

Two Late Bronze Age Axes from Perrots Farm, Banstead

The two Late Bronze Age socketed axes which form the subject of this note were found in August 1989 by David Hunt of Shirley, Croydon with the aid of a metal detector. The axes (fig 1), along with a few ingot fragments, were found in the ploughsoil of a field adjoining Ruffett Wood, north west of Perrots Farm. The findspot lies at a height of about 160mm OD and occupies a low and wide promontory with reasonable views, mainly to the north. The subsoil seems, from observation of the rootplates of fallen trees in the nearby wood, to be Clay-with-flints. The axes and the ingot fragments were found within a diameter of about '100 feet' in the centre of the field but whether the finds represent a dispersed hoard or casual losses from a settlement on the site is not clear. A further, damaged, socketed axe was found, apparently in the same field, in July 1954 by a Mr Jordan, a worker at Perrots Farm (OS record cards). This is now untraceable.

Axe 1. A looped socketed axe with a double mouth moulding. The mouth and body are sub-rectangular in section; the profile is waisted. Below the mouldings there are wing or wing-and-pellet decorations. The casting seam lies off-centre suggesting that the two halves of the mould were not symmetrical. The cutting edge has been expanded by hammering which on one side has obliterated the casting seam. The axe retains a smooth surface patina which has been scarred through plough action. This has also chipped the blade. 'Wing-decorated' axes are dated to the Ewart Park phase of the Late Bronze Age, c900–700BC.

Axe 2. A looped socketed axe with a double mouth moulding. The mouth and body are apparently sub-rectangular in section; the profile is waisted. There are slight traces of a casting seam but none of hammering. This axe, which has a rough surface and is of less fine quality than Axe 1, is in two pieces which were recovered on separate occasions by the finder; other fragments are clearly missing. The broken edges do not appear fresh and it is difficult to see how a plough could have caused this damage which may have occurred in antiquity. The walls of the socket are of varying thickness, suggesting perhaps that the core had become dislodged in casting. There are traces of filing on the blade.

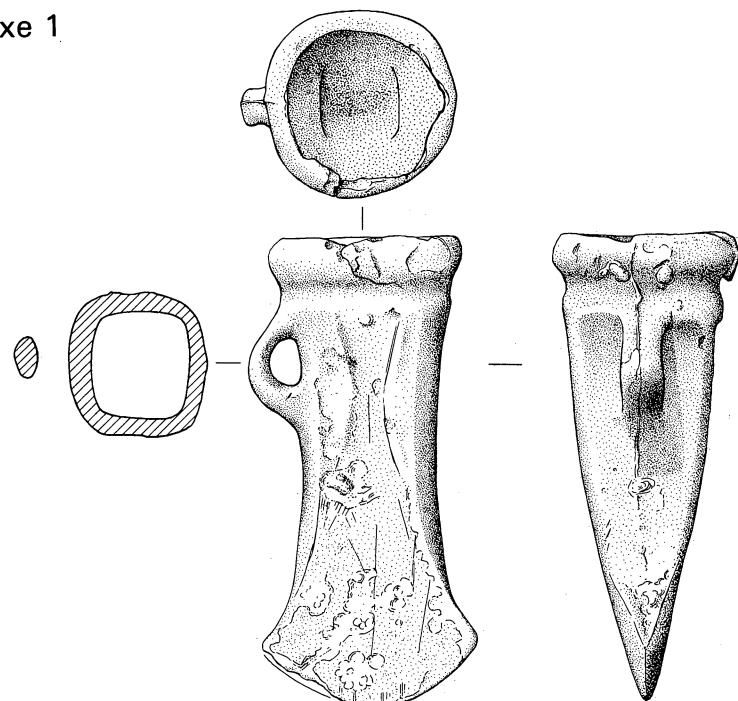
Ingot fragments. Three or four ingot pieces were found. Recorded weights were 200, 120 and 90 gm.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I should like to thank David Hunt for allowing me to record the axes and for being so prompt in reporting their discovery to Dr Stuart Needham at the British Museum. Dr Needham's descriptive comments and those of Jeremy Harte, Curator, Bourne Hall Museum, Ewell are used along with mine above. Thanks to them and also to Stephen Nelson for first drawing the finds to my attention. At the time of writing the finds remain in the possession of the finder.

DAVID WILLIAMS

Axe 1



Axe 2

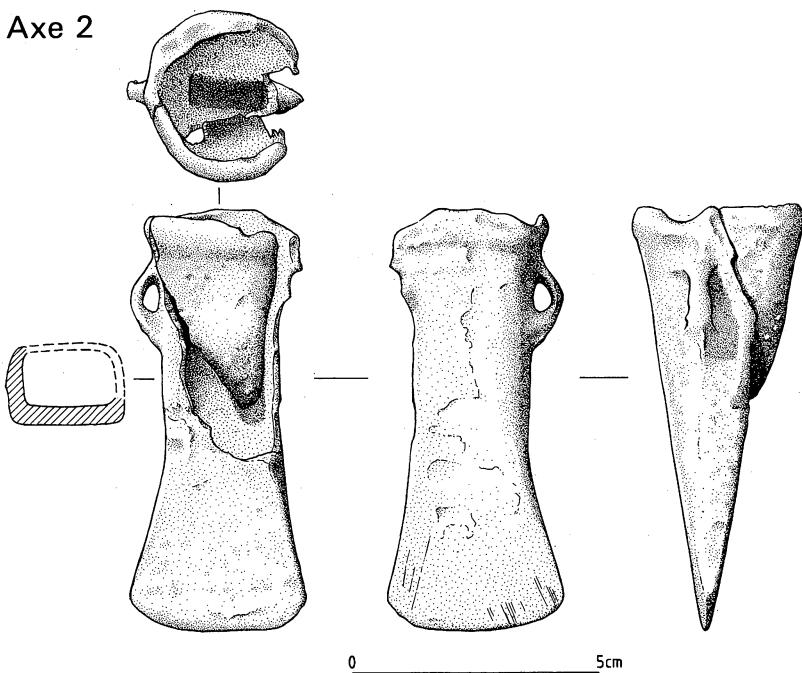


Fig 1. Two late Bronze Age axes from Perrots Farm, Banstead.