



Fig. 1: map showing the location of the London area late Bronze Age and Iron Age sites mentioned in the text (base map by kind permission of the Museum of London Archaeology Service)

Iron Age London: some thoughts on *Current Knowledge and Problems* 20 years on

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Introduction

TWO DECADES after Roy Canham's survey of Iron Age archaeology in greater London¹, it is perhaps time to consider some of the current problems and advances and to attempt another survey. Canham wrote just as rescue archaeology and large-scale excavations were on the in-

crease. Surveys of the Iron Age have been few², the most recent in the 1980s³ and 1990⁴. South-west London was reviewed with Surrey in 1987⁵ and north-east with Essex in 1996⁶. Canham focussed on west London, then the best known region. Since the later 1970s there has been a great

1. R. Canham 'The Iron Age' in Collins *et al* (1976) 42-49.

2. eg: C. Vulliamy *The Archaeology of Middlesex and London* (1930); F. Celoria and J. Macdonald 'The Iron Age' in *The Victoria History of the County of Middlesex* 19 (1969) 50-64.

3. N. Merriman 'A Prehistory for Central London?' *LA* 5 no 12 (1987) 318-26; Stuart Needham and Jean Macdonald, lecture

on Bronze Age and Iron Age London at the Archaeology of London Conference 1986.

4. N. Merriman *Prehistoric London* (1990).

5. R. Hanworth 'The Iron Age in Surrey' in Bird and Bird (1986) 139-64.

6. N. Brown 'The Archaeology of Essex c. 1500-500 BC' in Bedwin (1996) 26-37; P. Sealey 'The Iron Age of Essex' in Bedwin (1996) 46-68.

increase in late Bronze Age (LBA) and Iron Age evidence elsewhere (Fig. 1), especially on the eastern gravels.

Dating

Major reviews and changes in pottery classification and dating since 1976 have significantly affected LBA and IA chronology, along with reappraisals of metalwork, more stratified assemblages and a greater combining of artefact and scientific dating. Reviews of LBA metalwork⁷, more controlled radiocarbon sampling and better finds associations have improved dates at the start of the Iron Age. Sites such as Queen Mary's Hospital, Carshalton (1) and Coombe Warren, Kingston Hill (2), considered early Iron Age (EIA) in the mid-1970s, are now placed in the LBA, as would be most of the pottery illustrated by Canham. While radiocarbon dating has problems in the 700-400 cal BC range⁸, affecting much of the EIA, its potential is better for the middle (MIA) and late (LIA) Iron Age, periods with recently revised coin and brooch chronologies⁹. It is probably that suitable tree-ring dates will eventually be obtained in the region.

The London region lies within several of Cunliffe's pottery style zones¹⁰, a scheme in much need of reappraisal, redating and possibly replacing, particularly now larger assemblages are becoming available for study in greater London. It may soon be possible to begin to define sequences, isolate regional groupings and differentiate those in the east from the west, differences which become clearer as the Iron Age progresses.

Here the traditional tripartite period division of early, middle and late Iron Age are retained, though there are clearly ill-defined aspects and transitional phases.

Metalwork

With few excavated sites available, Canham, like others, concentrated on metalwork and chance finds, mostly prestige objects and weapons recovered from the Thames and its tributaries. Metal objects and moulds, some associated with pottery, have now been excavated, such as the LBA hoard aiding the dating of the LBA-EIA transition from Petters' Sports Field, Egham (3), the 5-4th-century BC EIA brooch from Holloway Lane, Harmondsworth (4) and a class I potin coin with late MIA pottery from Uphall Camp, Ilford (5), a site which also has a small but important ironwork assemblage.

7. S. Needham 'The Structure of Settlement and Ritual in the Late Bronze Age of South-East Britain' in C. Mordant and A. Richard *L'habitat et l'occupation du sol à l'Age du Bronze en Europe* Actes du Colloque International de Lons-le-Saunier, Mai 1990 (1993) 49-69; Stuart Needham, lecture at Oxford on the Bronze Age, 1996.

8. S. Bowman *Radiocarbon Dating* (1993).

9. Alex Bayliss, *pers. comm.* 1994 and 1997; C. Haselgrove 'Iron Age Brooch Deposition and Chronology' in Gwilt and Haselgrove (1997) 51-72.

10. B. Cunliffe *Iron Age Communities in Britain* (1974); 3rd edn (1991).

11. S. Needham and C. Burgess 'The Later Bronze Age in the Lower Thames Valley: The Metalwork Evidence' in J. Barrett and R. Bradley (eds) *The British Later Bronze Age* BAR British Ser 83 (1980) 437-69; A. Fitzpatrick 'The deposition of La Tene Iron Age metalwork in watery contexts in South-

More has since been written on the nature and date of the river finds¹¹. Recently, however, smaller metal objects, such as brooches and coins, have been found by metal detector users and others working along the foreshore¹². LBA-EIA pottery, a LBA hoard and a roll-headed pin, the result of regular surveys of the Putney foreshore (6), may be from an eroding settlement. Some metalwork and 'complete' pots recovered from the foreshore/river may have been deliberately buried in earlier land surfaces rather than cast into the river.

Geology, topography and soils

The distribution of known Roman settlement in greater London in relation to its geology and soils has recently been examined¹³. Consideration of the Bronze and Iron Age evidence is long overdue. Generally, there appears little variation in the LBA and IA people's choice of site, most known settlements and sites are less than 40m above the modern sea level and most on the Thames gravel terraces and brickearths, as might be expected. A few sites, however, have been discovered on other soils, areas where further investigation might find more, a point also raised for the Bronze Age¹⁴. Some LBA and IA sites in the London region and Surrey are on soils generally considered unsuitable, for example Welling LBA site (7) on the clayey soils of Shooters Hill and MIA Alpine Avenue, Tolworth (8) and Old Malden (9) on London Clay. Hillforts and defended sites tend to be located on hills, spurs and slopes on a wide range of soils, the topography and relative height above the surrounding land being of greater importance.

