

# Excavations at London (Heathrow) Airport 1969

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## PART I THE EXCAVATIONS

### INTRODUCTION

The airport is situated in the centre of the wide plain that forms the south western corner of Middlesex, straddling a gravel ledge that slopes gently from around 25m OD on the Bath Road to 20m at West Bedfont (Fig. 1). The southern border of the feature is clearly seen in the fields south of the airport where the land drops away steeply to the level of the Floodplain Terrace. The formation of this ledge is generally assigned to the Taplow stage of the Ice Age. It is clear from the geological map of the area and from inspection of gravel pits and trench sections that much of the surface of the gravel is covered by a sheet of brickearth.

The principal runways of the airport were, as first designed and constructed, a little under 3000m in length. The more southerly of these (No. 5 runway) was extended by 800m in 1959 for the use of heavy long-range jet aircraft. During winter 1968-69 work was started on an extension to the No. 1 runway (which is sited close to the Bath Road on the northern perimeter) to meet the requirements of the new generation of aircraft expected to enter service in the 1970s (Fig. 1). From planning lists received at the then London Museum and from information published in the press, it was realised that a massive amount of earthmoving was to be undertaken in an area likely to have been occupied for several thousand years. The scheme involved the construction not only of the runway extension (over 1000m long and 42m wide) but also the taxiways, new perimeter road and a vast aircraft-holding area (Pl. 1). In addition many trenches were to be cut for storm-water drains and electricity cables.

An approach was made to Sir Peter Masfield, at that time chairman of the British Airports Authority, who immediately gave permission for regular inspection of the engineering works in order to record any traces of ancient settlement. Museum staff worked in conjunction with members of the West London Archaeological Field Group to ensure frequent tours of inspection. The discoveries described below all resulted from this operation, for no archaeological sites were previously recorded from the area of the extension.

The contractors for the project, Richard Costain Ltd., proved sympathetic towards the requirements of archaeology and temporarily diverted work from certain areas where excavation seemed desirable. In most cases this amounted to a respite of no more than a day or two, for numerous discoveries were made within the runway cutting where the principal effort of the construction project was concentrated.

Sherds collected during the scraping of the runway extension suggested that a settlement of some duration had once existed in the area. The dating material ranged through the iron age and Romano-British period, and included a number of worked flint items of neolithic or bronze age date. Attempts to gather information were rendered haphazard by the speed of

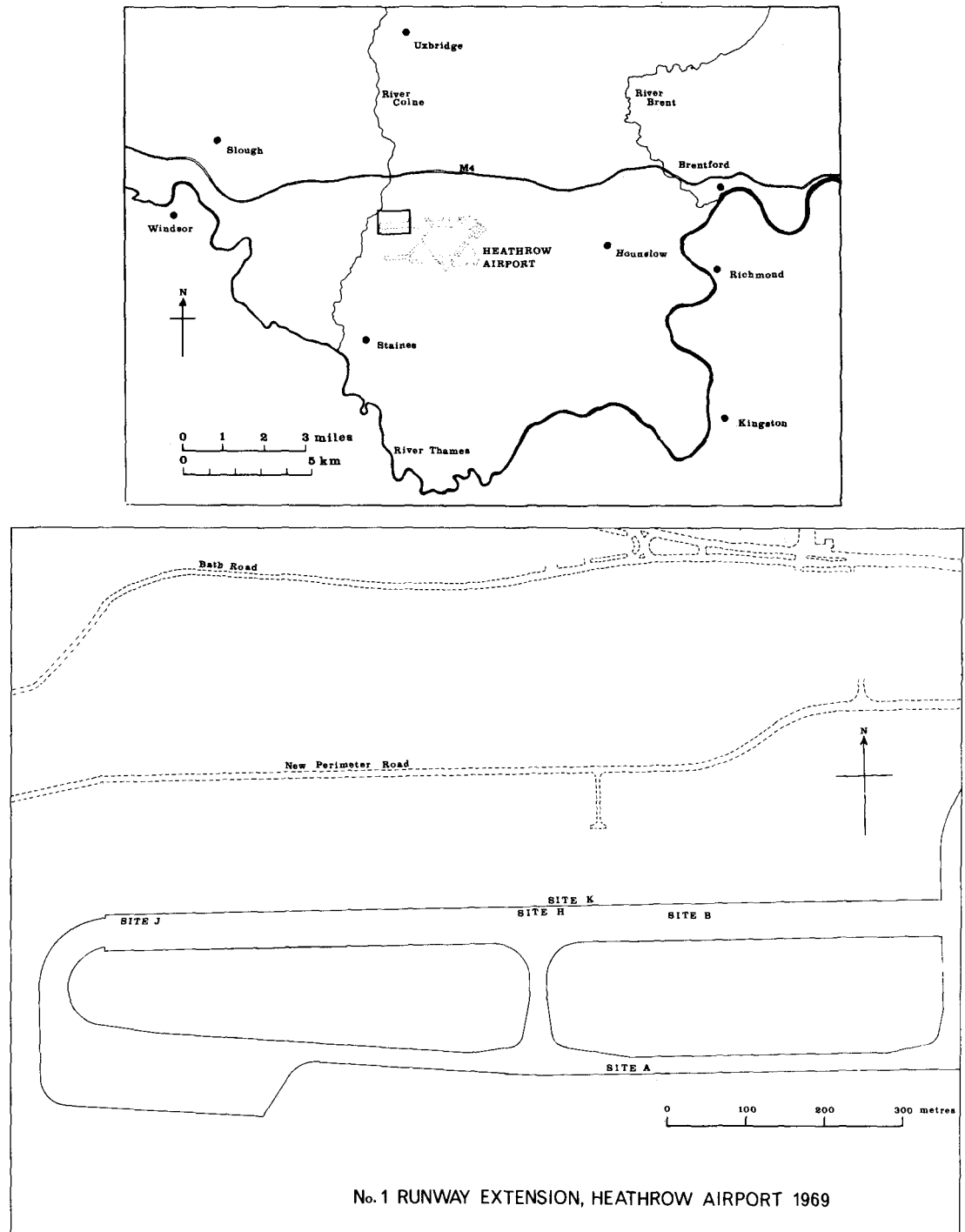


Fig. 1. Heathrow: Site Location maps.

earthmoving and the wet conditions of March and April 1969. In certain places excavation was conducted from an undisturbed or partially scraped level, in others from a much reduced level at the surface of the gravel. In the latter cases only deep-cutting features survived, since a bed of brickearth was removed together with the topsoil and the shallower aspects of habitation were thereby destroyed.

## HISTORICAL BACKGROUND<sup>1</sup>

BY ALISON LAWS

The excavations were located on land that was until recently in agricultural use south of the Bath Road and south-east of the village of Longford. The area was originally part of the ancient parish of Harmondsworth within the hundred of Elthorne. This parish incorporated the settlements of Longford, Heathrow, Perry Oaks and Sipson until 1946 when the airport opened for civilian use obliterating the farms of Heathrow and Perry Oaks. Until the building of the airport, the area was open agricultural land with the large expanse of Hounslow Heath occupying its eastern side and a network of rivers emanating from the River Colne on its western border.

Of the present day tributaries of the River Colne, only two streams are original. In the north-west of the parish, the Bigley Ditch leaves the Colne at West Drayton and west of Harmondsworth village joins the Wyrardisbury River, and the Poyle Mill stream which also left the Colne at West Drayton. The Duke of Northumberland's River which crossed the line of the runway extension some 300m west of the main area of excavation, and the Longford River, are both artificial running east and west respectively of Longford village. The Duke's River (formerly called the Isleworth Mill River) was constructed to increase the water driving Isleworth Mill in or about 1543. It has been suggested however, that the cut was made along the course of a much earlier stream and this possibility is substantiated by the fact that a bridge known as Longford Bridge was in existence as early as the 14th century. It has also been suggested that Longford Bridge once stood in the place of either Mad Bridge or High Bridge further to the west. The Longford River was constructed by Charles I to improve the water supply at Hampton Court and did not receive its present name until the 20th century having been called the New River, King's River, Queen's River, Cardinal's River, Hampton Court Cut/Canal. In the late 1940s to help with the building of Heathrow Airport both the Duke's River and the Longford River were diverted southwards into a single channel.

The name of the parish first appears in Domesday Book as 'Hermodesworde' (Hermode's Farm) although an earlier document refers to a grant made by Offa, King of Mercia in the 8th century (probably AD 780), consisting of land in the place called Hermonds in the Middle Saxon Province. The manor at Harmondsworth belonged to the Earl Harold under Edward the Confessor and was given by William the Conqueror to the Abbey of Holy Trinity at Rouen. In the reign of Edward III it was seized by the crown whence it passed to Winchester College, was seized again by the crown under Henry VIII and eventually descended to the Earls of Uxbridge. The Benedictine priory of Harmondsworth once stood to the south west of the surviving tithe barn which is of 14th or 15th century date.

The only medieval settlement to grow up along the Bath Road was at Longford, *c.* 1.5km north-west of the excavations and there is evidence of settlement here by 1337. A medieval hamlet known as Southcote was in existence in 1265. Its position is not accurately known but it has been suggested that it lay in the south-west of the parish. In the 15th century it

became known as Southcoterow and also about this time the settlement at Heathrow became established. Both settlements are mentioned in a rental of 1493-1494 but thereafter Heathrow appears alone. Perry is mentioned as a hamlet in 1354 although there is a suggestion that this reference is in fact to Southcote and not the settlement at Perry Oaks as that name is not mentioned again until the 16th century. The settlement at Sipson, well established by 1337 lay in the north-east of the parish.

The first definite picture of the parish is supplied by Rocque's map of 1754. Houses are shown at Longford, Sipson and Harmondsworth, Perry Oaks and Heathrow. The uncultivated area west of the rivers was known as Harmondsworth Moors although south of the Bath Road the area between the Colne and the Longford rivers was meadowland and arable land lay between the Longford and the Duke's River. The latter also covered the rest of the parish to the eastern boundary north of the Bath Road and the Heathrow Road in the south. John Middleton, writing in 1798<sup>2</sup> describes the area lying between the Hounslow to Colnbrook Road on the north and the Thames on the south as being loamy sand or dry turnip and barley land containing 1-3 feet deposit (presumably brickearth) resting on gravel. He continues 'All the land to the south of the road passing from Brentford through Hounslow to Longford is so nearly level as to have no more than a proper drainage and much the greater part of it is less than 10 feet above the surface of the river and not more than 3-5 feet above the level of the rivulets flowing through the district.'

The agricultural coverage of the area appears to have changed very little over the last few hundred years. The first Ordnance Survey map of 1868-1881 shows the area of the excavations divided into large open fields which apart from a few boundary changes appear to have continued in use up until acquisition by the British Airports Authority.

## THE EXCAVATION

The following notes are intended to clarify the confusing picture represented on the general plan (Fig. 2).

*Site A* a segmented ring-ditch, found during the scraping of the taxiway cutting.

*Site B* a series of small trial trenches, dug during a pause in the scraping of the runway extension when flooding rendered machine operations impossible.

*Site C* observation and recording of features exposed in storm water drain trench.

*Site D* examination of the gravel base after scraping of the runway extension, and excavation of features thus revealed (same area as Site B).

*Site H* a ring-ditch, found within the runway extension following machine scraping.

*Site J* excavation of a solitary pit in the scraped runway extension, towards its western limit (Fig. 1).

*Site K* excavation of an area adjacent to the northern edge of the runway.

Information relating to settlement was gathered principally from Site K. Sporadic discoveries during the engineering works showed that the occupation area extended beyond the northern edge of the main cutting and it was at first assumed that little damage would occur in this region. Apparently, the ground in this area projected slightly above the proposed runway surface and the decision was made to lower the level. Topsoil was removed by mechanical means and several weeks spent in excavating the traces of settlement thus exposed. This provided something of a counter-balance to the 'salvage' conditions encountered in the rest of the work.

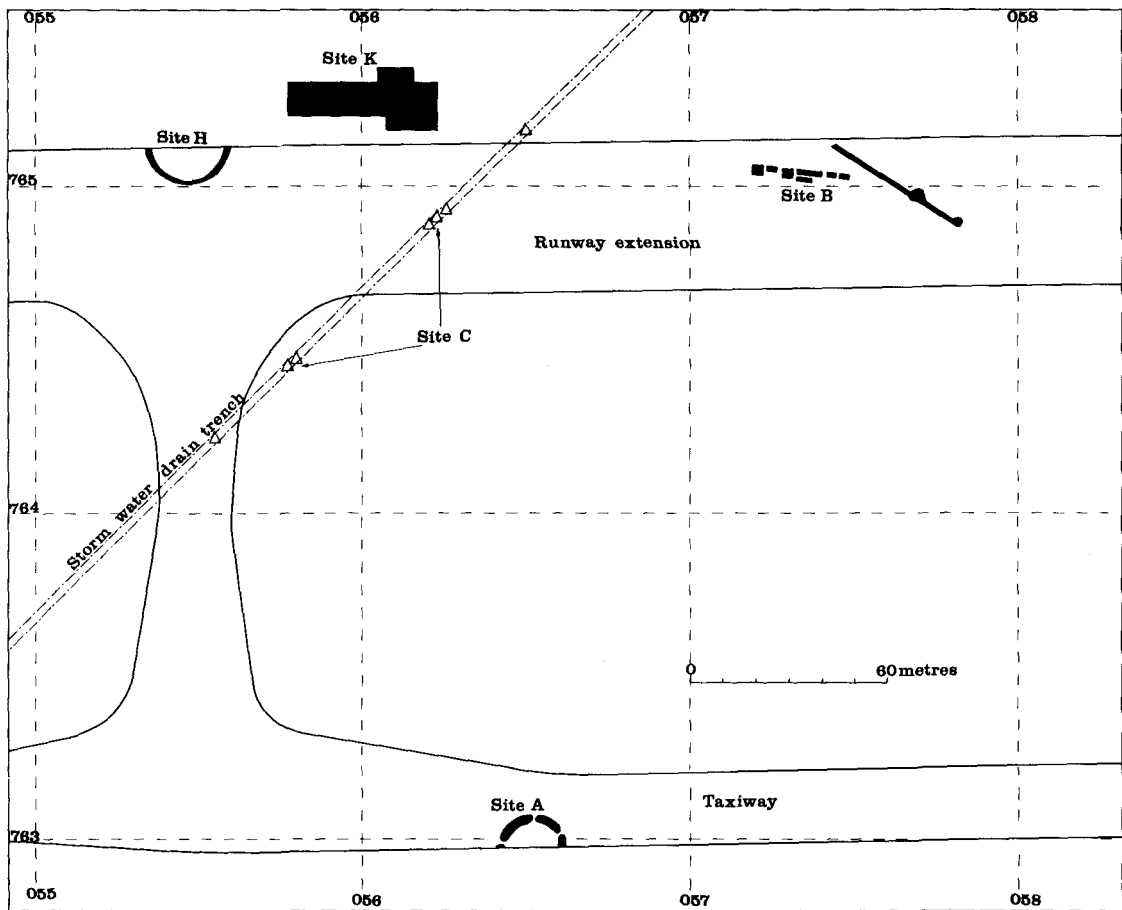


Fig. 2. Heathrow: Location of the excavations.

A general impression that must be recorded in relation to Site K concerns the degree of preservation. Topsoil was removed by mechanical means in order to provide reasonably speedy access to features, and during this process concentrations of domestic refuse were noted at certain spots. Ultimately it was confirmed that these were the positions of prehistoric pits. In spite of many years of agriculture, it may be confidently stated that the archaeological deposits still survived well above the top of the bedrock.

On exposing the brickearth surface, a wealth of detail could be observed. In many cases only partial excavation was attempted for there was no certainty of the length of time available for work. The following description is presented in chronological order, and includes not only features of the main excavation (Site K) but related discoveries made in other parts of the engineering works.

#### INDICATIONS OF BRONZE AGE MONUMENTS

The principal deposits exposed during the project related to settlement in the early iron age. However, there were in places features lacking the usual collection of iron age pottery and these appear to have belonged to the second, rather than the first, millenium BC.

## THE SEGMENTED RING DITCH (Site A)

During February inspection of the work for the new taxiway resulted in the discovery of a semicircular feature located against the southern edge of the cutting (Fig. 3). The following weekend was set aside for examination, since it was known that all soft fillings observed within the gravel base were to be removed by machine and filled with rammed aggregate.

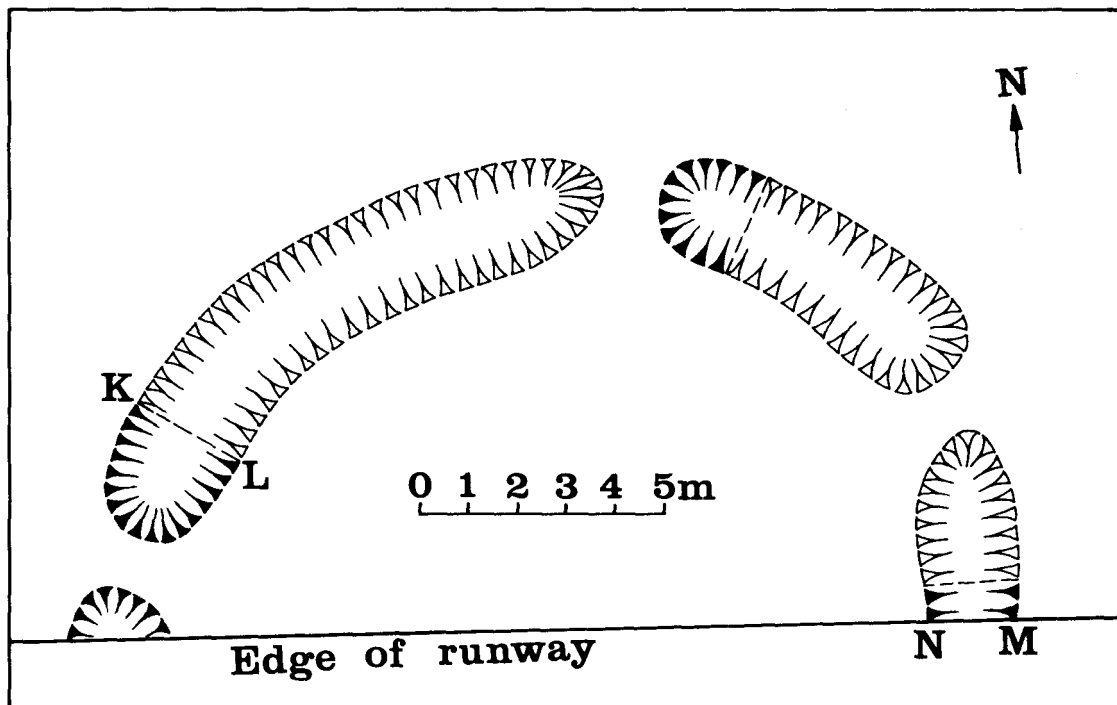


Fig. 3. Heathrow: Plan of ring-ditch, Site A.

