

## APPENDIX 1 - HUMAN REMAINS

### 1.1 Assessment of the Cremated Human Remains

*by Angela Boyle*

#### *Introduction*

- 1.1.1 Eight deposits of cremated bone in fourteen contexts were recovered by sieving from a variety of pits. Most of these pits contain no direct dating evidence, but three of the cremations can be dated to the early-middle Bronze Age, the middle Bronze Age and the late Iron Age-early Roman period. The samples were collected with the aims of identifying the number, age and sex of the cremated individuals and assessing other details of the practice of cremation and the deposition of cremated remains.

#### *Methodology*

- 1.1.2 During the watching brief cremation contexts were subject to 100% recovery as whole-earth samples and were subsequently wet-sieved. Material from the >2 mm fractions were retained en masse. 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*

- 1.1.3 The cremated human remains are quantified and summarised in Table 5.1. The quantity of cremated remains in most of the pits was very small, usually between 1 g and 7 g, though two (pit 46, dated to the early-middle Bronze Age and pit 44, undated) contained much larger deposits. In only one case (the upper fill of pit 46) could a definite identification - of an adult male - be made, although three adults, two possibly male could be tentatively identified (pit 46, lower fill, dated to the early-middle Bronze Age, pit 70, dated to the late Iron Age early Roman period, and pit 44, undated).

#### *Provenance*

- 1.1.4 The cremated remains were all recovered from pits, most of which were shallow, having suffered from significant truncation. Their form and contents are summarised in Table All were accompanied by charcoal. Pottery was the only artefactual material associated with the cremations and this occurred in only three.

#### *Conservation*

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

### *Comparative Material*

- 1.1.6 The specification of comparative material is hindered by the lack of dating evidence for most of the cremations. The few dated examples, however, will allow some comparisons to be made. It is not unusual for early and middle Bronze Age cremations to be associated secondarily with earlier ring ditches as the two dated examples here appear to be. Nor is it unusual for them to contain only small deposits of cremation remains, as though only a token portion of the cremation remains have been deposited (cf Boyle 1999, 176). Unfortunately the truncation of the cremations means that little detail of the original form survives, and the potential for significant comparisons is thus limited.
- 1.1.7 A number of late Iron Age-early Roman cremations in small groups have been found elsewhere along the CTRL (eg Boys Hall Balancing Pond, Chapel Mill and Snarkhurst Wood). Together these burials provide a significant sample of apparently low status burials, the importance of which 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*

- 1.1.8 The potential of this assemblage is limited by its small size as a group and by the size of all but two of the deposits. An average adult cremation can weigh between 1000-2400 g if complete (McKinley 1997, 68); observations at modern crematoria). Clearly, then most of the deposits do not represent the entire remains of any one individual. Nevertheless, the assemblage provides further evidence to address CTRL research aims relating to the definition of ritual landscape in the 'early agriculturalists' period, and to study of change and continuity in burial practice in the late Iron Age and Roman period.

### *Bibliography*

Boyle, A, 1999, Human remains, in *Excavations at Barrow Hills, Radley, Oxfordshire*, volume 1: *the Neolithic and Bronze Age monument complex*, (A Barclay and C Halpin) Thames Valley Landscapes 11

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**Error! Bookmark not defined.**-73

Table 5.1: Summary of cremated human remains

Context	Context type	Period	Weight	Identifiable fragments	Colour	Minimum number of individuals
71	Primary fill of pit 70 <b>Error! Bookmark not defined.</b>	?	4 g	Skull vault, parietal	White	?1 adult male
72	Upper fill of pit 70 <b>Error! Bookmark not defined.</b>	LIA-early Roman	>1 g	Skull vault	White	
45	Fill of pit 44 <b>Error! Bookmark not defined.</b>	?	505 g	Skull vault, femur, tibia and fibula shaft	White	?adult
48	Fill of pit 46	E-MBA	3 g	Nothing identifiable	White	
49	Fill of pit 46	E-MBA		4-2 mm residue, no bone		
50	Fill of pit 46	E-MBA	22 g	Skull vault, vertebral arch fragment, long bone shaft	White	?adult
47	Fill of pit 46	?	1347 g	Skull vault, occipital, nasal bone, vertebrae, radius, rib, odontoid	White	Adult male
99	Fill of pit 98	?	7 g	Skull vault, long bone shaft	White	
271	Middle fill of pit 269	?	3 g	Shaft fragments	White	
270	Primary fill of pit 269	?	> 1 g	Long bone shaft	White	
298	Upper fill of pit 301	MBA	7 g	Long bone shaft	White	
24	Upper fill of pit 23, <i>in situ</i> burning, associated charcoal	?	> 1 g	Long bone shaft	white	
268	Upper fill of clay-lined pit 266	?	> 1 g	Nothing identifiable	white	
272	Upper fill of pit 269	?	2 g	Long bone shaft	white	

Table5.2: Summary of cremations

Context	Period	Shape in plan	Sides	Base	Diameter /length-width (m)	depth	Location within cremation fill	Cremated remains (g)	charcoal (as % of deposit)	Artefacts	Comments	Location
301	MBA	Circular	Steep	Flat	0.6	0.35	fill of urn upper	- 7	present much	pottery pottery	Cremation in inverted urn	south of ring ditches
23	?	Circular	Steep	Flat	1.3 x 1.1	0.47	Primary Upper	- <1	5% 40%		Burnt <i>in situ</i>	84+450
98	?	Circular	steep	Rounded	0.7	0.18	Single	7	20%	v. fragmentary pot, flint		south-east of ring ditch 90, near LBA ditch 78
266 <b>Error! Bookmark not defined.</b>	?	Circular	steep	Rounded	0.9	0.3	Primary Upper	- <1	- 10%		Clay lining of pit (clay imported)	near LBA ditch 190
46	E-MBA	Oval	steep	Rounded	1.2 x 0.83	0.23	Primary Upper	25 1347	10% <10%	pottery		south-east of ring ditch 90, near LBA ditch 78
44	?	Oval	shallow	Rounded	0.51 x 0.31	0.07	Single	505	-			between ring ditches 81 and 90
269	?	Irregular	irregular	Irregular	1.95 x 0.8	0.28	Primary Middle Upper	<1 3 2	40% 20% <1%		Disturbed by animal burrow	near southern end of LBA ditch 76
70	LIA-ER	Subrectangular	vertical	Rounded	1.18 x 0.34	0.24	Primary Upper	4 <1	8% flecks only		Disturbed	north-west of ring ditches

