

Excavations on the site of a Late Bronze Age settlement at Cambridge House, Renfrew Road, Kingston upon Thames, 1986–7

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Excavations at the site of the former Cambridge House, Renfrew Road, Kingston upon Thames recovered evidence of Late Bronze Age structures that provide a context for the finds made in the area by 19th century gravel diggers and indicate that the site was of regional importance. The site may have been deliberately levelled in order to promote a change in land use.

Introduction

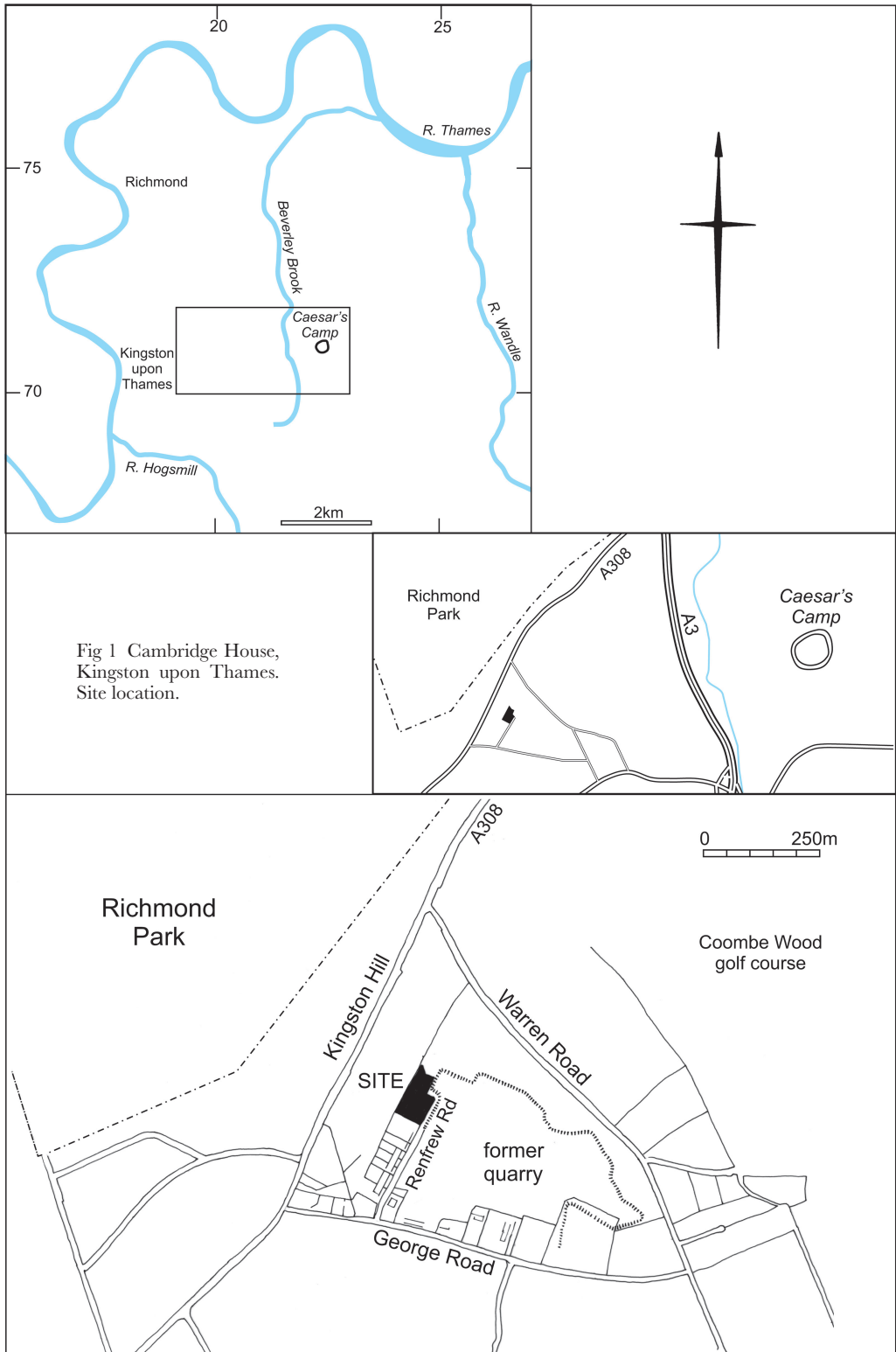
Evidence of Bronze Age activity on Kingston Hill, Kingston upon Thames, first came to light during the 19th century when quantities of potsherds and bronze tools were unearthed while quarrying for gravel. Some of these found their way into museums and remain available for inspection. In other cases, vigilant local antiquarians recorded the recovery as well as the occasional destruction of material. The available evidence has been summarised elsewhere (Field & Needham 1986, 127–51) and suggests that the material may represent a destroyed settlement of the early 1st millennium BC, while proximity to the Thames suggests that inhabitants of the site may have been responsible for the deposition of some of the rich collection of bronze metalwork found in the south-west London meanders of the river.

While antiquarian accounts indicate that prehistoric and Roman finds were widespread on the south-western slopes of the hill, the area from which the 19th century finds were recovered can be narrowed down by utilising early editions of Ordnance Survey maps to trace quarry development and this indicates that many of the discoveries were located in the area adjacent to Renfrew Road (fig 1). Small-scale excavations were therefore conducted close to this area in late summer of 1981. Two trenches were excavated at Bruin Wood in George Road situated on the southern edge of the quarry, but neither encountered prehistoric material (Field 1981) and, since an urn was found in the northern face of the quarry in 1910, attention turned to that edge alongside Warren Road as planning for development occurred. Excavations were subsequently carried out at Warren Park, but these revealed no prehistoric features and the only finds were several flint flakes from the topsoil (Field & Nicolaysen 1983).

