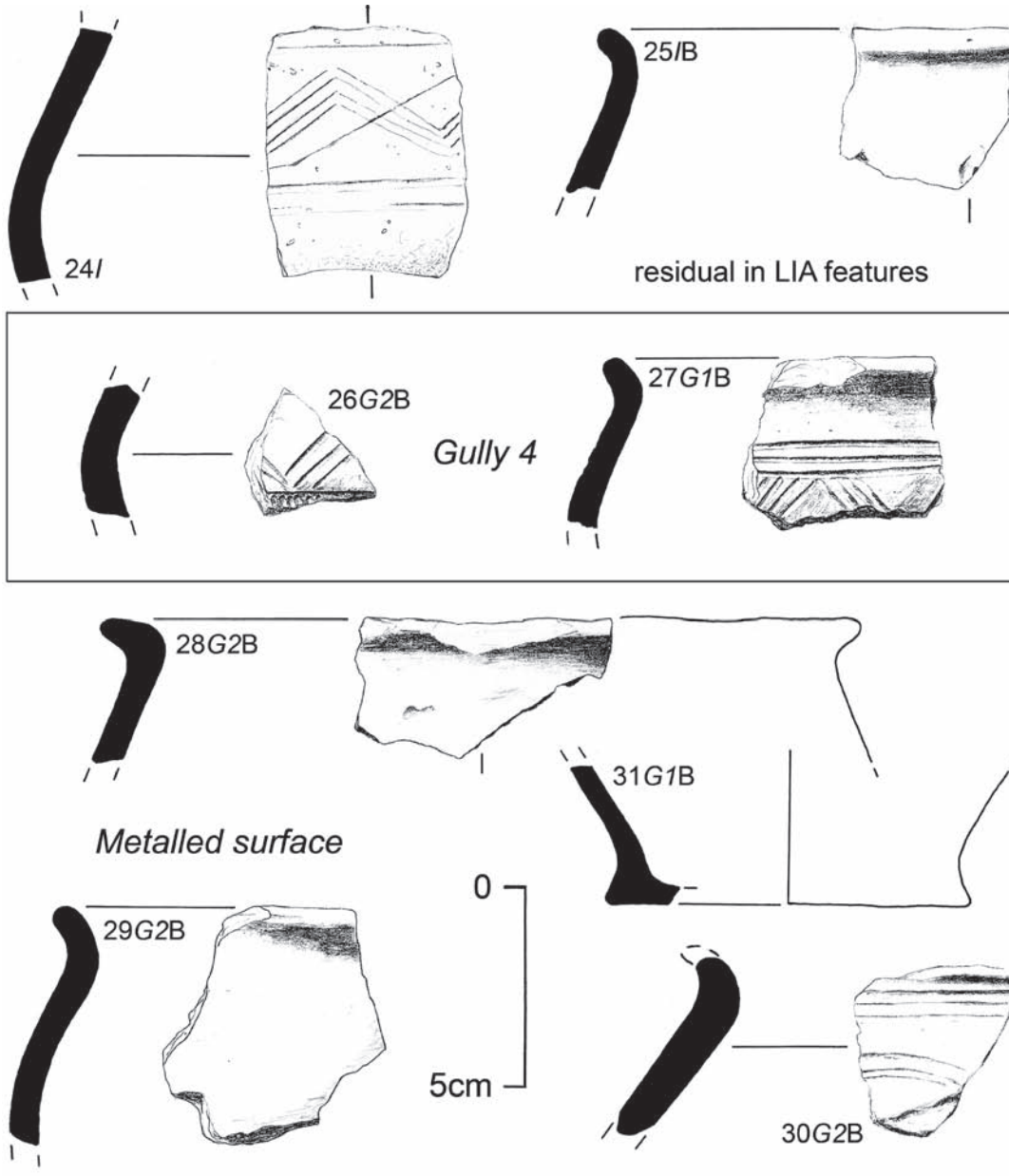

Fig. 19. Pottery from the metalled surface and gully 4 (24 and 25 residual Middle Iron Age; 26-32 Late Iron Age).

