New evidence for a Late Bronze Age occupation of Selsey Bill

by Mike Seager Thomas

Recent archaeological work on the Selsey peninsula has identified a previously unrecognized settlement of Late Bronze Age date. Two (small) feature concentrations, including pits and post-holes, are being studied. The finds made so far include important assemblages of pottery, stone and charred material. In the present paper, these are examined in context, and their implications for our understanding of local site organization and the economy of the south-east during the Late Bronze Age discussed.

INTRODUCTION

Archaeologically, Selsey is best known for its finds of Late Iron Age gold. The association of these with a possible Selsey or Chichester *oppidum* by writers such as Bedwin (1983) has tended to overshadow the evidence for occupation at other periods. Finds from the area, however, both antiquarian — where these or diagnostic records of them survive (*vide* Aldsworth 1987) — and modern (Kenny 1989), show that this spanned all periods from the Mesolithic through to modern times, and suggest significant episodes during both the Middle and Late Bronze Ages. The present paper discusses a new and possibly rich find dating from around the end of the Late Bronze Age (*c.* 800–700 BC). The site is of importance for three reasons. Firstly, it is only the fourth find of stratified material of this date from the West Sussex Coastal Plain — the others are Knapp Farm, Bosham (Gardiner & Hamilton 1997), Yapton (Rudling 1987), and Broadreeds, Selsey (Kenny 1989) (Fig. 1) — and thus it fills a potentially distorting gap in the local archaeological record. Secondly, it puts the better known Iron Age finds in perspective: Selsey was *not* an Iron Age development. Thirdly, the quality and the nature of the new finds enables us to draw some new and different conclusions about the Late Bronze Age of the south-east generally.

METHODOLOGY

Exposed prehistoric features at Selsey were first identified by the author in December 1996 (site A). These were monitored through 1997, and after the vandalization of pit 11, they were reported to the County Archaeologist, Mark Taylor. After the appearance of site B and the recovery of a large amount of material from the slump beneath pit 55, permissions to examine the two sites archaeologically were obtained from the landowner, Mrs J. R. Bunn, English Nature (the area is an SSSI) and the Environment Agency. Exposed features were cleaned, redrawn (measured sketches had been made during various monitoring visits), photographed and described; archaeological material in the sections was removed and selected features were sampled archaeologically, their surfaces being pared down context by context. In addition, a two-litre trial sample was taken for environmental analysis. No feature was fully excavated. The present paper discusses and puts into context the material, both artefactual and documentary, recovered so far.

SITE CONTEXT (Fig. 1)

SITES A AND B

Two concentrations of stratified material have been identified, both in the sea cliff to the west of Selsey village. This part of the coast bears the brunt of the prevailing wind and tide and it is eroding rapidly. The first, site A, is at the end of West Street at TQ 8447 9300 (close to the Coastguard Station). It is the more stable of the two, protected as it is by modern sea-defence works. A number of features are visible in the cliff (Fig. 2), at least seven of which are of possible or probable Late Bronze Age date. These include six pit-like features and two possible post-holes. The second, site B, was located about

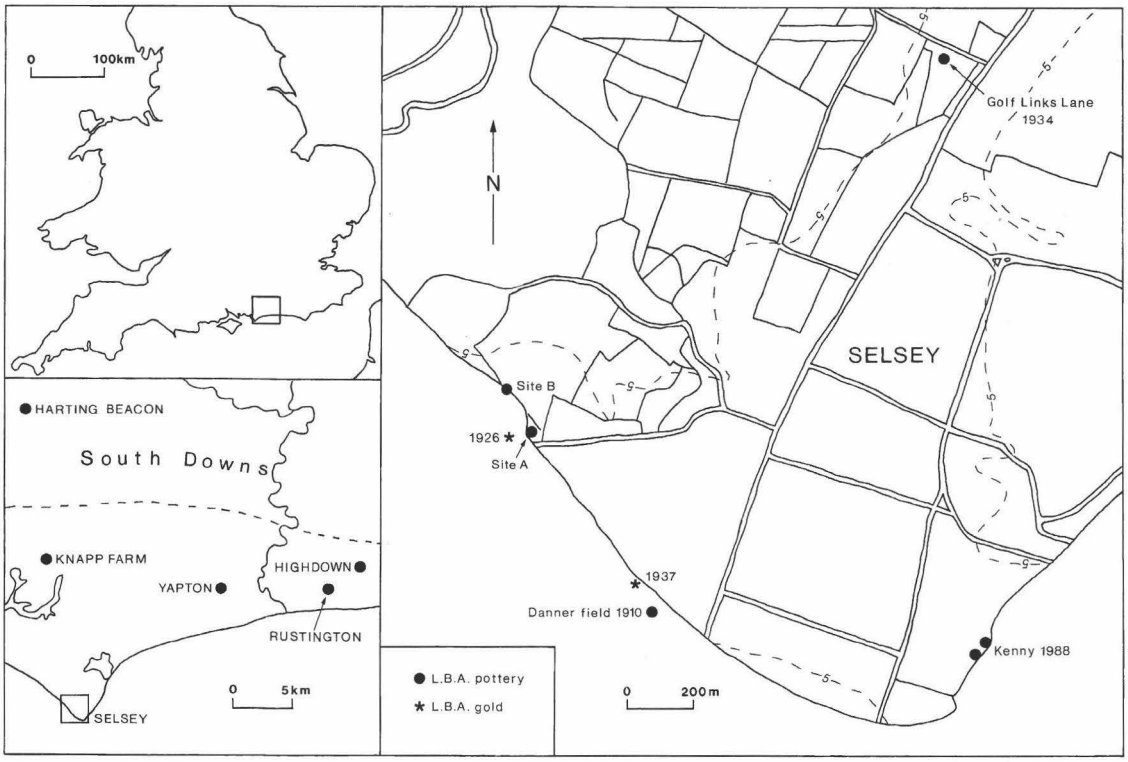

Fig. 1. Site location. Late Bronze Age occupation sites.

200 metres along the cliff to the north-west at TQ 8440 9320, edging the appropriately named Seaside Field (Heron-Allen 1911, 54). It appeared in December 1997 or January 1998, at about the time of the Selsey tornado. Two features were visible: a deep, vertically-sided pit which contained the bulk of the diagnostic pottery considered below (Table 1, Figs 3, 4 & 5), and a smaller concave feature. The latter is probably not of Late Bronze Age date. A shingle feature between the two sites contains *in situ* frost-shattered pebbles and is periglacial in origin. This part of the beach lacks sea-defence works of any sort. By the time this paper comes to press it is likely that the features discussed here will no longer exist.

STRATIGRAPHY

Features at sites A and B were cut both into and, in a few cases, through drift deposits which overlie the Selsey raised beach. These are of clayey silt, usually with a few matrix-supported beach pebbles towards the base. Where clasts occur close to the modern land surface they have usually been intruded from above. As can be seen from Figures 2 and 3, unless they incorporate a significant clastic element (e.g. fill 36), early features only become visible at about 0.4–0.5 metres below the modern land surface. This is not because they have been buried (it is unlikely that any significant deposition of sediment has occurred in the area since the beginning of the Holocene), nor because they have been truncated by later ploughing, but because the acidity of the soil has resulted in the development of a particularly deep soil profile (an argillic brown earth or *sol lessivé*). The whole, or a significant part, of many Late Bronze Age features will almost certainly be irrecoverable. For this reason, conventional machine stripping and planning of the site has little to recommend it.