Proposals in 1986 to develop the site of Cambridge House, Renfrew Road, Kingston Hill (fig 1; TQ2004 7053), however, provided an ideal opportunity to investigate the last remaining piece of original land surface at the George Road gravel quarries that lay close to the area where Late Bronze Age material was recovered during the 19th century. Five trenches were excavated that year, two by hand and three by machine, down to the surface of the gravel and several cut features were revealed, some of which contained late prehistoric potsherds. Restrictions on time prevented further investigation, but enough evidence was recovered to demonstrate that the known Late Bronze Age activity within the area incorporated domestic occupation.

Topography

Kingston Hill reaches over 50m OD and is a prominent feature overlooking the Thames and its flood plain to the west as well as the much smaller Beverley Brook in the east. Overlying



the Claygate Beds, the gravel capping on the summit of the hill forms part of the high-level Black Park river terrace laid down during the Late Anglian glaciation as part of the former Wey/Mole drainage system and which reaches a maximum thickness of 6m. To the north-west the deposit extends into Richmond Park and in the south-east to Combe Neville. Springs issue at the junction of gravel and clay and were tapped to provide water for Hampton Court Palace during historic times but are likely to have provided an important component of the prehistoric landscape. Where not enclosed as parkland, much of the area was common and waste until relatively late, although Rocque (1741–5) shows the Kingston slopes between Warren Road and George Road as enclosed and in cultivation and this land-use continued until the gravel quarrying of the 19th century.

Excavation

TRENCHES AND ASSOCIATED FEATURES

Trenches A–E were laid out on the lawns and gardens of the house (fig 2) in order to sample the site as widely as possible. The house was demolished as work progressed and, although it was intended to investigate the area that it occupied, lack of time did not eventually allow it. The trenches revealed a uniform stratigraphy across the site. This included a considerable deposit of topsoil (layer 1) that in places survived to a depth of *c* 40cm, and which contained sherds of Victorian pottery, glass, clay pipes and tile, together with a small quantity of prehistoric pottery and flint flakes. It is conceivable that some of this soil may have been imported for gardening purposes and therefore no further consideration was given to it. Beneath it lay a deposit of buff/orange coloured sandy loam (layer 1a), up to 10cm thick. In one or two places this had been disturbed and mixed with the topsoil, but elsewhere it remained intact. On the surface of this small flecks of charcoal and small fragmented nodules of chalk occurred, the latter perhaps the remnants of post-medieval marling. In contrast, the base of the layer took on a more reddish-brown colour and contained exclusively late prehistoric material. The base horizon of gravel occurred at a depth of *c* 50cm (layer 2) and was punctuated at intervals by sand-filled solution hollows. Other features cutting into the gravel were noted, predominantly in trenches A, B and C, some of which contained late prehistoric pottery. All features encountered in trenches D and E were recent.

Trench A, oriented north–south and measuring 10 x 5m, was positioned within the area of a former tennis court, on the east perimeter of the site, adjacent to the face of the old gravel quarry. A well-bedded, gravelled garden path ran north–south through the trench, but a few features occurred that cut into the natural gravel and were filled with the sandy loam of layer 1a (figs 3 and 4).

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| <p>F3 A shallow gully 0.60m wide x 0.1m deep, running transversely for 2m towards the centre of the trench and curving slightly towards the south. There were no finds.</p> <p>F4 A linear feature, 2.75m long x 0.65m wide x 0.5m deep. Placed centrally within the east half of the trench and running into the section, an extension was made on that side to trace the feature further. It was shown to turn north-east before terminating. Curiously the feature had a vertical side on the north but sloped steeply on the south (fig 4). The fill was composed entirely of the</p> | <p>reddish-brown loam that was associated elsewhere on site with Late Bronze Age material. The lack of stratigraphy suggests that it was backfilled quite rapidly. There were no finds.</p> <p>F5 Situated less than 1m south of F4 was a sub-circular feature, 0.25m across, and cut into the gravel to a depth of 0.1m. It may have been the base of a small posthole. No finds were recovered.</p> <p>F7 Within the extension on the east side of the trench, a small circular feature was revealed, 0.25m across x 0.15m deep, which may have been the base of a small posthole. No finds were recovered.</p> |
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Trench B was located to the north-west of trench A (figs 3 and 4). It measured 8 x 3.5m, and oriented west–east, but was subsequently enlarged on the north-west side. A modern pit (F4) was encountered east of its centre, but there were also several prehistoric features.