Following a general clean-up of the gravel surface and the cutting of four narrow sections, the feature was revealed to be a ditch consisting of short, curving segments. It had been somewhat truncated in the vertical plane by the machine cutting of the taxiway, but was distinguished from the gravel matrix by its dense clay filling. Within the stripped area two complete segments and the ends of two others were exposed. The gaps or causeways between segments were of near-identical width, roughly 1.2m. The segments averaged about 2m in width by 0.6m in depth from the base of the plough-soil. The distinctively heavy and compact ditch filling, consisting of a thin lining of yellow clay and a main filling of brown clay, is somewhat difficult to explain. Though it is close in character and colour to the local brickearth, this cannot have been its origin for in the immediate vicinity of the feature, the gravel bears no brickearth capping. Further intrigue is added by the observation that very little gravel was present in either layer of the filling. Perhaps a brickearth deposit formerly existed in this area but has been totally admixed with the plough-soil by the action of cultivation.

It may be relevant that the sections (Fig. 5, K-L and M-N) suggest two points concerning the history of the feature. Firstly, the thin lining of yellow clay, the primary silt, had an unusual profile, in that it lacked the concentration of silted material normally to be found in the ditch base and extended without noticeably thinning up the sides. There is thus a strong implication that the ditch had been re-excavated at some period, resulting in the partial destruction of the primary silt profile. Secondly, at the interface of the archaeological deposits and the plough-soil (as seen in the section taken at the edge of the taxiway cutting, M-N) there was a marked truncation of the ditch filling. No doubt this resulted from constant

ploughing of the site, but there is reason to believe that this took place in the distant past (a point discussed below) since a number of prehistoric features investigated nearby were preserved to a significantly higher level.

On the theory that the feature was a ring-ditch (of about 20m in diameter) a slot was cut into the adjacent undisturbed area in order to search for remains of a burial, but nothing resulted. There are in fact other possible interpretations for the ditches which are discussed in the general conclusions below. Finds from the filling consisted of a few flint flakes, waste products of a date impossible to determine with great exactitude.

#### THE RING-DITCH (Site H, Fig. 4)

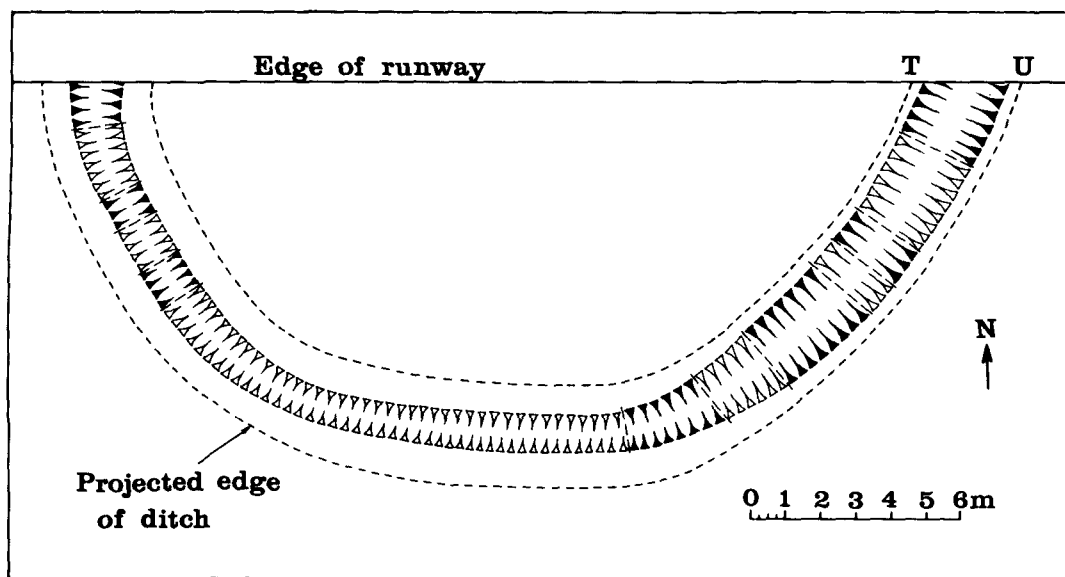


Fig. 4. Heathrow: Plan of ring-ditch, Site H.

Within the cutting for the runway extension, part of a ring-ditch emerged. Its appearance contrasted so much with the gravel bedrock that it was first reported by the machine drivers. Since the brickearth capping (approx. 0.40m thick) was removed in the earthmoving, the feature was examined in a reduced state. The apparent diameter of the ring-ditch was 30m, the width and depth of the ditch being 3m and 1.4m respectively (as recorded at the edge of the cutting). An intermittent spread of coarse gravel in the base of the ditch was sealed by a primary silt of yellow clay containing a few waste flint flakes. The secondary silting consisted of a dense clay, blue-brown in colour. Above this, and sealed by the plough soil, a deposit of mixed soil and gravel was noted (Fig. 5 T-U). This too contained waste flakes.

The upper filling was sited assymmetrically in the ditch against the inner edge. This implies that material was derived from a central mound, presumably demolished when the land was given over to agriculture. There is thus a strong possibility that the feature was a bronze age bowl-barrow. No indications of a burial or other internal feature came to light. The centre of the barrow lay within undisturbed ground beyond the edge of the cutting.

#### THE EVIDENCE OF SETTLEMENT

Information concerning successive phases of settlement activity is drawn principally from site K (Fig. 6), with additional observations from sites B, C, D and J (see Figs. 8, 9 and 12).

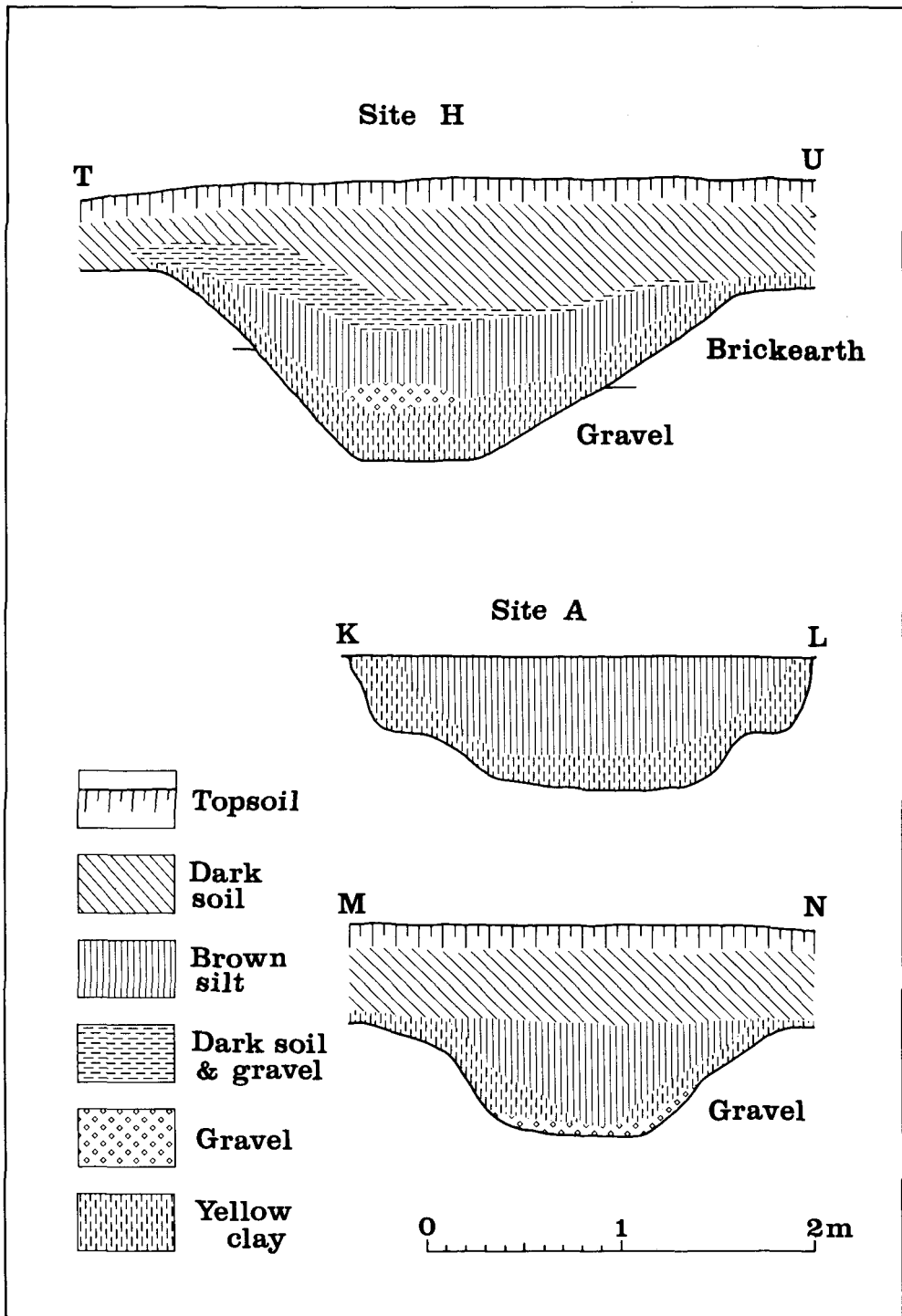


Fig. 5. Heathrow: Ditch sections, Sites A and H.



PHASE I: neolithic or bronze age

Amid the complex of early iron age features on Site K, the vague outlines of a ditch were discerned which proved difficult to excavate owing to the similarity of its filling to the brickearth. It was established that early pre-Roman iron age pits cut this ditch, that it was approximately 2m wide, and that it had been dug with a V-shaped profile. The few worked flints from its filling cannot be dated with great precision. Tiny fragments of pottery or daub in its upper fill did nothing to clarify the problem of its origin or date. It appeared to be a straight rather than curving feature, aligned roughly east-west.

PHASE II: early pre-Roman iron age

The features excavated on Site K were in the main characterised by the presence of shouldered jars and angular shouldered bowls of a widely recognised type, These forms, together with associated debris of occupation, formed the substantial part of evidence recovered from our investigations.

The features consist almost totally of pits and hollows, a combination found on other settlements of this period. The single structural element consisted of a line of three post-holes, situated between the two large hollows on Site K (Fig. 6). Little can be offered by way of interpretation of these save to refer to the two-post arrangements which have been regarded as possible drying racks, and were first recognised at Little Woodbury in Wiltshire.<sup>3</sup>

The pits

Twenty two pits of this phase were recorded within Site K. Another (Feature 19) was noticed during the earthmoving that finally destroyed the site and was rapidly dug out but not planned. A further pit of large type was located during work within the runway area on Site B, and another was found in complete isolation some 500m from Site K towards the western limit of the works (Site J; see Fig. 1). A distinct pit-cluster is observable on the plan of Site K. The majority of the pits were circular and about 1.5m in diameter. Depths varied from a shallow example a mere 0.06m deep to almost 2m in the case of Feature 22. There was a certain variety of form, but the greater number were of a simple type with flat bases and steep sides (Fig. 7, Features 8 and 10). Two pits exhibited a distinctive profile which included a broad base and undercut sides forming a constriction just below the surviving surface (Features 3 and 19 for section of 3 see Fig. 7). Two related types (Features 1 and 7) also possessed undercut sides, though the expansion was restricted to a portion of the bottom circumference.

Three of these early period features had interior characteristics of an unusual kind. These can best be described as steps or ledges, disposed either concentrically or in chord-like fashion with respect to the pit outline (Pls. 2 and 3).

The filling of almost all pits contained occupation refuse. Pottery varied in quantity from a handful of sherds to the shattered remains of complete vessels (Features 19 and 21). Fragments of burnt daub were common, calcined flints occurred sporadically (in large quantities in Feature 22), ash and charcoal appeared intermittently as lenses in the filling or had been mixed with earth. An absence of silt in the pits indicates that they were deliberately filled.

Two pits with distinctive characteristics came to light at some distance from the cluster on Site K. The first of these, Feature 22, was encountered in the small trial trench dug into the partially stripped topsoil on Site B, within the main runway cutting (Fig. 8). This was at a point some 120m from the pit-cluster on Site K. The feature was large, 3.5m in diameter, 2m in depth. The lower part of the filling at least was derived from deliberate filling and included a huge number of calcined flints. These apart, there was scarcely any material relating to settlement activity. The other pit occurred in total isolation, some 500m west of Site K (Fig. 1, Site J). It was oval in plan (1.7m x 1.20m, Fig. 9) and just under 1m in depth. Internally, the pit possessed a central chamber flanked by two ledges. Its filling was composed of a dense clay, and contained a carbonised wooden stake together with the remains of a large shouldered jar. The latter fragments were scattered in unusual manner around the lower walls and base of the central chamber.

The hollows

There were four features of this category, each possessing characteristics singular to itself. A brief individual description will help to clarify the essential differences.

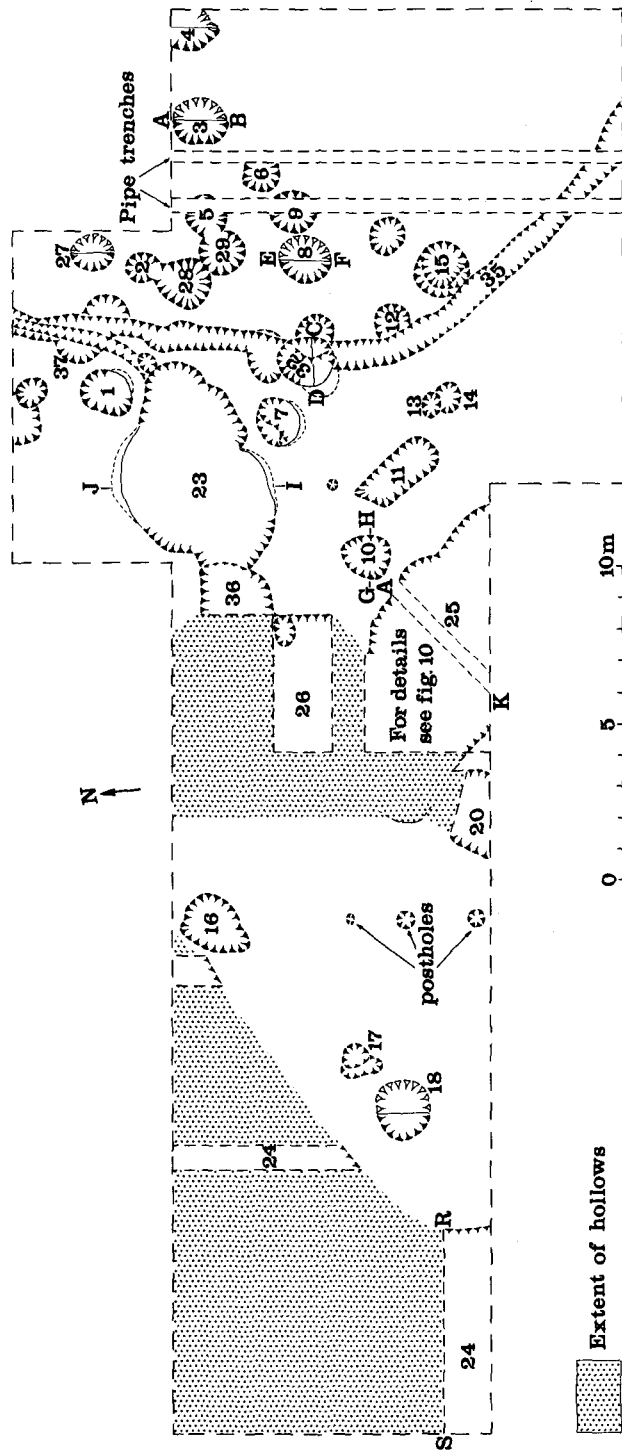


Fig. 6. Heathrow: Plan of Features, Site K.

