

A Late Bronze Age Site in Priory Park, Reigate

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with a report on the pottery by STEVE DYER
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THE LATE BRONZE AGE POTTERY

A total of 34 sherds of Late Bronze Age pottery, representing a minimum of 15 vessels, was recovered from the excavations. A number of different fabrics were present, the main tempering agent determined by visual examination being fine and medium calcined flint grits. Coarse calcined flint grit is present in three sherds, one sherd contains temper appearing to be grog and one sherd has one grain of sand present in the fabric.

CATALOGUE

1. Flattened expanded rim with fingernail impressions. Smooth fairly hard black fabric with fine and medium flint grits.
2. Thinned and rounded out-turned rim with part of shoulder visible, three sherds; outer surface smooth buff; inner surface fairly rough, wiped, grey; section grey. Hard fabric with occasional fine flint grits.
3. Thinned upright rim; outer surface very smooth, buff (?slip/accretion) over grey; inner surface fairly smooth, buff over grey/brown; section buff to grey. Moderate medium flint grits.
4. Body sherd with shoulder carination (from carinated bowl); outer surface badly abraded, but would have been fairly smooth, brown; inner surface fairly smooth, dark grey-black; section grey. Hard fabric, frequent fine and occasional medium flint grits.
5. Rounded, out-turned rim, with finger impressions just below the rim; outer surface coarse, orange/buff; inner surface coarse, orange/buff; section dark grey. Slightly hard fabric, frequent fine and medium flint grits.
6. Body sherd, ?part of neck; outer surface smooth and burnished, buff over dark grey/brown; inner surface fairly smooth, black over dark grey/brown; section dark grey. Hard fabric with moderate fine to medium flint grits.
7. Body sherd; outer surface smooth, dark grey/grey brown; inner surface smooth, brown; section dark grey. Hard fabric, moderate fine to medium flint grits.
8. Body sherd; outer surface slightly abraded, smooth and burnished, dark grey; inner surface smooth, grey brown; section dark grey. Hard fabric, moderate fine to medium flint grits.
9. Body sherd; outer surface smooth, brown/grey; inner surface smooth, grey brown; section grey. Hard fabric, moderate fine, occasional medium: flint grits.
10. Body sherd; outer surface smooth, brown/grey; inner surface smooth, dark grey; section grey. Hard fabric, moderate fine and occasional medium flint grits.
11. Body sherd; outer surface smooth, brown/grey; inner surface fairly smooth, grey brown; section grey/brown. Hard fabric, moderate fine and medium flint grits.

12. Body sherd; outer surface slightly smooth, brown; inner surface slightly rough, brown; section grey. Hard fabric, frequent fine and medium flint grits.

13. Body sherd outer surface quite rough, brown; inner surface smooth, dark grey/black; section dark grey. Hard fabric, frequent fine and medium flint grits.

14. Body sherd; outer surface slightly smooth, brown; inner surface smooth, black; section black. Hard fabric, frequent fine and medium flint grits.

15. Body sherd; outer surface rough, grey; inner surface slightly smooth, grey brown; section grey/brown though monochrome through fired fracture. Fairly soft fabric, frequent fine medium and coarse flint grits.

16. Body sherd; outer surface abraded, red brown/grey; inner surface fairly rough, dark grey/black; section dark grey/black. Fairly soft fabric, fairly frequent fine and medium large flint grits.

17. Body sherd; outer surface rough, brown; inner surface rough, grey/brown; section grey/brown and pink/brown. Hard fabric, frequent fine and medium flint grits. Wiping striations on inner surface and to lesser extent on outer surface. From same vessel as sherds 18, 19, 20 and 21.

18. Body sherd; outer surface rough, dark brown; inner surface slightly smooth, dark grey; section dark grey and pink/brown. Hard fabric, frequent fine and medium flint grits. From same vessel as sherds 17, 19, 20 and 21.

