4. ROMAN AND EARLY MEDIEVAL CRICKLEY HILL: POST-EXCAVATION ANALYSIS

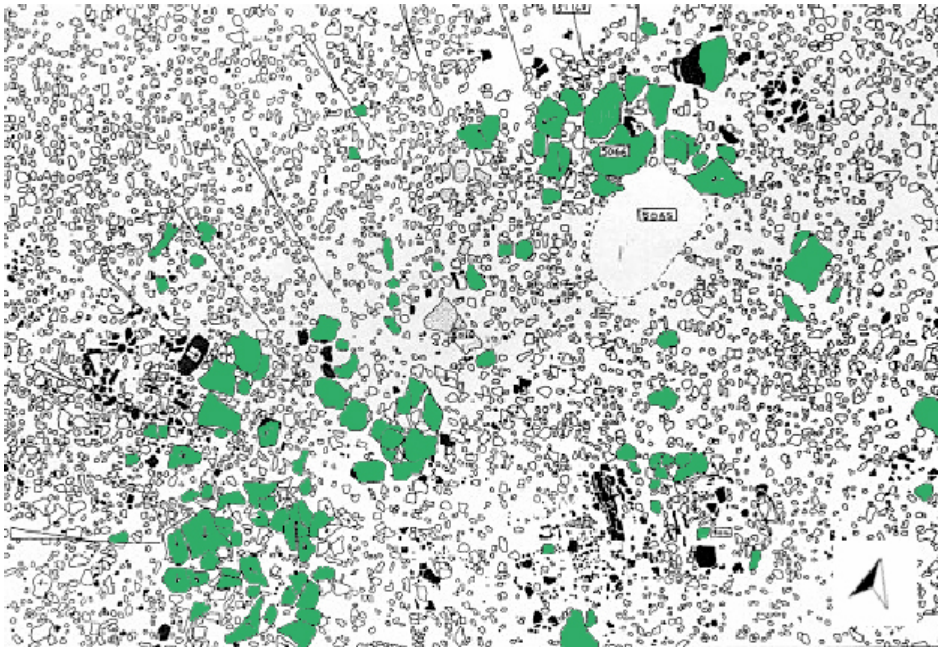
July 29, 2011 LIPCAP / PSP Anglo-Saxon, Day of Archaeology, Day of Archaeology 2011, Early Medieval, Iron Age, Romano-British ancient metalworking technology,Archaeology, Artefacts, Artifact, author, Britain, CBA,Ceramics, Context records, Excavation, Finds, Harris Matrix, IT,Late Roman, manufacturing process, Metallurgy, Nottingham,Organic-temper, particular ceramic manufacturing technique,Post-excavation, Roman Medieval Crickley Hill, Sheffield,specialist in ancient metalworking technology, Technology,XRF

Analysis of the Crickley archive:

This post outlines my approach to the Crickley archive in examining the Roman and early Medieval activity on the hilltop, discussing some of the problems encountered during this work, as well as some of the exciting findings!

Crickley Hill with 10m excavation grid (© K. Jarrett)

My involvement with post-excavation analysis of the Crickley Hill archive has consisted of examining and interpreting the plans, context records, finds and their records, and any other associated documentation (such as excavation notes), to determine the extents and forms of Roman and post-Roman activity on the hill. I began by seeing what others had written about the site, and familiarising myself with the archive (which was enormous!). Over a period of 25 years, aided by several thousand volunteers, the hilltop (which covered over 10 acres) was almost entirely excavated, mostly within a 10m grid system, although a number of cuttings were also placed across significant features (such as the hill fort ramparts). This extensive excavation uncovered much material!