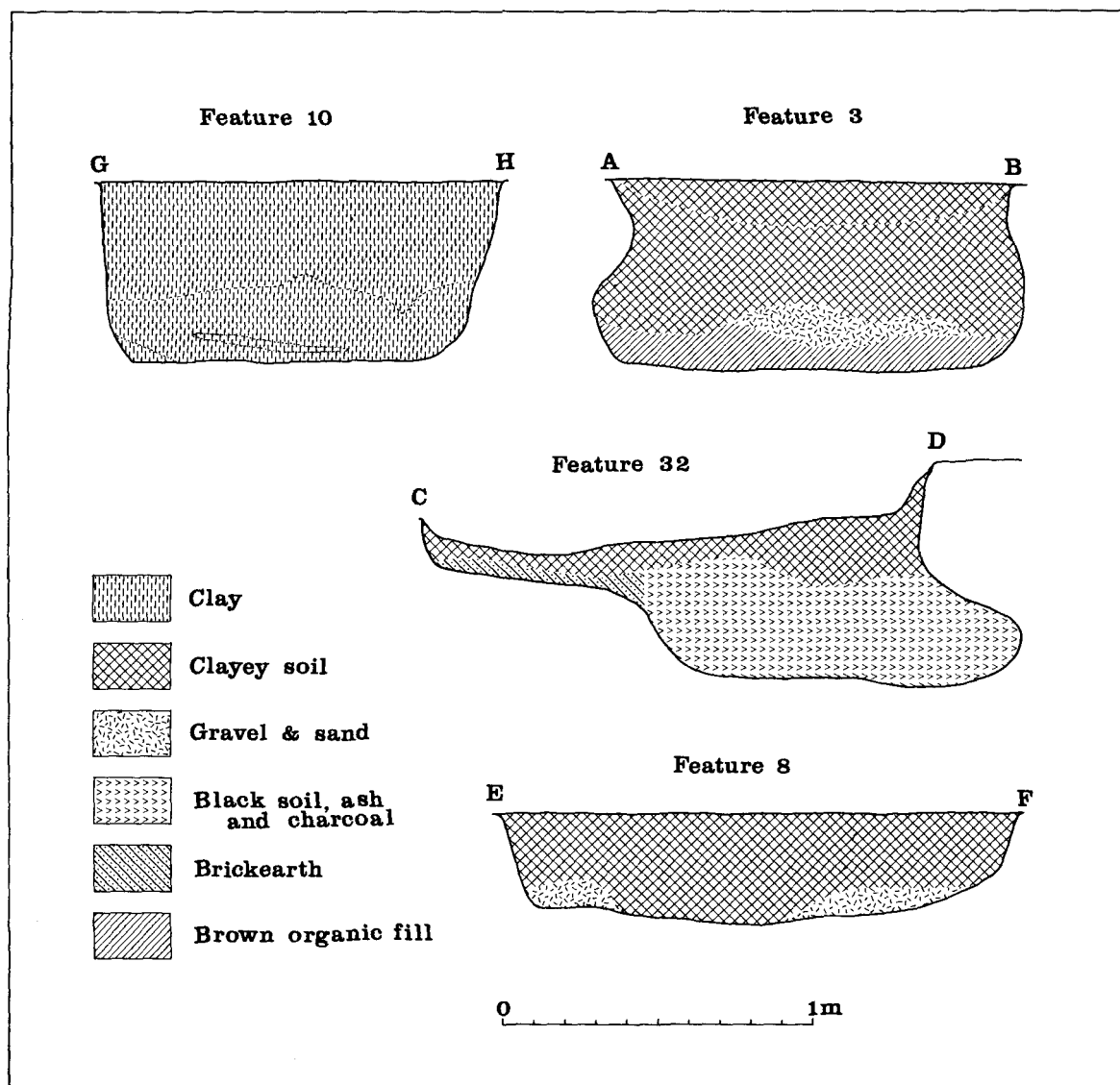


Fig. 7. Heathrow: Sections of early iron age pits.

*Feature 23* (Fig. 6 and 10, I-J)

An oval shaped hollow, 7m x 5m, and averaging 1m in depth. The outline consisted of a series of arcs, as if the hollow had resulted from the intersection of numerous pits (Pl. 4). Excavation proved that the feature was a single entity, having a flat bottom and undercut sides. In these aspects it was comparable to some of the circular pits. The nature of its filling encourages such a comparison, for it had obviously been filled by human agency in a single action. The principal constituents were tipped layers of pure brickearth, brickearth containing charcoal flecks, and mixtures of soil and brickearth. Fragments of burnt daub were noted, together with much pottery and a certain amount of animal bone.

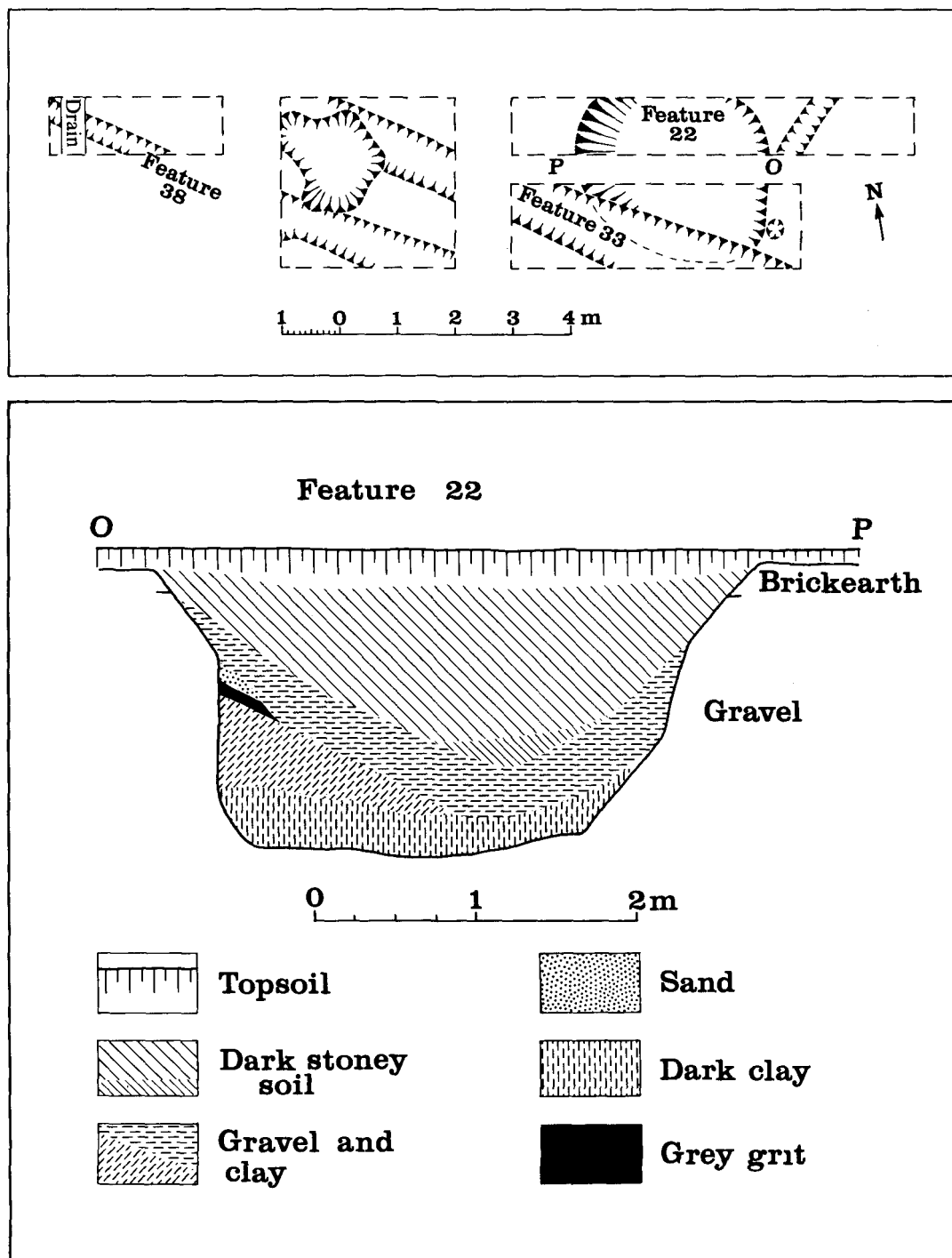


Fig. 8. Heathrow: Features on Site B and section of storage pit, Feature 22.

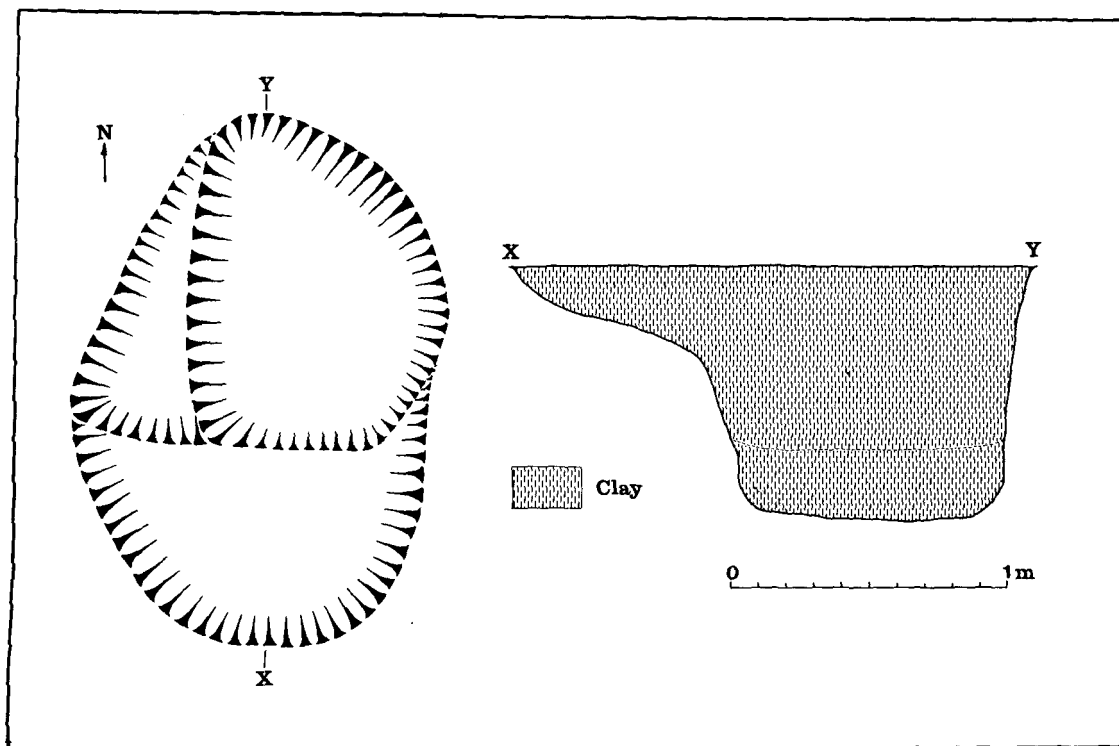


Fig. 9. Heathrow: Plan and section of the isolated early iron age pit, Site J.

Two noticeable concentrations of pottery were unearthed. In both cases the impression was gained that the sherds had been placed in the filling in small heaps. The two piles were derived from two shouldered jars (Nos. 41 and 42).

#### *Feature 24 (Fig 6)*

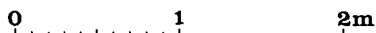
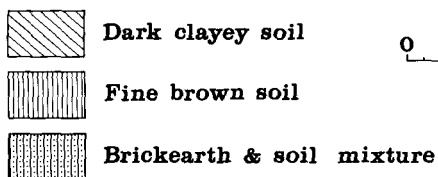
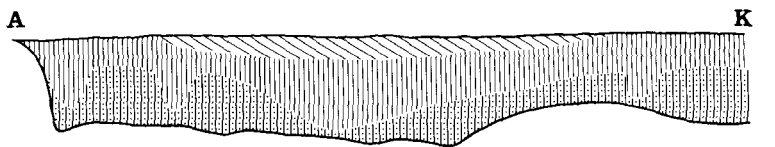
A hollow which fell only partly within the excavated area. The section (Fig. 11) shows a feature of uneven, though shallow, depth, filled with a brown clayey soil throughout. This material was noticeably sterile of finds in its lower portion, but the upper part abounded in sherds of pottery and fragments of bone. Although excavation was confined to the digging of two narrow trenches a very useful quantity of material resulted. For reasons that remain obscure, the conditions of both pottery and bone was extremely poor, a circumstance not encountered generally in the excavations.

Apart from the domestic refuse in the top, there was no indication of deliberate filling.

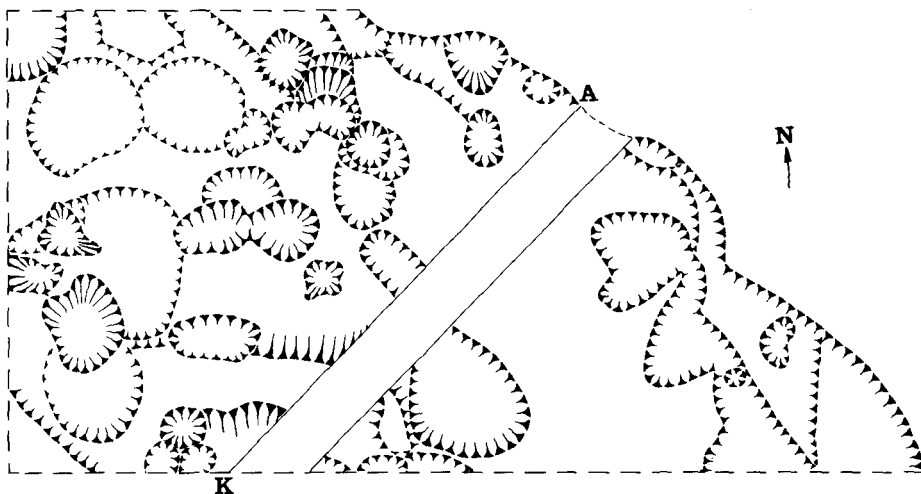
#### *Feature 25 (Fig. 10)*

A large hollow, not fully excavated, with an average depth of 0.60m. The feature was approximately 5m wide and at least 10m long. It possessed a rather intricate nature, being essentially a hollow with vertical sides that were in places undercut. The base was fairly flat with no obvious features cut into it.

Feature 25



Feature 25



Feature 23

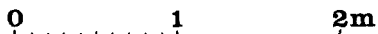
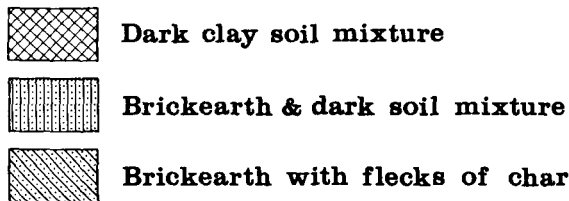
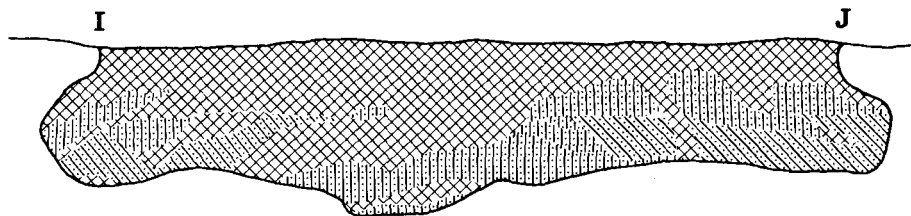


Fig. 10. Heathrow: The early iron age hollows on Site K.

This was covered with 0.30m of brickearth and dark soil through which various small pits had been dug, some of them having the appearance of post-holes. The upper part of this level held a concentration of potsherds and bones perhaps indicating that it was a floor. It was covered by a fine dark soil and sealed by a dark clayey soil containing large quantities of daub, potsherds and calcined flints.

It does not seem possible to make a firm interpretation of the jumble of small pits and postholes. It will be observed, however, that one or two clusters of postholes with similar diameters are present, indicating presumably the replacing of vertical timbers in a long-lasting structure. The patches of brickearth and soil may represent materials packed around the base of these timbers to give them support.

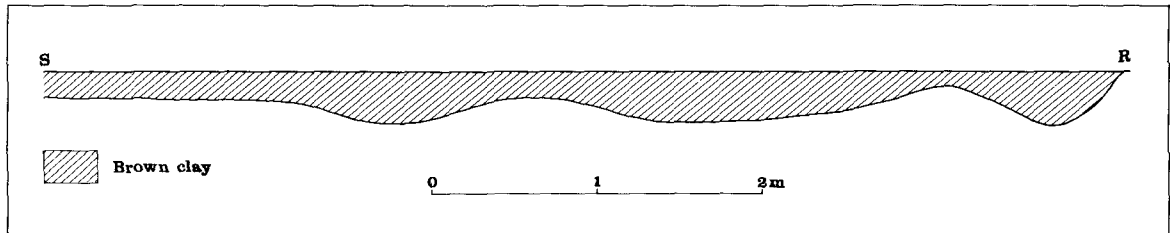


Fig. 11. Heathrow: Section of one of the hollows, Feature 24.

Several hundred sherds of pottery were found within the feature, the majority of them belonging to the shouldered jar and bowl tradition. Only the topmost surviving layer, which constituted the final levelling-off of the hollow (probably by plough action), contained later material, and this was restricted to four sherds of the later iron age or early Romano-British period. Since the same top filling contained fifty or more sherds of the early material, none of it particularly worn or eroded, it appears that the late sherds are intrusive or merely an indication of the tail-end of the levelling process. However, in the description of the pottery the sherds from the top fill are set apart in the interests of accuracy.

#### Feature 26 (Fig. 6)

This hollow merged with the northern portion of Feature 25. The sequence of the two was not established. Excavation was limited to a small trial trench, but was sufficient to establish that the feature was similar to 23. It was flat bottomed, filled with a mixture of soil and brickearth, and contained potsherds and calcined flints. A single posthole was noticed, cut into its base, close to the eastern edge. The pottery fragments were present in large numbers and concentrated in the upper filling.

During the final earthmoving, traces of the feature could be seen extending some distance (20m or more) away to the north-west. The hollow was thus revealed as a parallel-sided entity, rather in the manner of a hollow-way.

#### PHASE III: the later pre-Roman iron age

A number of the features observed in cuttings or excavated on Site K were never satisfactorily dated. However, a small group of pits contained sherds of pottery belonging to a late phase in the iron age. Five of these (Features 27-29, 31 and 32) fall within the pit-cluster of Site K, a sixth was recorded on Site C (Feature 30) within the storm-water drain trench, situated 80m south of Site K. Four of these are directly comparable in size, shape and filling to the simpler forms of the early pits. Feature 32 compares to the undercut pits of early type for it contained a marked hollowing of one side, in which a cache of animal bones had been stored. Its filling was rich in ash and charcoal (Fig. 7, C-D).