PREVIOUS FINDS OF LATE BRONZE AGE MATERIAL FROM SELSEY BILL

In his catalogue of Prehistoric and Roman finds from Selsey, F. Aldsworth (1987) listed four finds of Late Bronze Age and eleven of Iron Age pottery. The dating of this material was based upon a ceramic chronology which has now been superseded. Two of so-called Late Bronze Age date (1 and 7) can be

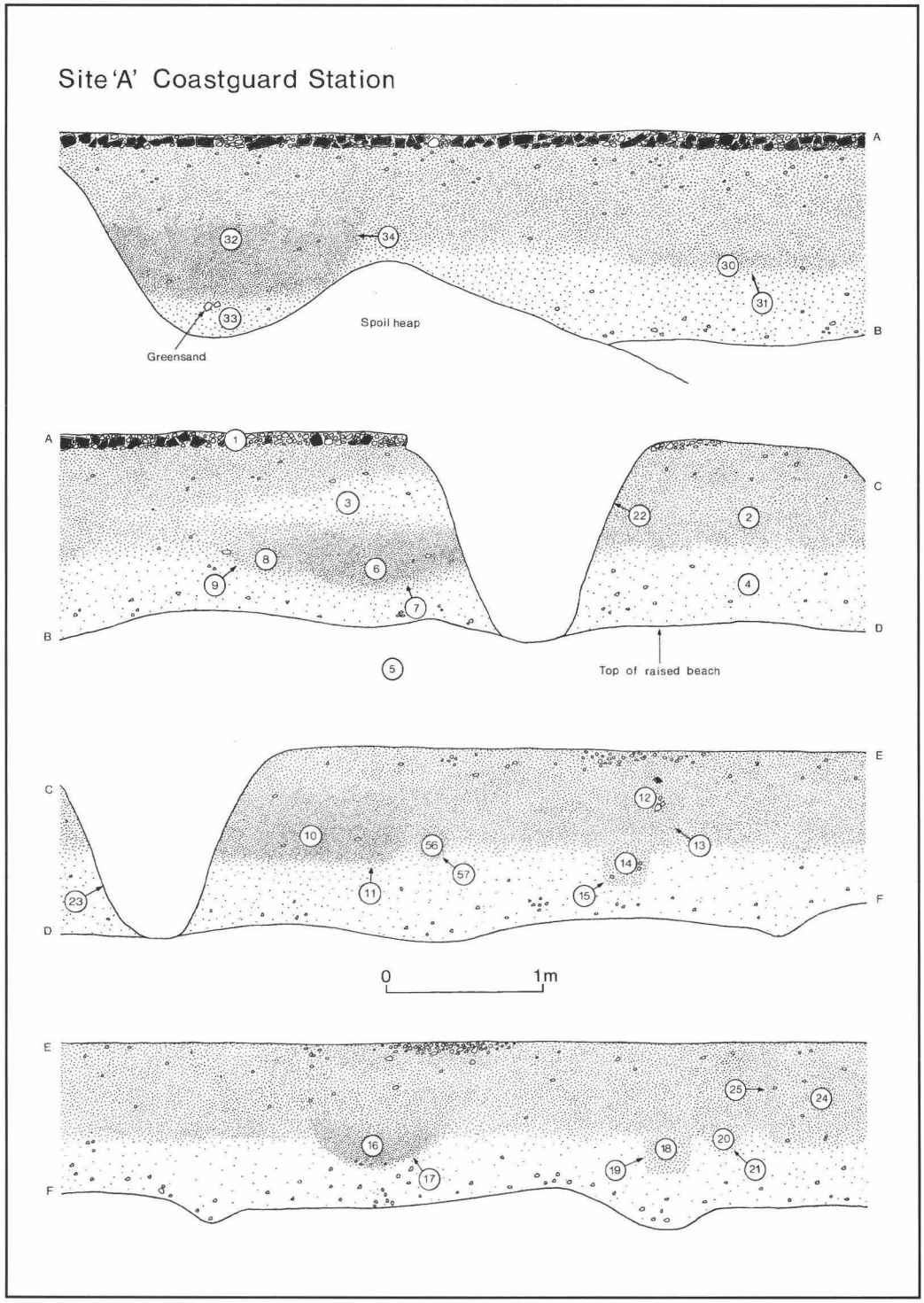

Fig. 2. Exposed section of site A.

Table 1. Quantification of the pottery from sites A and B.

Context	Fabric	Nos.	(g)	Burnished	Finger-impressed	Finger-smeared	Brushed	Grass-wiped	LBA form*	Smooth	Rough-cast	Weathered
Site A												
6	Fa	1	24	1						1		slightly
	Fb	1	9	1						1		no
	Fe	3	9	1						3		one
	Fk?	12	32			5					6	eight
	U	6	14	2						2	2	three
6/8	Fj	1	10									yes
	Fk	2	12		1	1			SJ:SR		1	no
8	Fe	1	3							1		interior face
10	Fi	1	4									interior face
14/12	U	1	2									very
16	Fa	1	18							1		exterior? face
	Fk	1	13									very
18	Fk	1	19			1?					1	exterior face
30	U	1	17		1							one face
32	Fk	10	46	3		3			BB	3	6	four
Site B												
36	Fb	1	10	1						1		no
	Fk	8	44	1		1					5	no
	U	16	22	5					R	5		nine
36/40	Fa	1	17									very
	Fe	7	91	7					BB or TB	7		no
	Fg	1	10	1						1		no
	Fk	3	17						FPB		3	slightly
	U	6	13	2						2	1	slightly
40	Fc	1	5	1						1		no
	Fd	2	6	1		1				2		one slightly
	Fg	2	108	2						2		no
	Fh	1	6	1						1		no
	Fi	1	26							1		slightly
	Fk	4	19			2		1			4	two slightly
41	Fa	3	59		1	3			SJ:C		3	no
	Fd	2	29	2		2				2		no
	Fg	1	16			1?						slightly
	Fi	3	67								3	no
	Fj	4	182	1						4		one slightly
	Fk	7	230	1	1	3	1		SJ:SPCR/S			
44/42	Fa	1	25	1					TSJ?	1		no
	Fd	3	46	3						3		no
	Fi	8	222								8	no
	Fk	2	6			1				1	1	no
44/45	Fe	28	72	28		28			TB	28		one
	Fi	1	8								1	no
	Fj	2	24							2		no
45	Fe	1	5	1						1		no
	Fj	3	101			1			SJ:SPCR	3?		slightly
47	Fa	2	25	1		1		1	SJ:SFPR	1	1	no
	Fg	2	143	2		2				1		no
	Fk	3	9								3	slightly
49	Fa?	1	3	1					HB(fine)	1		no
	Fg	2	46	2		1				2	1	slightly
50	Fa	1	8	1?		1				1		exterior face
	Fb	4	126			3					4	two
	Fg	14	182	14						14		no
	Fk	5	70	1		4			dish:SR		5	no

Table 1. (*cont.*)

Context	Fabric	Nos.	(g)	Burnished	Finger-impressed	Finger-smeared	Brushed	Grass-wiped	LBA form*	Smooth	Rough-cast	Weathered
53	Ff	1	7	1						1		no
	Fe	1	3	1		1				1		no
	Fk	1	6			1	1				1	no
	U	1	8							1		no
55	Fa	3	54	3					FPB	3		no
(slump)	Fd	1	15	1						1		no
	Fk	5	91	1	1	3			HB	1	4	no
60	Fj	1	26							1		no