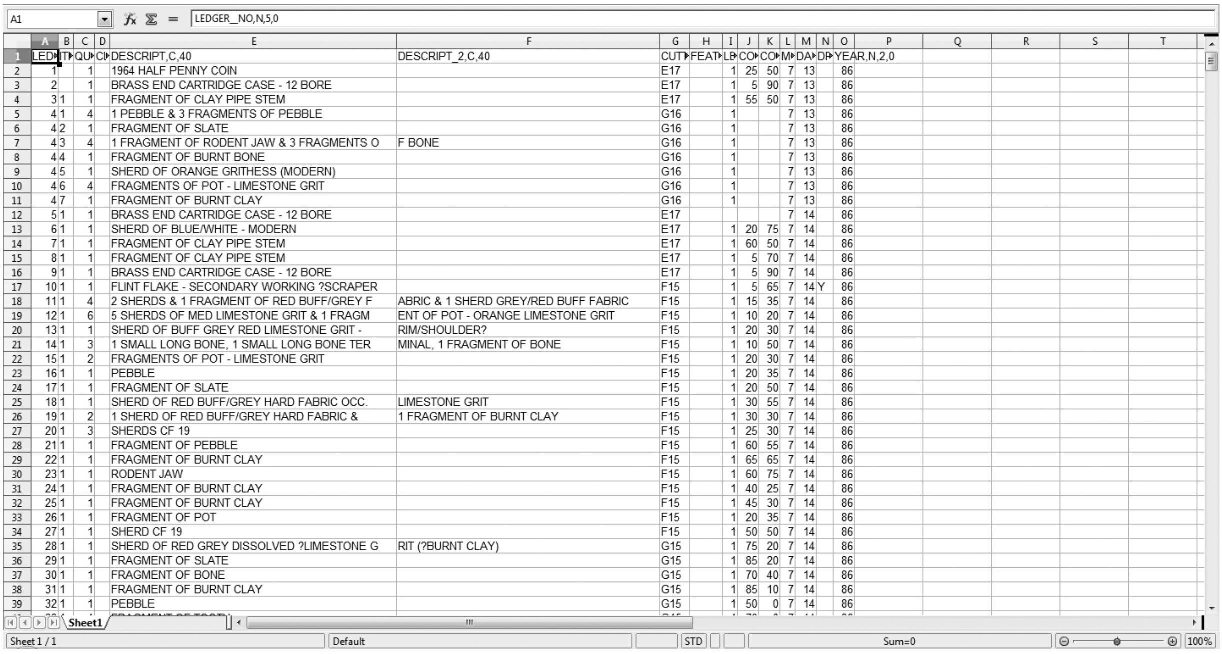


Drawing of features in unenclosed settlement (©CHAT)

I examined the context records, to see how the features related to one another, and build up a picture of the Period 4 settlements – this was helped by the creation of Harris Matrix diagrams (schematic plans showing strategraphicrelationships). I went through the finds, to see if there were any Romano-British or later artefacts that had not been dated as such within the records – which helped me understand some of the features for which the dates were uncertain. During and after this process, I illustrated and photographed a number of important finds belonging to Period 4, and created plans of Period 4 settlement features.

CUTT	CONTE	CLASS	DESCRIPTN	OVER	O_LAIN_BY	CUTS	CUT_I	ABUTS	ASSOC_WITH	PHAYEA	LAY
X97	6556		AREA OF BURNT STONES (RED + BLUE;only 1 lay deep		(2)				in 6562		
X97	6557		SMALL AREA OF BURNT STONES (RED	6560	(2)				in 6559		
X97	6558		SLIGHT HOLLOW.	6554	(2)						
X97	6559		NEOLITHIC BANK?W edge cut by ph/sh's	6568,	(2), 6554		ph's 6		?=		
X97	6559		Area of large pitched slabs with occasional vertic		6559						
W97	6560	RGW	AREA OF SMALL AGULAR RUBBLE IN CORNER OF X97 & W97.	6567	(2)		6114				
X97	6561	8,3,14	POST OF A GRANARY.	GULL	6554	GULL BED			6573, 7029	?1a	
Y97	6562	2,3,5,8	AREA OF SMALL ANGULAR RUBBLE	6567,	(2),6564,6571					IA?	
Y97	6564		BROWN SOILY AREA WITH FEW CHIPPLES (LAYER IS SIMILAR T	6554,	(2)					IA?	
X97	6565		POST HOLE HAS BEEN CUT 6561).	GULL	6554	GULL BED	6561			IA?	
Y97	6566		AREA OF PITCHED VERY BURNT STONES. POSSIBLE PIT.	6581	6562	6567				IA?	
y97	6566	14									
Y97	6567		AREA OF SMALL & MEDIUM ANGULAR RUBBLE SET IN DARK BR	6581	6562		6566,			IA?	
X97	6568		BURNT STONES & CHIPPLE IN BANK 6559;	6559	6559	6559				IA?	
X97	6571		CHIPPLE IS A WASH DERIVED FROM 6554.	6562	(2), 6564					IA?	
Y97	6572	2,8 14	AREA OF BURNT ANGULAR LIMESTONE;	6581	6562	6567				IA?	
Y97	6573	2,8, 14	POST HOLE OF A GRANARY	GULL	6554	6567, GUL			6561, 7029	IA?	
Y97	6574		POST HOLE WAS OVERLAIN BY 6567	GULL	6567	GULL BED				IA?	
Y97	6575		STAKEHOLE.	GULL	6554	GULL BED				IA?	
Y97	6576		STAKEHOLE.	GULL	6554	GULL BED					
X97	6577		STAKEHOLE.	GULL	6554	GULL BED					
Y97	6578		SH	GULL	6554	GULL BED					
X97	6579		AREA OF VERTICAL SLABS LIMESTONE.		6559	6559					
X97	6580		POSSIBLY THE WALL OF A CIRCULAR STRUCTURE.		6559	6559			6585,7006		
X97	6581		MEDIUM SLABS LIMESTONE SET IN AN ORANGE SOIL.	GULL	6554/59/62/66		7029			<4?	
X97	6583		AREA OF LARGE VERTICAL SLABS SET IN BANK (6559).		6559	6559					
X97	6584		VERTICAL SLABS IN BANK (6559).		6559	6559					
X97	6585		AREA VERTICAL SLABS SET INTO BANK (6559);		6559	6559					
X97	6586		AREA OF VERTICAL SLABS SET INTO BANK (6559).		6559	6559					
X97	6587		VERTICAL SLABS IN BANK (6559).		6559	6559					
X97	6588		LARGE VERTICAL SLABS IN BANK (6559).		6559	6559					
X97	6589		PATCH OF VERTICAL STONES WITHIN BANK (6559).		6559	6559					