19. Body sherd; outer surface rough, brown; inner surface fairly rough, grey/brown; section grey/brown and pink/brown. Hard fabric, frequent fine and medium flint grits. Wiping striations on inner surface and to a lesser extent on outer surface. From same vessel as sherds 17, 18, 20 and 21.

20. Body sherd; outer surface rough, brown; inner surface rough, dark grey/black; section dark grey and pink brown. Hard fabric, frequent fine and medium flint grits with 1 medium, red/brown sand grain. Same vessel as sherds 17, 18, 19 and 21.

21. Body sherd; outer surface rough, brown; inner surface rough, dark grey/black; section pink/brown and grey/brown. Same vessel as sherds 17, 18, 19 and 20.

22. Body sherd; outer surface rough, pink/brown; inner surface rough dark grey; section pink/brown and dark grey. Hard fabric, frequent fine and medium flint grits. Some possible organic residue on inner surface.

23. Body sherd; outer surface rough, pink/brown; inner surface fairly rough, dark grey/black; section dark grey/black and pink/brown. Hard fabric, frequent fine and medium flint grits.

24. Body sherd; outer surface rough, orange/brown; inner surface rough, brown; section brown, orange/brown. Hard fabric, frequent medium and occasional fine and coarse flint grits. Some possible organic residue on inner surface.

25. Body sherd; outer surface rough, orange/brown; inner surface rough, buff; section grey with light grey core. Hard fabric, frequent fine and medium and occasional coarse flint grits.

26. Body sherd; outer surface fairly rough, orange/brown; inner surface fairly rough, brown; section brown orange/brown. Fairly soft fabric, frequent fine and medium flint grits.

27. Body sherd; outer surface rough, orange/brown; inner surface rough, grey; section grey. Fairly soft fabric, frequent fine and medium flint grits.

28. Body sherd; outer surface rough, pink/brown; inner surface rough, dark grey/black; section dark grey/black. Fairly soft fabric, occasional fine and medium flint grits.

29. Body sherd; outer surface abraded, rough, pink/brown; inner surface rough, dark grey/black; section dark grey/black. Slightly hard fabric, frequent fine and medium flint grits.

30. Body sherd; outer surface abraded, rough, buff; inner surface rough, grey; section grey. Soft fabric, moderate fine and medium flint grits, may contain some grog tempering.

31. Base sherd; outer surface smooth, grey/brown to buff; inner surface very abraded, virtually absent, rough, grey/brown; section grey, grey/brown and buff. Fairly hard fabric, frequent medium and occasional fine flint grits.

32. Base sherd; outer surface very abraded, rough, buff; inner surface very abraded, fairly smooth, grey; section grey. Soft fabric, frequent fine and medium flint grits in outer surface, occasional fine and medium flint grits in fabric.

The sherds present fall into 7 fabric types, 10 sherds representing 4 fineware fabric types and 22 sherds within 3 coarseware fabric types.

THE FABRIC TYPES

FINEWARES

Fabric A. 4 sherds (Nos. 4, 10, 12 and 13). Hard, brown outer surface, dark grey inner surface, dark grey monochrome rough fracture. Frequent amounts of fine to medium (0.25 to 2mm, normally 0.5 to 1mm), angular, fairly well sorted calcined flint temper. Very sparse, fine, rounded, iron rich particles. The surfaces are somewhat abraded, but where these are preserved they appear smooth.

Minimum number of vessels 2. Probably all from bowls.

Fabric B. 1 sherd (No. 9). hard, smooth, brown outer surface and reduced dark brown inner surface, dark grey core with irregular fracture. Moderate amounts of fine (0.3 to 1.5mm, normally 0.5 to 1mm), well sorted calcined flint. Very sparse fine, rounded, iron rich particles.

Minimum number of vessels 1.

