

## - HUMAN REMAINS

### 1.1 Assessment of the Cremated Human Bone

*by Angela Boyle*

#### *Introduction*

- 1.1.1 Five deposits of cremated human bone in pottery vessels were recovered by hand during excavation works. These were recovered as soil samples and were subsequently wet-sieved. Material less than 2 mm has not yet been sorted. The study of the material is aimed at achieving both of the fieldwork event aims specified in section 2.2 above.

#### *Methodology*

- 1.1.2 Material was quantified by weight and scanned in order to determine age, sex, and potential for further analysis. Given the small size of the assemblage a decision was made to scan all of it. Each deposit was recorded on a pro forma record sheet which includes context, context type, period, weight, identifiable fragments, colour and minimum number of individuals.

#### *Quantification*

- 1.1.3 Five cremations were found, and are quantified and described in Table 10. Very little survived of all but one of them, in which the remains of two individuals, perhaps one male and one female, were identified.

#### *Provenance*

- 1.1.4 The cremations were located in a cluster in the south-eastern corner of the site. All were originally placed in vessels which had been truncated by later ploughing. Only the base of the pot survived in the case of 39. Four of the cremations were severely truncated as can be demonstrated by their weight (see Table 10). Four of the cremations were associated with pottery vessels and as such are well-dated. Preservation is poor due to the level of truncation by later ploughing. Four of the cremations were associated with charcoal which in each case was identified as oak.

#### *Conservation*

- 1.1.5 Further analysis of cremation (44) would not conflict with long term storage. The material does not require any conservation for the purposes of long-term storage.

#### *Comparative material*

- 1.1.6 Small rural cemeteries associated with peasant settlement of this period are not well known in the south-east of England (Drewett, Rudling and Gardiner 1988, 233) and for this reason the small group excavated at this site is a significant addition to our understanding of the burial rites of the early Roman period. Their significance will be more apparent when they are compared with larger groups of burials of similar date from along the CTRL and elsewhere.

#### *Potential for further work*

- 1.1.7 The potential of this assemblage is limited by its small size as a group and by the poor preservation of the cremations due to truncation. Only cremation 44 is of substantial size and merits more detailed osteological analysis. Scanning of this deposit has suggested the possibility that two individuals are represented.

*Bibliography*

Drewett, P, Rudling, D and Gardiner, M, 1988, *The south-east to AD 1000*, London

*Table 10: Summary of cremated human bone*

<b>Context</b>	<b>Context type</b>	<b>Period</b>	<b>Weight (g)</b>	<b>Identifiable fragments</b>	<b>Colour</b>	<b>Minimum number of individuals</b>
39	Pot and fill	c. AD 50-250	18	None	white	?
40	Charcoal layer	c. AD 43-100	7	Skull vault	white	?
44	Fill of pot	c. AD 43-100	1361	Skull vault, mandible, third molars, mastoid, rib, radius, ulna, fibula	white	2? (male and female?)
45	Fill of pot	LIA-AD 70	22	None	white	?
48	Fill of pot	LIA-AD 70	21	Long bone-upper limb	white	?