

survived in the acid subsoil. No contemporary worked flints were identified and furthermore there is no evidence for the use of bone to produce artefacts.

How important metalworking was to the existence of the site can only be surmised but Barrett & Bradley's observations (1980, 265) on the replacement of bronze workshops by iron working centres at the end of the Bronze Age are relevant, particularly if Weybridge was a natural successor to Egham as a metal producing complex. The potential of the river as a food source does not appear to have been realised, however, although the presence of crab shell suggests a limited interest in seafood.

Other activities evidenced at Petters fit into the general pattern of settlement in this period. Local pottery production was suggested at Runnymede because of the uniformity of the fabric (Longley 1980, 1) and the same argument could be applied to Petters with the corollary that a single clay source was utilised for the bulk of the material. The relative frequency of Class IV bowls probably reflected the role of feasting and drinking at the site, two activities which are regarded as of increasing importance during this period, (Barrett 1975, 116). Spinning of yarn is attested but no loom weights have been identified which would have indicated actual cloth production. However, the same system of keeping sheep for wool rather than meat content was practised at Runnymede and Petters (4.10).

To a large extent the bone evidence from both sites presents a similar picture of the stock maintained and there is some indication that pastoralism played a more important role in the economy of this area than agricultural production, (Needham & Longley 1980, 402-3) although the sparsity of the environmental record from Petters does little to substitute or detract from this argument. Satisfactory storage pits for grain are noticeably absent, though cereal emmer has been found on the site and the presence of two sickles amongst the hoard contents might indicate agricultural activity (Needham & Longley 1980, 403). The field boundaries already referred to could point to some degree of land utilisation for cultivation purposes while vegetables formed part of the diet.

Hunting and gathering played a very minor role in supplementing the meat intake and the deer bones identified are perhaps of most significance for the light they throw on the environment of Egham in this period. The only information on food preparation relates to butchering techniques although in this context it is interesting to note that the clay plaques could have been used for cooking.

The incompleteness of our picture of occupation at Petters during the later Bronze Age is disappointing but when considered together with the growing body of evidence from the Lower Thames Valley, particularly from sites such as Runnymede Bridge, Weybridge and now Stanwell (O'Connell 1986) adds substantially to our understanding of this period in Southern England.

CHAPTER 5 PHASE 4 ROMAN

5.1 PHASE 4a

5.1.1 *The ditch* (F124/200/406, F1, Trial trench 1 and Machine trenches A, B & C) (figs 2, 3, 4, 6, 9, pl 20). The ditch and palisade trench (5.1.2) were a continuation of the two features excavated by Johnson and Barker (Johnson 1975, 12-14). The ditch ran north-south, gently curving in a north-westerly direction. In Area 2 where the ditch had been cut into brickearth with gravel it was fairly uniform with V-shaped profile (Section 15). In Areas 1 and 4 where the subsoil was predominantly gravel it was wider reaching a maximum width of 2.50m and depth of 0.92m while the profile had a less accentuated V-shape (Section 11, fig 59). A gradual natural silting appears to have taken place followed by a more rapid infilling when some building debris was thrown into the ditch. In Trial Trench 1 (Section 18) and machine trenches A, B and C, where the natural subsoil consisted of pure brickearth there was noticeable variation in profile and depth:

	TT I	A	B	C
Max width, Metres	1.56	1.10	1.70	1.12
Max depth, Metres	0.73	0.64	0.70	0.76

The profile in Trial Trench 1 and Trenches A and C was V-shaped, but in Trench B had a more rounded wider bottom. The fill was fairly homogeneous consisting of only two layers, primary silt and ultimate fill which contained flecks of charcoal. The uniformity of the fill in this area might suggest a deliberate infilling of the feature although it may only reflect the differential weathering and silting of a ditch cut into brickearth as opposed to gravel.