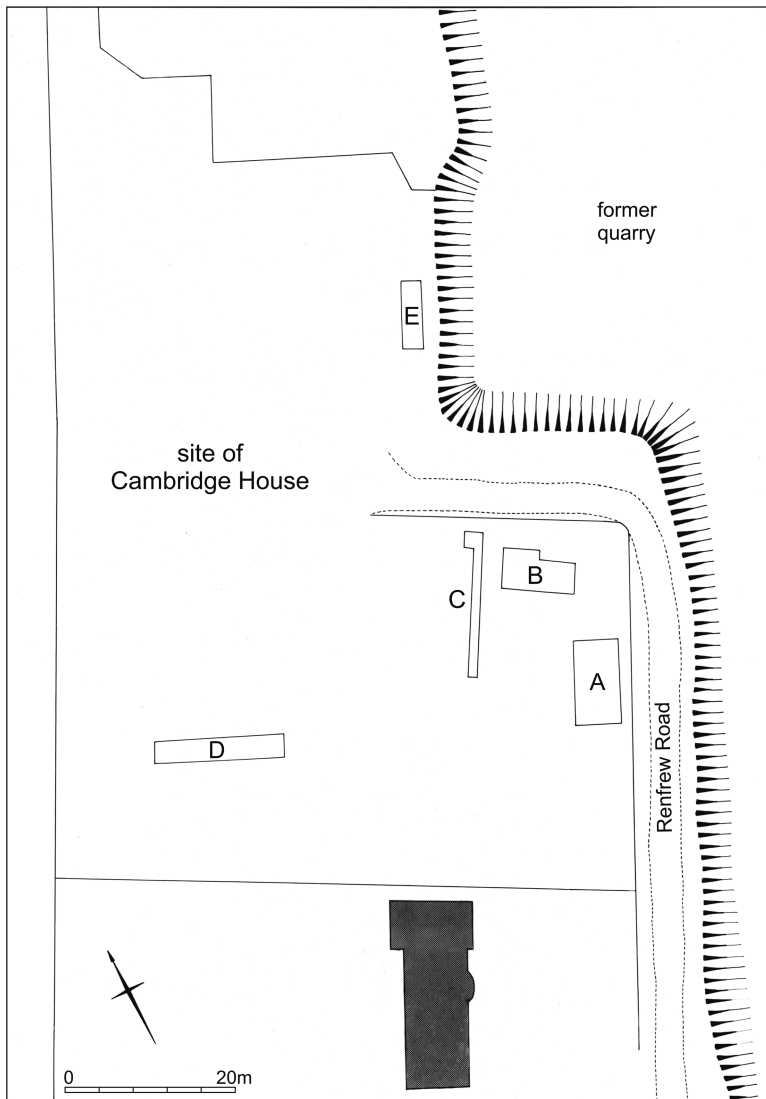


Fig 2 Cambridge House, Kingston upon Thames. Plan of site showing location of trenches A–E.

- F1 A small burnt patch 0.45m in diameter containing several burnt stones that covered a sub-circular hollow, 0.25m diameter x 0.20m deep. In section a small central pipe, 0.08m in diameter x 0.1m deep, was recorded running at an oblique angle. Adjacent to the burnt stones was part of a saddle quern (F2) found associated with sherds of Late Bronze Age pottery.
- F2 A small circular feature, 0.25m across x 0.15m deep, cut into the gravel about 1m south of feature F1, and with a dark, almost black filling of even consistency, containing occasional pebbles and Late Bronze Age potsherds.
- F3 A small circular feature, 0.3m diameter x 0.15m deep, situated in the south-west corner of the trench. This contained a dark sandy loam filling of even consistency, but with occasional pebbles and containing Late Bronze Age potsherds.
- F4, 7, 8, 9 and 11 Five small circular features at the north-west and south-west corners of the trench, F6 and 7, were 0.25m in diameter x 0.1m deep, F8 measured 0.25m in diameter x 0.15m deep, F9 measured 0.2m in diameter x 0.1m deep, and F11 0.25m in diameter x 0.15m deep, all with similar filling to F5. No finds were recovered.

Trench B/C. A *c* 1.5m wide portion of the baulk, separating trenches B and C, was hurriedly excavated on the final day on site. Only one feature was noted.

F1 A small posthole 0.25m in diameter x 0.1m deep.

Trench C, measuring 17 x 1m, was positioned to the west of trench A, and aligned north-south (figs 3 and 4) with an extension to the west at the northern end where prehistoric features were encountered. There the base of layer 1a was markedly reddened and the deposit reached an increased depth of *c* 0.3m. The layer contained a single potsherd together with a barbed-and-tanged arrowhead but also sealed several features cut into the gravel.

F1 A depression in the gravel that was filled with reddish sandy loam containing potsherds. No definite edges were detected.

a dark, almost black sandy loam filling, with some potsherds.

F2 A small, circular feature 20cm in diameter x 15cm deep, cut into the gravel, which contained

F3 A circular spread of darker loamy gravel 40cm in diameter containing potsherds.

WATCHING BRIEF

The site was visited intermittently during redevelopment early in 1987 and, while the reddened loamy layer was noted in several areas, only one further feature was recorded. This was a circular pit (SF1) with steep sides and a flat base, located to the south-west of trench E (fig 4). It measured *c* 1.5m in diameter, with an overall depth of 0.75m. One corner had been clipped by a construction trench, but the remainder of the feature was excavated by quadrant. The upper levels contained the reddened sandy loam common elsewhere on the site, but lower down the profile this became darker, while at the base lay a thin deposit of black sooty material 0.1m thick containing charcoal. Resting on this and partly contained within it, were a number of pebbles of various sizes, some of which had been blackened, with some of the larger examples placed around the sides of the pit. Most of the cultural material rested on the layer of stones. Sherds from a large coarse ware jar lay among, and predominantly above, the pebbles, while below it among the black layer, there were several smaller pottery fragments. A few potsherds and two fragments of unidentified bone were also present at the base of the pit.