(*C*) (Table 7). The first of these probably includes Rookery Hill Iron Age fabric 2 (Hamilton 1977, 89) which is attributed to a source at Newhaven. Similar Sussex Iron Age fabrics are restricted the Ouse Valley (Table 2). Fabric *I*, which occurred in Sussex as early as the end of the Late Bronze Age must originate in the Weald, although uncertainty regarding the exact nature of the inclusions rules out a closer provenance within the region. It conflates Bishopstone Iron Age fabrics 3b and 3c (Hamilton 1977, 90) and — possibly — Slonk Hill Iron Age fabric 1 (Morris 1978; Hamilton 1993). Similar fabrics were popular in southeast England during the later Iron Age, occurring in Wessex, Kent, Greater London and Essex, but during this period their Sussex distribution was restricted to East Sussex and West Sussex east of the River Arun (Table 2). The last fabric, *C*, has not previously been distinguished but its identification is certain. The identifications of greensand

in Norton vessel 18 and some other vessels probably indicate a Wealden source for it. At least seven Sussex sites and one Surrey site have yielded identical fabrics (Table 2; Seager Thomas forthcoming b, fabric *GS*) but only at Norton can they be associated with this early group.

The assemblage from possible pits 4 and 6 and pit 13 includes sherds from two decorated saucepan pots (22 & 23) and several undecorated jars with probable S-shaped profiles (20) (Fig. 18). All of these were burnished. However, coarsely-finished non-feature sherds in both fabrics *S* and *I* were also present. Vessel 22 is decorated with what looks like a tooled-scroll, vessel 23 with two parallel tooled lines immediately below a pronounced out-turned rim. The principal typological differences between this and the preceding group are the absence of convex-sided vessels, the presence of S-shaped vessels and developed rims, and the nature — rather than the presence or absence — of the decoration. Currently it has no group parallel. Close individual saucepan pot parallels however come from Slonk Hill, Newhaven and Patcham-Fawcett (Morris 1978, fig 12.73; Fig. 4), and more approximate S-shaped parallels from North Bersted (Morris 1978, fig. 17.81), West Blatchington (Fig. 4), and a number of important non-Sussex sites including Little Waltham in Essex (Drury 1978, fig. 38.11), Bigbury in Kent (Thompson 1983, fig. 10) and Hawks's Hill in Surrey (Cunliffe 1965, fig. 7.5). The fabrics associated with this group are the same as those described above with three additions, one tempered with crushed ferruginous siltstone (*H*) which occurred in an S-shaped form in possible pit 6 (unillustrated), a sandy fabric (*Q*), and a sandy fabric with shell inclusions (*QS*). No new forms occurred in fabric *S* but saucepan pots in this fabric with expanded rims and curvilinear decoration from Newhaven (Hawkes 1939, figs. 4a.5 & 4a.7) show that the fabric runs through into this later group. The same typological logic is applicable to fabrics *I* and *C*. For example the swag-decorated vessel from Newhaven which is in Norton fabric *I* has a pronounced out-turned rim and can be assumed to belong to the same chronological group, as can two probable S-shaped vessels in fabric *I* from LIA contexts at Norton itself (24 & 25), and several vessels in fabric *C* from other Sussex sites (Fig. 4). Fabric *H*, or — at least — the material used to temper it, almost certainly comes from the Weald Clay. Fabric *Q* is more characteristic of Thames Valley than Sussex MIA traditions and was perhaps imported (cf. Ashford, Surrey, fabric *CQ2*: Seager Thomas forthcoming a), and fabric *QS*, of which there was only a single typologically undiagnostic body sherd in the whole assemblage, is perhaps the same as Rookery Hill Iron Age fabric 3a which is attributed to a local alluvial source (Hamilton 1977, 90–93).