The finds from the ditch were limited but indicated a date in the latter half of the 1st century AD for the infilling of the feature. The few abraded sherds of prehistoric pottery found were presumably residual. Late Bronze/Early Iron Age material was identified in the silt layers of the ditch where it had cut a Late Bronze/Early Iron Age pit (F405) and subsequent weathering of the ditch side had caused material from the feature to fall into the ditch. The catalogue of ditch-fill is on Microfiche 48.

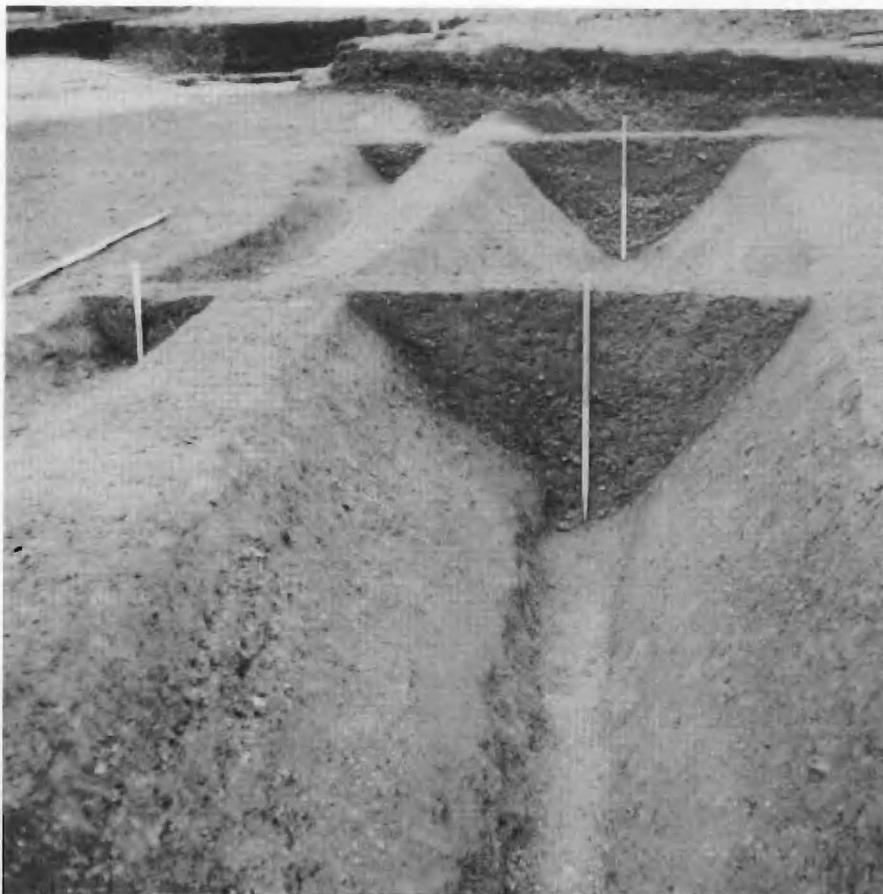


Plate 20 Romano-British ditch and palisade trench Fs 200 and 201

5.1.2 *The palisade trench* (F134/201/407 F2 in TT2 and MTC) (figs 2, 3, 4, 6, 9)

This feature ran roughly parallel with the ditch as far as Machine Trench C and possibly occurred again in Machine Trench B. It varied considerably in profile and width beginning as V-shaped in Area 2 (Section 15, fig 59) and becoming U-shaped with a shallow ledge on its eastern side in Area 1 (Section 11). The fill was fairly uniform and there was nothing to indicate whether the ledge and the U-shaped slot were separate features. The maximum width of the trench at this point was 1.0m and depth 0.34m. The identification of the feature as a palisade trench is necessarily hypothetical because there was no evidence for the existence of posts within the feature although the possibility of a hedge cannot be discounted. Finds were scarce and limited to a few abraded, fragmentary sherds of prehistoric pottery and some fragments of Roman tile. The catalogue of palisade trench fill is on Microfiche 49.