The features

The postholes (figs 2 and 3) are small but uniform in size, each measuring about 0.25m in diameter x 0.15m deep. No stratigraphy was visible within them and, apart from an occasional pebble, the filling was of even consistency and a fine texture. No post pipes were present (except for F1 in trench B) and it is assumed that the posts were retrieved after the structure(s) had gone out of use. They are not deeply set but medieval and post-medieval cultivation may have resulted in a truncation of layer 1a. The isolated postholes in trench A may be associated with the linear features there. Those in trenches B and C probably form part of a structure(s), the remainder of which lies unexcavated.

Several small linear features were recorded in trench A, none of which contained artefacts or datable material. Indeed, the more irregular features, F7 and F8, could be tree-throw hollows. However, the remaining pair, F3 and 4, are certainly humanly made. The former consists of a shallow gully that curves south-east, steadily deepening, before terminating less than 1m from feature F4. The latter, even though only 2.75m long, can reasonably be interpreted as a bedding trench that held posts vertically against its north-west side. The even filling of fine red loam is difficult to interpret but suggests that the feature was backfilled soon after the posts were removed.

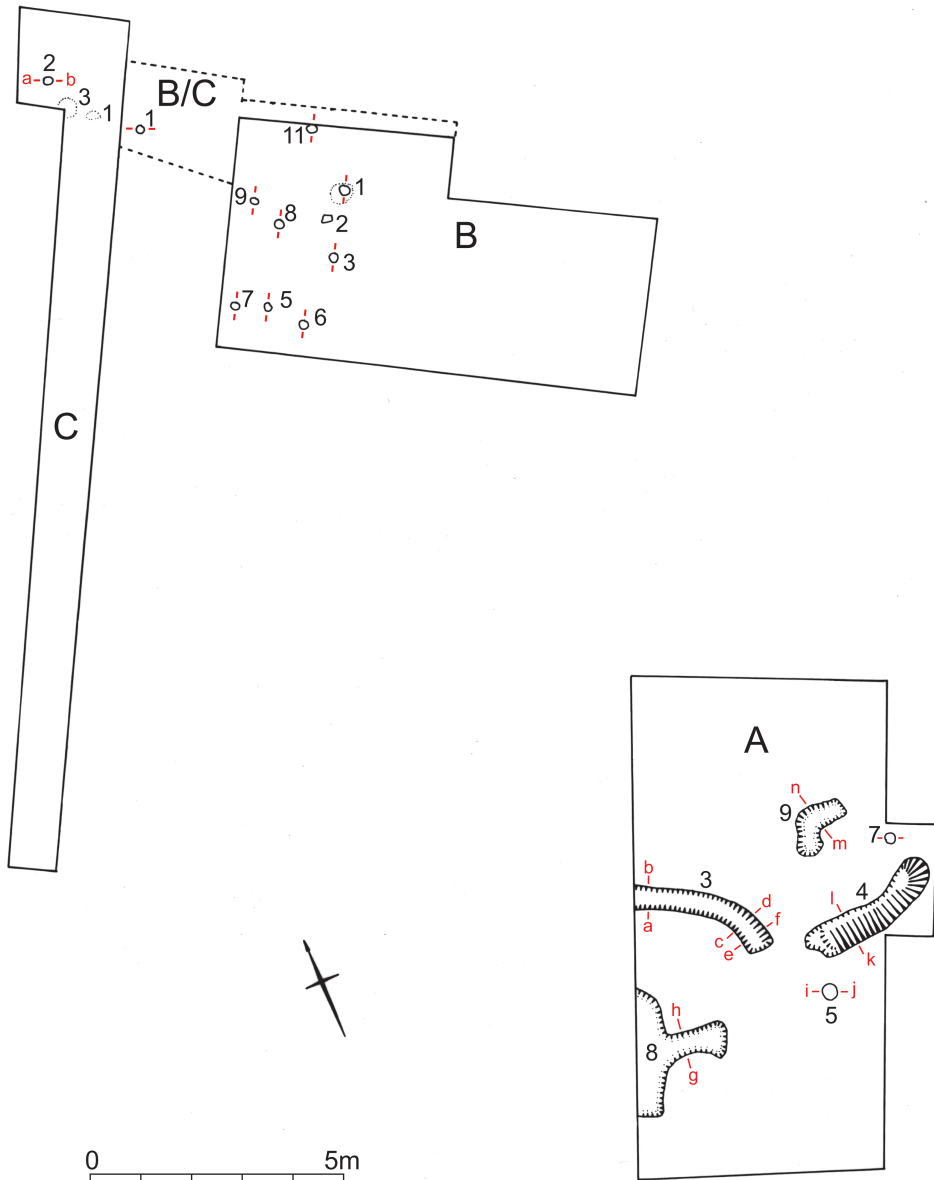


Fig 3 Cambridge House, Kingston upon Thames. Plan of trenches A–C. Lines and letters in red show the locations of sections given in figure 4.