*SJ = shouldered jar; SR = squared rim; C = finger-impressed cordon; SPCR = squared and pie crusted rim; S = finger-impressed shoulder; TSJ = tri-partite shouldered jar; BB = bi-partite bowl; TB = tri-partite bowl; SFPR = squared and finger-pinched rim; HB = hemispherical bowl; FPB = finger-pinched base; R = fineware rim.
UU = unclassified fabric

reassigned to the Middle Bronze Age; as can vessels in Chichester Museum, identified by him with a third (6). All of these are of the Deverel-Rimbury tradition. The fourth (8) is no longer datable and must be set aside. Of the finds of so-called Iron Age material, however, two included forms of probable Late Bronze Age type. The first find was made in the sea cliff at TQ 8486 9247, then the edge of Danner Field (5). It probably included a jar from this location now in store at Chichester Museum. The second was made during gravel extraction in a pit to the south of Golf Links Lane at TQ 8576 9421 (6), now part of Greenlawns Caravan Park (White 1934, 43, fig. 2). The remainder were either later (11) or are no longer datable. Of these, three were made in the vicinity of sites A and B, though in locations which are now in the sea (4, 8 and 9). Two gold bangles with trumpet-shaped terminals are also of Late Bronze Age date. These, too, were from locations which are now in the sea. One was found within 50 metres of the Coastguard Station (Anon. 1926; Heron-Allen 1926), while the other came from between the end of West Street and Hillfield Road, a few hundred metres to the south-east (Anon. 1937). Both were found on the beach. Lastly, finds of Late Bronze Age pottery — not included in Aldsworth's list — were made at TQ 8590 9238 during excavations by J. Kenny at Pontins' Broadreeds Holiday Camp (1989).

THE LATE BRONZE AGE FEATURES

DATING

Feature dating at Selsey is tied to the pottery. Assuming that a context contains nothing of later date, its presence provides a *terminus post quem*, a date before which it could not have been deposited. The specifically Late Bronze Age date, however, relies in addition upon the form of the features, their association with each other and the extent to which they have been subject to subsequent soil development. At best it is only *probable*. A further complication is the evidence for earlier prehistoric activity locally (Mesolithic or Early Neolithic in pit 7 and Middle Bronze Age at TQ 8410 9300) (Aldsworth 1987, 44, fig. 2:6). Because this may have involved the importation of pottery, non-diagnostic prehistoric sherds — as opposed to diagnostically Late Bronze Age sherds — are considered insufficient evidence for proper dating. Elsewhere this would not necessarily be the case.

There were four categories of date at Selsey: Late Bronze Age, possibly Late Bronze Age, uncertain, and modern.

Late Bronze Age features included those which contained sherds which are diagnostic of the period and/or sherds of the same fabrics and general vessel type as these (Table 1), and those which could be related to such a feature stratigraphically. Late Bronze Age features included, from site A, pits 7 (fill 6), 9 (fill 8) and 34 (fills 32 & 33), and post-hole 19 (fill 18), and from site B, pit 55 (fills 36 to 54, and 60 & 61). Post-hole 15 (fill 14) at site A is included because it resembled post-hole 19 almost exactly.

Features of possible Late Bronze Age date contained sherds of fabrics which, at Selsey, could not be firmly associated with a Late Bronze Age type (e.g. Fl), or were too small or infrequent to be relied upon, but which shared the same general characteristics as those which could. These included pits 11 (fill 10) and 31 (fill 30), both from site A.

Features of uncertain or modern date — characterized by the absence of finds or the presence of modern material — are not considered in this paper.

SITE A

At site A two features, about four metres apart, resembled post-holes or post-sockets (Fig. 2). In terms of their size, shape and fill — which was darker and sandier than the surrounding natural — they were alike. No doubt they belonged to the same structure. Close by but respecting the post-holes were six other features, all more diffuse (Fig. 2). These are interpreted as pits. Pit 34 had two definite fills, the lower of which (fill 33) was only distinguished from the 'natural' by its finds. Pit 6, fill 3, and a further deposit overlying pit 32 also resembled 'natural'. Otherwise all were darker (and less sandy) than those of the post-holes. Except for fill 3 and the deposit overlying 32, all contained small amounts of pottery and burnt material. Neither bone nor shell was present — presumably owing to the acidity of the soil — and none was rich in charred material.

The *purpose* of these features is irrecoverable. Data, however, are available on *how* they were used. Firstly, pit 7 cut pit 9. Secondly, pit 7, fill 6, was set apart from the other fills by the inclusion of a small quantity of struck flint, some of which is Mesolithic or Early Neolithic in date (Appendix 1, nos 1 & 2). This is interpreted as the spoil generated by the re-excavation of an earlier deposit. Presumably fill 3, overlying it, is the sub-soil from the base of this excavation. Thus we can infer at least three episodes or phases of pit digging and use. The diversity, the size and the sparsity of the Late Bronze Age material suggested, in addition, the incidental incorporation of domestic waste, not systematic waste disposal. This view is consistent with the observation that pit 7 was backfilled with — and perhaps closed by — freshly dug material.

SITE B

The fill of pit 55 comprised a series of interdigitating deposits, many inclined downwards from the edge of the cut. In part this is attributed to dumping or collapse from the edge of the pit. But much of the profile — in particular to the north-west — may be due to differential post-depositional subsidence, i.e. it need not have any functional significance at all (Fig. 3). Fill 54, the primary fill, was of clean, clast-supported shingle, only distinguishable from the adjacent 'natural' by its smaller clast size. Fills 37 and 39 comprised a deposit of displaced 'natural' in which the relationship of the drift to the shingle of the raised beach was preserved. They form part of a single stratigraphic unit. Fills 46, 48, 61 and 52 also resembled 'natural' shingle; and they too are interpreted as episodes of collapse rather than deliberate dumping. Though undulating, three fills — 43, 47/60 and 49 — of relatively clean clayey silt and of similar thickness throughout *may* have been waterlain. The rest were deliberate dumps. Of these, fills 50 and 53, both incorporating discontinuous charcoal- and find-rich laminae, and fill 42, wholly of charcoal-rich laminae, represented several dumps each. Pottery in these layers was aligned with them. The same may have been true of fill 45. By contrast, the irregular orientation of pottery recovered from fills 36, 40 and — possibly — 41 suggest that these comprised individual, bulk deposits. In terms of its appearance and its physical relationships the latter belonged to the period of piecemeal dumping; whereas fills 36 and 40, which diffused into one another, represented the final infilling of the feature after it had collapsed.

Note: Originally fills 41, 42, 43 and 45 had continued across the feature as far as the interface between fills 39 and 50. But to the south-east of the feature, all had been distorted by the collapse of fills 37/39. This may have involved the displacement of finds. To the south-east, therefore, fills 42, 43 and 45 were contexted as 44. Stratigraphically this is later than the units from which it was derived. In Table 1 the layers to which they originally belonged are given second (e.g. 44/42). Unfortunately, when 41 was sampled, its nature was not recognized and finds from different parts were not distinguished. It remains a stratigraphic anomaly.

As at site A purpose was irrecoverable. Two types of data were available: morphological and compositional. From these inferences could be made about both feature use and general site activity. Firstly, feature use: the large number of dumps and — in some instances — their separation from each other by deposits of varying colour and composition showed that deposition was piecemeal, their lack of reworking that they were deposited in a short period of time. Finds from individual dumps suggests that the pit was used for the disposal of domestic rubbish, and similar finds of pottery and stone from different dumps (Table 1 and Appendix 3) that it was used repeatedly by the same pottery- and stone-using unit, possibly a single household. Secondly, site activity: a wide range of activities is indicated and in many cases these were grouped — at least as far as rubbish disposal is concerned.