5.1.3 *Pit* (F202) (fig 60)

A small, shallow, irregular depression, found to the west of F201 and containing pottery similar to that identified in the ditch (7.1) and palisade trench (7.2).

5.1.4 *Synthesis*

No trace of a bank had survived but presumably the upcast would have been piled to the east of the ditch and the palisade or fence would then have served as a revetment. The origin and purpose of this feature remains uncertain although it is clear that the combined elements of a ditch, fence and bank would have provided an effective boundary or enclosure. The initial construction cannot be securely dated but the material evidence indicates that the final infilling of the feature took place between AD 60 and 85. The discovery of a fragment of a Roman military harness mount (5.3) in the ultimate fill of the ditch indicates a military presence within the surrounding area but is insufficient evidence for ascribing a military function to the feature. A military origin has been postulated for the settlement at Staines only 2km east of Petters and part of a cavalry helmet dated *c* AD 60 has recently been found there (Crouch 1976). To some extent the differences in ditch profile and fill are due to variations in the natural subsoil but the general irregularity and line of both the ditch and the palisade trench suggest that a civil origin is more acceptable than a military one and that we may be dealing with a territorial or pastoral enclosure.

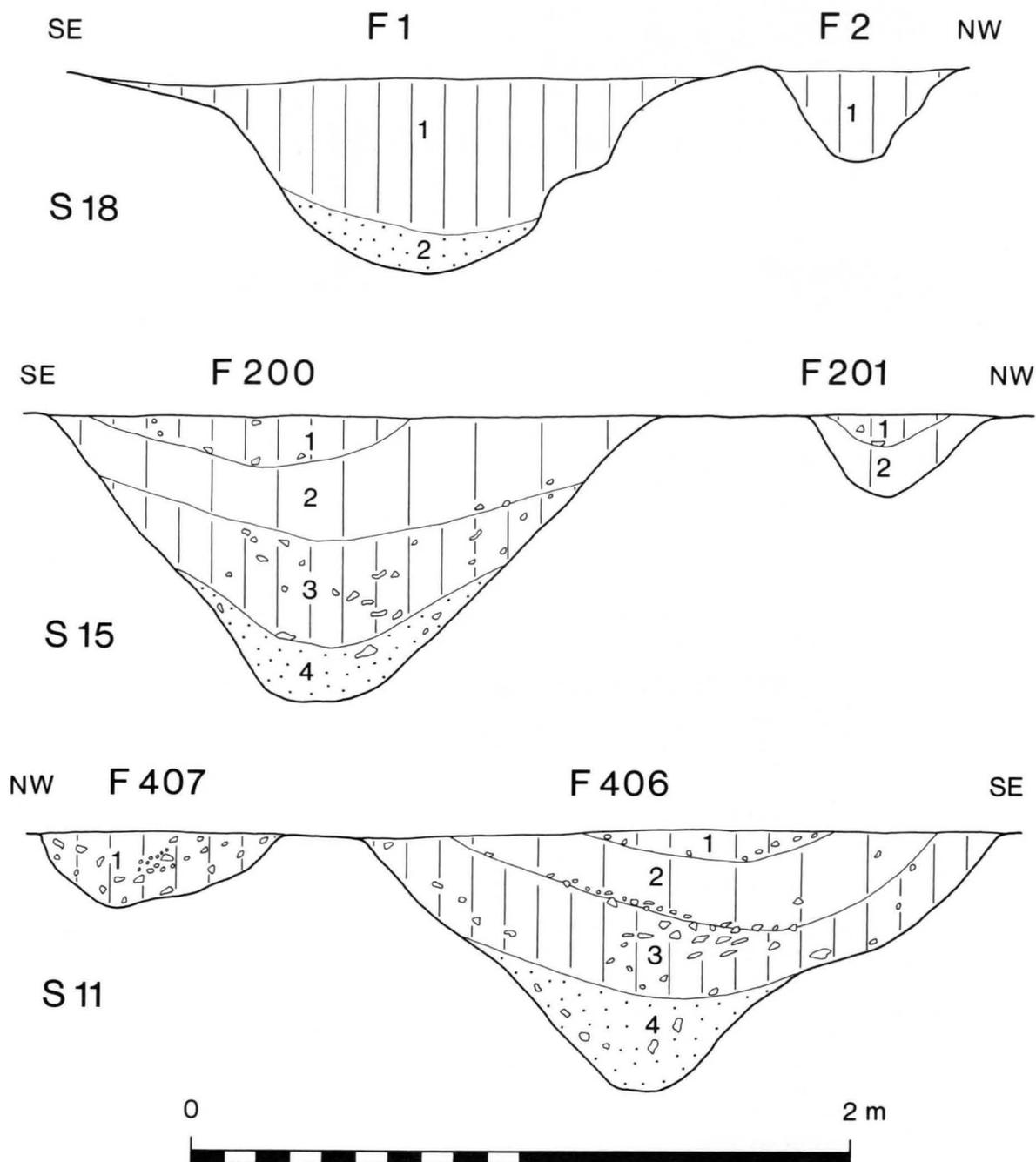


Fig 59 Sections 11, 15 and 18 across Romano-British ditch F124/200/406, F1 and palisade trench F134/201/407, F2

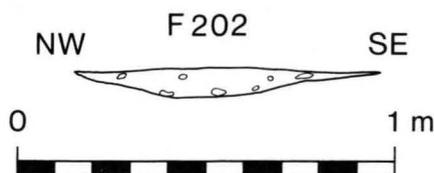


Fig 60 Romano-British pit F202

The building debris found in the two features (5.1.1 and 5.1.2) points to the existence of a building or buildings within the vicinity and other finds from the general area have indicated the presence of a number of Romano-British farming communities in this part of Surrey (Johnson 1975). It should also be noted here that a coin dated AD 77-8 was found unstratified in Trial Trench 2.

5.2 PHASE 4b

5.2.1 *Roadside ditch* (F130) (fig 61)

This was a continuation of the ditch excavated by Barker (Johnson 1975, 14) which ran parallel with a road

surface overlying the earlier ditch and palisade trench (5.1.1 and 5.1.2). A full discussion of this feature must await publication of Barker's excavations in which the line and complete profile of the ditch was recorded. The limited investigation of the ditch in Area 1 indicated an initial natural silting of the feature and a coin dated *c* AD 330-5 from F130.3 gave a *terminus post quem* for the upper fill of the ditch. Apart from part of a Roman brick the only other datable finds were Late Bronze/Early Iron Age which had presumably fallen into the feature during the weathering of the ditch side where it had cut the Late Bronze/Early Iron Age ditch (F117). The catalogue of ditch fill is on Microfiche 50.