The finds

FLINT, by Keith Winser

A total of 322 pieces of struck flint was recovered, 219 of which were burnt or affected by heat. They were spread through all levels and with no concentrations discernible. The colour is mainly grey, and buff pieces also occur, but none are patinated. The most significant artefact is a barbed-and-tanged arrowhead of Early Bronze Age date (fig 5), found in a residual position but located immediately above a posthole. A larger example, described as a ‘lancehead’ as it was ‘much too large for use as an arrowhead’, was found in the vicinity

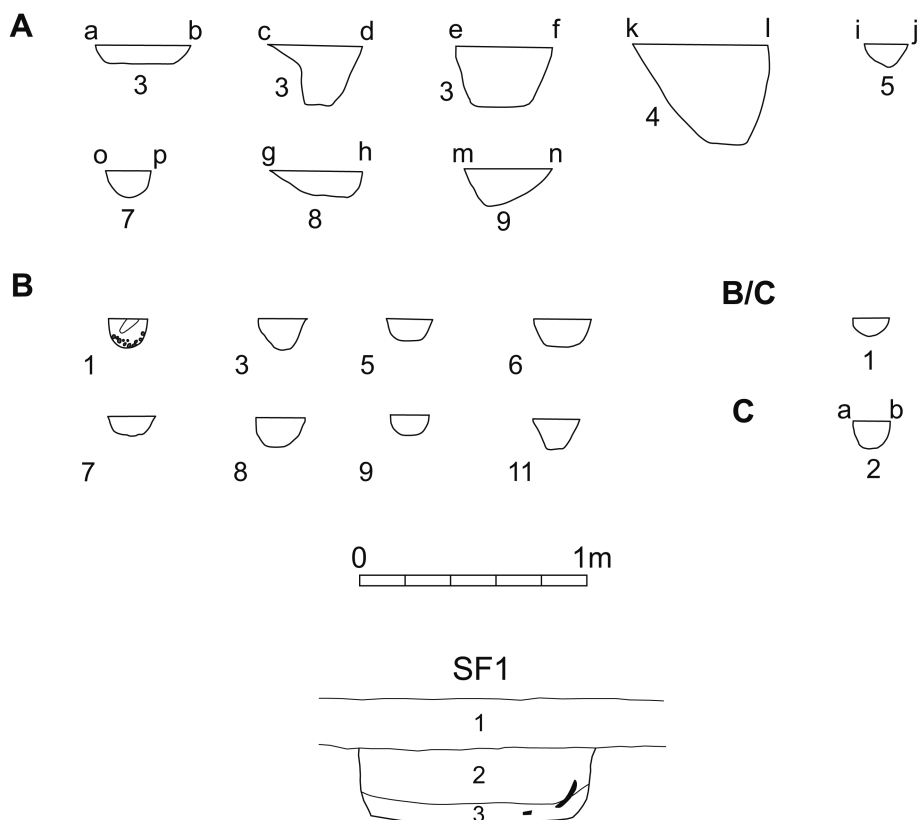


Fig 4 Cambridge House, Kingston upon Thames. Profiles of main features in trenches A–C, and of salvage feature 1 (from a field sketch by K Winsor and K Waters), showing 1) red sandy loam, 2) dark loam, and 3) black, organic, sooty material.

in the last century (Field & Needham 1986, 132). The assemblage is small and apart from the arrowhead, of crude manufacture, but it presumably represents a significant part of the toolkit used on the site. The following items are noteworthy:

Trench B layer 1

One utilised secondary flake of grey flint, 62 x 38 x 10mm, with retouch along one edge.

Trench E F5

One utilised secondary flake of grey/buff flint, 42 x 37 x 9mm, approximately square with retouch along half of one edge.

Trench C layer 1a

One barbed-and-tanged arrowhead, light grey flint, 32 x 24 x 5mm, with one barb broken (fig 5).

Salvage F1

One scraper, mottled grey flint with cortex on dorse, 70 x 38 x 16mm, notched at midpoint along one edge.

PEBBLES

A number of large rounded flint pebbles, probably derived from the local gravels, were recovered from the contents of pit (SF1). They are nearly all blackened or reddened or in some cases cracked by the effects of fire. Layer 1 (nineteen pebbles); layer 2 (64 pebbles plus six fragments); layer 3 (seven pebbles).

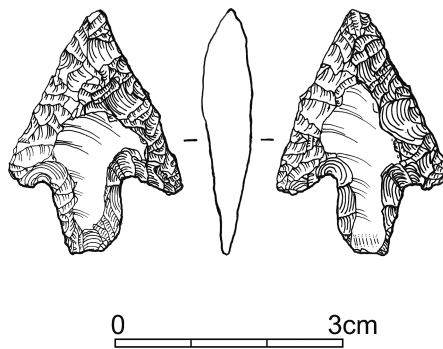


Fig 5 Cambridge House, Kingston upon Thames. Barbed-and-tanged arrowhead.

STONE

Trench B F1

One small fragment of sandstone quern with tool marks on one edge, measuring 40 x 30 x 20mm.

caused by grinding on the upper face with traces of residue adhering, measuring 170 x 170 x 50mm.

Trench B F2

One fragment of sandstone saddle quern with striations

Trench B F8

One fragment of sandstone quern, measuring 65 x 40 x 43mm.

BAKED CLAY

Several fragments of baked clay were recovered from the contents of the pit (SF1). These are of various sizes and shapes, but it is not possible to determine whether they are from buildings, pit linings or other structures. One piece contains a well-preserved fingerprint. Layer 2 (eight fragments); layer 3 (22 fragments).

BONE, by Pat Nicolaysen

A total of seventeen fragments of bone were recovered, all but two of them from the upper levels associated with post-medieval material. The condition is good and some bear butchery marks, and they probably represent food debris from post-medieval occupation nearby (further details are in the site archive). Two fragments from the base of pit SF1 are undoubtedly prehistoric and thought to be human but too small to be identified.