Example of Context records, Crickley Hill Archive (© K. Jarrett / CHAT)



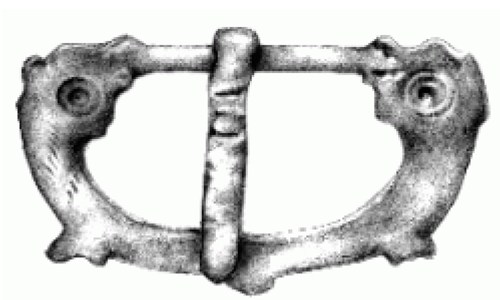
A1 | LEDGER__NO,N,5,0

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M	N	O
1	LED	IT	QU	CI	DESCRIPT,C,40	DESCRIPT_2,C,40	CUT	FEAT	LB	CO	CO	M	DA	DP	YEAR,N,2,0
2	1		1		1964 HALF PENNY COIN		E17		1	25	50	7	13		86
3	2		1		BRASS END CARTRIDGE CASE - 12 BORE		E17		1	5	90	7	13		86
4	3	1	1		FRAGMENT OF CLAY PIPE STEM		E17		1	55	50	7	13		86
5	4	1	4		1 PEBBLE & 3 FRAGMENTS OF PEBBLE		G16		1			7	13		86
6	4	2	1		FRAGMENT OF SLATE		G16		1			7	13		86
7	4	3	4		1 FRAGMENT OF RODENT JAW & 3 FRAGMENTS O	F BONE	G16		1			7	13		86
8	4	4	1		FRAGMENT OF BURNT BONE		G16		1			7	13		86
9	4	5	1		SHERD OF ORANGE GRITHESS (MODERN)		G16		1			7	13		86
10	4	6	4		FRAGMENTS OF POT - LIMESTONE GRIT		G16		1			7	13		86
11	4	7	1		FRAGMENT OF BURNT CLAY		G16		1			7	13		86
12	5	1	1		BRASS END CARTRIDGE CASE - 12 BORE		E17					7	14		86
13	6	1	1		SHERD OF BLUE/WHITE - MODERN		E17		1	20	75	7	14		86
14	7	1	1		FRAGMENT OF CLAY PIPE STEM		E17		1	60	50	7	14		86
15	8	1	1		FRAGMENT OF CLAY PIPE STEM		E17		1	5	70	7	14		86
16	9	1	1		BRASS END CARTRIDGE CASE - 12 BORE		E17		1	5	90	7	14		86
17	10	1	1		FLINT FLAKE - SECONDARY WORKING ?SCRAPER		F15		1	5	65	7	14	Y	86
18	11	1	4		2 SHERDS & 1 FRAGMENT OF RED BUFF/GREY F	ABRIC & 1 SHERD GREY/RED BUFF FABRIC	F15		1	15	35	7	14		86
19	12	1	6		5 SHERDS OF MED LIMESTONE GRIT & 1 FRAGM	ENT OF POT - ORANGE LIMESTONE GRIT	F15		1	10	20	7	14		86
20	13	1	1		SHERD OF BUFF GREY RED LIMESTONE GRIT -	RIM/SHOULDER?	F15		1	20	30	7	14		86
21	14	1	3		1 SMALL LONG BONE, 1 SMALL LONG BONE TER	MINAL, 1 FRAGMENT OF BONE	F15		1	10	50	7	14		86
22	15	1	2		FRAGMENTS OF POT - LIMESTONE GRIT		F15		1	20	30	7	14		86
23	16	1	1		PEBBLE		F15		1	20	35	7	14		86
24	17	1	1		FRAGMENT OF SLATE		F15		1	20	50	7	14		86
25	18	1	1		SHERD OF RED BUFF/GREY HARD FABRIC OCC.	LIMESTONE GRIT	F15		1	30	55	7	14		86
26	19	1	2		1 SHERD OF RED BUFF/GREY HARD FABRIC &	1 FRAGMENT OF BURNT CLAY	F15		1	30	30	7	14		86
27	20	1	3		SHERDS CF 19		F15		1	25	30	7	14		86
28	21	1	1		FRAGMENT OF PEBBLE		F15		1	60	55	7	14		86
29	22	1	1		FRAGMENT OF BURNT CLAY		F15		1	65	65	7	14		86
30	23	1	1		RODENT JAW		F15		1	60	75	7	14		86
31	24	1	1		FRAGMENT OF BURNT CLAY		F15		1	40	25	7	14		86
32	25	1	1		FRAGMENT OF BURNT CLAY		F15		1	45	30	7	14		86
33	26	1	1		FRAGMENT OF POT		F15		1	20	35	7	14		86
34	27	1	1		SHERD CF 19		F15		1	50	50	7	14		86
35	28	1	1		SHERD OF RED GREY DISSOLVED ?LIMESTONE G	RIT (?BURNT CLAY)	G15		1	75	20	7	14		86
36	29	1	1		FRAGMENT OF SLATE		G15		1	85	20	7	14		86
37	30	1	1		FRAGMENT OF BONE		G15		1	70	40	7	14		86
38	31	1	1		FRAGMENT OF BURNT CLAY		G15		1	85	10	7	14		86
39	32	1	1		PEBBLE		G15		1	50	0	7	14		86