Fabric C. 3 sherds (No. 2). Hard, brown outer surface, reduced, rather patchy inner surface, rough dark grey monochrome fracture. Outer surface regular and smooth, inner surface rather irregular and fairly rough, but this shows some signs of wiping. Moderate amounts of fine to medium (0.3 to 2mm, normally 0.5 to 1mm), angular fairly well sorted calcined flint temper. Very sparse, very fine rounded, iron rich particles. A variant of fabric A, but distinguished by fewer inclusions though their size range is very similar.

Minimum number of vessels 1.

Fabric D. 4 sherds (Nos. 6, 7, 8 and 11). Hard, brown outer surface which is often burnished to a black colour; inner surface brown or black; rough dark grey monochrome fracture. The surfaces are generally fairly regular and smooth. Moderate to common amounts of fairly fine to fairly coarse (0.3 to 3mm, normally 0.7 to 1mm), angular, fairly well sorted calcined flint temper.

Minimum number of vessels 2.

COARSEWARES

Fabric E. 15 sherds (Nos. 14, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 26, 28, 29, 30 and 31). Hard, brown-red (variable) outer surface, reduced dark grey inner surface (amount of reduction variable) with rough, grey core often carried through to the inner surface. Usually fairly rough. Common to abundant amounts of medium to coarse (0.4 to 4mm, normally 1 to 2mm), angular, fairly well sorted calcined flint temper.

Minimum number of vessels 4...Presumably all jars.

Fabric F. 6 sherds (Nos. 3, 5, 15, 24, 25 and 32). Generally fairly hard, orange-brown surfaced ware with a variably reduced grey to dark grey rough fracture. The surfaces are rough. moderate amounts of medium to coarse (0.4 to 6mm, normally 1 to 3mm), angular ill-assorted calcined flint.

Minimum number of vessels 4.

Fabric G. 1 sherd (No. 1). Hard, smooth, slightly soapy, dark grey ware with patchy oxidised areas and a rough reduced fracture. Rather sparse to moderate amounts of medium to coarse (0.5 to 5mm, normally 2 to 3mm), angular calcined flint temper.

Minimum number of vessel 1.

DISCUSSION

All the fabrics are flint tempered, the distinguishing feature lying in the size range and density of the temper. The finewares form a distinct group and the divisions made (Fabrics A to D) may over-estimate the natural variability within the mixing of clay and temper. There is, however, a real division of the coarseware into Fabric E, which contains fairly frequent, coarse flint, and Fabric F which contains fewer inclusions but which are larger than those in Fabric E.

Although the site lies on the Folkestone beds of the Lower Greensand series the clay has a virtual absence of quartz sand. This indicates either that the clay or the vessels were imported to this site and the latter is the favoured interpretation. The fine, red particles which occur as very sparse, rounded inclusions in several of the fabrics are probably iron-rich pellets naturally present in the clay. From the lack of quartz sand and the presence of the iron-rich pellets in the different fabric groups it appears that the clay for all the vessels represented here is derived from a single source.

The sherds recovered do not allow for a full form or type series analysis to be carried out. They do appear, however, to represent a collection indicative of occupation rather than, for instance, a burial group. A number of sherds are slightly abraded but they are unlikely to have moved far from their original place of deposition.

The study of the fabrics and forms available places the assemblage of pottery in the Later Bronze Age. The discernable forms and the range of fabric types tie in very closely with other published collections of Later Bronze Age pottery from Surrey, particularly those from Runnymede Bridge (Longley, 1980); Queen Mary's Hospital, Carshalton (Adkins and Needham, 1985); Petters Sports Field, Egham (O'Connell, 1986); Weston Wood (Russell, 1989), in a similar topographical position; and Renfrew Road, Kingston-Upon-Thames (Field, forthcoming).

ROMANO-BRITISH POTTERY AND TILE

One small unabraded neck sherd of a Romano-British flagon and a tile fragment of probable Romano-British date were recovered during excavation.