#### PHASE IV: the Romano-British period

A small number of features and deposits indicated that settlement continued throughout the Romano-British period. Within the areas examined, it was clear that this occupation was never intensive. The exception to this was a narrow curving gully on Site K (Feature 35) which produced a rich haul of 1st century vessels, most of them in a near-complete state. The date lies within the first decades of Roman rule, *c.* AD 43-65. Two pits on Site K (Features 36 and 37) appeared to be contemporary. Within Site B, much was lost in the machine-scraping for the runway, but the trial

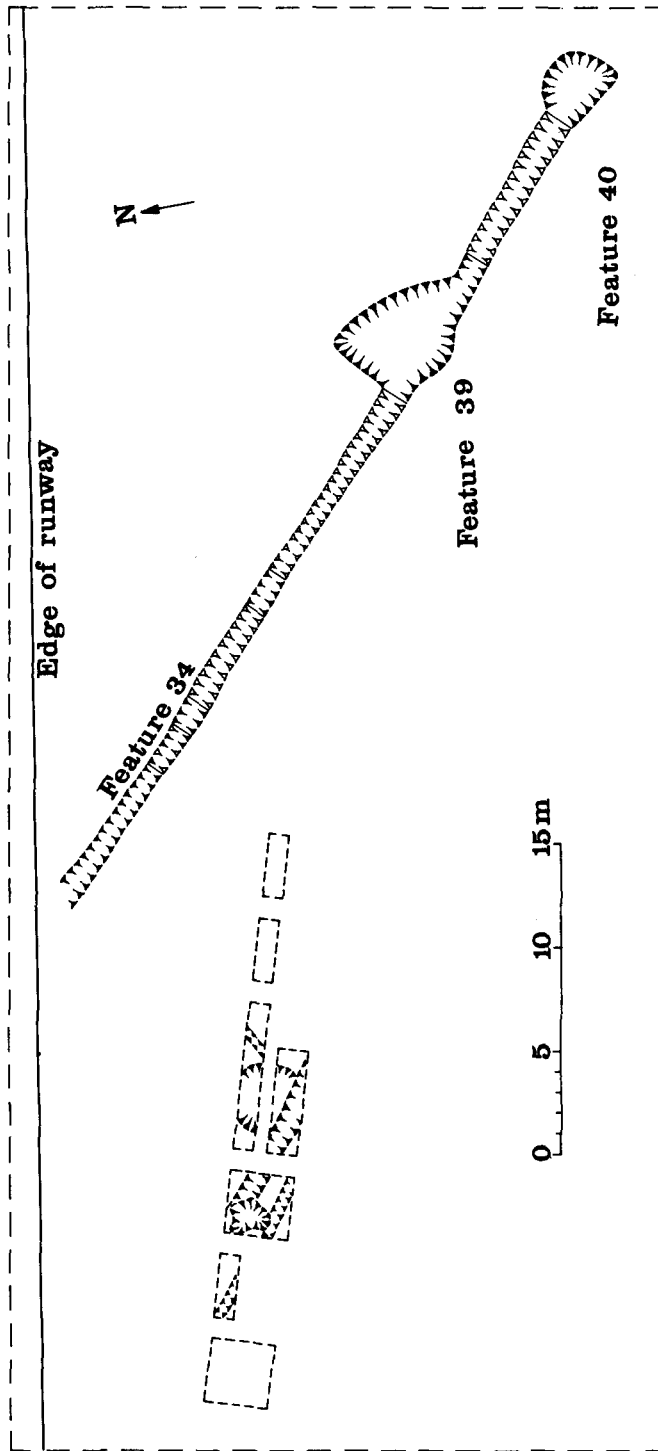


Fig. 12. Heathrow: General plan of Site B.



trenching prior to this established the existence of closely spaced archaeological features (Figs. 8 and 12). Among these there were two straight ditches (Features 33 and 34) that were first excavated in the mid 1st century. The more easterly of these (Feature 34) was intersected by two pits, which were probably dug as sumps to improve the drainage characteristics of the ditch (Fig. 12). The dating evidence ranges widely through the period, the total filling of the features not taking place until the 4th century. It is perhaps simplest to assume that pits and ditches remained in use for several centuries, being cleaned out occasionally and that the dating materials relate more to the demise of the features than to their original fabrication.

A small ditch (Feature 38) adjacent to Ditch 33, does however seem to have a 4th century origin, while on Site K evidence of a late Romano-British pit (41) was noted within the filling of Feature 23. Its size could not be determined owing to a close similarity to the fillings of the two, but its contents were isolated during excavation of the prehistoric hollow.

## CONCLUSIONS

In terms of the principal period of occupation the Heathrow site belongs to a widely distributed horizon of iron age settlements, probably spanning the period 550-300 BC and characterised by the manufacture of jars and bowls with angular profiles. In view of the difference with which absolute dates for iron age ceramics are currently stated, it would be foolhardy to dwell upon the question of chronology. The presence of a La Tène I type brooch, stratified deeply within one of the hollows belonging to the main phase, is added confirmation that the site lies within the 'angular ceramic phase' of the early La Tène iron age.<sup>4</sup> The length of occupation is also an issue about which speculation must be restrained. The two ring ditches denote the presence of a community in the area during the bronze age, while the later iron age pottery and indeed Romano-British features specify activity several centuries after the main iron age phase. We are thus presented with a picture of spasmodic settlement, the return to the site being influenced perhaps by social or economic pressures, or perhaps because land formerly exhausted by cultivation had re-established its fertility. An alternative argument would be that the nucleus of settlement drifted somewhat over the years and that the fieldwork reported here has recovered only a partial record. However, it would be true to say that a number of the Upper Thames sites, observed and excavated during extensive gravel digging, exhibit similar intermittent habitation.<sup>5</sup>

The simple ring-ditch (Site H) has parallels too numerous to mention on virtually every tract of river terrace gravel in southern Britain surveyed from the air. Since the terraces have universally been subjected to continuous ploughing for a very long period, it is likely that associated banks and mounds have been obliterated. The original form of these monuments remains in doubt, though in the present case there was a clear indication from the character of the ditch filling that an internal mound or bank had once existed. It may therefore have been a bronze age round barrow. The feature on Site A differed in that the circular ditch was interrupted by numerous causeways. Parallels are known for this characteristic. A small barrow on Stockbridge Down in Hampshire, which contained a primary beaker burial, was surrounded by a similar ditch dug in five segments.<sup>6</sup> It is also appropriate to refer to the oval burial mound excavated at Alfriston, East Sussex,<sup>7</sup> which was flanked by two ditches, curved to form an oval plan with two causeways, and apparently dug in segments. The Alfriston monument was of neolithic date, and it brings to mind another neolithic feature delineated by interrupted ditches, the long mortuary enclosure discovered on Normanton Down, Wiltshire.<sup>8</sup> Although a bronze age date seems probable for Site A, the neolithic tradition of digging ditches in this fashion suggests the possibility of an earlier date and perhaps a

different interpretation. The recutting of the ditch of this feature might be regarded as a sign of the revamping of a sacred or ritual site, examples of which in the context of the Wessex early bronze age have been listed in a recent report.<sup>9</sup>

Had there been more aerial survey of the gravels in the West London area, these two features would have been known prior to the excavation. It raises the speculation that the London gravel terraces may be as well-endowed with clusters of ring-ditches as the similar terrain of the Upper Thames,<sup>10</sup> and it is interesting that Barrett<sup>11</sup> has already pointed to a number of bronze age finds from the region that may have originated from ploughed-out barrows. The same author has also presented us with the reasons why such monuments have not come to light in the region, largely a matter of discovery potential rather than actuality.<sup>12</sup> It is germane to his argument that the Heathrow project offered a rare opportunity within the London region for the inspection of a large area of stripped gravel surface, and that the discovery of two ring-ditches resulted.

The dominant aspects of the main phase of settlement are the pits and the hollows. The pits were found to possess a number of characteristics recorded at Little Woodbury, where the case for their interpretation as storage pits was powerfully argued.<sup>13</sup> These elements include the presence of ash, burnt daub and calcined flint (believed to derive from ovens for parching corn) and the digging of some pits with constricted mouths. We need no longer range as far afield as Little Woodbury for parallels, for the pit clusters which reveal themselves on so many of the Thames Valley sites, both in excavation and on aerial photographs, are most certainly of the same nature.<sup>14</sup>

The hollows, by contrast, appear not to be a characteristic of Thames Valley iron age sites, yet at Heathrow these strange features were obviously important in the function of the settlement. The oval shaped hollow, Feature 23, is similar in its irregular outline and in size to many of the isolated hollows found on the Wiltshire site, but Features 24 and 26 by virtue of their size and regular shape differ both from the isolated Little Woodbury hollows and from the 'big hollow' on that site which was shown to consist of very many smaller units. In seeking to determine the function of these features Bersu described hollows observed in the neighbourhood of Egyptian villages, in which many of the tasks of harvest-time were carried out.<sup>15</sup>

Feature 25 was a hollow unparalleled at Little Woodbury in that it contained clear traces of numerous postholes. Harding has discussed forms of building other than circular houses and quotes continental examples of oval hollows into which foundations were recessed,<sup>16</sup> which adequately describes this particular feature.

Most of the features of this phase, therefore, would seem to be associated with cereal production and storage. The bone evidence supplies information on the stock-raising aspect of the community, in which cattle and sheep were of about equal importance. The low figures for the pig are typical of iron age deposits, and are usually taken to imply a landscape cleared of woodland (to which the pig is well suited and useful in furthering clearance). What is missing from the picture are the details of earthworks for controlling stock (ranch boundaries, droveways, and stock-enclosures) and the fences and drainage ditches which must have defined the fields.

Comment has been made above on the truncation of the ditch-filling on Site A and the implication from its filling, that a deposit of brickearth in its immediate area has disappeared. This contrasts strongly with the stratigraphy of iron age settlement where feature-fillings

survived high within the topsoil, and the Site H ring-ditch was similarly preserved above the bedrock level. The varied situation must result from ploughing in ancient times, and probably at the time of occupation of the iron age settlement since its features appear to be unaffected in this way. The evidence of the later iron age and Romano-British phases gives hints of the continuation, albeit with breaks, of farming. The late iron age pits are little different in form to those of the early phase, and presumably were dug for the same purpose; Feature 32 in particular, with undercut side and a filling full of burnt materials, is reminiscent of the Little Woodbury features. The ditches found to the south-east of the main settlement, apparently spanning the Romano-British period, were probably dug to drain land needed for cultivation. As to the rest of the Romano-British material, it was found within the prehistoric settlement, mostly scattered within the top fillings of iron age features. The curving gully (Feature 35) is too small to have formed the boundary ditch of a settlement, and may have served to drain an area in which buildings were sited. Of the latter there was no trace.

The discovery of an isolated pit towards the western end of the extended runway (Site J) may indicate the existence of another settlement. No other features were seen in the area in spite of extensive earthmoving. Further, the pit was of unusual construction, and the discovery of a wooden stake in its filling may connect it with the ritual pits discussed by Ellison and Drewett,<sup>17</sup> one of which contained a standing stake in its floor.

The Heathrow settlement is one of several iron age sites found within the Middlesex gravel plain. It is about equidistant from the previously excavated Heathrow settlement<sup>18</sup> just under two miles to the east, and from the large complex of fields, tracks, enclosures and hut-circles revealed as cropmarks near Bedfont two miles to the south-east.<sup>19</sup> Of the three, only the previously excavated Heathrow site was enclosed by a bank and ditch. On each site occupation continued into the Romano-British period. Comparison must inevitably be made with the 'multiple settlement' complexes of the Upper Thames gravels discussed by Harding,<sup>20</sup> although the separation distances in Middlesex are somewhat greater, at least on present evidence. It would be reasonable to assume that the kind of ancient landscape features seen to spread out from the Upper Thames sites existed also in Middlesex, and the ditches found near Hatton on the south-east corner of the airport by members of the West London Archaeological Field Group would fit into such a scheme.<sup>21</sup>

The Heathrow community had connections of culture and tradition over a wide realm. East Anglian sites, in particular West Harling, offer parallels for much of the pottery. A number of aspects, notably the pit-clusters and undefended nature of the settlement, invite close comparison with discoveries in the Upper Thames region. The farming techniques (including cereal production, the use of grain storage pits, sheep and cattle rearing) extend the apparent connections over a wider zone, encompassing Wessex settlements such as Little Woodbury in Wiltshire and Gussage All Saints in Dorset.<sup>22</sup>

However, the emergence of an horizon of 'angular ceramic' sites within the London region has been long awaited, in view of the remarkable Hallstatt D/La Tène I daggers dredged from the bed of the Thames.<sup>23</sup> It remains to be seen whether contemporary material comes to light in the gravels of central London during observation of building sites. On the gravels of the Lower Thames in Essex iron age occupation sites are again apparent. It is not difficult to envisage a linear zone of farming communities established along the entire length of the terrace system, linking the population of East Anglia and the Lower Thames with the Upper Thames settlements, and those of the Wessex chalkland.

## NOTES

1. The information was taken from the following sources: Victoria County History (V.C.H.) iii (London 1962); *Ibid.* iv (1971); M. Robbins *Middlesex* (London 1953); *Report on Bridges in Middlesex* (London 1826).
2. J. Middleton *The Agriculture of Middlesex* (London 1798).
3. G. Bersu 'Excavations at Little Woodbury, Wiltshire' *Proc. Prehist. Soc.* 6 (1940) 95.
4. D. Harding *The Iron Age in the Upper Thames Basin* (Oxford 1972) 86-96.
5. *Ibid.* Pl. 27.
6. P. Ashbee *The Bronze Age Round Barrow in Britain* (London 1960) Fig. 23.
7. P. Drewett 'The excavation of an oval burial mound of the third millennium BC at Alfriston, East Sussex' *Proc. Prehist. Soc.* 41 (1975) 119-152.
8. F. de M. Vatcher 'The excavation of a Long Mortuary Enclosure on Normanton Down, Wilts' *Proc. Prehist. Soc.* 27 (1961) 160-173.
9. F. de M. and H. L. Vatcher 'The excavation of a round barrow near Poor's Heath, Risby, Suffolk' *Proc. Prehist. Soc.* 42 (1976) 273.
10. E. T. Leeds 'Round barrows and ring-ditches in Berkshire and Oxfordshire' *Oxoniensia* 1 7-23.
11. J. Barrett 'The Bronze Age' in *The Archaeology of the London Area: Current knowledge and problems*. Special Paper No. 1 London Middx. Archaeol. Soc. (1976) 35.
12. *Ibid.* 33.
13. Bersu *op. cit.* in Note 3, 60-63.
14. Harding *op. cit.* in Note 4, Pl. 35.
15. Bersu *op. cit.* in Note 3, 77-78.
16. D. Harding *The Iron Age in Lowland Britain* (London 1974) 52.
17. A. Ellison and P. Drewett 'Pits and Postholes in the British Early Iron Age: some alternative explanations' *Proc. Prehist. Soc.* 37 (1971) Pt. 1 184.
18. W. F. Grimes 'Some smaller settlements; A Symposium, in S. S. Frere (ed) *Problems of the Iron Age in Southern Britain*.
19. N. Farrant 'Iron Age Site at Bedfont' *London Archaeol.* 1, 13 (1971) 305-309.
20. Harding *op. cit.* in Note 4, 10.
21. Unpublished information from Alison Laws.
22. G. Wainwright and M. Spratling 'The Iron Age settlement of Gussage All Saints' *Antiquity* 47 (1973) 109-130.
23. E. M. Jope 'Daggers of the Early Iron Age in Britain' *Proc. Prehist. Soc.* 27 (1961) 307-343.

## PART II: THE FINDS

## THE EARLY IRON AGE POTTERY

## PHASE II: The Pits on Site K

(Figs. 13 and 14)

*Large jars (diameter at mouth 250-400mm)*

1. Coarse black fabric with red-brown surface, containing much flint grit. The exterior bears numerous oblique and horizontal striations as though wiped or brushed before firing.
2. Coarse dark brown ware, smooth surface.
3. Dark brown with very fine filler (partly pounded flint grit, partly grog).
4. Coarse dark brown ware with finely pounded flint grit. Similar vessels with thick, rimless necks inclined inwards were found at Staple Howe in Yorkshire. (Brewster 1963, Fig. 39, No. 4).
5. Well-made brown to black ware with a fine sand filler. The surface is lightly burnished. Although expanded rims are common on this and other settlements of the early iron age this specimen with an internal ledge (presumably to support a lid) is a rarity. The closest parallel is from a Belgic level at Maiden Castle, (Wheeler 1943, Fig. 75, No. 233).

*Medium size jars (diameter at mouth 150-250mm)*

6. Dark brown ware with flint grit, smooth exterior.
7. Coarse brown ware, crudely finished. Sparse flint grit, the particles of which vary considerable in size.
8. Black fabric with orange-brown surface. Sparse flint grit.
9. Coarse black fabric with brown surface.
10. Brown ware with sparse flint grit.
11. Coarse brown-black ware.
12. Coarse brown ware with fine flint grit.
13. Coarse dark brown ware with sparse flint grit. Some attempt has been made to smooth the surface.
14. Coarse brown vesicular ware, smooth surface.

15. Coarse black fabric with brown surface, smooth finish.
16. Coarse brown to black ware, poorly finished.
17. Coarse grey fabric with buff surface and sparse flint grit. Surface wiped or brushed before firing.
18. Orange-grey ware, sparsely tempered with pounded flint and grog.
19. Coarse black ware with well-smoothed, burnished surface, a few large particles of flint.
20. Coarse brown ware with some grog, smooth exterior.
21. Fragment of a handle in brown ware, tempered with a fine white grit (possibly pounded shell).
22. Black fabric with orange surface. Well-finished and burnished on exterior. The rim seems more Belgic than early iron age. However the associated sherds are early.

*Small jars (diameter at mouth 100-150mm)*

23. Brown to black fabric, smoothed by horizontal brushing or wiping.
24. Dark brown ware with a sparse flint grit.
25. Dark brown ware, crudely wiped surface.

