

## A baked clay weight from Wallington

During research into material from Queen Mary's Hospital, Carshalton, the baked clay weight illustrated in fig 1 was examined. It is made of baked sandy clay, and is buff in colour, with some light grey patches. The fabric has inclusions consisting of vegetable tempering and 15% grits 0.5mm and less. The baked clay weight has been poorly fired, making it very friable. It weighs 1550 grams, has a diameter of 13.5cm and a height of 9.0cm. It is partially damaged.

This weight is of a type well represented on Later Bronze Age sites, and is very similar to loomweights and loomweight fragments from the Later Bronze Age site at Queen Mary's Hospital, Carshalton (Adkins & Needham forthcoming). Similar weights have been found at Knight's Farm, Berkshire, which were interpreted as thatch weights rather than loomweights owing to their weight (900 grams and over) (Bradley et al 1980, 275). It is equally possible that the baked clay weight recorded here was also a thatch weight.

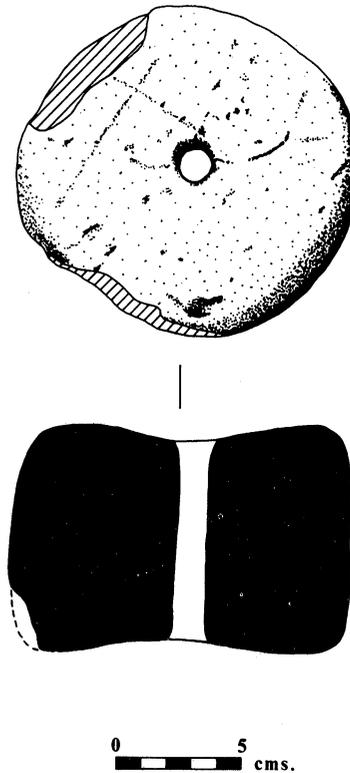


Fig 1. Baked Clay Weight from Wallington. The diagonal shading represents damaged surfaces.

The baked clay weight was in a box of material from Queen Mary's Hospital, Carshalton, but it was accompanied by a label saying 'old loom weight found in Wallington. Mrs Birch', and it therefore seems unlikely that it was found at Queen Mary's Hospital, even though the area was occasionally described as Wallington (cf Roberts 1905). Mrs Birch is not known to have had any connection with Queen Mary's Hospital, but she did excavate a site by the River Wandle known as Bunker's Field, Wallington (TQ 288 650). Finds of various periods were discovered as well as an earthwork (Major 1925) which was believed to be Iron Age in date (Morris 1959, 134).

Excavation close to this site in 1971 (TQ 289 650) revealed, amongst other finds, 240 sherds of flint-tempered pottery which could not be closely dated (Laws & Wooldridge 1980, 21–2). In view of the presence of Later Bronze Age flint-tempered pottery on the nearby sites of Queen Mary's Hospital, Carshalton (Adkins & Needham forthcoming) and Beddington Sewage Works (Adkins & Adkins 1982, 203), it would seem likely that this pottery, together with the baked clay weight described here, form part of a Later Bronze Age assemblage from a settlement site alongside the River Wandle. Any further development in this area should be closely examined.

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LESLEY ADKINS