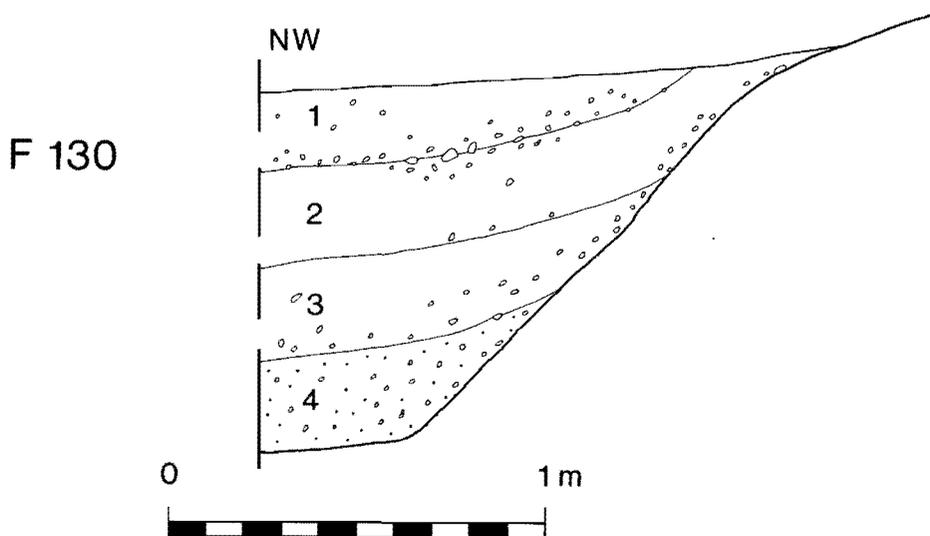


Fig 61 Romano-British roadside ditch F130

5.3 BRONZE HARNESS MOUNT (fig 62) by Martin Henig

Bronze harness-mount, circular, found in F200.2. Raised rim is ornamented with elegant punched decoration in the form of four pairs of scrolls, symmetrical about a central line: centre is depressed and pierced by a rectangular hole. In good condition apart from the flange which is chipped. Green patina. This is a military bronze of mid 1st-century date. It is almost exactly the same as one found at Ham Hill, Somerset (Webster 1958, 82 and fig 5, no 121). It may also be compared with a mount from Colchester in which a circular base is set in the centre of a rectangular plate (Anon, 1849, 84). In the last analysis the decoration is probably derived from vegetal, and especially acanthus motifs, commonly to be seen on better quality metalwork (such as the Fulham Sword Scabbard).

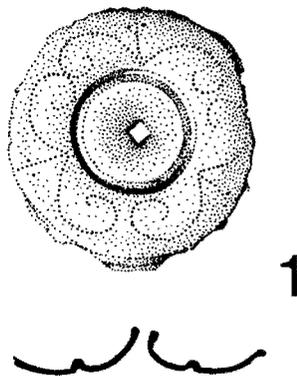


Fig 62 Bronze Harness Mount, scale 1:1 Drawn by Moira Mackenzie

5.4 IRON OBJECT (not illustrated)

Fragmentary iron object, discovered in F406.1. It appeared to have been roughly shaped, presumably with a hammer, against a secondary object or artefact. The single hole seems more likely to have been produced by a nail driven through the object rather than the result of deliberate manufacture. Date and function are uncertain.

5.5 COINS

Two coins were found but only one (2) was stratified in a Roman context (see 5.2.1.1). The other coin (1) was found in a layer of disturbed plough soil in Trial Trench 2.

- 1. Vespasian Cos VI RIC 783
- 2. Constantine I AD 330-5 LRBC 53

5.6 THE POTTERY (fig 63) by Joanna Bird

The stratified Roman pottery came from two features, the Roman ditch (F124/200/406) and a shallow depression (F202). The pottery dates between AD 60–85. The catalogue of the samian and coarse pottery is on Microfiche 51.

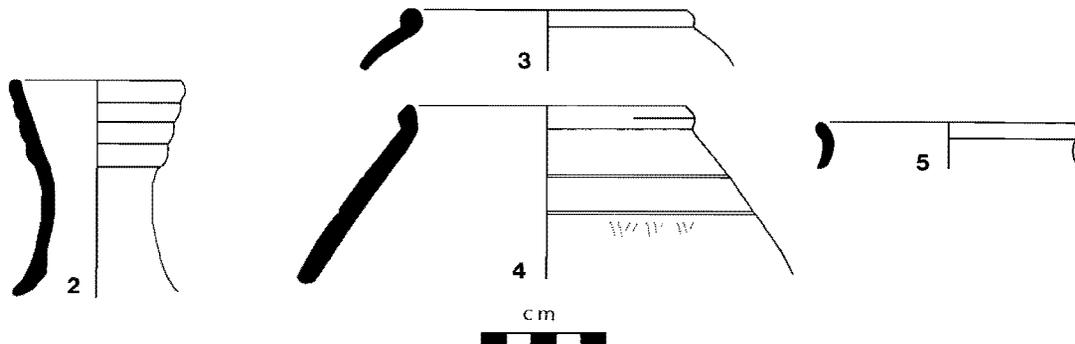


Fig 63 Romano-British pottery 2-5