The nature and effect of the Thames in the London area in the Iron Age is still little understood; Merriman and Rackham discuss recent research, for earlier periods and central London in particular¹⁵. River levels were probably above OD by the EIA and c 1m OD in the early Roman period at Westminster¹⁶. LBA sites, such as Runnymede Bridge (10) and pottery from Fort Street, Silvertown (11), the EIA timber structure at Richmond Terrace, Whitehall (12) and the MIA settlement at Barn Elms (13), though so far no LIA sites, amply demonstrate the presence of later prehistoric sites under the alluvium and the potential for further discoveries. The relationship of alluvial deposits and Iron Age sites must be investigated.

Early Iron Age (c 800-400/300 BC)

Significant changes in dating since 1976 mean that the onset of the LBA is currently put at c 1100 BC or earlier and the

ern England' in B. Cunliffe and D. Miles (eds) *The Iron Age in Central and Southern Britain* Oxford Univ Ctee Archaeol Monog 2 (1984) 178-90; G. Wait *Ritual and Religion in Iron Age Britain* BAR Brit Ser 149 (1985); N. Farrant 'Two weapons from the Thames' *TLAMAS* 24 (1973) 157-8.

12. J. Cotton and N. Merriman 'Some recent prehistoric finds from Greater London' *TLAMAS* 42 (1991) 33-58.

13. D. Bird 'The London Region in the Roman Period' in Bird *et al* (1996) 217-32.

14. J. Barrett 'The Bronze Age' in Collins *et al* (1976) 33-41.

15. N. Merriman 'Predicting the Unexpected' in S. Needham and M. Macklin (ed) *Archaeology Under The Alluvium* (1992) 261-7; J. Rackham 'Prehistory 'in' the Lower Thames Flood Plain' *LA* 7 no 7 (1994) 191-6.

16. B. Sloane, H. Swain and C. Thomas 'The Roman Road and River Regime: archaeological investigations in Westminster and Lambeth' *LA* 7 no 14 (1995) 359-70.

earliest Iron Age at c 800 BC¹⁷. Much of the LBA is represented by the post-Deverel Rimbury/LBA plain wares as defined by Barrett. A regional pottery sequence from early plain wares to developed plain wares, with decoration increasing at the end of the LBA, during the LBA-EIA transition and on into the EIA, is associated with a gradual change from predominantly flint-tempered fabrics to sandy ones¹⁸. With increased decoration comes a greater variety of fabrics, as at Weston Wood, Surrey¹⁹, Welling, Kent (7) and Hunts Hill Farm, Upminster, Essex (14).

Compared with the LBA evidence, the EIA is still rather shadowy and ill-defined. Few sites are known, few published and fewer still exhibit continuity or apparent continuity. There are potential LBA to EIA sequences at Warren Farm, Romford (15), Hunts Hill Farm, Upminster (14) and, perhaps, Heathrow Runway 1 extension 1969 (16) and Beddington Sewage Works (17). Some sites may be transitional, such as Petters Sports Field B (3) and Snowy Fielder Way, Isleworth (18), others may have mixed material, such as Jewsons Yard, Uxbridge (19).

Hunts Hill Farm, Upminster (14), Warren Farm, Romford (15), Heathrow 1969 (16) and Lower Warbank, Keston (20), all have key finds assemblages for their areas sharing a general similarity. Features at Heathrow 1969, mainly pits, may span several phases, some pottery having LBA traits. EIA pottery from Warren Farm enclosure upper fills is

17. J. Barrett 'The Pottery of the later Bronze Age in Lowland England' *Proc Prehist Soc* 46 (1980) 297-319.
18. D. Longley *Runnymede Bridge 1976: Excavations on the Site of a Late Bronze Age Settlement* Surrey Archaeol Soc Res Vol 6 (1980); J. Close-Brooks in Grimes and Close-Brooks (1993).

Darmsden-Linton style, first defined by Cunliffe²⁰, and typical of Essex sites⁶, dating to the 9/8th-6/5th centuries BC²⁰ (Fig. 2, nos 1-3). Pottery styles and fabrics evolved and changed during the EIA and on into the early MIA, as indicated by Hunts Hill Farm, Upminster (14) and Maybank Avenue, Hornchurch (21).

Metalwork, personal, domestic and other items are known from EIA settlements. They include triangular fired clay 'loomweights', saddle-querns from Hunts Hill Farm, Upminster (14) and Lower Warbank, Keston (20), biconical spindle-whorls from Heathrow 1969 (16) and brooches from Holloway Lane, Harmondsworth (4), Heathrow 1969 and Beddington Sewage Works (17).

EIA settlement and structural evidence in the London area is sparse in comparison with the LBA. There are post-ring round-houses (the characteristic house-type of south and east Britain in the LBA and EIA) possibly dating to the EIA at Shepperton Green (22) and at Hunts Hill Farm, Upminster (14), a site also with an EIA/early MIA round-house with a penannular gully and possibly other post-fast EIA buildings or structures. A post-hole structure at Heathrow 1969 (16) may also be a building of some kind.