*Fine ware bowls*

- 26-29. Fine dark brown ware with smooth surface, fine flint grit.
30. As No. 26, a parallel with four grooves at Darmsden (Cunliffe 1968, Fig. 4, 61).
31. As No. 26 but burnished. This and No. 29 are possibly from fine ware jars. A similar distinctly expanded rim was found at Darmsden (Fig. 3, 34).
32. Brown ware with burnished surface.
33. Grey fabric with pale grey surface, tempered with dark brown grit (possibly a grog). Chinnor produced a number of bowls with the same motif of parallel vertical strokes. (Richardson and Young 1951, Fig. 8, Nos. 47, 54, 55)

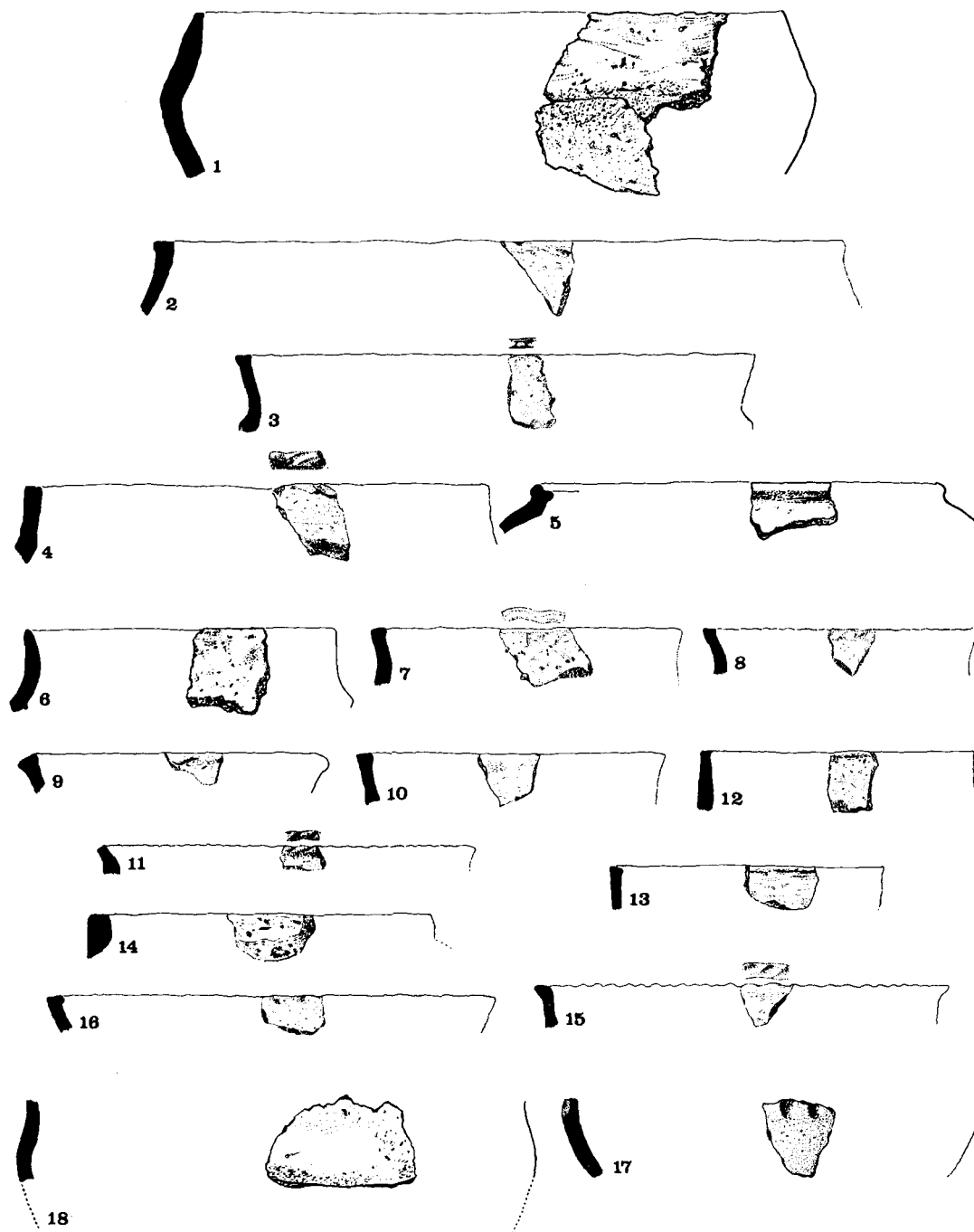


Fig. 13. Heathrow: The iron age pottery. Nos. 1-18 (1:4).

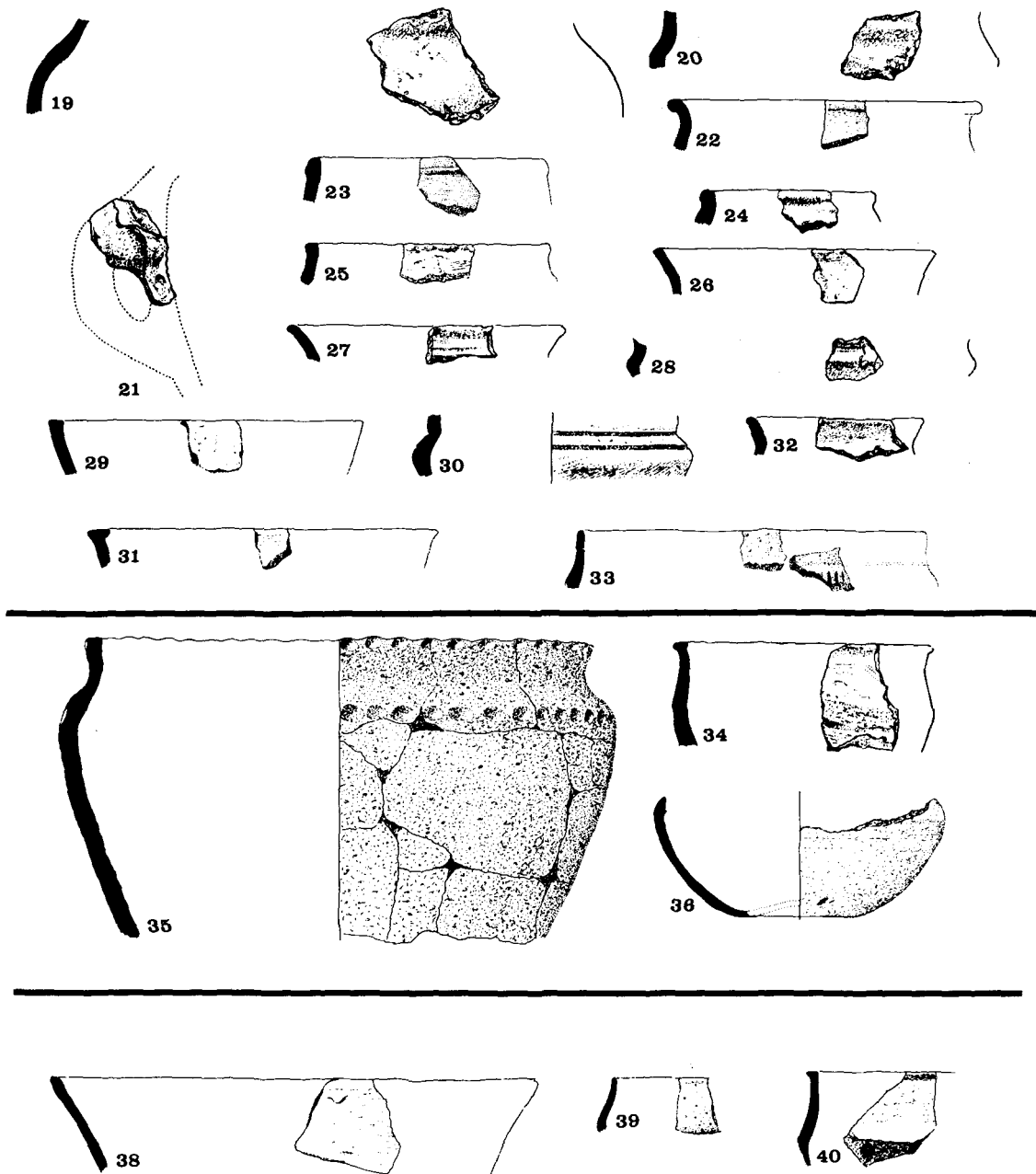


Fig. 14. Heathrow: The iron age pottery. Nos. 19-36, 38-40 (1:4).

## FEATURE 19, a pit north of Site K

(Fig. 14)

Although its dating evidence and shape place it in the same category as the pits listed above it has been accorded separate treatment here because it contained a rather greater quantity of pottery than was normal with these features.

*Shouldered jars*

34. Dark brown fabric with black exterior. Flint grit apparent in break and on interior surface but not on exterior, as though vessel has been coated with a crude slip.
35. Coarse black fabric with brown surface, dense shell tempering. Many of the jars from the West Harling site are decorated in the same manner, with bands of finger-tip impressions on both the shoulder and the

exterior of the rim (Clark and Fell 1953, Figs. 10-12).

*Fine Ware Bowl*

36. Fine black fabric with extremely fine white grit. Orange slip on interior and exterior, polished. There is a slight indication that the bowl had an indented base. A few round-shouldered bowls appeared at Chinnor, one possessing a similar hemispherical lower half, (Richardson and Young 1951, Fig. 8, No. 69)

## FEATURE 21, isolated pit, Site J

(Figs. 14 and 15)

*Shouldered jar*

37. Heavily gritted black ware fired to grey-red in places.

*Fine ware vessels*

38. Brown fabric with black burnished surface; fine flint grit. It is not clear whether this is a bowl or a jar.
39. Fine dark ware, though containing much flint grit.
40. Fine black ware with sparse flint grit.

## FEATURE 23, a hollow

(Figs. 15, 16 and 17)

*Large jars (diameter at mouth greater than 250mm)*

41. Coarse dark brown fabric, orange exterior, much flint grit.
42. Coarse grey to brown ware with flint and grog filler. The decoration has been formed by pushing a finger-tip into the clay and applying pressure to one side of the indentation to form a ridge. Not only the decoration but also the size of the vessel is noteworthy. A large biconical jar with an all-over decoration of finger-tip impressions was found at West Harling (Clark and Fell 1953, Fig. 12, 26), and Cunliffe describes vessels from Darmsden in Suffolk that possess 'over-all finger pinching or impression' (Cunliffe 1968, 179). The distinctive form — a large, wide-mouthed jar with short neck and high rounded shoulder — is closely paralleled at West Harling (for example Fig. 12, 20).
43. Coarse black fabric, fired red on the surface; dense flint grit. The exterior bears signs of rough brushing or wiping. Nail-marks within the impressions confirm that they are finger-tip ornament. As with No. 42 the West Harling site provides the best comparisons, both for the shape of the vessel and the use of a double band of finger-tip impressions (Fig. 12, 20 & 21). A vessel from Wisley in Surrey has an identical profile (Lowther 1945, Fig. 3, No. 51)
44. Coarse fabric with some grog and much flint, especially on the undersurface. Appears to be the base of No. 43.
45. Brown to black coarse ware with flint grit, well finished. There are traces of the orange slip seen on some of the fine-ware bowls. In his survey of the iron age in Surrey, Bishop defines a class of jars with high bulging shoulders (Bishop 1971, 3). Most sites seem to produce one or two examples with high flaring rims similar to the vessel illustrated here.
46. Brown to black ware containing large particles of flint grit.
47. Coarse black ware with flint grit. The sherd is presumably a base fragment and possibly belonged to No. 42.

*Medium sized jars (diameter at mouth 150-250mm)*

48. Coarse black, flint-gritted ware, exterior burnished.
49. Coarse dark brown ware, flint grit.
50. Coarse black fabric with flint grit, fired buff-to-brown on exterior.
51. Grey-brown fabric with extremely fine shell temper. Well-finished with burnished exterior.
52. Dark brown ware with flint grit.

*Small jars*

53. Coarse black fabric with flint grit.
54. Coarse dark brown ware, some flint grit. Smooth surface.

*Fine ware vessels*

55. Dark brown ware, smooth surface. Exterior has a red coating, possibly haematite.
56. Dark brown burnished fabric with fine flint grit. Decoration incised before firing. The sherd appears to represent the neck of an angular jar, broken at rim and shoulder. Tripartite jars and bowls with four-line chevron decoration on the neck were common at Fengate (Hawkes and Fell 1945, Fig. 2), and from the published description were smooth and well made as is this example.
57. Coarse black fabric with flint grit, smooth brown surface burnished on interior and exterior. Probably part of a bowl.
58. Dark brown fabric with very fine, sparse flint grit and well smoothed surface. Very similar to No. 56. The unusual rim has a parallel at Staple Howe (Brewster 1963, Fig. 35, 4).
59. Fine orange ware with extremely sparse flint grit. Burnished exterior. An indented base is indicated by the change in angle on the lowest surviving portion. The bowl is closely paralleled by some of the Darmsden vessels (Cunliffe 1968, Fig. 2, 7).
60. Fine grey ware with smoothed surface.
61. Fine black ware with sparse, fine flint grit. Thin orange slip on both surfaces.
62. As above. The orange slip on this sherd is applied evenly and is unworn.

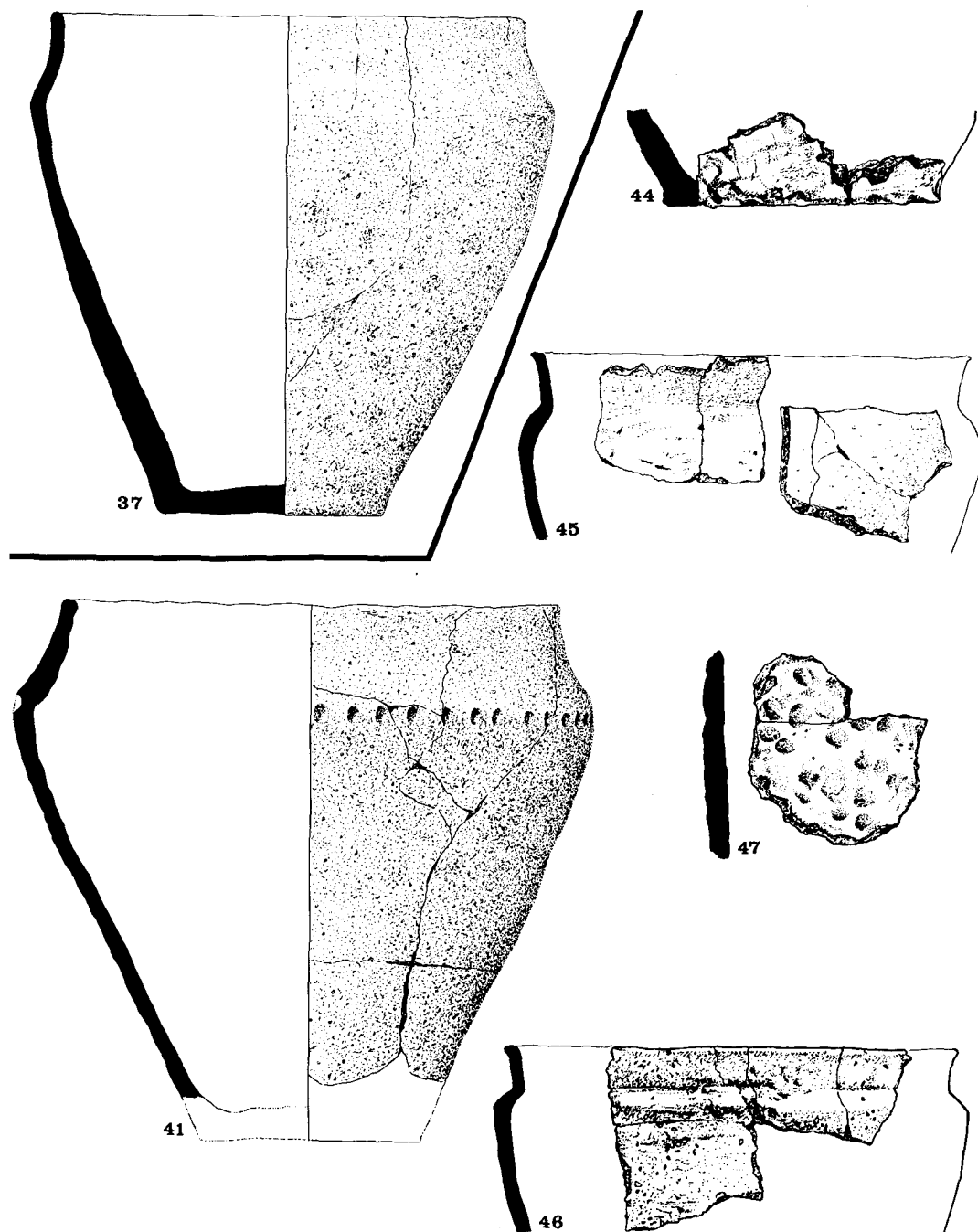


Fig. 15. Heathrow: The iron age pottery. Nos. 37, 41, 44-47 (1:4).



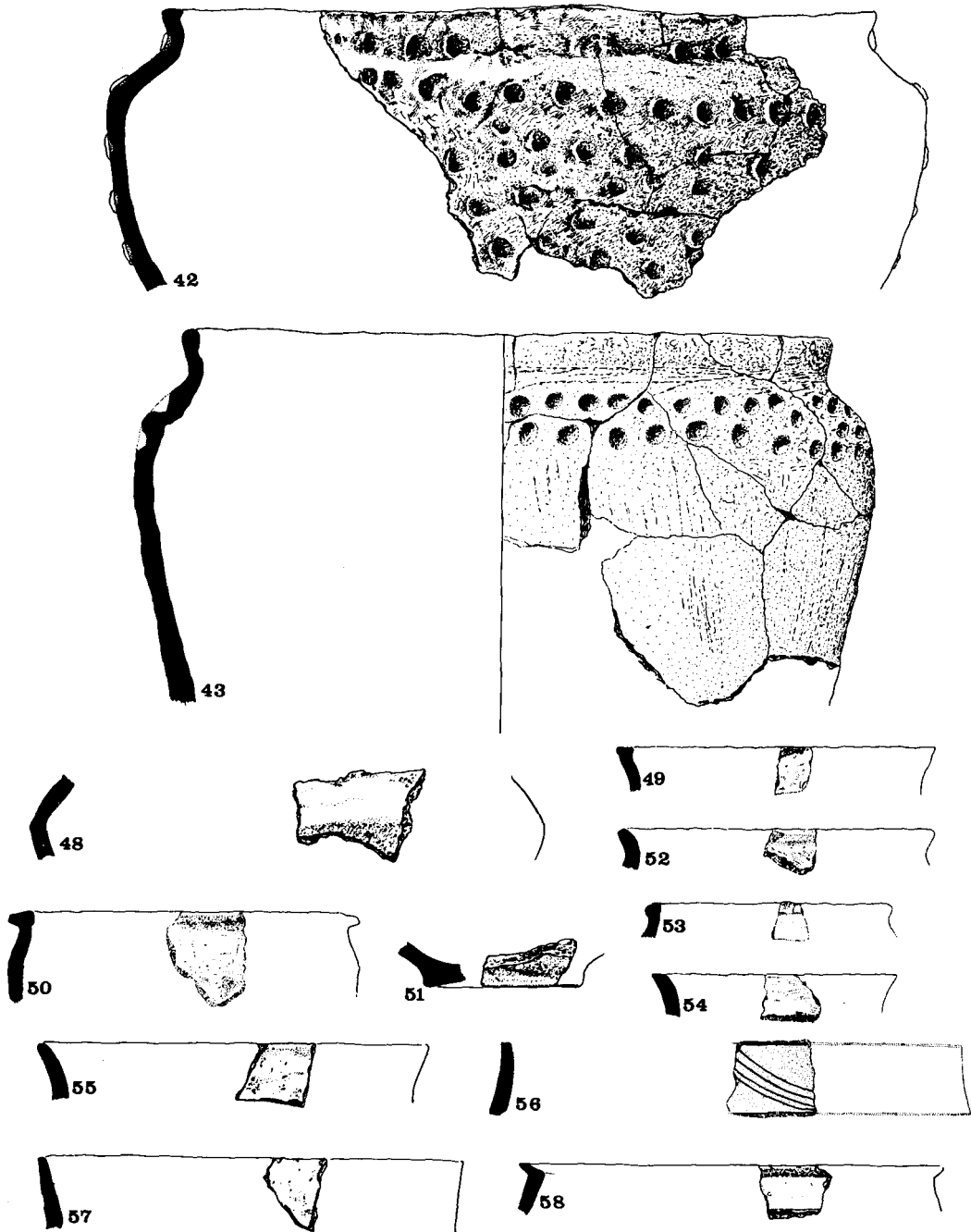


Fig. 16. Heathrow: The iron age pottery. Nos. 42, 43, 48-58 (1:4).

