

APPENDIX 1 - ASSESSMENT OF HUMAN REMAINS

1.1 Cremated Human Bone

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Introduction

- 1.1.1 Cremation contexts were subject to 100% recovery as whole-earth samples during the watching brief and were subsequently wet-sieved. Material from the >2 mm fractions were retained en masse. The study of the material was aimed at determining the number, age and sex of the burials and details of burial practices.
- 1.1.2 The recovery and study of the human bone was undertaken in accordance with the Fieldwork Event Aims (see Section 2.2), in particular Aim 1.

Methodology

- 1.1.3 Cremated 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 (where determined). The >2 mm fraction was scanned with a view to determining whether or not it should be sorted for small fragments of human bone.

Quantification

- 1.1.4 The cremated remains are quantified in Table 3.1. Both deposits of cremated remains weigh only 2 g, only a small fraction of the weight of the complete remains of a human cremation. Only long bone fragments could be identified.

Table 3.1: Summary of cremated human remains

Context	Context type	Period	Weight (g)	Identifiable fragments	Colour	Minimum number of individuals
22	Primary fill of pit 23	LN;EBA	2	Nothing identifiable	white	?
24	Upper fill of pit 23		-	Residue only, no bone		-
61	Primary fill of pit 60	LN;EBA	-	Residue only, no bone		-
62	Upper fill of pit 60		2	Long bone shaft	White	?

Provenance

- 1.1.5 The deposits came from two Beaker associated pits (23 and 60) located near the south-eastern end of the site.

Conservation

- 1.1.6 The material does not require any conservation for the purposes of long-term storage. Under the terms of the CTRL Act 1996, however, all human remains are to be reburied.

Comparative Material

- 1.1.7 Cremations of comparable date have been found at Tutt Hill, and further deposits may exist at Saltwood and elsewhere in Kent, while token deposits from pits are less easy to parallel. It is unlikely that valuable insights would be yielded by comparison of these small deposits of cremated remains with those elsewhere, except insofar as it might reveal the consistency with which small, possibly token deposits of human remains were deposited.

Potential for Further Work

- 1.1.8 The potential of this assemblage is limited by its small size as a group and by the small size of the individual deposits. An average adult cremation can weigh between 1000-2400 g if complete (McKinley 1997, 68; observations at modern crematoria). It therefore seems probable that those observed at Eyhorne Street are only token deposits, which do not represent the entire remains of any one individual. Nevertheless, it is recommended that the provisional identification of the material is confirmed and that its context is examined alongside associated stratigraphic, artefactual and palaeoenvironmental evidence in order to characterise the deposits and if possible determine their true function. Such a study would benefit from an integrated approach considering all similar features from CTRL sites.

Bibliography

McKinley, J, 1997 The cremated human bone from burial and cremation-related contexts, in *Archaeological excavations on the route of the A27 Westhampnett Bypass, West Sussex, 1992*. Volume 2: *the cemeteries* (A P Fitzpatrick), Wessex Archaeology Report No 12, 55-73