LIA pottery

In all places where it was found at Norton, Ouse Valley Ware (Fig. 19) was stratigraphically above MIA deposits. Individually and collectively the Norton Ouse Valley Ware vessels are closely paralleled in LIA assemblages from Rookery Hill (Hamilton 1977), Horsted Keynes (Hardy 1937) and Charleston Brow (Parsons and Curwen 1933) and can be assumed to be of the same approximate LIA date. Two slightly different grog-tempered fabrics are distinguishable. These equate with Rookery Hill Iron Age fabric 5 (Hamilton 1977, 91) and have approximate Iron Age parallels from 16 or 17 sites, 12 in Sussex, one in Greater London and three or four in Surrey (Green 1980; Cotton 2001, 13–15; Seager Thomas forthcoming b; with additions).

CURATED STONE

Curated stone includes material which has been worked, altered incidentally by human action, or upon which an artefactual pattern has been imposed by import or sorting. Iron Age features at Norton yielded curated stone of 10 different geological types from at least six different sources. Since few of these were demonstrably *in situ* in terms of use it is difficult to infer with certainty for what most were used. However, the recurrent association of different categories of stone finds with each other and with other, non-stone finds indicates that most relate to a set of domestic or craft activities. This set closely resembles that of other, contemporary or near contemporary sites within the region and like most other categories of finds made at Norton occurred in features belonging to all periods of the site's Iron Age occupation (Table 8).

The stone trade

Four types of non-local sandstone were identified. From Eastbourne came Upper Greensand, from the Weald fine non-calcareous sandstone, from the Folkestone area of Kent coarse, very green calcareous Lower Greensand (quite unlike any Sussex stone), and from an unidentified location probably outside Sussex, shelly sandstone. Evidence for trade in stone locally lies in the known occurrence of analogous stone on three other Sussex Iron Age sites, the Caburn (Curwen & Curwen 1927, pl. 8.55), St Anne's Road, Eastbourne, and Slonk Hill. The find from Slonk Hill comes from the east of the site (posthole 38) which probably makes it MIA or earlier; the Caburn (pit 81) and St Anne's Road finds are from LIA features. This suggests continuity in stone procurement through the Iron Age. Probably these stones were traded as or for tools — fragments of Eastbourne Upper Greensand and Folkestone Stone from the midden retain traces of picked and ground convex surfaces comparable to those of complete querns, although of what type — saddle or rotary — it is impossible to say. Differences in colour, consistency and fracture pattern between naturally occurring stone and the Norton assemblage indicate that most of it had been burned prior to discard.

Local material

Of local origin were fire-cracked-flint, chalk rock and three varieties of ferruginous sandstone, locally associated with the Clay-with-flints. Only their burning shows these to have been curated, indeed, in the absence of any other evidence for use, it is assumed that they were curated *for* burning. For the flint this was indicated by fire-cracking and the progressive whitening of its fabric. Most of that from Norton was grey, rather than white, indicating that it was burnt at a low temperature. For the chalk it was indicated by surface calcination and the absorption of carbon. For the ferruginous sandstone it was indicated by its friability, cracking and the reddening of some stones. Tools of local origin include struck flint which occurs across the site; a fist-sized pounder of nodular flint and part of a saddle quern of sarsen stone from the LIA metalled surface; and a flint hammerstone from pit 3.

'Slingstones'

The beach pebbles, some deeply patinated and some not, comprised a mixture of unstained and deeply iron-stained flint which closely resembles that from the seashore, 2 km away (beach pebbles from the Clay-with-flints have a 'bleached patina' while *in situ* Sussex tertiary beach pebbles are often glauconite-coated: Lake *et al*. 1987). These are

Table 8. Local and imported stone.