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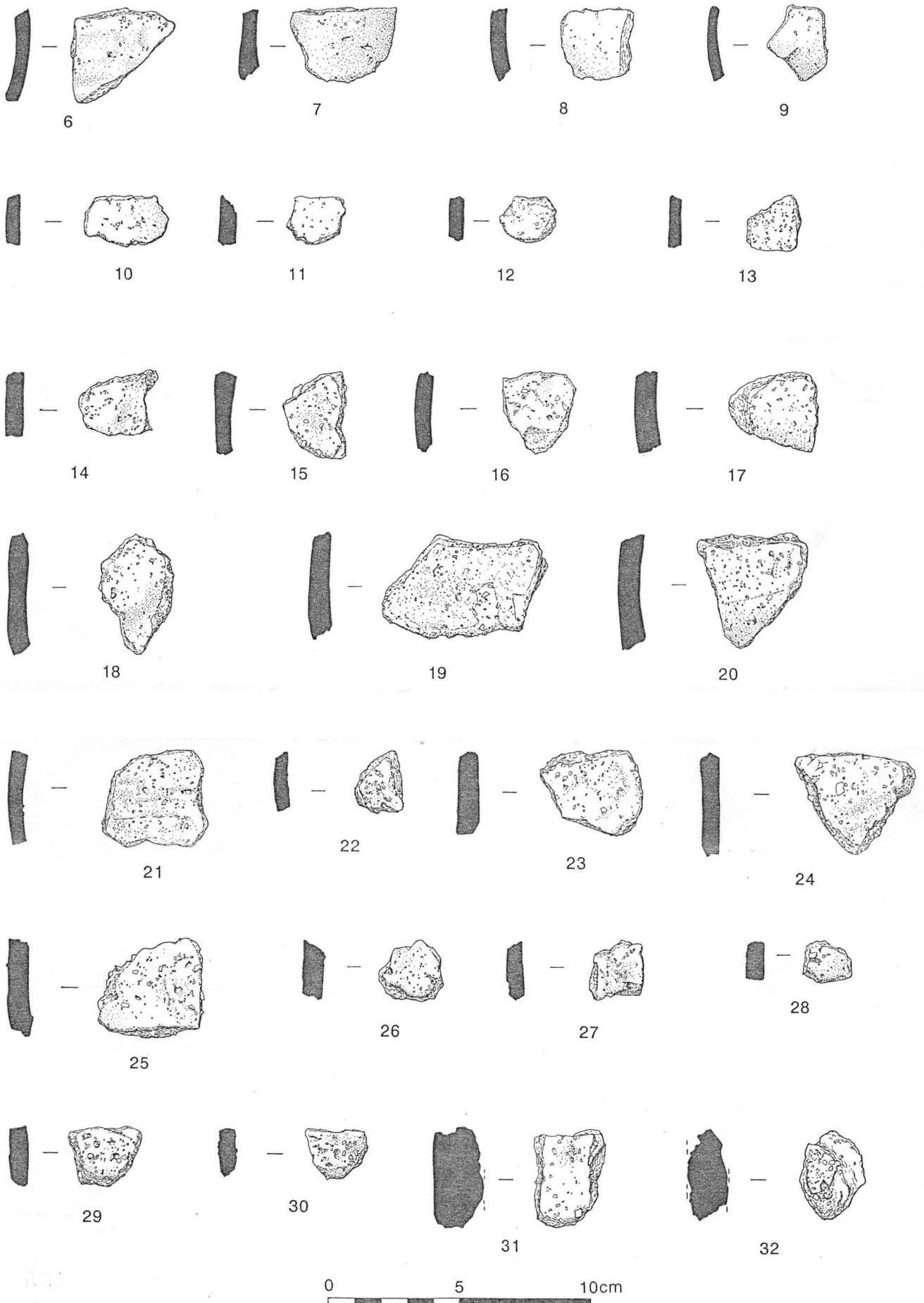


Fig 5 Priory Park, Reigate. Late Bronze Age pottery, body sherds (drawn by Alex Thorne)