EIA Heathrow 1969 (16) and Hunts Hill Farm, Upminster (14) are unenclosed settlements on middle gravel terraces; Lower Warbank, Keston (20), a few pits, is largely on the

19. M. Russell 'Excavation of a multi-period site in Weston Wood, Albury: the pottery' *Surrey Archaeol Collect* 79 (1989) 3-51.
20. E. Martin 'Two First Millennium Sites at Barham' *Settlements on Hill-Tops: Seven Prehistoric Sites in Suffolk* East Anglian Archaeol 65 (1993) Ch 2, 23-40.

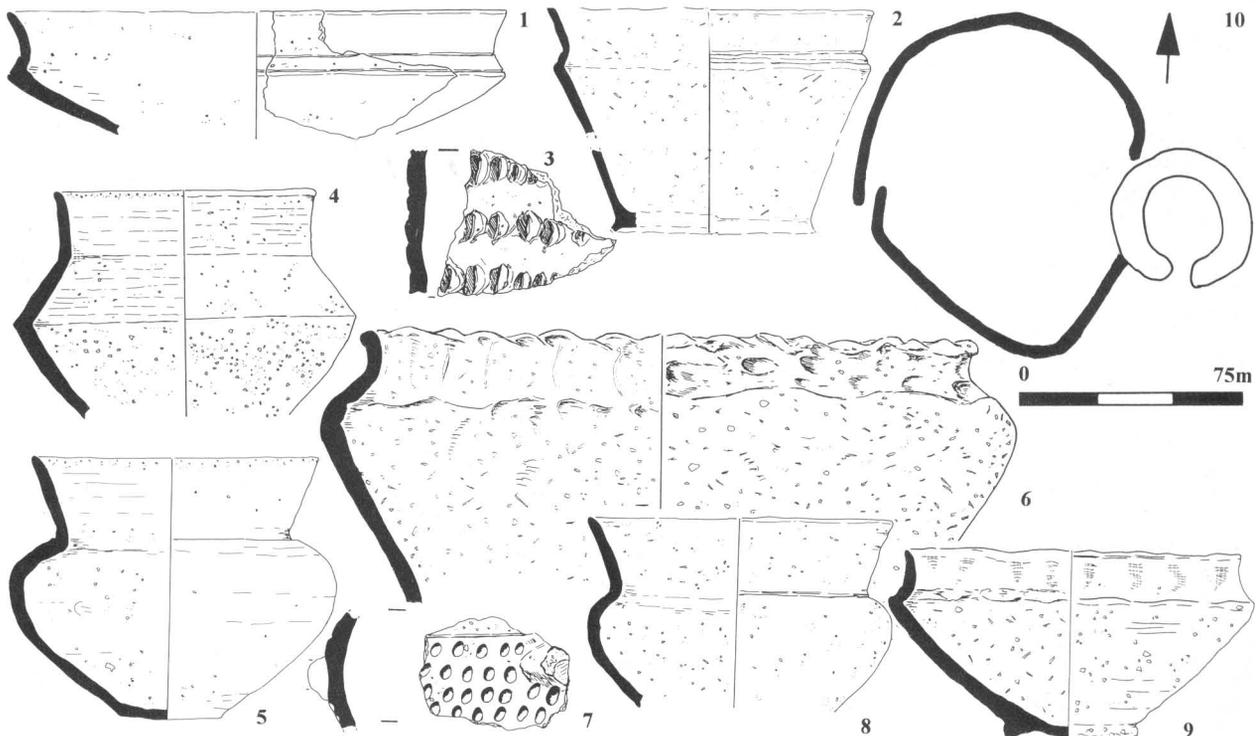


Fig. 2: selection from a range of EIA pottery (scale 1:4) from Warren Farm, Romford (15) (nos. 1-3) and Hunts Hill Farm, Upminster (14) (nos. 4-8) and a plan of the cropmarks of the LBA/EIA enclosure at Warren Farm (shaded) cut by a medieval mill-mound.

chalk at c 122m/400ft OD. Warren Farm, Romford (15) on the tip of a gravel spur at c 40m/130ft OD, is a LBA subcircular enclosure/fort in origin; EIA pottery was dumped in the upper ditch fills (Fig. 2). EIA pottery from St Ann's Hill, Wandsworth (23) indicates a hillside settlement. Dating Caesar's Camp, Wimbledon (24) is problematic because a pit with EIA pottery cuts the ramparts of the circular enclosure or hillfort. A timber structure from Richmond Terrace, Whitehall (14) and foreshore finds suggest that further riverside sites may exist.

The LBA practice of structured or deliberate deposition continues into the EIA, shown by complete or 'killed' fine bowls placed in pits and in a well at Hunts Hill Farm, Upminster (14) (Fig. 2), perhaps some pits at Heath-row 1969 (16), a pit with pottery beside pits with burnt bone at Great Sunnings Farm, Upminster (25) and the metalwork and fine pots recovered from the Thames. Pottery and other finds dumped in wells and ditches may be termination rites. Such activities form the main evidence for ritual. No burials or methods for disposal of the dead have been securely identified.

Planned landscapes with settlements, ditched field systems and droveways as found at Holloway Lane, Harmondsworth (4), the Heathrow area, in Uxbridge (19) and Beddington Sewage Works (17) tend to span LBA and EIA periods. There is no evidence as yet for trackways or surfaces metalled with burnt flint as found on LBA sites at Cranford Lane (26) and Betchworth, Surrey²¹.

Although environmental remains from both dry and waterlogged deposits are now leading to a better understanding of local and regional vegetation, crop husbandry, crop processing and stock-breeding in the 1st millennium BC, EIA evidence is still limited to small samples such as the emmer wheat and arable weeds from Sipson Lane, Harlington (27). Dung beetles, indicating stockbreeding, are abundant in LBA to EIA well/waterhole deposits at Hunts Hill Farm, Upminster (14) together with modest waterlogged plant remains. Generally, gravel soil conditions result in poor preservation of bone; a small assemblage is published from Heathrow 1969 (16).