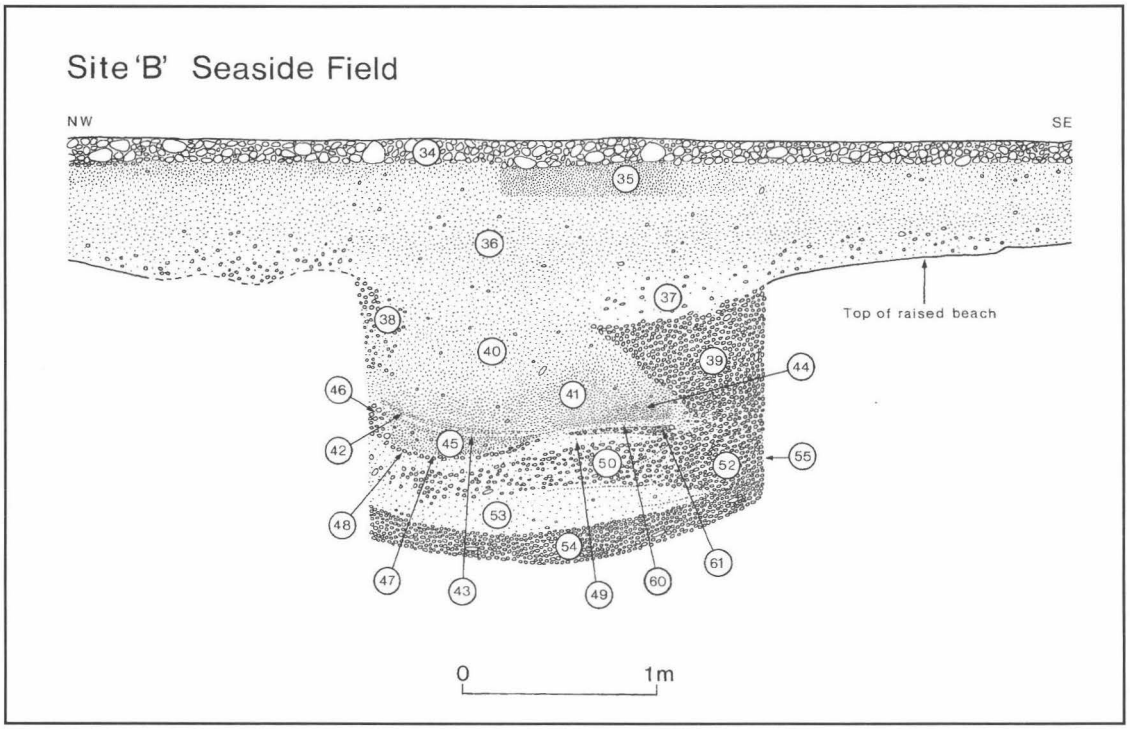

Fig. 3. Site B. Exposed section of pit 55.

For example, the small bulk sample taken for environmental analysis proved to contain a mixture of charred wood, grains of barley (*H. vulgare*) and wheat (*T. spelta*), rachis fragments and weed seeds. There were also pieces of hazelnut shell and a small fragment of calcined bone. The weed seeds have not yet been analyzed but the former resembles the waste product of G. Hillman's phase 7 — second sieving — in the traditional processing of free-threshing cereals (Hillman 1981, 135). The sample taken straddled fills 42 and 45. These contained pottery (Table 1), struck flint (Appendix 1, nos 14–16), possible rubbers of local and non-local stone, and burned stone (Appendix 3, nos 11–16). Most likely the activities with which these were associated occurred in the same place. Other categories of find from pit 55 include pottery with possible food residues and daub (both from fill 41), and the remains of what may be a loom-weight (fill 53). The activities for which there is evidence, therefore, include flint knapping, stone selection and burning, cereal processing, weaving (possibly), and food preparation and consumption. The feature was not used for the purposeful and symbolic 'placement' of rubbish, nor does it indicate levelling of the site prior to abandonment, an interpretation suggested by S. Hamilton for other Late Bronze Age deposits in West Sussex (Gardiner & Hamilton 1997, 79).

NEW POTTERY FINDS

The 200-odd sherds so far recovered from sites A and B represent only the second stratified assemblage of Late Bronze Age pottery from Selsey Bill. Material from the two sites is of differing quality. At site A much is weathered, presumably because of the site's long exposure to the elements, whereas that from site B is preserved in its original — unweathered — condition (Table 1). Twelve fabric groups can be distinguished (Appendix 2), five of which can be related to Late Bronze Age vessel types. These fabrics — plus one other — occurred on both sites (Table 1). From this we can conclude two things. Firstly, the two concentrations are broadly contemporary; and, secondly, both had a common source of supply of finished pottery. No doubt they formed part of the same complex. Finds from both, therefore, can be and are treated as coming from a single assemblage.

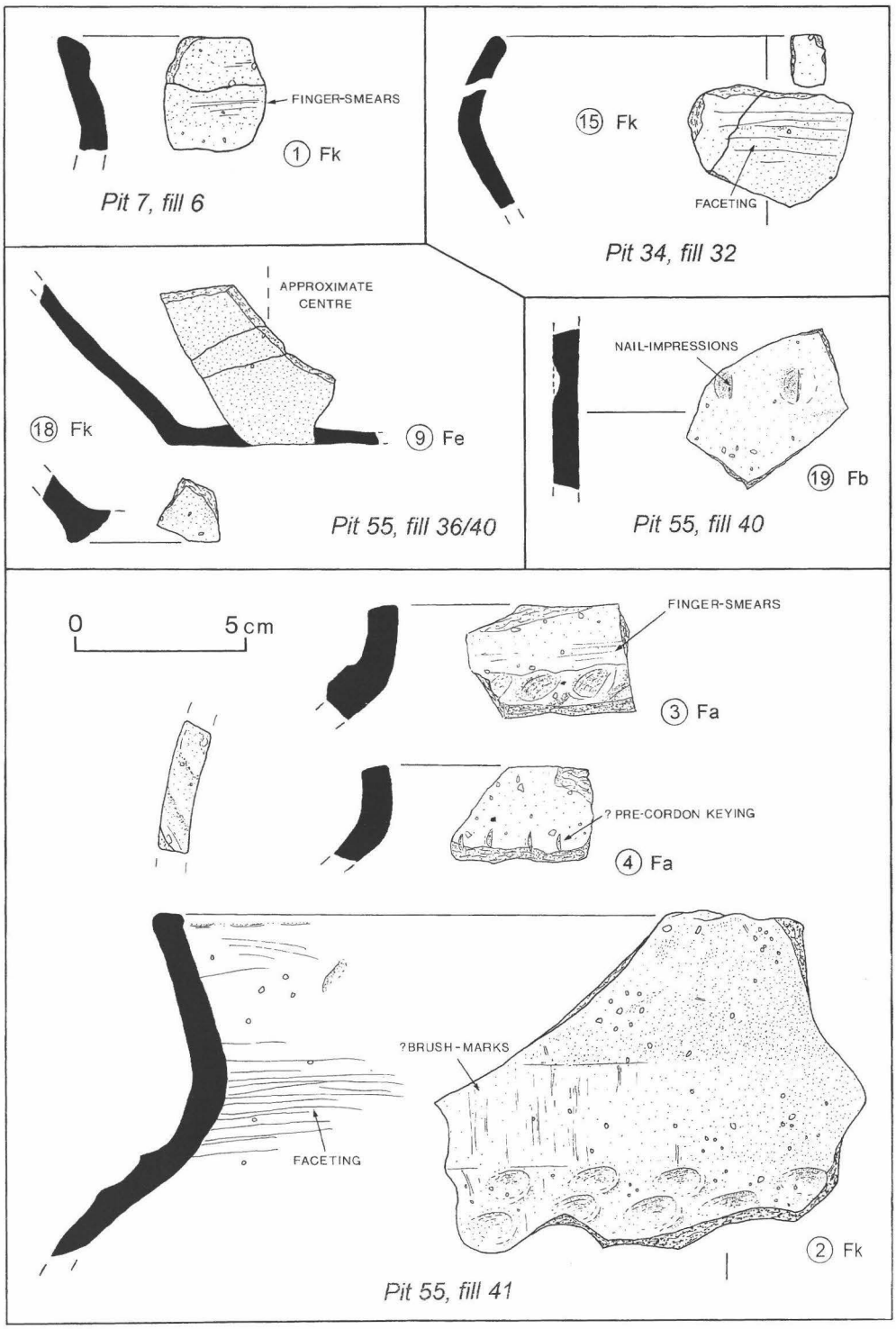

Fig. 4. Pottery from sites A (pits 7 & 32) and B (pit 55).