Feature	**Stone type**										
	fire-cracked flint	*struck flint*	*chalk rock*	*ferruginous sandstone*	*sarsen*	*flint beach pebbles*	*quartzite beach pebbles*	*Upper Greensand*	*wealden sandstone*	*Lower Greensand*	*shelly sandstone*
	Number of clasts/weight in grams										
P1	39/2810	2/38	1/18	1/10		2/61	1/64				
P1 or PP6	24/1700	1/28		1/6		2/81					
P1/P2/P4	32/ 1490	5/125		1/30		5/146				1/8	
P1/P4		5/19									
P1/GR	1/100					1/47					
P1/P13	4/200			1/15							
P3	39/ 2965	8/31	1/49		1/217	6/222				1/33	
P4	2/195					1/17					
P5	2/125	2/107				1/31					
P5/P7	1/400										
P6/P11 or PP4	6/400	1/35		2/20							
P8	11/463	5/240		1/8		1/79					
P9				1/27							
P10	29/ 1820	4/19	2/20	1/2		3/88				1/13	
P11	26/ 1774	1/14	1/15	5/43		2/170		2/17		1/80	1/198
P11 or PP4	116/7190	14/60	16/450	3/78	1/50	6/264		1/23		3/84	
P12	3/32	1/2		6/225						1/44	
P13	11/84					4/567					
PP1	27/ 1915	7/129				5/171					
PP2	1/2	1/ >1									
H1	2/160										
H2	333/16,426		N/A	7/554			1/172			18/776	
M	157/8380	24/324	192/5717	8/78		4/120		3/145	1/4	79/3946	
G1	5/435	6/88				2/68					
G2/G4	1/125	2/77				1/15					
G2	2/71	1/9				2/98					
G4	22/>575	7/35				3/82					
S	78/6845	18/391		4/138	1/209	19/577	1/186	1/73		2/60	
GR	1/19	6/48									
Km to Source	1					3		15	20	More than 20	

the 'slingstones' of E.C. Curwen and others (Curwen & Williamson 1931, 30). Metrical comparison of those from MIA contexts at Norton with bulk samples taken from a variety of active and fossil beach deposits in southeast England showed the Norton group to be much better sorted than most of the latter (Fig. 20). Most weighed between 20 and 100 grams, with an emphasis on the lower end of the size range, and were either sub-round or oval in shape. Their actual role is uncertain but the widespread occurrence of identically sorted beach pebbles on prehistoric settlement sites of a variety of periods, including many located at some distance from the sea, and their frequent association on these with domestic rubbish suggests that during this period on these sites they too had a role which was domestic, rather than martial. The seashore was also the source of several flat quartzite pebbles found on site.

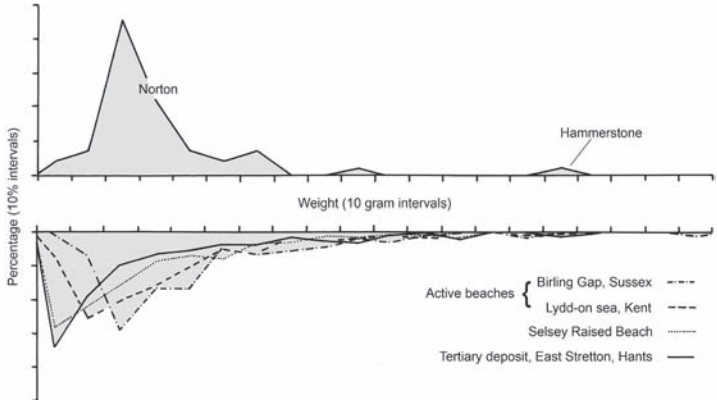

Fig. 20. The size range of beach pebbles from Norton Middle Iron Age features and a selection of fossil and active beach deposits.

Table 9. Animal bone from MIA contexts.

	Unidentifiable	Large	Medium	Small	Species	Number of identifications
Bone and bone fragments	240 (neonatal - 12)	10	47	8	Ovicaprid	12
					Cattle	10
					Pig	3
					Horse	1
Loose teeth and tooth fragments	0	n/a	n/a	n/a	Ovicaprid	19
					Cattle	2
					Pig	5
					Horse	3
Minimum number of individuals keeping contexts separate are, ovicaprid – 16, cattle – 8, pig – 4, and horse – 3.						

Table 10. Animal bone from LIA contexts.