21. D. Williams 'Betchworth: Excavations at Frank's Sandpit' *Surrey Archaeol Soc Bull* 307 (1996/7) 2-8.

22. T. Champion 'Socio-economic Development in Eastern England in the First Millennium BC' in K. Kristiansen and J. Jensen (eds) *Europe in the First Millennium BC* (1994) 125-44.

EIA sites are still very rare in the London area, and in eastern England as a whole²². Any new evidence will contribute to the regional knowledge of the period. Research priorities should be to locate and investigate EIA settlements and sites, to publish backlog excavations and review earlier finds, and to produce regional dating sequences.

Middle Iron Age c. 400/300-150/100 BC

Archaeologically the most visible Iron Age period in the region, the MIA has enjoyed a comparatively better rate of discovery since 1976, particularly of settlements with structures. Most known settlements, both open and enclosed, are probably farmsteads on the Thames terraces below 30m OD, some at the same site or in the same general location as EIA and/or LIA settlements. There is also evidence from other areas, such as the settlement and possible ritual site on the river Lea alluvium at Stratford (28).

Despite more excavation of settlements, good pottery assemblages are few and a sequence not yet worked out, hampering the understanding of phasing and other aspects. West London has few published groups available for comparison, creating difficulties isolating late MIA from LIA pottery²³. Farningham Hill, Kent (29) is a transitional MIA-LIA settlement, the dating supported by both pottery and brooches²⁴. An idea of the range of ceramics and other finds can be gained from Caesar's Camp, Heathrow (30), the Keston sites, Lower Warbank (20) and Caesar's Camp (31), and Ardale School, Aveley (32). Important unpublished assemblages include Stockley Park, Dawley (33), Beddington Sewage Works (17), East Bedford Esso Terminal (34), Moor Hall Farm, Rainham (35), Holloway Lane, Harmondsworth (4), Sipson Lane, Harlington (27) and Uphall Camp, Ilford (5).

Round-houses at Maybank Avenue, Hornchurch (21), Hunts Hill Farm, Upminster (14) and Manor Farm, North Ockendon (36) may date in the 400-250 BC range. Their pottery assemblages, neither classic EIA nor classic MIA (Fig. 3), lack the characteristic MIA 'S' profiled jars/bowls (Little Waltham Form 13²⁵) (Fig. 4, no. 7) in a glauconitic fabric, or their sandy imitations, later widespread in the lower Thames

23. J. Close-Brooks *op cit* fn 18, 356-7.

24. C. Haselgrove *op cit* fn 9, 69.

25. P. Sealey *op cit* fn 6; P. Drury *Excavations at Little Waltham 1970-71* CBA Res Rep 26 (1978).

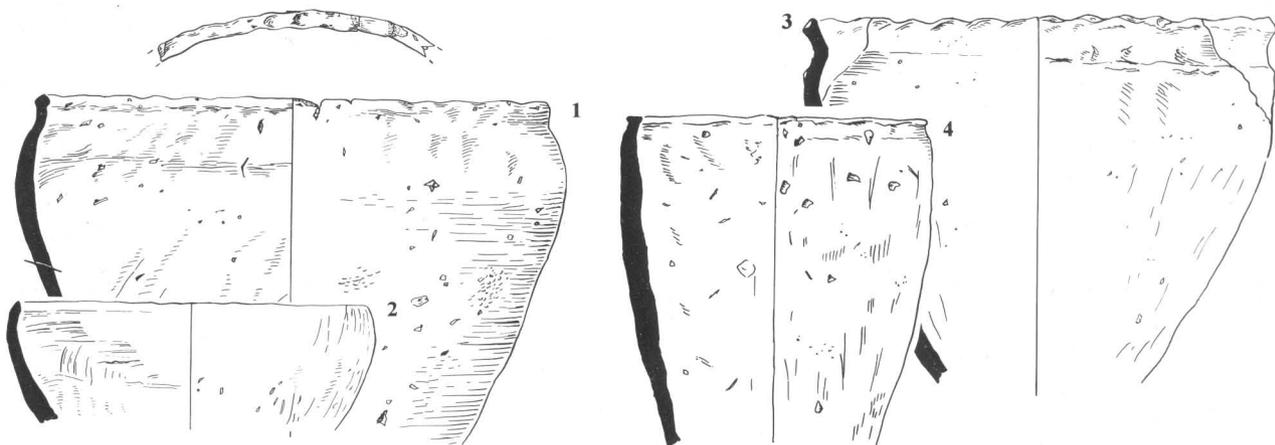


Fig. 3: early MIA pottery from Maybank Avenue, Hornchurch (21) (nos. 1-2) and Manor Farm, North Ockenden (36) (nos. 3-4) (scale 1:4) (AET/PAG).