Fabric Fa is distinguished from Fb by the inclusion of grey — as opposed to white — calcined flint. Several sherds have been burnished, the surfaces of others have been finger-smeared (as opposed to impressed or furrowed) (e.g. pit 55, fill 41) (Fig. 4:3), one has been grass-wiped (pit 55, fill 47) (Fig. 5:10), and one appears to have formed part of a pinch-splayed base (pit 55, slump) (Fig. 5:13), a characteristic which S. Hamilton considers 'recurrent' through the Late Bronze Age period (1988, 65). Perhaps because it rarely survives, published examples of finger-smearing are difficult to identifiy. Pinch-splayed bases, however, occurred in stratified Late Bronze Age assemblages at Knapp Farm (Gardiner & Hamilton 1997, 82, fig. 8:7), Bishopstone (Hamilton 1977, 103, fig. 40:6), Heathy Brow (Hamilton 1982, 84, figs 34:45 & 34:46) and Slonk Hill (Morris 1978, 103, fig. 12:16), and in the unstratified assemblage at West Blatchington (Norris & Burstow 1950, 44, pl. 1:8). Other distinct forms present include a fine angular ?tri-partite shouldered jar (pit 55, fill 44/42) (Fig. 5:6), best paralleled in unstratified Late Bronze Age assemblages from Hollingbury Camp (Cunliffe 1966, 112, fig. 2:64) and Highdown (Wilson 1940, 196, fig. 7:d3), and — also paralleled at Highdown (Wilson 1940, 192, fig. 3:a; 196, fig. 6:j; 190, figs 2:a & 2:b; and 198, fig. 7:f1) — a coarse ?tri-partite shouldered jar with a squared and pinched rim (pit 55, fill 47) (Fig. 5:10), a ?bi-partite shouldered jar with a finger-impressed cordon (pit 55, fill 41) (Fig. 4:3) and pre-cordon keying (pit 55, fill 41) (Fig. 4:4), and a rare fine hemispherical bowl (pit 55, fill 49) (Fig. 5:11). Sherds from a vessel with a finger-impressed cordon also occurred in the stratified Late Bronze Age assemblage at Yapton (Hamilton 1987, 60, fig. 5:13). Fabric Fb is restricted to thick bodied (*c.* 10 mm) coarsewares. One sherd is finger-impressed (pit 55, fill 40) (Fig. 4:19). Otherwise none are of a diagnostic type. A sherd from fill 50 includes the impression of a grain of wheat, probably *T. spelta*.

Fabrics Fc to Ff are restricted to finewares. They are always smoothed or burnished and few exceed 5 mm in thickness. Possibly all are variants of a single fabric. Only fabric Fe occurred in a diagnostic form. Several sherds — including rim, base and sharply-carinated body sherds — are probably from bi- or tri-partite bowls (pit 55, fill 36), (pit 55, fill 44/45) (Fig. 5:7) (pit 55, fill 36/40) (Fig. 4:9). Such carinations are one of the principal innovations in the pottery of the early post-Deverel-Rimbury period. Fragments of similar vessels occurred in stratified Late Bronze Age assemblages at Harting Beacon (Hamilton 1979, 28, fig. 6) — associated with two gold ornaments dated to the 7th/8th centuries (Keef 1953) — and Knapp Farm (Gardiner & Hamilton 1997, 82, fig. 8:4), and unstratified assemblages at Belle Tout (Bradley 1971, 14, figs 3:2 & 3:3), Stoke Clump (Cunliffe 1966, 110, fig. 1) and West Blatchington (Norris & Burstow 1950, 44, pl. 1:7), but they are best represented in assemblages from sites outside Sussex such as Runnymede Bridge (Longley 1980, 181, fig. 78:28) and St Mary's Hospital, Carshalton (Adkins & Needham 1985, 24, fig. 8:215; 28, fig. 11:327). The fine quality of these particular vessels probably places them towards the end of the Late Bronze Age period. Several sherds from a fineware vessel of Late Bronze Age type recovered during Kenny's excavations at Broadreeds, Selsey (Kenny 1989, 15, figs 5:6 & 5:8), are of the same fabric. The single sherd of Ff (pit 55, fill 53) includes the impression of what looks like a grain of barley.

Fabric Fg closely resembles Fa but was restricted to thick-bodied burnished wares. The principal difference is the inclusion of fragments of quartz/mica rock and conspicuous (1 mm) mica crystals. No sherd is of an identifiable Late Bronze Age form, but one from pit 55, fill 40, is coil built.

Fabrics Fi, Fj and Fk differ only slightly and may, like the finewares Fc to Ff, represent variants of a single fabric. Their use at sites A and B was restricted to coarse wares. The interior surfaces of a number of sherds have been roughly smoothed, either by finger-smearing or burnishing (e.g. Figs 4:2 & 5:14). All these surfaces are unoxidized, i.e. the vessels were fired mouth down. Possibly this treatment was to facilitate water retention. Two external surfaces only showed evidence of having been smoothed and they too were unoxidized. They were in Fj, the finest of the three fabrics (pit 55, fill 45) (Fig. 5:8), and Fk (pit 34, fill 32) (Fig. 4:15). A sherd in each of fabrics Fi and Fj, and seven sherds in fabric Fk are of diagnostically Late Bronze Age type. Three of these belong to shouldered jars. One in Fk is from a very large vessel (pit 55, fill 41) (Fig. 4:2): the rim is squared and 'pie crusted', the neck flared and the shoulder decorated with a double row of finger impressions. The latter are difficult to parallel, but a similar configuration — comprising a finger-impressed shoulder and a finger-impressed cordon — was present in a vessel from the Late Bronze Age site at Shinewater Park, Eastbourne