	Unidentifiable	Large	Medium	Small	Species	Number of identifications
Bone and bone fragments	100	3	11	3	Ovicaprid	1
					Cattle	4
					Pig	0
					Horse	1
Loose teeth and tooth fragments	5	n/a	n/a	n/a	Ovicaprid	8
					Cattle	0
					Pig	8
					Horse	2
					Dog	1
Minimum number of individuals keeping contexts separate are, ovicaprid – 3, cattle – 2, pig – 3, and horse – 2.						

STRUCK FLINT by Chris Butler

The flintwork recovered during the excavations comprises mostly hard hammer-struck debitage — flakes, fragments and shattered pieces — with a small number of cores and implements. A few pieces with Mesolithic, Neolithic and Bronze Age traits were certainly residual and will be considered elsewhere.

Typology

The hard hammer flakes are mostly roughly knapped and have hinge fractures, broad platforms and crushing at the butt-end. The cores are irregular, with few flake removals, and no evidence of platform preparation, and they frequently have cortex remaining. End and side scrapers are made on hard hammer-struck flakes and have minimal amounts of abrupt and semi-abrupt retouch, suggesting that they are expedient tools. Four flakes and fragments, one of which may have been used as a scraper, have also been retouched, and they too may have been expedient tools. The flint is un-patinated, and many pieces look fresh and un-abraded, although one scraper has been manufactured on an earlier flake.

The case for Iron Age flintworking

Many of these come from secure Iron Age contexts (Table 8) but it is difficult to say whether they are themselves Iron Age, or were residual from Later Bronze Age activity. The proposed characteristics of an Iron Age flintworking technology are an extension of those found in later Bronze Age assemblages (Young *et al* 1999), namely:

- Utilization of highly localized raw materials
- Small assemblage numbers
- Simple core/flake technology employing hard hammer, direct percussion
- Lack of skill in knapping
- A restricted range of tool types
- Crude hammerstones
- A predominance of secondary and tertiary flakes
- Possible evidence for the recycling of flint

The lack of skill in knapping would result in short squat flakes with a high instance of step or hinge terminations, thick, wide striking platforms, and obtuse striking angles. There would also be a high instance of chips and chunks, together with irregular core morphology. The assemblage does appear to meet many of these criteria, but as it comes from contexts which include earlier residual material, and there are no pieces that can be refitted or appear to come from the same knapping episode (cf. Seager Thomas 2001, 33, note 59), it is impossible to confirm that they represent *in situ* Iron Age flintworking.

Table 11. Marine molluscs.

Species		MIA	LIA
Mussel (*Mytilus edulis*)	MNI/weight in grams	64/229.6	10/41
Carpet shell (*Tapes decussate*)		1/0.3	0
Cockle (*Cherastoderma edule*)		1/3.1	0
Acanthocardia spp.		1/0.8	0
Scallop (*Pecten maximus*)		1/7.9	0
Winkle (*Littorina littorea*)		1/2.7	0
Limpet (*Patella vulgata*)		4/16.2	0
Dog whelk (*Nucella lapillus*)		1/2.2	0
Netted dog whelk (*Hinia reticulata*)		1/3.2	0

ECOFACTS

ANIMAL BONES

by E.M. Somerville

Bone and teeth were identified to species using Hillson (1986; 1992) and Schmid (1972) for reference. Additionally long bone, rib and other axial fragments were ascribed to large mammal (cow/horse-size), medium mammal (sheep/goat-size) and small mammal (cat-size). The majority of bone was broken into unidentifiable fragments. This precludes any detailed quantification and prevents any conclusions being drawn about whether whole carcasses were processed at the site. Tables 9 and 10 show the total number of elements which could be ascribed to the categories given above. The fragmentary nature of the material means that little can be learned from looking at material from different contexts and features individually and accordingly these data combine them under date.