*Miscellaneous*

63. Black fabric with fine flint grit. The exterior is gritless, implying that a coating has been added. The rustication has been achieved by pinching the surface

between thumb and finger (*cf* Cunliffe 1968, Fig. 3, 51).

64. Coarse black fabric, brown surface, roughly striated. The sherd appears to be a base fragment.

**FEATURE 24, a hollow***(Figs 17 and 18)**Large jars (diameter at mouth greater than 250mm)*

65. Coarse black fabric with fine-to-medium flint grit, surface fired red-brown. The clay has been pushed into a ridge using the finger-tip in the manner of No. 42.

66. Black fabric with sparse, fine flint grit. Traces of an orange slip.

67. Coarse dark brown ware with flint grit.

68. Dense black fabric with coarse flint grit. Exterior is scored by wiping or brushing.

*Medium sized jars (diameter at mouth 150-250mm)*

69. Black fabric fired to buff on surface.

70. Coarse grey-brown ware with flint grit.

71. Coarse dark brown ware.

72. Coarse black ware with flint grit.

73. Black fabric fired red on exterior, sparse flint grit.

74. Coarse buff to black ware, with grog and flint grit. Very crudely made.

75. Dark brown fabric fired orange on surface, much flint

grit and some grog.

76. Black fabric with brown surface and sparse flint grit. Vertical scoring on exterior.

77. Black fabric with brown exterior and flint grit. The clay has been thoroughly worked over with the finger-tips to form a thin, dense fabric.

78. Dark brown fabric with much flint grit. As the grits do not show on the exterior it seems that a coating has been added.

79. Coarse grey ware with flint grit and grog filler.

80. Coarse dark brown ware with flint grit.

81. Coarse black ware with grog filler, red-brown surface. Exterior wiped or brushed.

82. Black fabric with brown surface. Much flint grit.

83. Black fabric fired red-brown on exterior. Fine flint grit.

*Fine ware vessels*

84-92

All are in a fine dark ware with sparse flint grit, and most are burnished.

**FEATURE 25, a hollow***(Fig. 18)**Upper filling*

93. Dark brown vesicular ware. Indications of burnishing on upper part of body. The vessel is related to proto-beadrim pots though less globular, more open-mouthed than is normal. There are a few small bowls or cups at Staple Howe (Brewster 1963, Fig. 53, 3).

94. Fine hard black fabric, fired brown on surface. Very fine white grit. The vessel is related to the footring bowls of the later iron age in Kent (Ward Perkins 1944, Fig. 5).

95. Black fabric with much flint grit, fired brown on surface. Outer surface smoothed.

96. Dense black fabric fired brown on surface and burnished. Fine and sparse flint grit.

Fine brown soil (mid-filling)

*Medium sized jars (diameter at mouth 150-250mm)*

97. Black fabric with sparse flint grit and grog, buff surface. The ware has been compressed by thorough finger-working in the same distinctive technique as No. 42 (Feature 23). The shape is close to some of the early vessels from Maiden Castle (Wheeler 1943, Fig. 58, 40).

98. Coarse black fabric, some grog, fired buff on surface.

99. Black flint gritted fabric fired dark brown on surface.

Brickearth and soil mix (lower filling)

*Medium sized jars (diameter at mouth 150-250mm)*

100. Black ware with fine flint grit, compressed in the manner of Nos. 77 and 98.

101. Coarse black ware with flint grit.

The feature produced a few sherds of the typical fine-ware bowl form, though nothing of sufficient size to merit illustration.

**FEATURE 26, a hollow***(Fig. 19)*

A small group of late iron age/early Romano-British pottery and small finds located in the upper layers are probably to be attributed to an intrusive feature. The material amounts to three sherds, an iron brooch and a bronze coin. Several hundred iron age potsherds deriving from coarse angular jars and fine burnished bowls were also found, concentrated in the upper fill. Most were too fragmentary to permit illustration.

*The late pottery*

102. Fine grey fabric with orange surface.

103. Fine black ware with burnished surface.

104. Orange to black vesicular ware.

*The early pottery*

105. Coarse black fabric with buff surface.

106-

108 All in lightly gritted, black-burnished ware.

**PHASE III: pits of the later pre-Roman iron age****FEATURE 27***(Fig. 19)*

109. Grey core, brown surface: the sherd is soft and eroded.

110. Fine black fabric fired orange on surface, smooth and well-made.

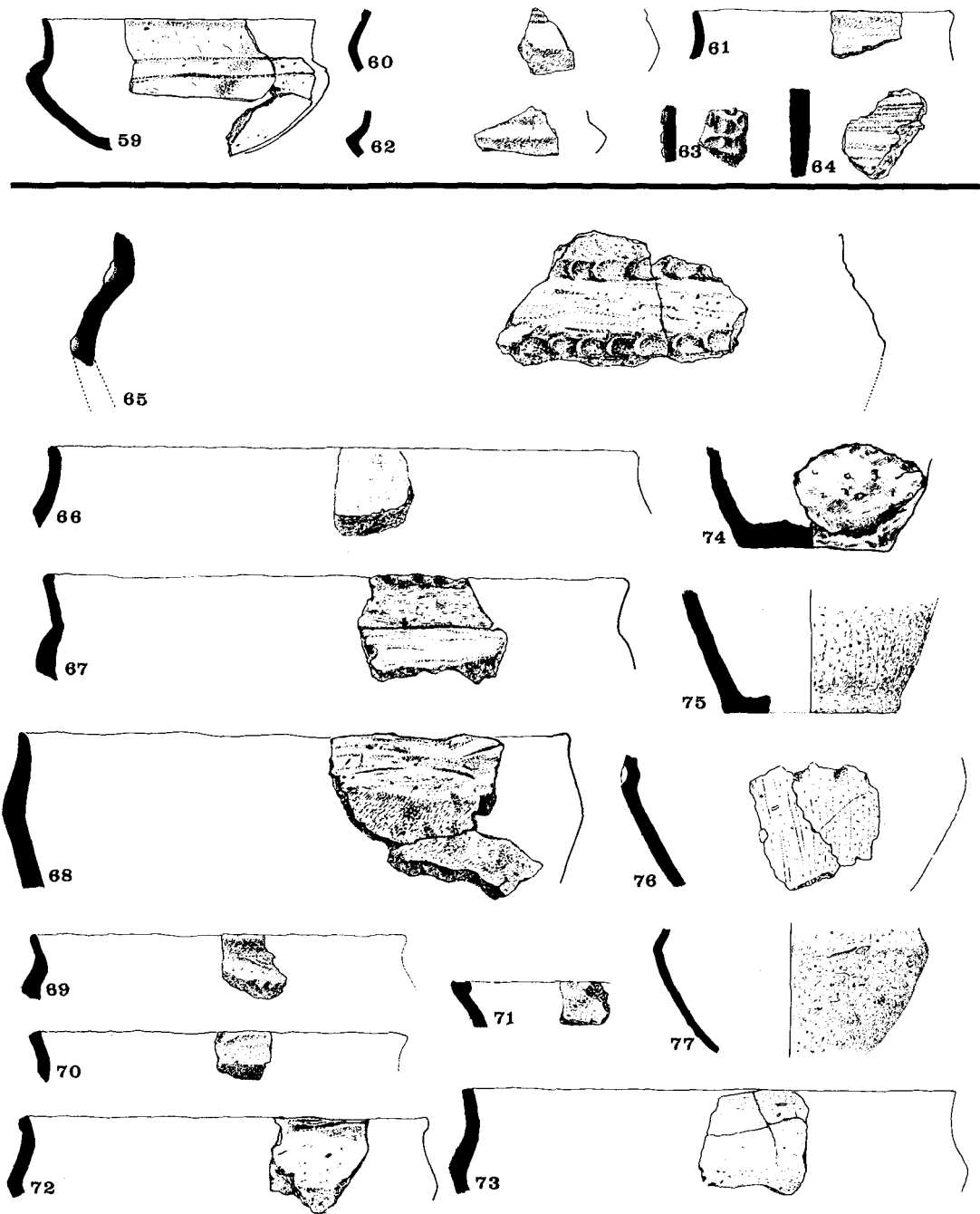


Fig. 17 Heathrow: The iron age pottery. Nos. 59-64, 65-77 (1:4).

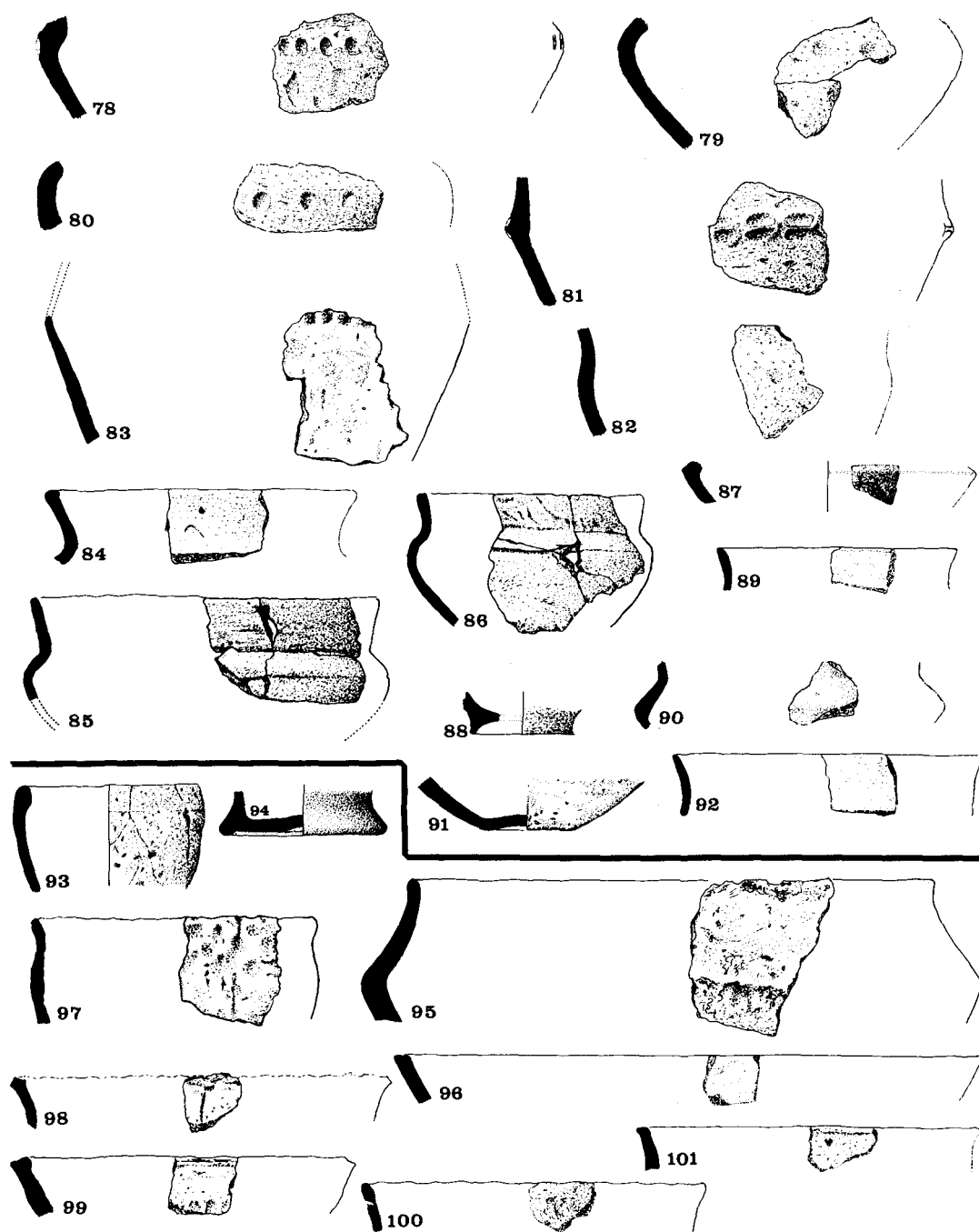


Fig. 18. Heathrow: The iron age pottery. Nos. 78-101 (1:4).



Plate 1. Aerial view of Heathrow Airport, looking east. The aircraft holding area and runway extension are nearest to the camera.



Plate 2. Heathrow: storage pit with ledge (Feature 15)



Plate 3. Heathrow: storage pit with ledge (Feature 7)

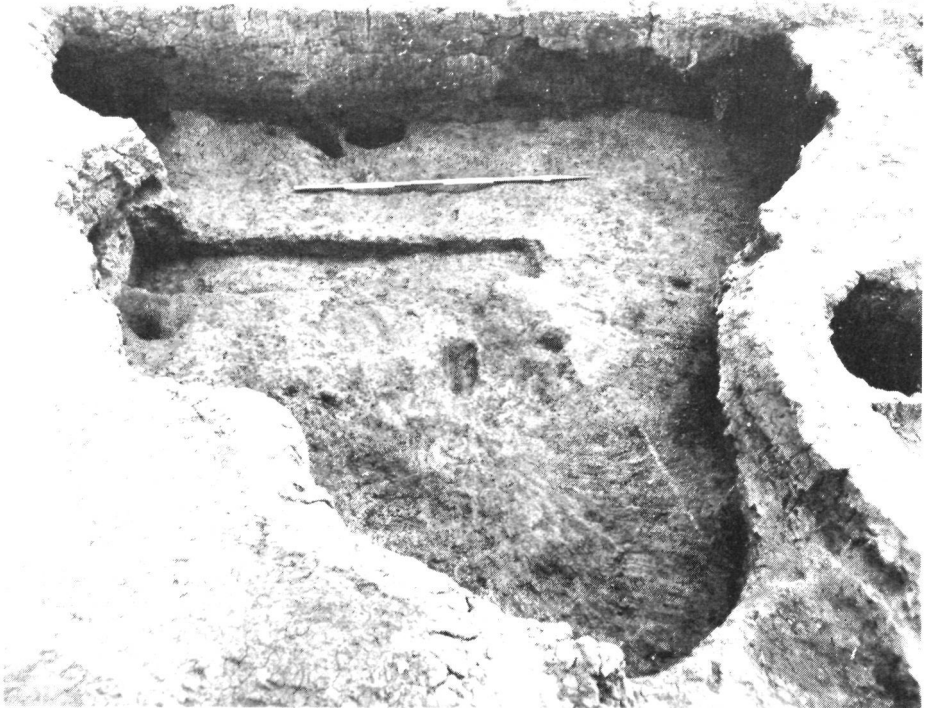


Plate 4. Heathrow: one of the hollows on Site K (Feature 23)

111. Dark brown ware with smooth exterior, very sparse fine grit.  
112. As above.

FEATURE 28

(Fig. 19)

114. Grey core, buff surface. Very soft and eroded.

FEATURE 29

(Fig. 19)

116. Identical to Nos. 111 and 112, perhaps same vessel.

FEATURE 30

(Fig. 19)

117. Black fabric fired brown on surface, well-finished. There are parallels at Hawks Hill for both the shape and the fabric (Hastings 1965, Fig. 6, 1). *cf.* also

FEATURE 31

(Fig. 19)

120. Black fabric with some grog, brown surface. *cf.* Hawks Hill (Hastings 1965, Fig. 7, No. 5).

FEATURE 32

(Fig. 19)

122. Black fabric fired buff on exterior.  
123. Red brown sandy fabric, fine flint grit.

UNSTRATIFIED POTTERY

(Fig. 19)

125. Finely gritted brown ware, incised lines forming an oblique panel.  
126. Black burnished ware with fine grit. The lines are made up of short incised bars formed by pressing a

THE ROMAN POTTERY

BY ALISON LAWS

FEATURE 33

(Fig. 20)

128. Small bead-rim vessel in corky fabric. Brown-black in colour with smoothed outer surface.

FEATURE 34

(Fig. 20)

131. Jar in hard grey ware, grey-brown surface. The type is present in Brentford groups of late 1st-early 2nd

FEATURE 35

(Figs 20 and 21)

133. Two-handled flagon in hard orange fabric with traces of white slip.  
134. Flagon in light pink-buff ware. The type is present at *Camulodunum* (Hawkes and Hull 1947 Pl. LXII, 155B) dated AD 10-65 and at *Verulamium* (Frere 1972 Fig. 102, 104) AD 60-75.  
135. Butt-beaker in hard light grey fabric with orange coated surface and two bands of combed decoration. An example from Fishbourne (Cunliffe 1971 Fig.

113. Somewhat coarse brown burnished ware, decoration incised before firing. This is perhaps a stray from an earlier feature.

115. Black fabric with smooth brown surface.

Crayford (Ward Perkins 1938, Fig. 7, Nos. 5, 12).