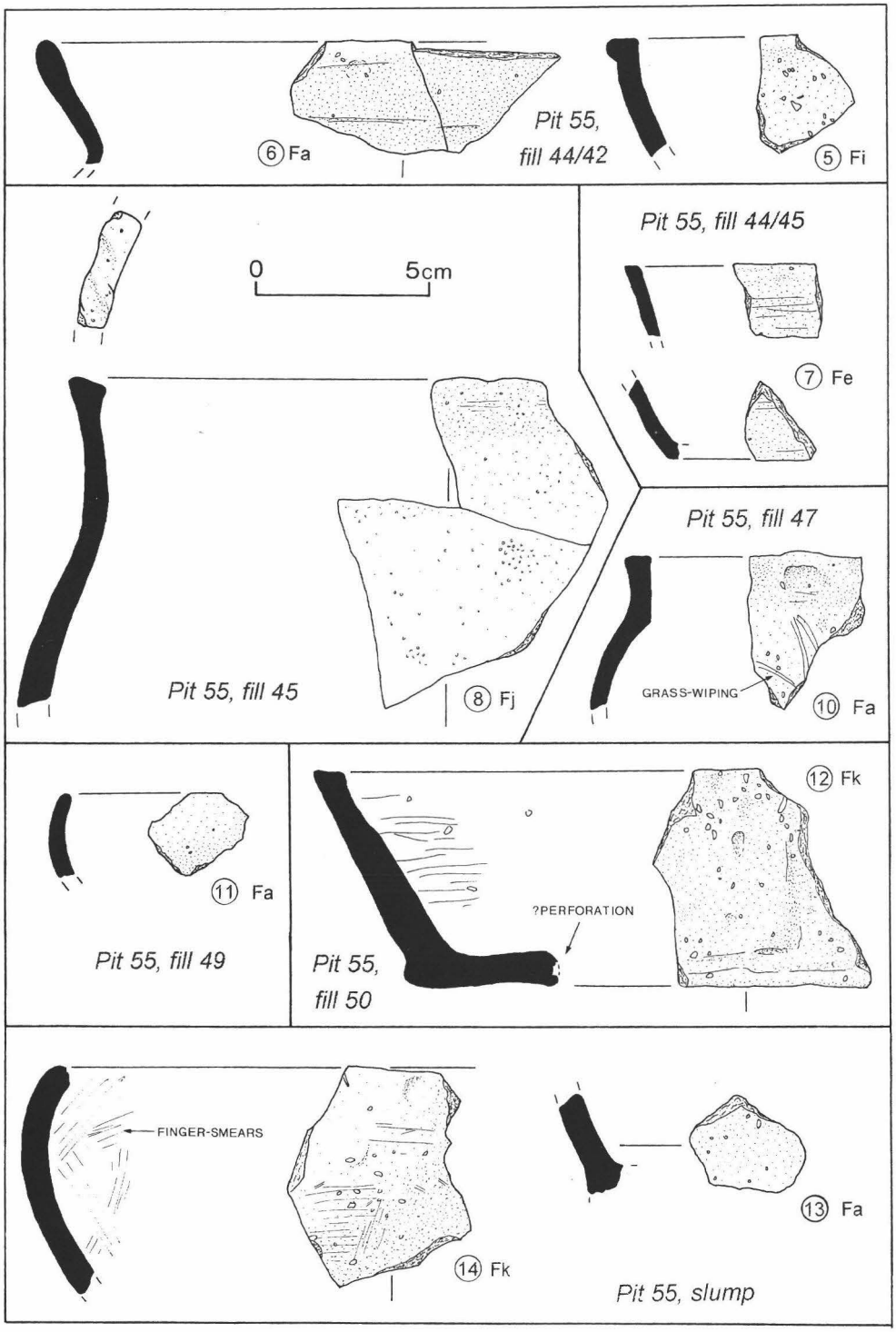

Fig. 5. Pottery from site B (pit 55).

(Greatorex in prep.). Flared necks with slash-decorated rims, however, occurred in stratified Late Bronze Age assemblages at Slonk Hill (Morris 1978, 103, fig. 12:13), West Blatchington (Norris & Burstow 1950, 47, pl. 2:11), and Broadreeds, Selsey (Kenny 1989, 15, fig. 5:4), and unstratified assemblages at Rustington (Hamilton 1990, 10, fig. 6:3) and Stoke Clump (Cunliffe 1966, 110, fig. 1:13); squared and 'pie crusted' rims (from a variety of vessel types) occurred in stratified Late Bronze Age assemblages at Knapp Farm (Hamilton 1997, 84, fig. 9:14) and Bishopstone (Hamilton 1977, 110, fig. 47), and unstratified assemblages at West Blatchington (Norris & Burstow 1950, 44, pl. 1:1), Golf Links Lane, Selsey (White 1934, 43, fig. 2) and Highdown (Wilson 1940, 195, fig. 5:b); and flared necks and undecorated squared rims occurred in unstratified assemblages at Golf Links Lane, Selsey (White 1934, 43, fig. 2:4), and Kingston Buci (Curwen & Hawkes 1931, 196, fig. 20). The sherd in Fj (pit 55, fill 45) (Fig. 5:8) and another in Fk (pits 7 and 9, fills 6 and 8, interface) (Fig. 4:1) also have squared rims and flared necks. The former is 'pie crusted' and compares closely with the sherd from Highdown referred to above. That in Fi also has a squared rim (pit 55, fill 44/42) (Fig. 5:5). Further rim and body sherds in Fk belong to bi-partite (pit 34, fill 32) (Fig. 4:15) and hemispherical bowls (pit 55, slump) (Fig. 5:14), both Late Bronze Age standards. These occurred in stratified Late Bronze Age assemblages at Yapton (Hamilton 1987, 62, fig. 6:17) and Plumpton Plain B (Hawkes 1935), and in the unstratified assemblage at Kingston Buci (Curwen & Hawkes 1931, 193, fig. 5). Finally, a sherd in Fk belongs to a dish, the base of which may have been perforated prior to firing (pit 55, fill 50) (Fig. 5:12). It too has a squared rim. So far dishes have not been recognized in assemblages of the Late Bronze Age in Sussex, and they are rare elsewhere. A possible parallel, however, exists in that from Weston Wood, Albury, in Surrey (Russell 1989, 26, fig. 13:18). Sherds in fabrics resembling Fj and Fk occurred at Broadreeds, Selsey.

Fabrics Fh (a fineware), and Fl (a coarseware) were rare. All were consistent with the general trend of pottery on site but no sherds of diagnostically Late Bronze Age type were found. The single sherd in Fm is probably part of a heavily gritted base, another characteristic not uncommon in pottery of Late Bronze Age date in south-east England (Hamilton 1997, 82).

The pottery is important for the following reasons. Firstly, in terms of the forms present, it belongs to a distinct and culturally rich horizon now recognized throughout south-east England (Barrett 1980), and confirms Selsey's place within this horizon. A close parallel — at least typologically — occurred at Highdown Hill. Secondly, the association in it of types previously recognized in unstratified assemblages — such as Highdown — with types recognized in stratified assemblages confirms that they are indeed contemporaneous. By adding to the number of stratified co-occurrences, it makes more viable the seriation of Late Bronze Age pottery in Sussex. Thirdly, it establishes a relationship between vessel type and fabric at sites A and B and Kenny's site at Broadreeds, Selsey. If this was not functional, it may indicate the existence of centralized potting — the same can be inferred of a iron oxide-rich ware widely distributed in East Sussex during the period (Hamilton 1977, 93). Lastly, it adds to the corpus of Late Bronze Age forms already recognized.

SITE RESOURCE PROCUREMENT STRATEGIES

In her discussion of the potting clay and tempers in the Knapp Farm assemblage, S. Hamilton suggests differences between the resource procurement strategies of sites on the West Sussex coastal plain and sites on the Downs. Knapp Farm and Yapton used only local material whereas sites on the Downs used both local and more distant, Wealden resources. This is attributed to the 'greater ease of access to the Wealden area from the Downs' (1997, 80). In terms of the pottery, the evidence from sites A and B at Selsey is consistent with this view. The clay could have been obtained either from the Brickearth or one of the more mica-rich Tertiary deposits which outcrop locally, the flint and more exotic stone types from the beach or the marine gravels which underlie much of the peninsula. The same is true of the majority of stone finds (Appendices 1 & 3).