POTTERY, by Julie Wileman

A total of 159 prehistoric sherds were recovered from various features. The material was sorted visually, and seven fabrics identified:

Fabric A. A coarse ware, with vessel walls 6–9mm thick, with crushed calcined flint temper that ranges widely in size from 0.3 to 3mm and with occasional small rounded and sub-angular flints. The fabric is mainly brown in colour but varies from red to black as a result of uneven firing.

Fabric B. A fine ware similar to fabric A, but with generally smaller and more sparsely distributed temper though with rare pieces up to 2mm. Vessel walls are between 5 and 6mm thick.

Fabric C. A fine ware with small, sparse calcined flint temper and occasional rounded grains of flint.

Generally buff/grey but with a reddened surface. Vessel walls 5–7mm thick.

Fabric D. A hard and sandy fine ware, with sparse minute flint inclusions. Vessel walls 5–7mm thick.

Fabric E. Very fine ware, hard and sandy. No flint temper. Oxidised. Vessel walls 2.5–3mm thick.

Fabric F. A coarse ware, very sandy with no flint temper. Vessel walls 15mm thick. Only one abraded sherd in this fabric.

Fabric G. A fine ware similar to fabric D but with no blackening. Instead oxidised red.

Table 1 Numbers of sherds by fabric and context

Fabric	A	B	C	D	E	F	G
Context	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
Trench A 1a	1	–	–	–	–	–	–
Trench B 1a	7	2	–	–	–	–	–
Trench B F1	11	1	2	–	–	–	–
F2	2	1	–	2	–	–	–
F3	20	3	–	1	–	–	–
F5	1	–	–	–	–	–	–
F11	2	–	–	–	–	–	–
Trench B/C 1a	8	2	–	3	1	–	–
Trench C 1a	9	–	–	–	–	1	–
Trench C ext 1a	3	5	–	–	–	–	–
Trench C F1	4	–	–	–	–	–	–
F2	24	2	–	–	–	–	–
Trench D 1a	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
Trench E 1a	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
Salvage F1 layer	2	1	–	–	–	–	–
layer 2	19	5	–	4	–	–	–
layer 2/3	3	1	–	–	–	–	1
layer 3	4	1	–	–	–	–	–
Total	120	24	2	10	1	1	1
Overall total	159						

Rims are mostly upright, sometimes slightly expanded and often flattened on top. The shoulders are invariably slightly carinated, and there is one with a rounded carination. Bases in all cases are flat and sometimes slightly expanded where they are pinched onto the vessel walls. The angular breaks of the large coarseware sherds suggest that manufacturing technique was in most cases of slab construction with pinched on bases. Whether this is true for the finer wares is uncertain.

The condition of the sherds varies, and the deterioration of some surfaces may be due to the acidic soils. However, most retain clear breaks and the surfaces, especially of the harder fabrics, are in good condition. The surface treatment on most sherds is quite uniform and similar to those previously reported from the site. There is much evidence of horizontal finger-smoothing on the internal surfaces and vertical finger-smearing on the exterior of coarseware sherds in particular. In addition, the interior on some sherds in fabric A is blackened. The fine wares are often burnished. Vessels in fabric B often occur with a smoothed and slightly sandy surface and are often burnished on both faces. The red fabric C is blackened and burnished, while fabric D is covered on both surfaces with a black slip-like coating, then burnished.

Decoration consists of 'pie crust' finger moulding on the outside of two rims (fig 6: 2 & 11), paired grooves across the top of necks, sometimes transverse and at an angle (fig 6: 8), finger impressions around the neck (fig 6: 8), finger impressions around bases (fig 6: 1, 5, 6 & 12), the latter perhaps an incidental effect of joining wall to the base.