Ovicaprid[3] bones and or teeth were ubiquitous in MIA deposits, and were sometimes the only remains identifiable to species, e.g. from the upper fill of the grave. The midden yielded ovicaprid from all levels and from its base horse. One burnt ovicaprid metacarpal conjoined with a fragment of burnt bone from the underlying hearth. The various pits contained pig and cattle in addition to ovicaprid. Possible pit 4 contained all four species. This may suggest some partitioning, but the large amount of unidentifiable material clouds the picture as do differences in the total numbers of bones from different deposits. The MIA bones which could be identified to species had some evidence both of dogs gnawing the bones (4 cases) and, separately, of chop-marks indicating butchery (4 cases). Both ovicaprid and pig mandibles and teeth indicate the presence of adult and juvenile animals.

Ovicaprids, horse and cattle were found both on the metalled surface and in gully 4, and pig, which was only identifiable from teeth, was found on the metalled surface. The pig MNI for the LIA acknowledges the presence of both deciduous and adult teeth. A single dog canine from the interface between the metalled surface and pit 9/possible pit 5 had been deliberately perforated through the root by a drilled hole (Fig. 21). There was no evidence of dogs having gnawed any of the bones for this period. None of the bones showed clear evidence of butchery in the form of cut or chop-marks.

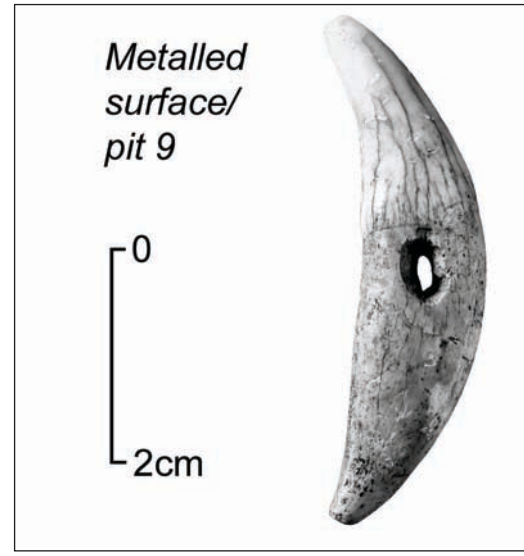

Fig. 21. Perforated dog's tooth.

For both the MIA and LIA most of the identifiable material comes from ovicaprids, which is in accordance with the larger number of medium-size elements found in both assemblages, although in terms of meat-weight cattle dominate. Given the fragmentary nature of the assemblage overall, it is probably fair to say that in both periods of the two medium-size animals which could be identified sheep were more common than pigs and of the two large-size animals which could be identified cattle were more common than horse. These conclusions parallel those of analyses carried out on assemblages of animal bone recovered from MIA contexts at Slonk Hill (Sheppard 1978, table 1) and later Iron Age contexts at Bishopstone (Gebbels 1977, 280).

MARINE MOLLUSCS by E.M. Somerville

Marine shell was identified to species following Fish and Fish (1989) and weighed. Table 11 gives the MNI and weight of shell for both the MIA and LIA. The small amount of material precludes any meaningful comparisons with other sites beyond noting that oyster (*Ostrea edulis*) was absent and that all the species recorded would occur on the channel coast. In both periods the assemblage was dominated by mussel but, as is usual, this was fragmentary (an inevitable function of the recovery process: *MST*). All the species except dog whelk are considered edible but these could have been gathered with the mussel.

CONCLUSION

EXCAVATION SUMMARY

The site is one of 35 Sussex MIA sites currently known. It is suggested that it was part of a domestic settlement and that early in its occupation a covered structure, most likely a non-post built house, was located in the area of the excavated trench. The evidence for this lies in the identification of a stove-

like feature which has no clear outdoor rationale and the burial of this by a midden comprising mixed and probably unstructured domestic rubbish. At some point during the MIA — it is not clear whether during the life of the house or not — the digging of a series of inter-cutting pits began. Later the stove, which had by now been buried by the midden, and several of the pits were truncated by one of two horizontal terraces of unknown purpose. The last act of the MIA was the interment of a middle-aged woman. It is postulated that she, possibly the last inhabitant of the site, represents a terminal deposit, for while there are traces of LIA activity it is clear from the density of finds that by this time the focus of activity had shifted elsewhere. Domestic activities evinced include the preparation and presentation of food, domestic heating and the procurement of material of non-local origin. Most of these probably continued through the site's occupation.

