

Roman material from Chatley Farm, Cobham

CHATLEY FARM, COBHAM, 1979-80

The finds by Joanna Bird

1: Finds from the 1979-80 excavation

Pottery

- 79 Area 1 Trench 2 (1) ploughsoil Sherd, thick buff fabric with red interior glaze; post-medieval.
Handle, probably from a jug, cream china; modern.
- 79 Area 2 Trench 1 (1) ploughsoil Sherd, fine sandy orange fabric, grey core, inclusions of haematite.
Probably Roman.
Sherd, hard light-red fabric with brown glaze on both surfaces.
Post-medieval.
- 79 Area 2 Base, small jar, Alice Holt grey ware; later C2-C4
- 80.100 Large cable-rim jar, diam approx 44cm, with finger-clawing on interior. Cf Lyne & Jefferies 1979, type 10.1, which also has holes through the wall; the type may have served as a ceramic beehive. Late C2-C4; Alice Holt.

Oxfordshire white ware mortarium fragment, diam 26cm; C3-C4.

Alice Holt grey ware sherd.

Jar base, buff-orange fabric with brown glaze on both surfaces; post-medieval.

Part of lid or technical item, pale grey stoneware; modern.

Rim fragment, white china; modern.

Stem, clay pipe; post-medieval, probably modern.

80.101 Cable-rim jar, Lyne & Jefferies 1979, class 10; Alice Holt.

Diam approx 48cm. Late C2-C4.

Shoulder sherd, probably Lyne & Jefferies 1979, class 10, with wavy line decoration as 10.A. Alice Holt, late C2-C4.

13 sherds, large Alice Holt grey ware jars.

Everted jar rim, diam 22cm, as Lyne & Jefferies 1979, type 3B9.

Alice Holt, C3+.

Everted jar rim, diam 20cm, Lyne & Jefferies 1979, class 3B.

Alice Holt, mid-C3-C4.

Everted jar rim, slightly beaded, diam approx 18cm. Lyne & Jefferies 1979, class 3B; Alice Holt, mid-C3-C4.

Everted jar rim (cf Lyne & Jefferies 1979, type 3B11), diam 16cm; slipped on lip and interior. Alice Holt, later C3-C4.

18 sherds, Alice Holt grey ware; possibly all jars.

Beaker sherd with overall rouletting; yellow-buff fabric with black external slip and brown internal, some ironstone inclusions.

?Nene Valley, later C3-C4.

Oxfordshire mortarium, cf Young 1977 type WC7.3, diam approx 40cm; mid-C3-C4.

Oxfordshire white mortarium sherd, C3-C4.

Alice Holt flanged bowl (cf Lyne & Jefferies 1979, type 5B4, 5); diam of flange 24cm. Later C3-C4.

Bowl or strainer, rim as Lyne & Jefferies 1979, type 5C2; diam 26cm. Alice Holt, fired to orange; late C3-C4.

Bowl, copying samian form Dr 31, diam 22cm. Coarse sandy orange fabric, grey core. Mid-C3-C4.

Lid, Lyne & Jefferies 1979, class 7, probably Alice Holt but fired light brown. Diam 28cm; C2-C3.

Dish, cf Lyne & Jefferies 1979, type 6A5 but with a shallow groove near the rim; diam 18cm. Alice Holt; later C3-first half C4.

Abraded rim, small bead rim jar in coarse orange-brown fabric with grey core and inner edge. Later C1-C2, probably.

Rim, diam approx 30cm, bucket-type vessel; coarse hand-made brown fabric, partial grey core, dense temper of grey-white flint grits and haematite fragments. Indications of a shaped handle below the rim. Prehistoric.

Four sherds, sandy orange/buff fabrics.

Sherd, probably from a hand-made vessel, coarse black fabric with flint grit temper. Prehistoric.

Stone

80.100 Three flint blades (these have not been examined by a specialist).

80.101 Flint blade (this has not been examined by a specialist).

Fragment from the upper stone of a Roman quern in basaltic lava from the Mayen region of Germany (see note by D F Williams, Microfiche 7)

Tile (summary of tile finds, which have not been studied in detail)

79 Area 1 Trench 2 (1) Ploughsoil Roman tile.

Probable modern tile.

79 Area 2 Trench 1 (1) Ploughsoil Fragment, probably Roman tile.

Post-Roman brick, probably modern.