Sheet1 | Sheet 1 / 1 | Default | STD | Sum=0 | 100%

Example of finds database records, Crickley Hill (© K. Jarrett / CHAT)

I analysed many of the finds in detail, to consider the technologies used on site (comparing these with material from other parts of Britain, and from the Continent). This required having the composition of some of the metalwork analysed (using XRF analysis), which told me a great deal about late- and post-Roman technological changes in Britain. After discussing this with a specialist in ancient metalworking technology, and reading metallurgical analyses of finds from other sites, I found that the composition of the worn late 4th century buckle found with a settlement at Crickley was very similar to the only stylistically comparable buckle so far found within Britain (from Catterick), which suggests that both may have been made in the same workshop in the Rhineland.



Late Roman buckle from Crickley Hill (illustration: author © K. Jarrett)

My studies at both Nottingham and Sheffield provided me with a background on the Roman and Early Medieval archaeology of Western Britain and beyond, but it has been necessary to keep up to date with recent discoveries by attending and presenting research at conferences and reading new publications, as well as talking to other specialists in this field. I have found that both academic writing, and teaching, has reminded me as to what I don't know, and need to investigate further, in order to understand a particular subject more clearly! In comparing the Crickley settlements, ritual activity, and artefacts to the evidence from other contemporaneous sites (in the Cotswolds and across the Southwest and west, as well as some site elsewhere in Britain), it's been possible to develop a chronology for the Roman and Early

Medieval activity at Crickley. My studies in theoretical archaeology at Sheffield have provoked me to ask a number of additional questions of the archaeological evidence from Crickley, and encouraged me to consider the Crickley landscape during the Roman and early Medieval periods, examining the social significance of material culture (the whole range of archaeological remains) and asking what the evidence from Crickley might say about political and social developments within the region after the Romans had left Britain.

Some problems:

There have been quite a few difficulties during post-excavation analysis. In trying to find comparisons for a particular ceramic manufacturing technique – the addition of organic temper (material incorporated within clay to reduce cracking, shrinkage, and shattering during the heating and cooling process) to clay during the manufacturing process – I read a number of archaeological reports and articles that indicated the presence of similar wares at other sites in the Southwest. However, when I visited museums to examine these sherds (pottery fragments), the curators were unable to locate these finds within their stores – which suggests that someone had beat me to it, and borrowed them for analysis! I'll hopefully be able to see them on future visits.

Sherd of pottery from Crickley with organic marks (photo: author © K. Jarrett / CHAT)

There have been various technological problems. Technical failure has resulted in the loss of some of my work (in the absence of accessible CD storage during the late 90s, large files were stored on Iomega Zip Disks, which unfortunately developed a fault commonly known as the 'click of death' – not helped by my IT inexperience at the time!). Consequently, I'm having to redo much work. Also changes in technology since I began this research has caused problems, and led to work having to be redone – programmes such as G-Sys (which was used to integrate database information within plans created in AutoCAD) no longer work with my current equipment. In combination with corrupted data, this means that digital versions of plans (including the digital distribution of finds) have to be recreated within current systems. This is one of the jobs that I am doing at the moment, which I'll be talking about in another post…