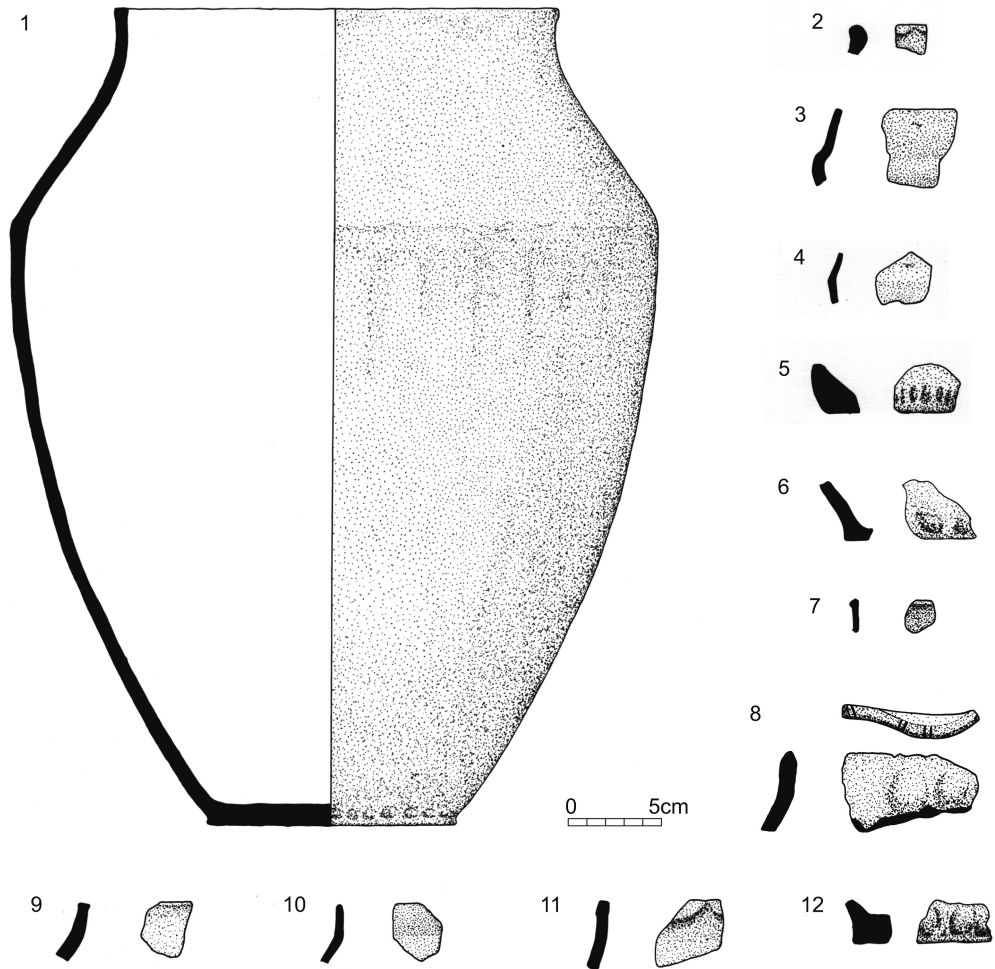


Fig 6 Cambridge House, Kingston upon Thames. Pottery: 1 Coarseware jar S F1/1, 2 Rim, moulded crinoline decoration S F1/1, 3 Rim S F1/2, 4 Shoulder S F1/2, 5 Base of cup S F1/2, 6 Base of jar S F1/2, 7 Rim, fineware, B F1, 8 Rim, coarseware, B F1, pits in neck, and paired grooves, across rim, 9 Rim, coarseware, B F1, 10 Rim, fineware, C F2, 11 Rim, coarseware, C F2, moulded crinoline decoration, 12 Base of jar, coarseware, C F1.

The pottery appears to be of the post-Deverel-Rimbury tradition, and much of it is similar to that previously reported from the site (cf fig 6: 5, 6 and 12 with Field & Needham 1986, 134 nos 8 and 10) but unlike that material, decoration occurs on a number of vessels. Finger moulding of the outside of the rim occurs at Hengrove Farm (Poulton *et al* 2017, Fig 4.2.4), Carshalton (Adkins & Needham 1985, figs 3, 4 and 7) and Weston Wood (Russell 1989, 37 no 263), as does the use of paired grooves (*ibid*, 37 nos 259, 276). Finger imprinting of the neck appears to be a rare feature, but occurs at Aldermaston (Bradley *et al* 1980, 237 no 26B & 239, no 102H) and on the shoulder at Hengrove Farm (Poulton *et al* 2017, Fig 4.2.4).

Conclusions

The data presented here provide fresh evidence for the nature of the late prehistoric occupation on Kingston Hill. In particular, the presence of artefacts such as quernstones

confirms earlier views that a domestic element was present, while the gully, post slot and postholes provide a valuable indication of the presence of structures. The postholes themselves are small, and set rather shallow, and though it cannot be certain that all are contemporary, they certainly represent the presence of at least one structure. They do bear a similarity, both in size and spacing, to those on other broadly contemporaneous sites including regional examples at Westcroft Road, Carshalton (Proctor 2002), Beddington (Bagwell *et al* 2001, 293–5) and Petters Sports Field (O’Connell 1986, 15–17; Needham 1990, 115–22), where although just a little larger (0.35m), they have been interpreted as forming circular huts *c* 6–7m in diameter. The Kingston Hill postholes may form part of a similar structure.

The pit recorded during site watching is intriguing. Some of its contents may be domestic refuse, but the material appears to have been carefully placed. The deposit of pebbles was arranged so that they extended part way up the sides of the pit. The coarseware jar found within it can be reconstructed in complete profile, even though only one-quarter of its circumference is present (fig 6: 1). It appears to have been broken or divided vertically. The fragments were found placed together and set upright in the pit, and had the appearance of being placed, rather than lying horizontally as they would have done if just thrown in. No ashes were recorded, and the burnt pebbles must have been selectively retrieved from a hearth nearby for deposition with the jar and baked clay. A number of pits described as ‘potholes’ were discovered nearby in the 19th century (Tregellas 1863, 372–3; 1868, 154–5; Field & Needham 1986, 131) some of which were said to form an orderly arrangement. Pits of comparable size are a feature of Late Bronze Age sites – at Weston Wood for example where some 44 pits were excavated (Russell 1989, 9–13). A number of pits found at Rams Hill are comparable in size but are thought to have silted naturally (Bradley & Ellison 1975, 52). Others occur at Aldermaston (Bradley *et al* 1980, fig 5), where pottery, burnt clay and other domestic debris were among the contents. Several pits at Westcroft Road, Carshalton contained placed deposits that were considered to result from ritual practices (Proctor 2002), an interpretation that is now widely accepted for these deliberately ordered deposits.