THE IMPORTANCE OF THE SITE

The Iron Age of southern Britain is coloured by a Wessex data base characterized by Butser Iron Age Farm (Reynolds 1979), and excavated sites such as Little Woodbury (Bersu 1940) and Danebury hillfort (Cunliffe 1984). It is rarely stated explicitly but the implication is that there was a single uniform Iron Age across the region (Haselgrove *et al*. 2001, 22) and that where this was absent, so was the Iron Age. Norton, however, shows how *Sussex* really was. In so far as houses and many of the features associated with them were shallow or ephemeral it differed from contemporary settlement in Wessex but, despite evidence for increasing cultural fragmentation, it too was in contact with the outside world and shared with it its modes of production and exchange. These characteristics originated in the preceding period (a rather startling observation in view of the change in ceramic repertoire); the increasing stylistic localization in ceramic production, the practice of burying individuals in functionally useful features, and specific sources of raw material were bequeathed to that which followed. Both show a degree of continuity, with all that implies in terms of peoples and society *through* the Iron Age.

Secondly, most known Sussex MIA assemblages are tiny. This begs the question: what happened to the rest? It is also assumed, primarily by those dealing in 'ritual theory', that in terms of quantity and composition most large MIA finds deposits are unrepresentative of artefact use (Hill 1995, 1–2). The discovery of a midden very close to the surface rather than in one of many deep pits on the site provides one possible answer; moreover, in so far as the finds from it cannot be shown to have been ritually deposited, it is likely they are representative of artefact use on site. Within the limits of survival the range of the finds accurately reflects the activities which took place on or near the site.

Lastly, the stratigraphy at Norton — arguably better than on any other excavated Sussex MIA site — helps refine the chronology of the period better than has been possible before, a necessary preliminary to the foregoing and any other similar analyses since it alone enables us to distinguish between the temporal change and the coeval difference which lies at their root. Key is the pottery. The site yielded two different MIA groups. Everything dated by them at Norton and on Sussex MIA sites in the future will have a refined social context and by extension will have the potential to become a social and chronological indicator itself. Take the potin coin. How many others of the 23 from the county are of similar MIA date and what does this mean in terms of contemporary settlement? In turn the relative chronological sequence into which these fall provided with approximate calendar dates by the associated radiocarbon dates from Norton and other Sussex sites and enable them to be compared against data from cultures, such as that in neighbouring Kent, to which they cannot be connected typologically because they fall outside the saucepan pot continuum.

FUTURE WORK

Although no features remained unexcavated within the trench, the continuation of several features beyond it, and the configuration and richness of what was excavated, herald further Iron Age archaeology nearby. Of particular interest is the area immediately upslope of the terrace where features belonging to the postulated house may survive un-truncated, the remainder of the hut-like terrace, the unexcavated terrace to the southeast, which — should it share features in common with the excavated one — might indicate both their purposes, and the stubbornly undated linear earthworks to the north. The site however remains unthreatened and besides our own curiosity there is little excuse to intrude upon it further. Instead it is recommended that the existing Sussex Iron Age date base be re-examined in the light of what we

have already learned from it. The similarity between the pottery fabrics — and some of the forms — from Norton and Rookery Hill suggests for example that much more of it is of MIA date than previously thought and a thorough re-analysis is required in order to configure this occupation; while many of the surviving assemblages from the sites listed in Table 1 could profitably be reconsidered in terms of date, centralized potting and resource procurement. The only damage this would do would be to our pre-existing conceptions of the Sussex Iron Age.

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NOTES

[1] Both radiocarbon samples retained bark and were of small diameter.

[2] Based upon the morphological characteristics of the skull and pelvis — which are unambiguously female — and pubic symphysis and auricular surface scorings.

[3] None of the diagnostic elements for distinguishing sheep and goat were found and no attempt was made to do this using teeth, hence the use of the term ovicaprid throughout this report.

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