

Assessment of Iron Artefacts from Chapel Heath, Navenby, Lincolnshire (CHNA05)

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A small collection of iron artefacts from Chapel Heath, Navenby, Lincolnshire, was submitted to the authors for identification and assessment. All were nails, varying in size, and in a few cases retaining traces of mineralised wood. This is consistent with their interpretation as coffin nails from Romano-British inhumations.

Description

Iron

Fragments of 17 nails were submitted for identification and assessment. Most were complete, or had what appeared to be a complete shank with missing head and had a square-sectioned tapering shank and a sub-rectangular head. The heads varied from 15 to 20 mm in maximum dimension. In one case, the head was definitely rectangular, 10 by 14 mm. Only a small number of nails were complete from the tip to the head and these were all of similar size, with a mean length (to the join with the head) of 57.20mm +/- 3.9 mm. The fragmentary nails were all approximately half of that length (Table 1). However, these include some which appear to be tapering more sharply than the others and these could have been intended to be about half of the length of the main group. The width of the shank, measured at the join with the head ranges from 4mm to 7mm and all of the complete nails have widths of 7mm. Those with the narrower shanks might have been intended to be shorter, smaller nails, but there is no clear division in shank widths (Fig 1).

Table 1

Group	N	Mean	SD
Complete	5	57.20	3.90
Partial	12	23.92	3.48
Entire sample	17	33.71	16.01

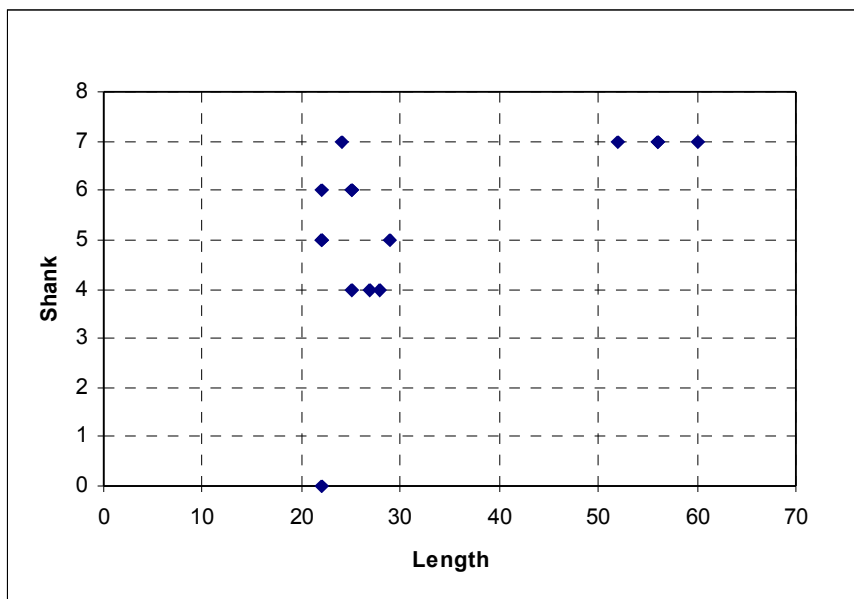


Figure 1

Mineralised wood was visible or 3 or 4 nails and in each case the nail was approximately perpendicular to the grain although in one case, the nail had buckled during insertion.

Assessment

The nails are consistent with their interpretation as coffin nails. There is some evidence for the use of two sizes of nail, but it is inconclusive.

Further work

No further work is recommended.

Retention

All the finds should be retained for possible analysis and re-examination.

Appendix 1

Context	REFNO	Object	Weight	Part	Description	diameter	L	TH	Condition
014 RT SIDE CRANIUM	07	NAIL	2	PART	STRAIGHT	0	16	3	LOST SOME OF HEAD
014	07	NAIL	8	PART	STRAIGHT; SQUARE/CIRCULAR HEAD 20 ACROSS	0	22	5	
014		NAIL (COFFIN)	4	PART	STRAIGHT	0	22	5	LOST MOST OF HEAD
014	04	NAIL	4	PART	STRAIGHT	0	22		LOST HEAD
014		NAIL (COFFIN)	9	PART	STRAIGHT; SQUARE/CIRCULAR HEAD 20 ACROSS	0	22	6	
014	04	NAIL	6	PART	STRAIGHT	0	24	7	LOST

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014	01	NAIL	3	PART?	SLIGHTLY TWISTED; RECT HEAD 10 BY 14	0	25	4		MOST OF HEAD
014		NAIL (COFFIN)	8	PART	TWISTED; WOOD GRAIN ADHERING; SQUARE/CIRCULAR HEAD 15 ACROSS	0	25	6		
014	06	NAIL	7	PART	STRAIGHT	0	25	6		LOST MOST OF HEAD
014	03	NAIL	4	PART	STRAIGHT	0	27	4		LOST MOST OF HEAD
014	05	NAIL	5	PART	STRAIGHT; SQUARE/CIRCULAR HEAD 15 ACROSS	0	28	4		
014	03	NAIL	9	PART	STRAIGHT; SQUARE/CIRCULAR HEAD 15 ACROSS	0	29	5		
014		NAIL (COFFIN)	10	WHOLE	FAIRLY STRAIGHT; SQUARE/CIRCULAR HEAD 20 ACROSS	0	52	7		
014		NAIL (COFFIN)	17	WHOLE	STRAIGHT; SQUARE/CIRCULAR HEAD 20 ACROSS	0	56	7		
014	08	NAIL	12	WHOLE	STRAIGHT; SQUARE/CIRCULAR HEAD 15 ACROSS	0	56	7		
014	02	NAIL	15	PART	STRAIGHT; SQUARE/CIRCULAR HEAD 20 ACROSS	0	60+	7		
014	06	NAIL	16	WHOLE	STRAIGHT; SQUARE/CIRCULAR HEAD 15 ACROSS	0	62	6		