

## Romano-British Cemetery VI (LPRIA?)

(Extracted from Going with no additions 13/9/07 – updated with microfiche and square barrows data 24/9/07)

### Introduction

Lying slightly to the SE of cemetery III (see above, p 000-000), and immediately to the north of the double ditched enclosure, was a series of four small, conjoining square ditched enclosures, each measuring *c* 10 x 10m (Fig 00). Sited roughly centrally in each of the four enclosures was a cremation burial (Cat Nos 1010-1013).

#### **Cremation 1003. (1339N/661E) Adult**

Notebook 253.80; 255.87

*Grave pit:* Sub-rectangular shape, disturbed by animal burrows.

*Pit fill:* Sandy fill with areas of charcoal in fill.

*Finds in fill:* None noted. Two small abraded flint gritted sherds.

*Grave furniture:* No data.

*Grave goods:* No data.

*Bone:* 'Human bone' found, but no further details.

#### **Cremation 1004. (1317N/659E) Adult**

Notebook 255.25

*Grave pit:* Unclear shape, disturbed by animal burrowing. Cut by or cutting grub hut.

*Finds in fill:* GT body sherd, eight abraded pot fragments.

*Bone:* Bone fragments.

*Remarks:* Animal disturbance may have brought material from the grub hut to the cremation or *vice versa*; therefore it is impossible to be sure of the sequence.

#### **Cremation 1005. (1345N/646E) Adult**

Notebook 253.83; 255.115, 116

*Grave pit:* Irregular shape.

*Pit fill:* Contains patches of charcoal, red pebbles and pink sand.

*Finds in fill:* Two abraded body sherds and three iron nails.

*Bone:* Bone flecks.

#### **Cremation 1006. (1353N/652E) Adult**

Notebook 253.82

*Grave pit:* Oval, 0.2m deep

*Pit fill:* Very dark brown loam, vitrified sand and charcoal.

*Finds in fill:* Bronze scraps.

*Bone:* Cremated bone.

*Remarks:* Evidence of burning around edge of pit.

#### **Cremation 1007. (1340N/660E)**

Notebook 257.107

*Grave pit:* Sub-circular.

*Pit fill:* No data.

*Grave goods:* No data.

*Bone:* No data.

*Remarks:* No data other than a plan.

**Cremation 1010. (1334N/632E) Adult**

Notebook 257.92

*Grave pit:* Oval in shape, with steep sides and irregular base, measuring 0.69 x 0.51m wide and 0.39m deep.

*Pit fill:* No data; cremation urn placed slightly off-centre in pit.

*Grave goods:*

1010.1 Large jar, in 'Belgic' ware, vesicular stabbed on shoulder, flattened rim. Used as cremation urn.

*Bone:* Little data preserved, but bone from an adult.

**Cremation 1011. (1338N/618E) Adult Male**

Notebook 257.101

*Grave pit:* Roughly circular pit (c.0.48m x c.0.53m), with a rounded profile.

*Pit fill:* The pedestalled cremation urn was placed upright slightly off-centre in the pit, and contained the cremated bones and other grave goods.

*Grave goods:*

1011.1 Lower part of a large, pedestal-based jar with a hollow foot, described by Dr I Thompson as a 'large HM [hand made] copy of an A5 pedestal urn, ie 'trumpet' pedestaled... The join between the base and body is very clear, as they do not fit' (Thompson 1982, 783). The fabric is not grog-tempered. Thompson considers the A5 'trumpet pedestal' form to be essentially an Essex variant of the series, and dates the form to the first half of the 1st century AD, noting its apparent absence from 1st century BC sites (*ibid.* 64-69). Seen IA Thompson, 8.5. 1978.

1011.2 Copper alloy brooch, with a perforated catch plate. Found among cremated bone. Complete Simple Gaulish (continental Colchester) type, with elaborately fretted openwork catchplate. Long, narrow, tapering bow of flat section and profile. 8-coil spring with external chord and hook. The extremely fine tip of the pin survives, bent up at an angle. Was this brooch ever used? Possibly burnt but not distorted. Length 96mm. Analysed examples are brass. A continental form in origin, but enough have been found in Britain to suggest they may also have been made here. Several similar in graves at Deal (e.g. Parfitt 1995, fig. 43, 17). Dating: Augustan on the Continent; the King Harry Lane seriation implies they were still placed in British burials towards the mid 1<sup>st</sup> century AD; Stead and Rigby (1989) Type B.

1011.3 Small circular object of iron, with a central square perforation with flange. Unparalleled. (See also a find from Maldon bypass which is paralleled by a circular iron object with an oval perforation found beneath a pedestaled urn ??? type. Context 29, c. 1st BC. Q. Mould).

1011.4 (not illustrated). Rectangular cross-sectioned narrow copper alloy strip, with slight lateral and longitudinal curvature and angled end with an angled transverse break. Length 32mm, width 5mm, thickness c. 2mm, weight 1g. The surface is pitted and corroded with evidence of mineral loss indicative of burning. The curvature and angled end of this item suggest this may be a tine from a set of tweezers, although this cannot be confirmed.

*Bone:* Little data, but identified as adult, male.

**Cremation 1012. (1341N/608E)**

Notebook 257.92, 130

*Grave pit:* Shallow, oval scoop, measuring 0.54 x 0.44m wide and 0.11m deep..

*Pit fill:* Medium brown sandy soil. Much cremated bone, but no charcoal.

*Finds in fill:* Two sherds of (?residual) flint-gritted pottery.

*Bone:* No details. The cremation appears to have been deposited loose, or in an organic container, in the grave-pit.

**Cremation 1013. (1330N/644E)**

Notebook 257.91

*Grave pit:* shallow, circular scoop.

*Pit fill:* Medium brown [soil], and some small pebbles.

*Grave goods:* No data.

*Bone:* No details; stated to have been unpotted.

## Discussion

In terms of their form and their date, these small funerary enclosures are closely paralleled by numerous sites in Yorkshire (Stead 1965; Whimster 1978, 1981). They lacked nearer parallels until air photography in the dry summers of 1975 and 1976 revealed a number of morphologically similar enclosures in the English midlands and, more especially, Essex between the Colne and the Blackwater (Whimster 1981, 121-128, fig 45, appendix D.3, 339-344). To Whimster's list should be added a close parallel at Great Dunmow, Essex, of three conjoining enclosures, with marks of a central feature, perhaps graves, in association with a ring ditch (Eddy 1981, fig 15). In his cogent and comprehensive assessment of these 'suggestive, but problematical features', Whimster rightly emphasized the importance of the Mucking enclosures, noting that they were one of only four instances where 'Aylesford culture cremations have been found associated with square or rectangular enclosures' (*ibid.*, 128). Whimster proposed that the apparent rarity of the type may be the result of poor observation, and that elsewhere in SE England these enclosures may have escaped notice 'just as the barrow ditches of Yorkshire were overlooked by all but the most recent excavators' (*ibid.*). Against this, Whimster noted the apparent lack of congruence: only one similar structure was noted among the 'wealth of crop marks that lie along the western extension of the North Downs and on the chalk ridge of the Isle of Thanet' (*ibid.*, 128), an area which has yielded considerable numbers of La Tène cremation burials, and their apparent presence in the densely settled river valleys of the east Midlands, with which La Tène III cremations have not been hitherto associated. Whimster's conclusion, that no more useful conclusions can be reached until a more adequate sample of enclosures has been excavated, holds good. Further data may be forthcoming from Essex as the threat of gravel extraction hangs over the recently discovered examples at Stanway, near Colchester (Crummy 1988).

## Bibliography

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