Other features on the site also appear to have been backfilled rapidly – the gully, and post trench, and perhaps the postholes, generally with the same reddish sandy loam. In itself, this need cause no surprise, simply indicating that the immediate environs were still being used for settlement where any open hole close to living space could be considered a hazard. However, the reddening of the soil might be interpreted as the result of burning and, if so, it may be that the change was imposed. In this respect it is also worth recalling that the greater part of the flint assemblage had been affected by heat. Posts at Westcroft Road, Carshalton had similarly been removed and the holes backfilled (Proctor 2002, 69–70) as had those at Petters Sports Field where it was suggested that there may have been a deliberate attempt at changing the land-use of the area (O’Connell & Needham 1986, 21). If posts were extracted and retained it implies that timber may have been scarce, but at all three sites there appeared to be no reuse of the area for settlement purposes and the assumption therefore must be that the change was to agriculture. In Wessex at this time, there was major change in land-use when the linear ditch system put the extensive co-axial fields at least partly out of use and where the impression is of a widespread move to increased pastoral agriculture (McOmish *et al* 2002; Field 2008; Field & McOmish 2017). There the change appears to have been planned and imposed, perhaps influenced by a worsening climate, but many holders of individual plots will have been severely affected and the process may in fact mark social change from the communal tenure of the field systems to one of more authoritarian control. The increased presence of enclosed settlements and hillforts at the time certainly points to a degree of stress and friction. Different regional responses to climate change, however, might be expected (eg Dark 2006; also see Johnston 2008) and at Hengrove Farm, near Staines, this might have included reactions to the emergence of a palaeochannel. There, co-axial field ditches were silting up by the Late Bronze Age – a time when, with the increased possibility of flooding, they might usefully have been kept clear. Like those in Wessex, the integrity of field units was maintained into the Roman period, thus preserving the landscape template,

but a number of Iron Age features were nevertheless cut into field ditches (Poulton *et al* 2017, 284) indicating a certain lack of respect for the system. The presence of hedges there would indicate a reliance on stock husbandry and it may be that this aspect of the local and regional economy persisted during climatic deterioration at a time when the linear ditch ‘ranch’ boundaries were being laid out across cultivated fields in Wessex. There is no indication that the Hengrove system was slighted but it is possible, given later documentary references, that linear boundaries were established along the Thames at Weybridge, Long Ditton and Battersea (Field 2004, 47) in a manner similar to that of the Wessex system. Nevertheless, some unknown stimulus at Hengrove led to the shift in settlement (or activity) foci that can be detected, from a dispersed pattern among the fields to one of greater nucleation during the Iron Age (cf Poulton *et al* 2017, figs 15.5 and 10.7) and it may be that the changes on Kingston Hill were part of a similar process.

Demonstrating that all features at Cambridge House are contemporary is difficult, since there is insufficient material present to provide a more refined chronology. Potsherds from the site are small, and scarce. However, the decoration present on some of them may set the assemblage apart from the plain ware finds in the area (Field & Needham 1986, 149) and indicate that it falls into Barrett’s (1980) decorated post-Deverel-Rimbury tradition. In this respect it is worth bearing in mind the 9th–7th century BC date of bronze metalwork found nearby during the last century (Field & Needham 1986, 149). However, the presence of sandier fabrics may also indicate an even later date. In contrast to the largely complete pots that were recovered by the gravel diggers, all the material excavated at Cambridge House was fragmented, indicating that pottery recovered from the gravel pits may not have been fully representative (*ibid*, 137). It is safe to assume that the area excavated represents only one small portion of a site that was occupied for an extensive period.

The well-drained gravels of Kingston Hill will undoubtedly have provided attractive settlement opportunities for prehistoric inhabitants when compared with the surrounding clays, and while little is known about activity on the north-eastern part of the deposit, antiquarian accounts and gravel quarrying has indicated the considerable presence of Bronze Age activity on the south-western slopes overlooking the present town. While it can certainly be concluded that activities were of some duration and incorporated domestic, industrial and funerary components during the earlier 1st millennium BC, the full nature of the settlement remains unknown. More recently, excavations at Long House, George Road (TQ 2020 7030) encountered Late Bronze Age pottery (Butler & Moore *nd*), while further east, at Warren Cutting, Combe Neville, excavations by the Museum of London in 1993 encountered a V-shaped ditch that was exposed for 25m in an east–west direction but which turned north-east at its eastern end (King 1993). Given the extent of Bronze Age fields noted around Carshalton but also on the flood plain around Lambeth and Bermondsey (Yates 2001, 68–73) it is likely that fields were quite widely spread in the area and, given the presence of quern stones, may have once covered the hilltop. The change in direction of the ditch at Warren Cutting, however, indicates that it is unlikely to be a field boundary and at just 1m wide x 0.9m deep it was hardly monumental. Yet it could have formed part of a small rectilinear enclosure similar to those on Salisbury Plain and elsewhere, some of which were constructed over Middle Bronze Age fields (Field & McOmish 2017, 90–5). There could of course have been other earthworks in the vicinity and it is worth noting that ‘Burghditches’ located somewhere on the southern slopes of the hill and recorded in deeds of 1426 and 1429 (Wakeford 1984, 254) appear to have been levelled prior to Rocque’s mapping (1741–5). That aside, there is no indication either archaeologically or in historic documentation of the presence of a ringwork and consequently that at Queen Mary’s Hospital, Carshalton (Adkins & Needham 1985) is likely to have remained the regional focus until the rise of the early hillforts at Caesar’s Camp, Wimbledon and St Ann’s Hill, Chertsey. Nevertheless, proximity to the Thames is likely to have ensured that the Kingston Hill site was a major influence on the riverside activities of the great west-London meanders.

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