79 Area 2 Trench 2 (2) alluvium Tile, probably Roman.

- 80.100 Roman tile.
- 80.101 Large amount of Roman tile, including tegulae, floor tiles, imbrices and box-tiles. These include a piece with three curves on the upper surface, a piece with straight grooves, and a piece with straight grooves and a hole through. (See note by D F Williams, Microfiche 6).

Iron

- Area 2 Trench 1 (1) ploughsoil Lump of iron slag.
- 80.100 Nail, possibly Roman.

Other finds

- 79 Area 2 Fragment of plaster or cement with large red tile fragments incorporated.
- 80.100 Piece of white plastic.
- 80.101 Bones.
Burnt daub.

2: Finds from the 1979 field walking

Pottery

Nine flanged bowls, Lyne & Jefferies 1979, class 5B, mostly as 5B6 and 5B8; Alice Holt, later C3-C4.

Six rims, Lyne & Jefferies class 3C; Alice Holt and Overwey, C4. Also nine sherds of the same form, including three with rilling on the body.

45 sherds, Alice Holt grey wares, including the base of a large jar.

Two jar rims, Lyne & Jefferies class 3B; Alice Holt, C3-C4.

Rim of a plain shallow dish, cream fabric with black colour coat.

Nene Valley, late C3-C4.

Rim of a beaker, simplified version of cornice rim; cream fabric, dark-red colour coat. Nene Valley, late C2-C3 probably.

Rim, Oxfordshire copy of samian form 31; mid-C3-C4.

Bowl base and two sherds, Oxfordshire ware; mid-C3-C4.

Rim in hard dark-red ware - ?Roman, in which case probably a plain beaker.

Nine sherds, coarse cream ware; some probably Overwey. Roman.

Six sherds, coarse buff and red wares; all probably Roman.

Bead rim, coarse hard red ware; post-medieval.

Sherd, brown fabric with black glaze on both sides; post-medieval.

Tile

The tile from the site was largely Roman, with a few probably modern pieces.

Other finds

Seven flint blades.

Piece of iron slag.

Note on the petrology of a Roman tile from 80.101 by D F Williams

(HBMC Ceramic Petrology Project, Department of Archaeology, University of Southampton)

The small fragment of tile (approx 55cm x 45cm) is light red (between Munsell 2.5YR 6/6 and 6/8) in colour, with a scatter of dark crystals of pyroxene easily picked out with a hand lens. Thin sectioning shows inclusions of quartz (discrete and polycrystalline grains), potash

and plagioclase felspar, green or occasionally colourless augite, amphibole and pieces of lava, set in an anisotropic matrix of baked clay. A thin section of a representative sample of the usual tile fabric from the site revealed a quite different range of non-plastic inclusions, namely frequent well-sorted grains of quartz, 0.20mm and under in size, with plentiful flecks of mica and the odd piece of chert.

Part of a quernstone made from the lavas of the Mayen-Niedermendig region of the Eifel Hills of Germany was also found at Chatley Farm (see below) but the composition of the volcanic inclusions found in the former tile would appear to preclude the notion of crushed pieces of this quernstone being used as a 'tempering agent' for the tile. Instead, it seems likely that this tile originates in an area of recent igneous rocks and Italy at once springs to mind. A variety of Italian tiles and pottery sectioned by the writer have a fairly similar range of inclusions, which point to the Italian volcanic tract as a possible source for the Chatley Farm tile. To the best of the writer's knowledge this tile may be the only example in Britain of an Italian Roman tile recovered from an archaeological context.

The quernstone by D F Williams, HBMC Ceramic Petrology Project,
Department of Archaeology, University of Southampton)

A small part of a rubber for a saddle quern in a grey, fairly coarse vesicular lava, containing conspicuous dark phenocrysts of pyroxene. A small sample was thin sectioned and studied under the petrological microscope. This revealed that the most prominent minerals are frequent grains of green and colourless clinopyroxene, mainly augite, set in a groundmass of small lath-shaped crystals of andesine/labradorite felspar, opacite, leucite and some xenomorphic nepheline. The composition

of the rock is particularly distinctive and it can be classified as a nepheline-tephrite. This type of rock is found in the lavas of the Mayen-Niedermendig area of the Eifel Hills of Germany, a region well known in both Roman and Saxon times for supplying quernstones and millstones (Parkhouse 1976; Kars 1980; Peacock 1980). The quernstone from the Roman site at Chatley Farm undoubtedly originated from this part of Germany.