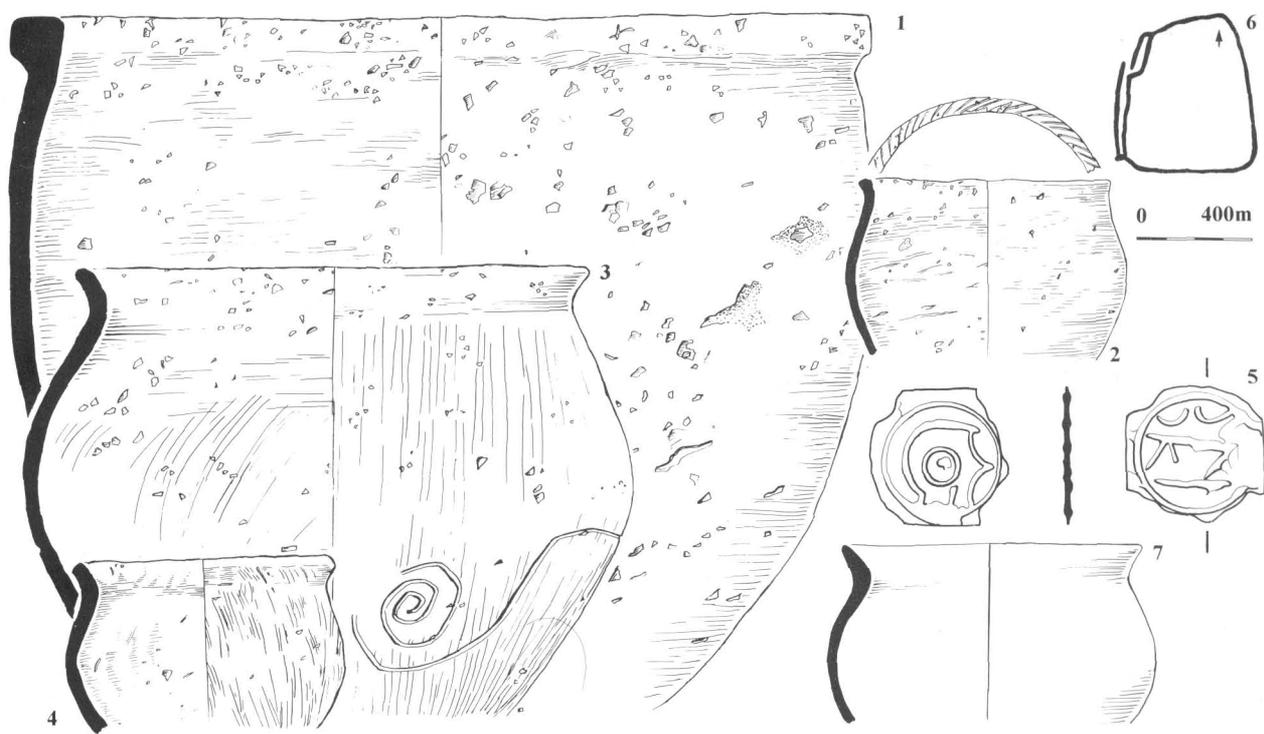


Fig. 4:(a) Uphall Camp, Ilford (5): a selection of MIA pottery (nos. 1-4) (AET), a potin coin (no. 5) (grw) and a plan (no. 6) of the earthworks, based on early surveys, and (b) Moor Hall Farm, Rainham (35) a MIA bowl (no. 7) (AET). Pottery scale 1:4, coin 1:1.

valley. There are western outliers of glauconitic fabrics from St Mary's Clerkenwell (37), Coronation Buildings, Lambeth (38) and Barn Elms (13). In west London Stockley Park, Dawley (32), probably East Bedfont Esso Terminal (34) and Beddington Sewage Works (17) have earlier MIA material. Later, classic MIA assemblages include Moor Hall Farm, Rainham (35), Caesar's Camp (31) and Lower Warbank (20), Keston, Uphall Camp (5) and Sipson Lane, Harlington (27).

Plain, rounded or globular jars and bowls, in fine and coarse wares are characteristic, sometimes decorated with curvilinear or geometric designs, especially towards the end of the MIA. The trend towards sandier fabrics continues, often including vegetable matter; finer and coarse shelly wares are also very evident at Uphall Camp (Fig. 4). West London is on the edge of the saucepan pot zone²⁶, though a shelly ware version was found at Farningham, Kent (29). East-west differences are also apparent.

Other MIA objects include brooches, triangular 'loom-weights', clay sling-shots and rotary quernstones²⁷. Rare evidence for iron objects and metalworking was found at Uphall Camp, Ilford (5) (a perforated iron disc, tools and fittings and copper and ironworking debris) and Hunts Hill Farm, Upminster (14) (crucible fragments; ?copper cake) from a probable bronzesmith's workshop.

Evidence for ritual activity is rather limited, though fine weapons are still recovered from the Thames¹¹. Crouched human burials and two horse burials from Stratford Mar-

ket Depot (28), without a confirmed date, would be important finds if MIA.

Extensive settlements with round-houses, four-posted buildings and other structures include Stockley Park, Dawley (33) (unenclosed, 4 round-houses), Caesar's Camp, Heathrow (30) (unenclosed, 11 round-houses), Beddington Sewage Works (MIA-LIA enclosure) (17), Uphall Camp, Ilford (5) (low-lying hillfort, the most variety in structures so far), and Hunts Hill Farm, Upminster (14) (several phases, c 10 round-houses, open and probably enclosed settlements, providing an opportunity to study different and changing styles) (Fig. 5). Later MIA pottery from the lower fills of large LIA rectilinear enclosures at Great Sunnings Farm, Upminster (25) and Moor Hall Farm, Rainham (35) may mean MIA origins; both enclosures are without obvious round-houses.

The typical local MIA round-house or building is post-fast, within a very visible penannular 'drip-gully', c 9m/30ft-16m/53ft in diameter. Variations imply different construction methods. Narrow gullies, perhaps foundation trenches, at Hunts Hill Farm, Upminster (14) have early MIA parallels elsewhere²⁸. Rectangular post-fast buildings are still built, especially the four- or six-posters interpreted as granaries. At Uphall Camp (7) small rectangular buildings, sheds and/or possibly shrines, have beam-slots. Unique so far in the region is the rectangular 'shrine' or 'temple' at Caesar's Camp, Heathrow (30). A smaller, simpler version at Stockley Park (33), is also interpreted as a shrine; both are insecurely dated.

