

ASSESSMENT OF FERROUS RESIDUES

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1. Introduction

- 1.1 A small quantity of ferrous residues, amounting to just twelve fragments, weighing 95g, was recovered from the CAT's excavations north of Westenhanger Castle. No further residues came from the OAU watching brief. The residues are summarised in Table 9.

2 Methodology

- 2.1 The residues have been examined visually under low magnification, and identified to type. They have been weighed and counted, and tested with a magnet for their ferrous qualities.

3 Quantification

- 3.1 The twelve fragments of ferrous residues are small pieces of smithing slag, with characteristic vesicular texture. Two pieces are unstratified and the remainder come from Phase 3 contexts, with the exception of two pieces from a post-medieval context. All of the material is typical of smithing slag of this period, but it has few distinguishing or notable characteristics.

5 Conservation

- 5.1 The material is stable and has been appropriately packaged. It does not decay unduly over time and can easily be prepared for long-term storage. Once fully recorded, it could be discarded, although the quantities involved are very small, and the material does not present any particular storage difficulties.

6 Comparative Material

- 6.1 Small quantities of smithing slag of this type are widespread across contemporary sites in southern England. This small assemblage stands in contrast to the larger quantities of material, including smelting slag, retrieved from excavations at Mersham. All of the material has come from early medieval or later contexts and is likely to be of early medieval date.

7 Potential for further work

- 7.1 The small size of this assemblage and the lack of any distinctive elements relating to other aspects of the smithing process diminish the significance of this material. Although little work has been carried out on ferrous residues from early medieval contexts in East Kent, other sites have provided far better assemblages. This material is tied to domestic activity in one area of the site but it provides little information about the nature of ferrous metalworking there. The entire assemblage can be briefly summarised in several sentences, if thought necessary. It has little significance in terms of the Land Zone Aims and the Fieldwork Event Aims, although it does relate to the small assemblage of cultural material of early medieval date associated with that rural landscape.

Table Nine
Ferrous Residues

<i>Site</i>	<i>Context</i>	<i>Sub-Group</i>	<i>Group</i>	<i>Phase</i>	<i>Count</i>	<i>Weight</i>
CAT Excavation	4	27	6	3	5	10
CAT Excavation	19	0	0	0	2	5
CAT Excavation	21	32	6	3	1	5
CAT Excavation	95	4	15	4	2	35
CAT Excavation	138	12	12	3	1	35
CAT Excavation	191	32	6	3	1	5