Contacts with the Weald, however, are demonstrated by the occurrence in pit 34 (site A) of two saddle quern fragments of Lodsworth-type Lower Greensand (Appendix 3, nos 2 & 3). 'Lodsworth Stone' is characterized by the presence of cherty stringers harder than the sandstone itself; it did not become smooth and, therefore, was recommended for the manufacture of querns. No stone type which

occurred naturally at Selsey would have been as suitable. Until now the only Late Bronze Age site in Sussex at which it has been recognized is Harting Beacon (Peacock 1987, 77), but it was widely distributed during the later prehistoric period and may have occurred in the stratified Late Bronze Age assemblage at Runnymede Bridge (Higbee 1996, 165). Its occurrence at Selsey is of interest for two reasons. Firstly, it suggests the existence of resource procurement strategies which were less restricted than those suggested by Hamilton for potting resources; and, secondly, it establishes a possible *overland* connection between the important Late Bronze Age site at Runnymede and the south coast. This reflects the wide cultural horizon evidenced by the pottery itself. Other occurrences of non-local material from the site include the gold bangle found in 1926, a further, unfaceted clast of 'Lodsworth stone' (Appendix 3, no. 1), a flint flake which *may* have been struck from downland flint (Appendix 1, no. 9), and two flakes — one of them faceted — of different, non-local cherts (Appendix 3, nos 7 & 15).

CONCLUSION

SUMMARY

Sites A and B comprise one of four known concentrations of Late Bronze Age material from Selsey (Fig. 1). The site of which they form a part was a large one. Much of this has been lost to coastal erosion. Owing to the nature of soil development on the site, the density of occupation within it remains unknown. However, not all the features identified were in use at the same time. Prestige goods have been found, but the types of feature and the variety of finds made suggest that sites A and B were domestic in nature. Activities included flint knapping, stone selection and burning, cereal processing (sieving), food preparation and consumption, and possibly weaving. Many of these were grouped on site — at least at the stage of rubbish dumping, which — contrary to the evidence from other West Sussex sites — was piecemeal. One feature was backfilled and possibly closed with freshly dug material. The pottery shows that the two sites belonged to a widespread cultural tradition recognized throughout south-east England. The exact source of the pottery is unknown. Some *may* have been produced 'centrally'. But other data are consistent with those from sites such as Runnymede Bridge and Shinewater Park which suggest that this cultural horizon was accompanied by equally far-reaching economic activity.

THE FUTURE

Much of the foregoing could not have been said of other Late Bronze Age sites in West Sussex. Almost certainly this is a result of the site's location and the nature of the sample available; for Selsey is unique both in terms of the history of archaeological inquiry there, and the instability — and therefore the visibility — of sites. There was no fundamental difference between its occupation and that of sites elsewhere. Further work is called for, however. Owing to the abundance of charred material in the small sample taken for environmental analysis, further samples were taken. These await analysis. Likewise the pottery from Kenny's site at Broadreeds, Selsey, has not yet been studied in detail. The results of such work should sharpen — and perhaps qualify — much of the foregoing.

Currently there are no plans to excavate the site. It would either have to be hand dug from the level of the first stone-packed feature (possibly as much as 0.8 metres) or truncated by machine. This would be uneconomic, both financially and archaeologically. But the sampling programme is continuing, and — it is hoped — will do so until such time as no new archaeology appears, either because it has all been eroded away or because of the construction of sea-defence works. The principal objectives are, firstly, the identification of relationships within and between features which might improve our understanding of the operation of the site, both during and at the end of its life, and, secondly, the recovery of finds which might improve our understanding of its relationship to the Late Bronze Age of Sussex generally. The results of this and the foregoing analyses will appear in a future report.

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APPENDIX 1: STRUCK FLINT

With the exception of the three Mesolithic or Early Neolithic blades (1, 2 & 5), all the flintwork recovered from sites A and B is probably of Late Bronze Age date, though it *could* be earlier. Most of that from site B is from the beach. This is shown either by the presence of chatter-marked surfaces (13, 15 & 16) or — less certainly — by a very poor concoidal fracture indicative of stress (11 & 12). One flake (9) retains a large area of cortex. It *may* be from the Downs but a small amount of abrasion suggests that it too is water-worn. Unfortunately, however, it has been struck in such a position that it is impossible to be sure. Two others which retain some cortex (15 & 16) are certainly water-worn. No doubt fresher, less stressed flint would have been favoured. A single iron-stained flake may be from the Brickearth. At site A one flake is from

the beach (3), and one other — though lacking any diagnostic characteristics — closely resembles it (4). The source of the rest remains unknown, but it is of very good quality: it was certainly selected and it may have been imported.

SITE A
Context 6
1) Blade (42 × 13 mm). Minimal butt. Possibly from a prepared core. Mesolithic or Early Neolithic.
2) Broken blade (20 × 8 mm). Minimal butt. Mesolithic or Early Neolithic.
3) Broken flake (34 × 35 mm). Broad butt.
4) Broken flake (30 × 30 mm). Broad butt.

Unstratified
5) Broken notched blade (45 × 13 mm). Mesolithic or Early Neolithic.
6) Broken single-edged retouched blade (40 × 25 mm).
7) Broken then single-edged retouched flake (42 × 21 mm). Broad butt.
8) Retouched flake (32 × 30 mm). Broad butt.

SITE B: PIT 55
Context 40
9) Edge-worn flake (60 × 30 mm). Broad butt.
10) Flake (35 × 30 mm).

Context 41
11) Blade or flake (80 × 40 mm).
12) Flake (53 × 40 mm).
13) Flake (43 × 22 mm).

Context 44
14) Flake (39 × 24 mm). Broad butt. Burnt.

Context 44/45
15) Retouched flake/point (32 × 30 mm). Broad butt.

Context 45
16) Flake (57 × 35 mm). Broad butt.

Context 49
17) Broken blade or flake (22 × 20 mm). Broad butt.

APPENDIX 2: MACROSCOPIC EXAMINATION OF THE POTTERY FABRICS

Fa
Rare to sparse (2–5 per cent) medium sand to small granule-sized (0.5–2.5 mm) angular calcined flint of grey colour. Common fine quartz sand. Very occasional 'chaff' impressions and black (carbonaceous) flecks. Oxidized and unoxidized surfaces and core: yellow brown and dark grey.

Fb
Sparse to moderate (3–10 per cent) medium sand-sized to small granule-sized (0.5–2.5 mm) angular calcined flint of white colour. Common fine quartz sand. Occasional sand to small granule-sized (0.5–2.5 mm) round Fe oxides. Abundant 'chaff' impressions and black (carbonaceous) flecks. Oxidized surfaces: orange. Oxidized and unoxidized core: grey to buff.

Fc
Sparse to moderate (3–10 per cent) medium sand-sized (0.5 mm) angular calcined flint. Common fine quartz sand. Occasional 'chaff' impressions. Oxidized surfaces: brown. Unoxidized core: black.

Fd
Rare to sparse (1–5 per cent) medium to coarse sand-sized (0.5–1.5 mm) angular calcined flint. Common fine quartz sand. Abundant 'chaff' impressions and black (carbonaceous) flecks. Note: a single sherd from 44/42 is mica rich. Unoxidized surfaces and core: light to dark grey.

Fe
Sparse to moderate (3–10 per cent) medium to coarse sand-sized (0.5–1.5 mm) angular calcined flint. Common fine quartz sand. Abundant 'chaff' impressions and black (carbonaceous) flecks. Oxidized and unoxidized surfaces: grey or dark grey brown. Oxidized core: grey.