26. J. Close-Brooks *op cit* fn 18, 357.

27. Sites quoted, and Cotton *et al* 56.

28. P. Drury *op cit* fn 25; R. Hanworth and D. Tomalin *Brooklands, Weybridge Surrey Archaeol Soc Res Vol 4* (1977).



Fig. 5: plan of the MIA features (shaded) from part of the settlement at Hunts Hill Farm, Uppingham (14) (SCW).

Evidence for MIA landscapes, and especially field systems, is slight and economic evidence is limited to a few sites²⁹. Uphall Camp, Ilford (5) has the largest known assemblage of charred plant remains, mainly grain, in the lower Thames valley, while the best of the few bone assemblages is from a MIA pit at Queen Mary's Hospital, Carshalton (39).

Uphall Camp, Ilford (5), c 10m/33ft OD and 19.24ha/48.59 acres, and Caesar's Camp, Keston (31), c 135.150m/443.492ft OD and 17.4ha/43 acres, both later MIA in date, belong in Cunliffe's large 'developed' hillfort category³⁰. Given that Uphall Camp, similar in size to Maiden Castle, was virtually lost under later development, further sites could still lie undetected. Massive ditches, c 7.62m/25ft deep, enclosing a probable MIA settlement with round-houses at Woolwich Power Station site (40) left no surface traces.

29. John Giorgi, *West London Gravels Assessment Report* (1993); pers. comm.; Alan Pipe, pers. comm.

30. eg B. Cunliffe *op cit* fn 10; R. Hanworth *op cit* fn 5.

31. J. Kent 'The London Area in the Late Iron Age: An Interpretation of the Earliest Coins' in J. Bird, H. Chapman and J. Clark *Collectanea Londiniensia: Studies in London archaeology and history presented to Ralph Merrifield* London Middlesex Archaeol Soc Special Paper 2 (1978) 53-8.

32. R. Merrifield *London City of the Romans* (1983) 4-22.

33. R. Canham *op cit* fn 1; Merriman *op cit* fn 4; P. Tyers 'Late Iron

Uphall Camp and Woolwich, on opposite sides of the Thames, may have had some economic or political relationship, if contemporary. Fulham Palace earthworks (41), enclosing c 14.5ha/36 acres fronting the river, may have MIA origins. A concentration of potin coins from the foreshore, dry-land finds and the topography at Barn Elms (13), beside the mouth of the Beverley Brook, may hint at another large site.

Whether the London region had an oppidum or even oppida is a major unresolved question. Tribal territories have been suggested, with locations of oppida, some known and some guessed³⁰. Kent³¹ and Merrifield³² proposed, on coin evidence, a major centre or oppidum, near the Thames, dating around '100-60 BC', somewhere in west London. Uphall Camp (5) in east London is of a scale to be a large centre of this kind.

Although the MIA has comparatively more evidence than other periods of the Iron Age, particularly of settlements and structures, dating and internal phasing are hampered by the scarcity of published finds assemblages and sites in general, as well as radiocarbon dates. Environmental evidence is scarce, as is that for land-division and field systems.

Late Iron Age c. 150/100 BC-AD 50

A major problem of the LIA in the London area is its apparent lack of identity and definition -- considered by Canham, Merriman and recently by Tyers³³ -- exacerbated by the scarcity of published sites, contributing to an impression of sparse settlement in a backwater, a somewhat pessimistic view restated recently³⁴. The pursuit of a 'Belgic' identity, often effectively meaning LIA, is a further complication. Possible tribal zones and names are not considered here; they have been much discussed in most general summaries³⁵.

Present evidence suggests that there are more sites than generally recognised, though not a major centre predating the Roman city itself. LIA material needs identification, definition and phasing. There is much potential in unpublished material and some sites were insufficiently excavated. A London-centric view of an area until recently divided between five counties tends to lead to an unwarranted expectation of a regional identity in the later Iron Age and Roman periods.

Pottery dating and classification still relies on work by Thompson on grog-tempered 'belgic' pottery, a type regarded as largely post-conquest in the London area³⁶. This type of pottery, however, is present in LIA settlements on the eastern gravels in contexts without Roman material (eg 14 and 34), in west Kent in the 1st half of the 1st century AD³⁷, in west London in the LIA³⁸ and Park Street, Southwark (42). Tyers has made the first attempt to isolate the kind of

Age and Early Roman Pottery Traditions of the London Region' in Bird *et al* (1996) 139-45.

34. J. Macdonald 'Londinia of the North? LA 8 no 1 (1996) 10-11.

35. eg fns 4, 5, 10, 31, 32.

36. I. Thompson *Grog-tempered 'Belgic' Pottery of South-eastern England* BAR British Ser 108 (1982), especially 770.

37. B. Philp *The Roman Villa Site at Keston, Kent* (1991); finds reports: P. Couldrey 'The Iron Age Pottery' 206-217; D. Cooper and K. Parfitt 'The Coarse Pottery' 191-206.

38. Jon Cotton *pers. comm.*

pottery which predates the earliest Roman assemblages in Southwark³⁹. Sandy and shelly wares continue MIA traditions. A fairly complete amphora from Hunts Hill Farm, Upminster (14) is a recent addition to the rare Dressel 1 amphora (90/70-15 BC) sherds found on the eastern edge of the region⁴⁰ (see cover).

Regional differences are apparent with eastern assemblages belonging in the lower Thames zone, pottery affinities between Holloway Lane, Harlington (4) and Hertfordshire and between Ewell and Sussex, and Atrebatian wares found at Percy Gardens, Old Malden (9a)³⁸. More local characteristics may emerge with further study emphasising these differences, which can be seen by the MIA. Phasing within the period should eventually be feasible, especially with good assemblages and stratigraphy, some of which already exist.