118. Coarse black fabric with light brown surface. Some flint grit. Identical to many of the early jar forms.  
119. Coarse brown vesicular ware.

121. Brown-black fabric with contrasting orange surface. The exterior has been furrowed and burnished.

124. Coarse black ware, poorly finished. Probably a stray from an early feature.

sharp tool into the surface.

127. Red to black fine fabric with fine grit. The small impressions seem to form part of a curvilinear design, as in the sherds from Wisley (Lowther 1945, Fig. 2, Nos. 24-25)

129. Jar in hard orange fabric.

130. Jar in hard grey sandy ware.

A 1st or 2nd century date is indicated by these sherds.

century date (Laws 1978, Fig. 56, 6).

132. Jar in hard reddish-brown fabric, dark grey micaceous coating.

88, 59.1) is dated AD 43-50.

136. Butt-beaker in hard fine orange fabric with two bands of rouletted decoration. The type is present in the early layers at Fishbourne (Cunliffe 1971 Fig. 88, 64).

137. Poppy beaker in fine light grey fabric with vertical bands of raised barbotine dots. Vessels of this type have not so far been found in the London area before the mid-Flavian period (information from Paul Tyers).



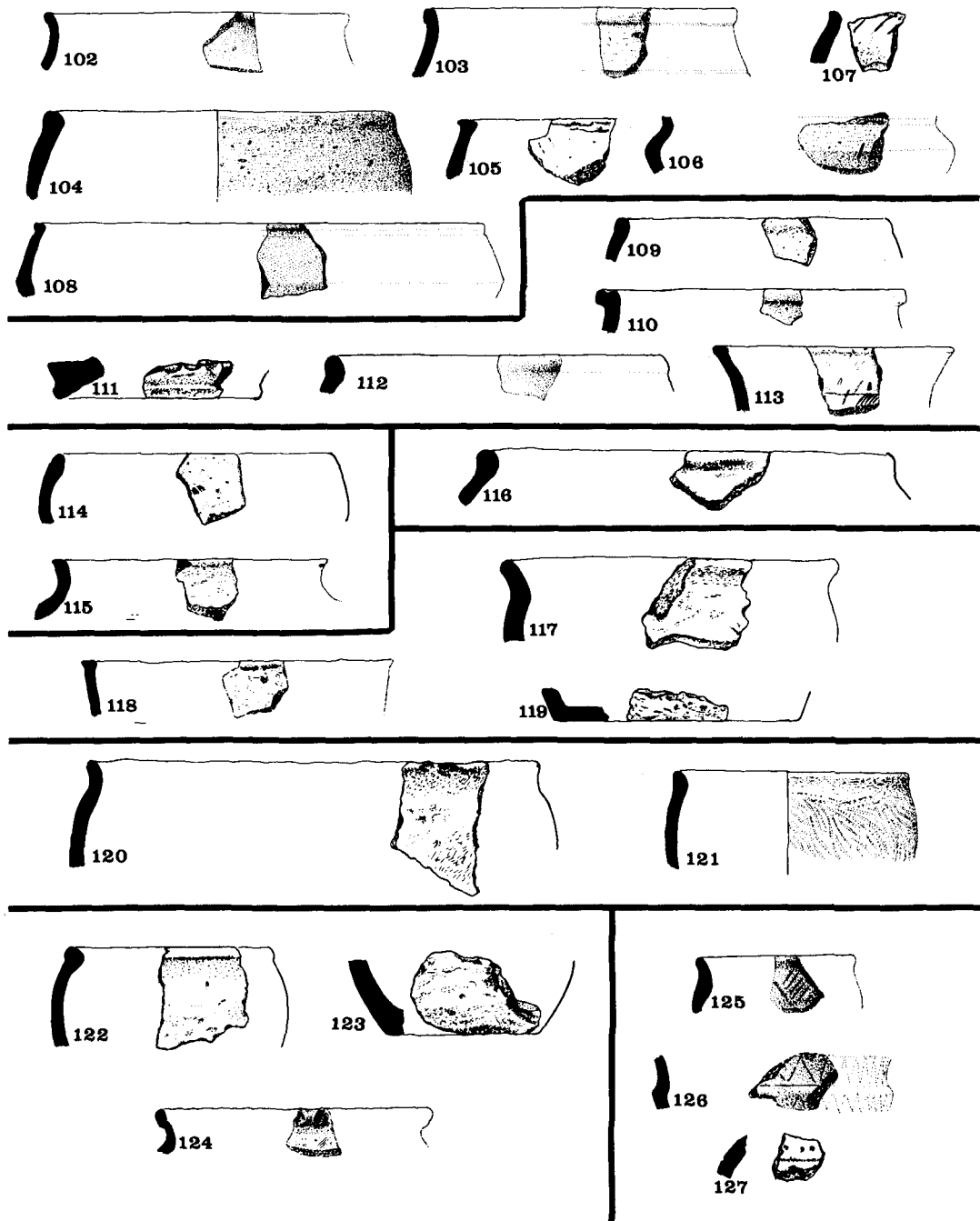


Fig. 19. Heathrow: The iron age pottery. Nos. 102-127 (1:4).

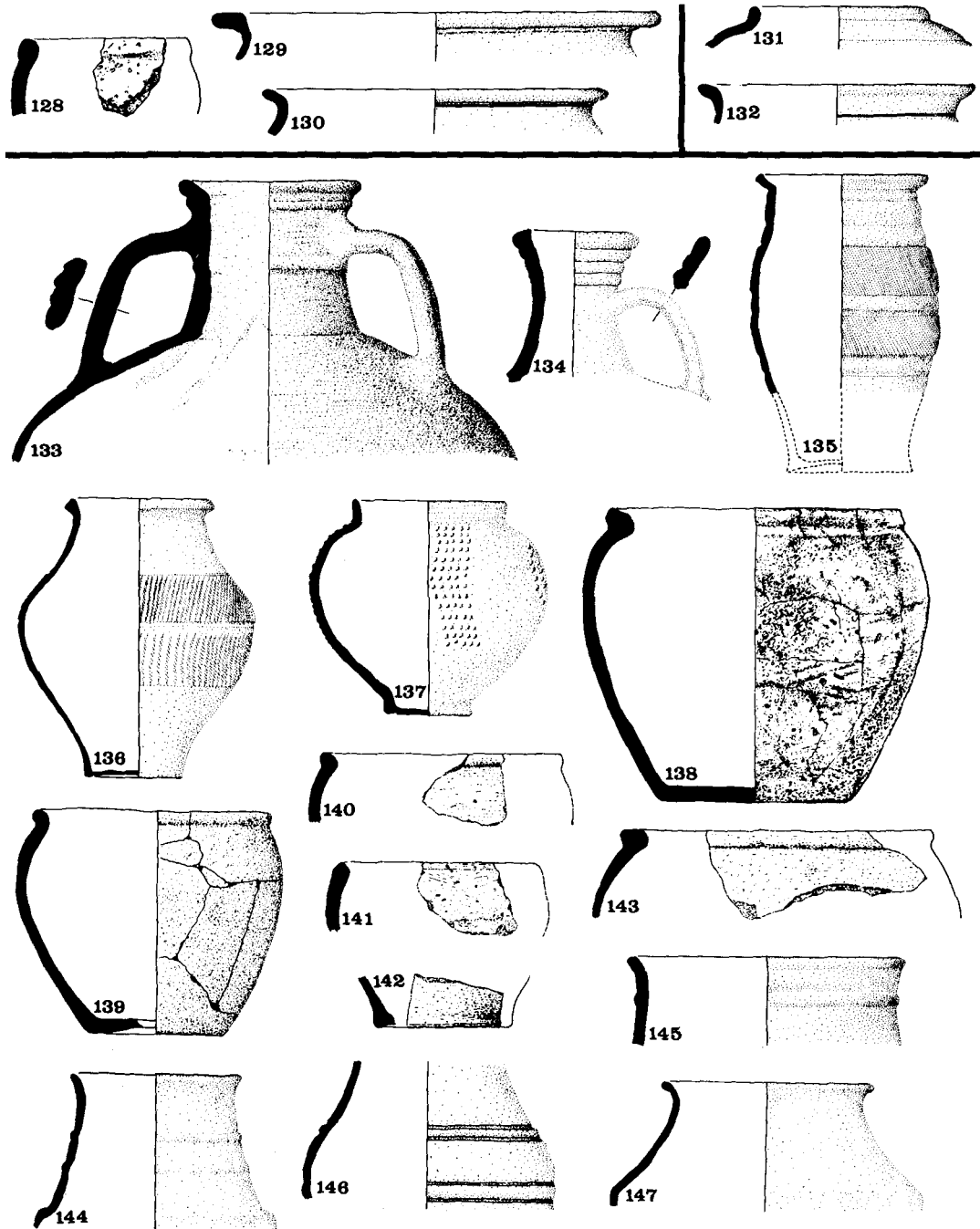


Fig. 20. Heathrow: The Roman pottery. Nos. 128-147 (1:4).

138. Coarse hand-made bead-rim jar in reddish-brown fabric but blackened around the rim, shoulder and inner surface. The surface has been smoothed and polished. Small particles of flint grit. An example from *Camulodunum* is dated AD 10-65 (Hawkes and Hull 1947 Pl. LXXXII, 257).
139. Coarse grey fabric with orange patches on outer surface. A deliberate hole has been chipped in the centre of the base. Similar to vessels being made in the Highgate kiln, phase 2 (Brown and Sheldon 1974 Fig. 3) dated to the period AD 70-100.
140. Small bead-rim jar in coarse handmade fabric.
141. Small bead-rim jar in black corky fabric containing small particles of flint grit. This vessel closely resembles items from the phase 1 production of the Highgate kiln, now thought to date to around the time of the conquest (information from Paul Tyers).
142. Base of jar in pinkish-brown fabric with small particles of flint grit.
143. Coarse bead-rim jar with smoothed buff-brown outer surface, blackened interior, flint grit tempering.
144. Cordonned jar in hard grey ware, orange surface on both sides. At Silchester cordonned jars of similar fabric were common in the pre-Flavian period.
145. Rim of cordonned vessel. Reddish-brown core with dark smoothed and polished surface, slightly soapy in texture.
146. Cordonned beaker in hard dark grey-black fabric. A similar type at Fishbourne is dated AD 43-75 (Cunliffe 1971, Fig. 88, 64.1).
147. Jar in hard dark grey micaceous ware.
148. Jar in fine hard micaceous fabric with light grey core and darker grey surface. A similar vessel from Fishbourne is dated AD 43-75 (Cunliffe 1971 Fig. 89, 66.5).
149. Coarse hand-made jar in grey-black fabric, large particles of flint grit, smoothed surface.
150. Pear shaped jar in red fabric with black coating which has been smoothed and polished.
151. Hard grey ware with lighter grey core, traces of brown painted decoration on rim and shoulder.
152. Jar similar to above in hard light grey ware with reddish brown patches.
153. Jar in hard micaceous grey ware with light grey core, darker on surface. This type was in common use at Fishbourne in the 1st and early 2nd centuries (Cunliffe 1971 Fig. 103, 180.1). At Verulamium cf. Frere 1972 Fig. 107, 285.
154. Small carinated bowl with reddish-brown core and brown-black surface showing evidence of burnishing.
155. Base of jar or flagon in light cream coloured fabric. As in vessel No. 139 a hole has been made in the centre of the base.

This group of vessels would appear to contain pottery of two distinctive types. Some of the vessels, notably the butt-beakers, cordonned jars and bead rimmed jars could well date to the very beginning of the Roman period, whilst others would suit a Flavian date. Although only two sherds of samian were present in the gully (see p. 00) a Flavian date is also indicated by these. The most interesting factor relating to the group is the condition in which the vessels were found. It seems that they were unbroken when thrown into the gully for the sherds from each pot were found close together with virtually no mixing. Whether this was merely a disaster of a domestic nature or something more serious is not evident.

It is interesting that two such distinct groups of pottery should be found in association with one another in circumstances which ought to point to a relatively tight date range. It may well be that the group represents continuing native traditions in an area which appears also to have had contacts with markets reflecting the new Romanised wares. Comparison may be made with sites such as *Camulodunum* and Fishbourne where native traditions continued to influence the pottery production. A date of AD 55-75 is suggested for the material.

#### FEATURE 36

(Fig. 21)

156. Bowl in coarse grey-black fabric with smoothed, burnished black slip on rim and upper part of shoulder, burnished decoration on shoulder. Probably residual from an iron age context.
157. Handle of dark grey ware with flint grit particles. Probably residual.
158. Bowl of dark grey ware with smoothed surface. At Silchester dated AD 45-65 (Cotton 1947 Fig. 11, 29).
159. Coarse grey bead rim vessel with smoothed surface, flint grit intrusion.
160. Coarse dark grey ware with particles of flint grit. Probably residual.
161. Jar in smooth buff ware.
162. Hard light grey fabric.
163. Jar in light grey fabric with darker grey smoothed surface.
164. Thick reddish-brown fabric showing traces of white slip.
165. Cordonned bowl with reddish-brown gritty core. Smoothed black coating on outer surface and inside rim. An early example of this tradition of cordonned bowls from the Belgic site at Deal can be seen in Birchall 1965 Fig. 12, 98. Examples of early Roman date are found at Fishbourne (Cunliffe 1971 Fig. 87, 53).
166. Coarse grey fabric with smoothed dark grey outer surface.
167. Bead rim bowl in coarse fabric with dark grey-brown surface, small particles of flint grit (Not illustrated).
168. Small dish in hard grey-buff fabric with orange outer surface. An example from Silchester is dated to the Flavian period (Boon 1969 Fig. 14, 164).

This group of vessels may be compared with the earlier vessels from Feature 35 and a pre-Flavian date is likely for this pit.

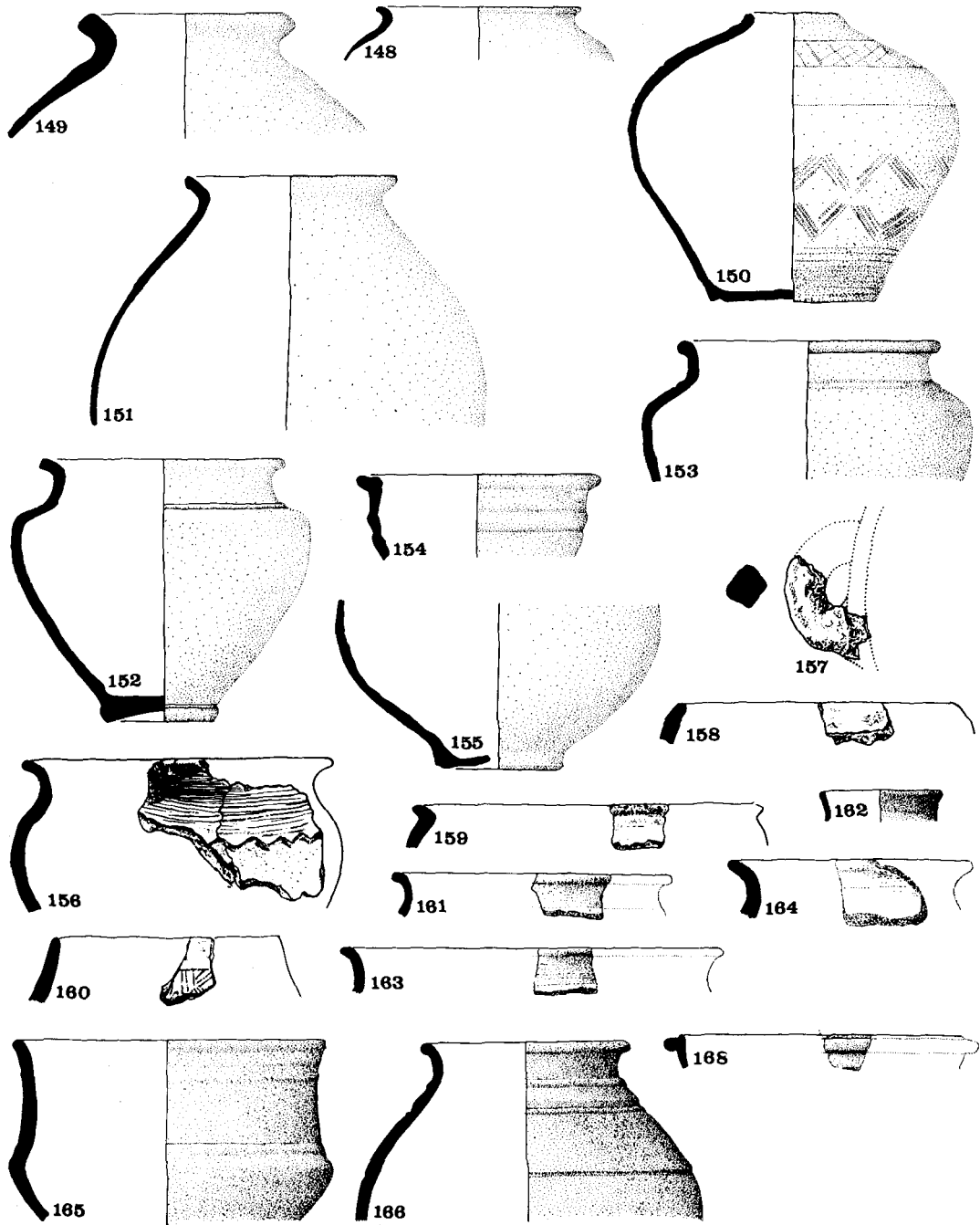


Fig. 21. Heathrow: The Roman pottery. Nos. 148-168 (1:4).

## FEATURE 37

Only one dateable sherd was present, the rim of a *mortarium* dated AD 80-110 (see *mortarium* report, p. 00 No. 203)

## FEATURE 38

(Fig. 22)

169. Hard dark grey ware with traces of burnishing on the cordon. Probably a product of the Farnham kiln in Surrey (Wade and Lowther 1949 Fig. 6); a similar vessel from Brentford was present in a group dated to the late 3rd or 4th century (Laws 1976 Fig. 51, 3).
170. Jar in hard sandy fabric with orange-red core with grey-buff surface, traces of black slip on rim.
171. Jar in hard orange fabric.
172. Small cup in smooth buff fabric, perhaps from the Brockley Hill area.
173. Jar in light grey ware with light grey burnished slip.
174. Flanged bowl in hard light grey fabric with light

grey slip on both interior and exterior surfaces. Although appearing earlier, this type of vessel is predominantly of late 3rd or 4th century date. A similar vessel is dated AD 270-350 at Winchester (Cunliffe 1964 Fig. 19, 4) and at Brentford (Laws 1976 Fig. 9, 77) is only present in groups of that date.