Ff
Rare (1–2 per cent) medium sand-sized to small granule-sized (0.5–2 mm) angular calcined flint. Common fine quartz sand. Abundant black (carbonaceous) flecks. Oxidized surfaces and core: dark red.

Fg
Rare to sparse (2–5 per cent) medium to coarse sand-sized (0.5–1.5 mm) angular calcined flint. Rare (1–2 per cent) granule-sized (3.5–6 mm) angular calcined flint and coarse sand to small granule-sized (2–3 mm) angular quartz/mica rock fragments. Rare (1–2 per cent) sand-sized (1 mm) mica. Common fine quartz and, possibly, Fe oxide sand. Occasional black (carbonaceous) flecks. Oxidized and unoxidized surfaces: dark red or brown. Unoxidized core: grey brown.

Fh
Sparse (3–5 per cent) medium sand to small granule-sized (0.5–2.5 mm) angular calcined flint. Common fine quartz sand. Very rare (<1 per cent) small granule-sized (2.5 mm) round Fe oxides. One wholly oxidized sherd: buff.

Fi
Sparse to moderate (7–10 per cent) medium sand to small granule-sized (0.5–2.5 mm) angular calcined flint. Common medium to coarse rounded quartz sand. Abundant 'chaff' impressions. Oxidized and unoxidized surfaces: buff and black. Unoxidized core: black.

Fj
Sparse to moderate (7–10 per cent) medium to coarse sand-sized (0.5–1.5 mm) angular calcined flint. Common fine to medium quartz sand. Occasional pale, non-calcareous earthy pellets and black (carbonaceous) flecks. Oxidized and unoxidized surfaces and core: buff and grey.

Fk
Sparse to moderate (7–10 per cent) medium sand to small granule-sized (0.5–2.5 mm) angular calcined flint. Common

fine to medium quartz sand. Occasional grey, non-calcareous earthy pellets. Oxidized and unoxidized surfaces: black and buff. Unoxidized core: black.

Fl
Sparse (3–5 per cent) medium sand to small granule-sized (0.5–2.5 mm) angular calcined flint. Common fine quartz sand. One sherd with oxidized and unoxidized surfaces: black and buff.

Fm
Sparse to moderate (7–10 per cent) medium sand to small granule-sized (0.5–2.5 mm) grading into common (25 per cent) small granule sized (2.5 mm) angular calcined flint. Common fine to medium quartz sand. A single unoxidized sherd: black.

APPENDIX 3: MACROSCOPIC IDENTIFICATION OF THE STONE FINDS

PIT 6
Context 7
1) Lodsworth-type Greensand (21 g). Small angular pebble. Light red-brown, but not obviously burnt. Lower Greensand. Midhurst area.

PIT 34
Context 33
2) Lodsworth-type Greensand (156 g). Large angular pebble with the remains of a slightly convex facet. Probably from the upper stone of a saddle quern. Light red-brown, but not obviously burnt. Lower Greensand. Midhurst area.
3) Lodsworth-type Greensand (205 g). Large angular pebble with the remains of two slightly concave and converging facets. Probably from the lower stone of a saddle quern. Light red-brown, but not obviously burnt. Lower Greensand. Midhurst area.

PIT 55
For the most part, the origin of the clasts considered here is uncertain. Most, however, *could* have been derived from the beach or the marine gravel underlying the site. Their identification as manuports is based on two things. Firstly, the proportion of clasts other than flint was far greater than it is in either of the aforementioned 'natural' deposits, with examples of the same types occurring in different deposits (clasts of stone types other than flint had been selected). Secondly, though few had been modified by abrasion or sculpture, many were burned. This is typical of assemblages of humanly transported stone from sites of the later prehistoric period, including the Late Bronze Age. The assemblage from pit 55 differs only insofar as there is little evidence for the burning of flint. This perhaps suggests a different role or function. If so, not only does it help to characterize the nature of activities represented by the deposits in pit 55, but it heralds the possibility of such differences elsewhere. For example, Kenny's excavations at Broadreeds, Selsey, recovered much fire-cracked-flint from Late Bronze Age deposits but no other burnt stone.

Context 36
4) Coarse sandstone (19 g). Small angular pebble. Friable with the remains of an earlier smoothed surface. Either from a rubber or a large water-worn clast. Grey. Burnt.

Context 40
5) Fine-grained sandstone (48 g). Small angular pebble. Friable with the remains of an earlier smooth but pitted surface, possibly a varnish or weathering rind. Very pale grey. Similar to a large sarsen stone found in the gravel pit to the south of Golf Links Lane.
6) Coarse sandstone (60 g). Small round pebble. Friable with the remains of an earlier smoothed surface. The same as (4). Either from a rubber or a large water-worn clast. Grey. Burnt.
7) Limestone chert (58 g). Angular pebble from an unweathered nodule. Creamy white. Probably an import.
8) Fine sandstone (135 g). Large angular pebble. A non-calcareous ?concretion with gastropod casts. Yellow brown. ?Bracklesham Beds. Selsey area.

Context 41
9) Quartzite (42 g). Small, well-rounded water-worn pebble. Disc-shaped with thermal fractures and one very smooth face. Possibly a rubber. Grey on one side and dark grey on the other — smoother — side. Burnt or from the raised beach.
10) Ferruginous sandstone (23 g). Small very angular pebble. Dark red interior; yellow-brown weathering rind. Burnt.

Context 44
11) Fine-grained sandstone (146 g). Large angular pebble with the remains of a water-rolled surface. Thermal fractures. Pale grey. Burnt.

Context 45
12) Coarse sandstone (104 g). Angular pebble. Friable with the remains of a smoothed surface. The same as (4). Either from a rubber or a large water-worn clast. Grey. Burnt.
13) Coarse sandstone (146 g). Angular pebble. The same as (4). Red grey. Burnt.
14) Coarse sandstone (129 g). Large angular pebble. Friable with the remains of a smoothed surface. The same as (4). Either from a rubber or a large water-worn clast. Grey. Burnt.
15) Greensand chert (22 g). Small angular pebble. A flake from an unweathered nodule. Traces of facetting. Possibly from a rubber. Greeny grey interior; very pale grey cortex. Lower Greensand. Probably an import.
16) Greywacke (25 g). Angular pebble-sized flake. Grey.

Context 49
17) Unknown (273 g). Large well-rounded water-worn pebble. Trapezoidal. Fractured. Green grey. ?Effluent-stained.

Context 50
18) Fine-grained sandstone (241 g). Small angular cobble with the remains of two smoothed surfaces. The same as (11). Either from a rubber or a large water-worn clast. Thermal fractures. Pale grey. Burnt.

Context 53

19) Coarse micaeous sandstone (64 g). Angular pebble-sized flake. From a water-worn clast. Red.

20) Fine sandstone (365 g). Angular cobble. A non-calcareous ?concretion with gastropod casts. The same as (8). Yellow-brown. ?Bracklesham Beds. Selsey area.

The slump

21) Pyrites (231 g). Angular cobble with one smooth facet. Gun metal interior; brown weathering rind. London Clay. Bognor area.

22) Fine-grained sandstone (77 g). Large angular pebble. Friable. A non-calcareous concretion. Red brown. Burnt.

23) Fine-grained sandstone (77 g). Large angular pebble. Friable. A non-calcareous concretion. Brown.

24) Chert (51 g). Very angular pebble. Thermal fractures. Grey. Burnt.

25) Flint (72 g). Angular pebble. Fragment from a water-worn clast. Thermal fractures. Grey. Burnt.

26) Flint (150 g). Angular pebble. Thermal fractures. Grey. Burnt.