With coin and brooch dates aligned to the recently revised Continental chronology, the introduction of wheel-turned pottery, potin coins and cremation burial is now put in the later 2nd century BC. Early LIA wheel-turned pottery is associated with MIA-tradition hand-made pots in transitional MIA-LIA deposits at the enclosed farmsteads at Farningham Hill, Kent (29)⁹ and possibly at Corbets Tey, Upminster (43). Potential sequences from the MIA to the Roman period occur at Keston (31, 20), in the Rainham-Upminster-Aveley area (eg 14, 32, 35), Beddington Sewage

39. P. Tyers *op cit* fn 33.

40. M. Medlycott, O. Bedwin, S. Godbold 'South Weald Camp - a probable late Iron Age hill fort: excavations 1990' *Essex Archaeol Hist* 26 (1995) 53-64 (cites other references).

41. J. Kent *op cit* fn 31; R. Merrifield *op cit* fn 32; C. Haselgrove

Works (17), and on the western gravels. Park Street, Southwark (42) and Marloes Road, Kensington (44) have important LIA to early Roman assemblages.

Coins, mostly chance finds, relatively abundant and indicating London-wide activity, have received much attention⁴¹. Other finds include triangular 'loom-weights'/oven furniture, fired clay bricks (so-called Belgic bricks) of unknown function and occasionally, ironwork, spindle-whorls, fragments of salt containers and personal items and fittings such as beads, brooches, rings and bone toggles⁴² (Fig. 6).

Identifiable and well-dated buildings and structures are rare in the London area. Several four-posted structures ('granaries') with 1st-century BC pottery and a rectangular building at Lower Warbank, Keston (20) and conquest period, rectangular structures at Corbets Tey (43) and Atwood School, Sanderstead (45) are all post-fast constructions. London is probably in the same architectural zone as Essex and nearby south-east England where the standard LIA house is rectangular⁴³. Construction techniques, such as sleeper-beams which can leave little or no trace, susceptible to destruction by ploughing and soil-stripping by machine, may explain the apparent absence of LIA buildings and rarity of ordinary rural Roman ones in the area.

A few field systems and property boundaries are dated to the LIA-early Roman period, probably reflecting the na-

'The Archaeology of British Potin Coinage' *Archaeol J* 145 (1988) 99-122; 'Iron Age Coinage: recent work' in T. Champion and J. Collis *The Iron Age in Britain and Ireland: Recent Trends* (1996) 67-85.

42. Especially sites (20), (35).

43. P. Sealey *op cit* fn 6, 60.

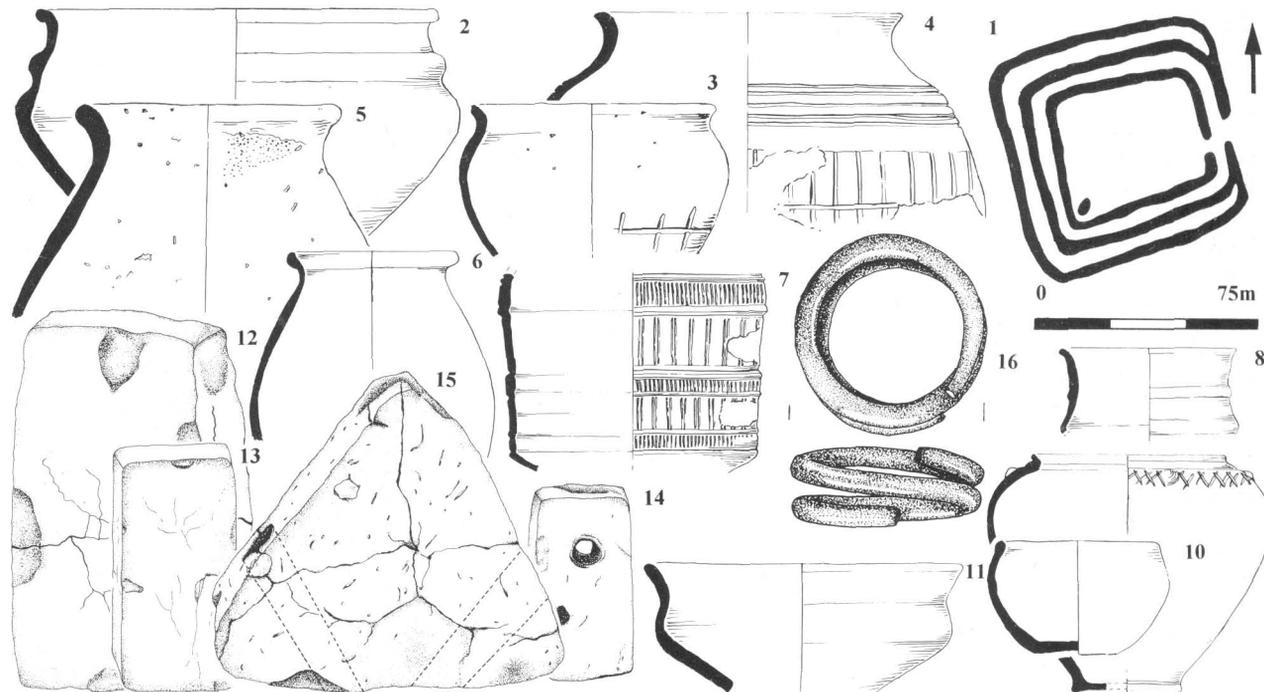


Fig. 6: LIA finds from the triple-ditched enclosure at Moor Hall Farm, Rainham (35) (no. 1): a selection of finer pottery (nos. 2-11) (AET), fired clay bricks (nos. 12-14) and a triangular 'loomweight' (no. 15), and spiral copper alloy ring (no. 16) (SPG). Ceramic finds scale 1:4, ring 1:1.

ture of the finds and continued use into the Roman period. Environmental evidence is still sparse, as in most of the Iron Age, but there are small plant assemblages from such sites as Moor Hall Farm, Rainham (35) and Beddington Sewage Works (17), the latter also with good Iron Age bone assemblages. Cattle, sheep, pig and dog are represented at Lower Warbank, Keston (20); a pit on the Bermondsey Abbey site (46) contained largely cattle, sheep and horse.

Deliberate deposition continues in rivers or wet places and on dryland, for example the Hounslow Hoard⁴⁴, Pit 9 Lower Warbank, Keston (20) (including a whole lamb) and a large dump, possibly a termination rite, of 900+ fragmentary vessels in a well at Moor Hall Farm, Rainham (35). Temples or shrines are not yet recognised, unless the rectangular structure at Caesar's Camp, Heathrow (30) is LIA, not MIA. Other forms of sacred site may be present, such as a possible multi-ditched enclosure at Warren Farm, Romford (15) and elsewhere (see below).

The London area seems to lack 'Aylesford-Swarling' type urned cremations and the rich burials typical of certain parts of Essex and Hertfordshire⁴⁵, though they may still await discovery. Earlier rites may have continued and there is some evidence for simpler inhumation in Essex⁴⁶, for example at Ardale School, Aveley (32). Burials dating to the early to mid-1st century AD may include three inhumations at Beddington Sewage Works (27)⁴⁷, a probable cremation burial at Ewell (53) and four ill-recorded cremation burials at Corbets Tey, Upminster (43), one with iron hoops, possibly from a bucket. Three imprecisely dated inhumations⁴⁷ from the Tower (47), the Minories (48) and Southwark (49) may equally be early Roman.

Several comparatively small, rectangular/sub-rectangular, deep-ditched enclosures or strongholds, some multi-ditched, and some with special deposits, lie on eminent positions from Rainham and Upminster (35, 14, 27) to Mucking, Essex⁴⁸. Caesar's Camp/Shakesbury Hill, Heathrow (30) may be similar or may enclose the 'shrine'³⁸. Ditched LIA sites in south London include Coulsdon Wood (50). Some may be multi-purpose sites, combining defence and ritual, perhaps similar to Continental rectangular enclosures, *viereckschanzen*, though with few completely investigated, their interior layout, patterns of deposition in the ditches and function are little understood.

Ordinary settlements appear to be interspersed amongst these prominent enclosures, though some are insufficiently explored to be categorized. Enclosed farmsteads have been found at Corbets Tey (43), Fairlop (51), possibly Crayford (52) and at Holloway Lane, Harlington (4). Most known sites lie below 30m OD on terrace gravels, a few at 80-130m OD. A notable density of MIA, LIA and LIA-early Roman settlement on the east London gravels, like the marked increase in numbers of sites in the middle and upper Thames in the same periods⁴⁹ and clusters of later IA sites in the mineral extraction zones, on the fringes of greater London and possibly Southwark (eg 44, 46, 50), where

44. Cotton *et al* 56-7.

45. B. Cunliffe *op cit* fn 10; R. Whimster *Burial Practices in Iron Age Britain* BAR British Ser 90 (1981).

46. P. Sealey *op cit* fn 10, 57-8.

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48. A. Clark *Excavations at Mucking: Volume 1: the site atlas* (1993).

49. C. Haselgrove 'The later Iron Age in Southern Britain and

evidence for LIA settlement is increasing, suggests that the same ought to be the case for the whole region.

Recent work at Hunts Hill Farm, Upminster (14) (c 16ha/40acres) and nearby sites (25, 35, 43) demonstrates shifts in settlement and land use. If a large enough area is investigated, Iron Age and Roman sites may be found adjacent to each other, showing greater continuity than might have been supposed if only a small area had been examined. A comparable situation exists around Heathrow and Bedfont, at Beddington (17) and Keston (20).

Conclusions

A re-examination of the Iron Age in the London basin is long overdue. This account is an attempt to survey the current state of knowledge and to consider research priorities². Considerably more is known of some aspects, though others have hardly advanced since 1976. The point where research priorities can be very specific is still some way off. Present distribution patterns of sites can-not be regarded as reliable, with the bias towards mineral extraction areas and the suburban fringe zone. We need more excavated sites, preferably of large areas, where complete settlement plans and landscapes might be recovered, sites with good stratigraphy, finds assemblages and environmental evidence to provide a solid background and dating framework for the period and its phases.

The *Bibliography and Gazetteer of Later Prehistoric Ceramics*⁵⁰ currently being compiled by the Later Prehistoric Ceramics Research Group will provide a valuable basis for examining and assessing sites and earlier collections in the region, containing much more than just information on pottery. Publication of the backlog sites of the 1970s and 1980s, a valuable resource, is essential. Cultural, social and economic aspects of the periods can be better interpreted once a solid chronological basis is established.

There is still a large gap in the knowledge of the Iron Age and other prehistoric periods in the more urban part of the region and in the alluvial zone. The nature of the sites, the developments and the excavation methods will have contributed to this situation, together with, perhaps, the activity ranges of those interested in prehistory. Recent discoveries since 1986 of prehistoric material from the City, both on site and in museum collections, are a cause for reflection. Given the increase in knowledge and discoveries since 1976, more surprises are likely to be in store.

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