175. Storage jar in light grey sandy ware. This vessel is very probably a product of the Farnham kilns and a date of AD 320-360 is given to a vessel from Cobham of similar type (Frere 1949 Fig. 8, 4).
176. Storage jar in coarse orange fabric, small particles of translucent flint grit. Probably also from the Farnham kilns.

An early 4th century date is indicated by these sherds.

## FEATURE 39

(Fig. 22)

The following four vessels are from the earliest silting:

177. Flagon rim in hard grey sandy fabric, blue-grey core.
178. Storage jar in grey sandy fabric, light blue-grey core, darker exterior. Probably from the Farnham kilns.
179. Cordoned jar in reddish-brown fabric with grey surface slip, traces of burnishing on surface.
180. Jar in light brown-black corky fabric.

(From the later silting)

181. Hard grey sandy fabric. At Winchester present in a group dated AD 43-60 (Cunliffe 1964 Fig. 13, 3).
182. Jar in sandy grey ware with lighter grey core.
183. Hard grey sandy ware with blue-grey core.
184. Hard blue-grey fabric.
185. Jar in buff fabric blackened on rim. A similar

example from Verulamium is dated AD 200-275 (Frere 1972 Fig. 131, 1061) and the type is present in Brentford groups of late 2nd century date (Laws 1978 Fig. 50, 69).

186. Dish in hard black micaceous fabric showing traces of burnishing on outer and inner surfaces. This type of vessel was found in a later 4th century group at Bow (Sheldon 1972 Fig. 7, 23) and at Brentford (Laws 1976 Fig. 8, 55) a 4th century date is also given.
187. Flanged bowl in buff sandy fabric with white-grey slip on rim. Once again a 4th century date is indicated (Laws 1976 Fig. 9, 76-82).
188. Storage jar in light grey sandy fabric with blue-grey core.

The pottery from this feature covers a wide date range although there is not necessarily much difference in date between the latest identifiable sherds from each group (178, 180, 186 and 187).

It is likely that vessels Nos. 183, 184, 178 and 187 are products of the Farnham kilns in Surrey. Also present was the base of an Oxfordshire *mortarium*.

## FEATURE 40

(Fig. 22)

189. Jar in light grey sandy fabric. At Silchester a similar example is dated to the Antonine period (Boon

1969, Fig. 11, 16) and at Leicester (Kenyon 1948, Fig. 50, 29) to AD 200-250.

## FEATURE 41

(Figs. 22 and 23)

190. Small beaker in fine fabric with one shallow horizontal groove on exterior shoulder. Evidence of barbotine panels. Hard, grey fabric with light grey burnished slip. This type of beaker is found in Flavian/Trajanic levels in London (information from Paul Tyers) and at Brentford a similar form was present in a group of late 1st or early 2nd century date (Laws 1978, Fig. 52, 1).

191. Bowl in hard dark grey fabric with smoothed surface.
192. Dark grey-black fabric with brownish surface, small particles of flint grit.
193. Friable reddish-brown shell tempered fabric with traces of brownish slip on interior surface.
194. Hard dark grey sandy fabric with coarse dark grey surface.

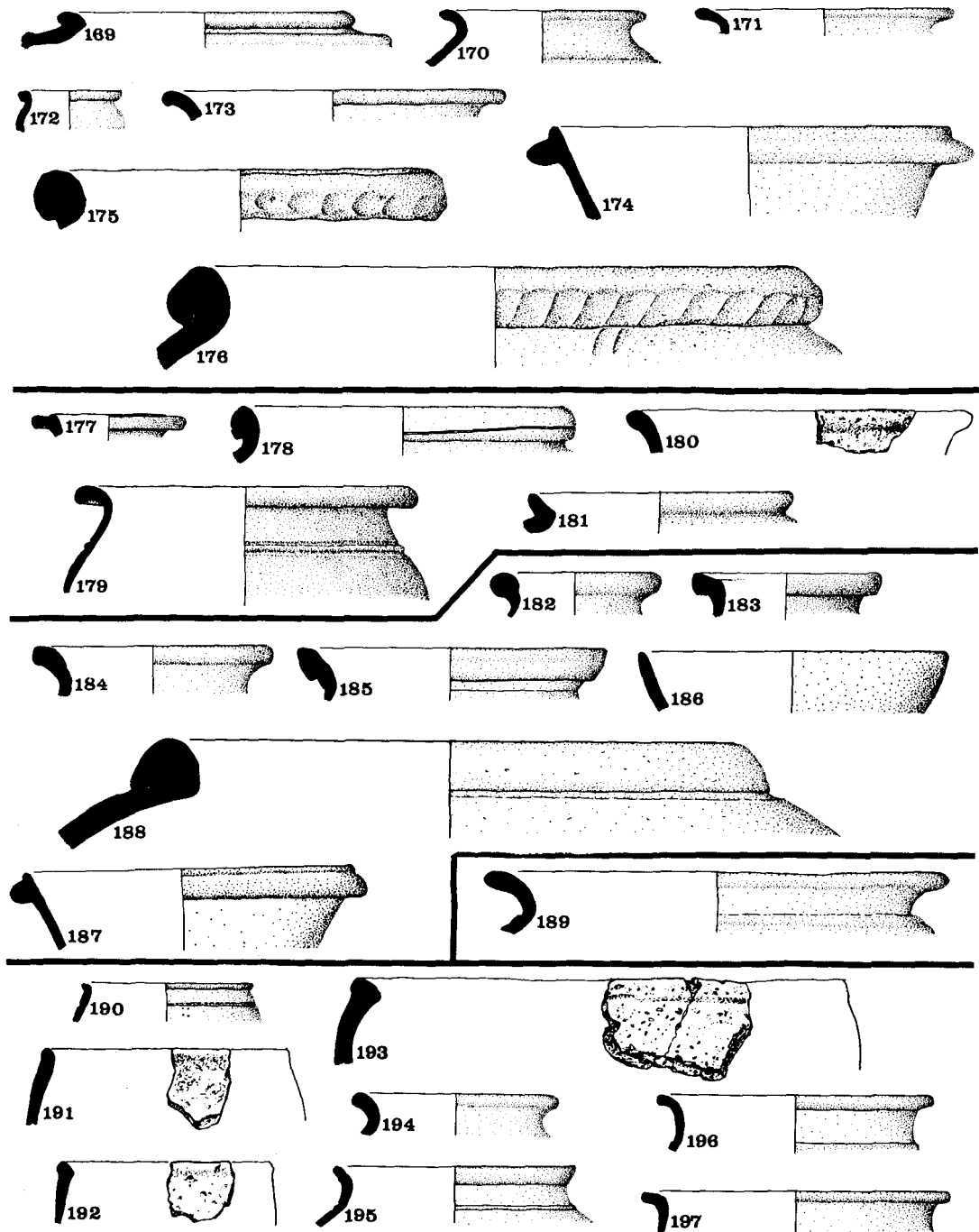


Fig. 22. Heathrow: The Roman pottery. Nos. 169-197 (1:4).

195. Fine light grey fabric with hard dark grey slip.
196. Hard fine orange fabric with grey-brown surface. A similar sherd from Dorchester is dated AD 135-180 (Frere 1962 Fig. 16, 122).
197. Hard Brown fabric with smooth grey-brown surface.
198. Hard orange-brown fabric heavily tempered with black and brown grit, smooth but pitted orange slip weathered brown on surface.

The decorated samian sherd from this feature (see p. 00) indicates an early 2nd century date, however this pit cut into the surface of Feature 35 and it would appear possible that several vessels, notably Nos. 192, 193 and 195 are residual from this earlier context. An early 2nd century date would suit the jars present.

## THE SAMIAN

BY JOANNA BIRD

### FEATURE 35

(Fig. 23)

199. Undecorated: Dr. 27 South Gaul, probably Flavian (Not illustrated).
200. Decorated: Dr. 30 South Gaul, slightly burnt, gladiator incomplete but similar to 0.1020 (Oswald 1936-7), c. 55-75 AD.

### FEATURE 41

(Fig. 23)

201. Undecorated: Dr. 33 South Gaul, Flavian (Not illustrated).
202. Decorated: Dr. 37, in the style attributed to Donnaucus of Les Martres de Veyre. His ovolo with beads above and below (Stanfield and Simpson 1958, Pl. 48, 567); he also used the bacchus 0.571 (Oswald 1936-7; Stanfield and Simpson 1958, Pl. 46, 546). c. 100-125 AD.

## A MORTARIUM STAMP FROM HEATHROW

BY KATHARINE F. HARTLEY

### FEATURE 37

(Fig. 23)

203. This is a fragmentary impression of a stamp which even when complete is impossible to interpret with certainty and the potter must be regarded as illiterate or semi-literate. There is, however, no reasonable doubt that his intention was to produce a namestamp to one side of the spout and a *fecit* counterstamp to the other. The Heathrow example is part of the namestamp.

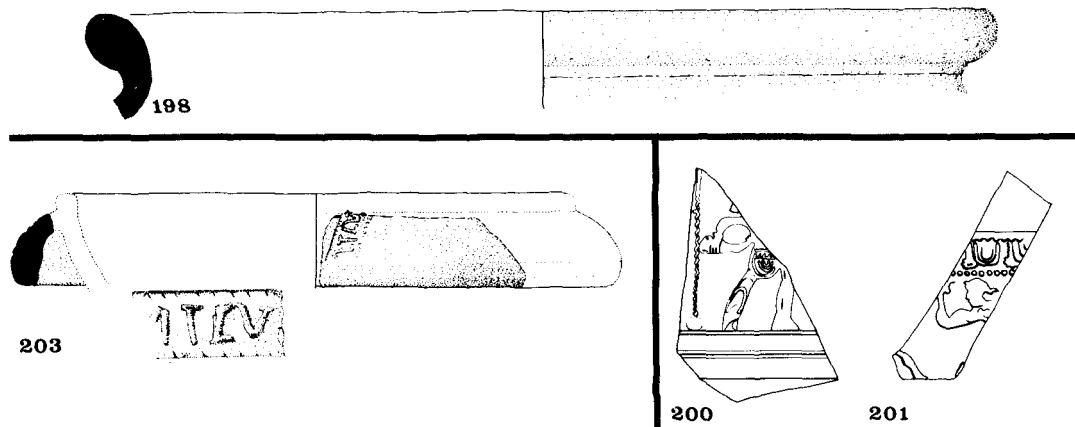


Fig. 23. Heathrow: The Roman pottery. Nos. 198, 203 (1:4) (Mortarium stamp 1:2) Nos. 200-201 (1:2).

Stamps from the same pair of dies have now been noted from Brockley Hill (4); Deanshanger, Nr. Towcester; Great Chesterford; Hassocks, Sussex; High Cross; London (5 + 2?); Southwark; Wilderspool; Worcester; and Wroxeter (2). The fabric produced by this potter points to production in the extensive potteries near Watling Street in the area between Verulamium and London (including kilns at Brockley Hill, Radlett, Verulamium and Bricket Wood). The condition of the mortaria from Brockley Hill, Middlesex suggests that he had a workshop there (Castle 1972, 87 and Fig. 6). A stamp from Wroxeter (Atkinson 1942, Fig. 40, Nos. 8 and 280) is from a pit dated to AD 60-90 and his rim-profiles would fit well with activity in the period AD 80-110.

(NB. The reconstruction of the sherd, Fig. 23 No. 203, is inaccurate and for closer parallels from Verulamium see (Frere 1972, Fig. 110 No. 359-370))

## THE SMALL FINDS

### WORKED FLINT

(Fig. 24)

The neolithic-bronze age ditch, Site K

1. Side scraper; translucent grey-brown flint, retouch on two edges, others show signs of wear.
2. Triangular flake; translucent grey-brown flint, steep flaking on all sides, possibly combined borer/scraper.

3. Snapped point; light grey translucent flint, very sharp point with delicate bi-facial flaking. Possibly the point from a hollow-base arrowhead or sickle.
4. Snapped blade; translucent grey-brown flint.
5. Snapped blade; translucent grey-brown flint. Broken blade, no re-touch but edges show signs of wear.

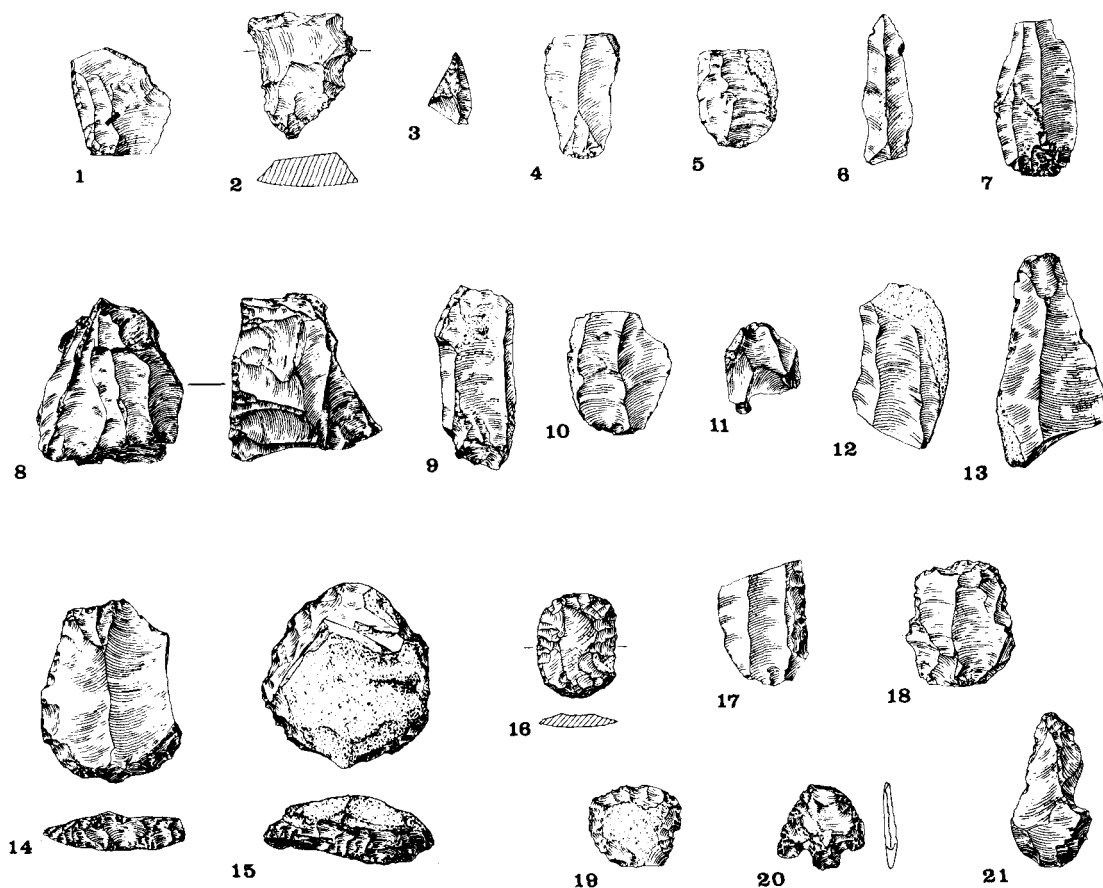


Fig. 24. Heathrow: The worked flint. Nos. 1-21 (1:2).



*The segmented ring-ditch, Site A*

6. Pointed and notched bladelet; grey-brown translucent flint. Both edges show signs of wear, one edge has small notch with retouch.

*The ring-ditch, Site H*

7. Blade; grey mottled flint. Three flake facets on convex face, no bulb. Notched and snapped.

*Early iron age contexts*

8. Core; sandy grey flint with two striking platforms (Feature 19).
9. Blade; light grey flint (Feature 25).
10. Snapped blade; translucent brownish flint. Cortex on one edge (Feature 17).
11. Notched flake; grey flint. Yellow cortex on one edge (Feature 24).
12. Snapped blade; bluish flint, cortex on one side (undated feature, Site C).
13. Snapped blade; translucent dark-grey flint. Signs of use on edges (Feature 22).
14. End scraper; light grey speckled flint (Feature 22).
15. Discoidal scraper; fine brown-grey flint (Feature 22).
16. Thumb nail scraper; fine brown-grey translucent flint (Feature 22).

*Romano-British contexts*

17. Blade with blunted edge; the implement has been snapped after the retouching has been done. Possibly a side scraper or a knife blade with blunted back (Feature 35).
18. Convex end scraper; grey speckled flint, fine pressure-flaking on broad end and one edge. Bulbar face unworked (Feature 33).
19. Small scraper; light grey-brown flint, three edges steeply flaked with very fine pressure, bulbar face untouched (Feature 35).

*Unstratified*

20. Barbed and tanged arrowhead; of bronze age date. Pale grey translucent flint. Bilateral scale flaking.
21. Notched flake; fine dark grey flint — possibly intended as a combined awl and scraper.

## OBJECTS OF BRONZE

*(Fig. 25)*

1. One piece brooch with ring-and-dot ornament on the flat bow. A La Tène III type found on early Roman sites such as Colchester and Hod Hill in Dorset. Brailsford 1962, Fig. 7, C. 22-26. Unstratified.
2. Fragmentary brooch of La Tène I type. Found in the lower filling of an early iron age hollow (Feature 25).

## OBJECTS OF IRON

*(Fig. 25)*

3. A four coiled brooch of La Tène III type, probably 1st century AD, found in Feature 26, but presumably

## THE BONE EVIDENCE

## BY MARGARET SUTTON

The Heathrow site yielded only a comparatively small amount of bone, comprising 172 identifiable fragments and 83 teeth. The majority of the bone is in a broken condition and probably represents food debris. The animals represented are cattle, pig, sheep and horse with a few unidentifiable bird bones. A distinction between sheep and goat was not attempted. No wild animal or dog was found. The site may be divided into two horizons, early pre-Roman iron age (by far the largest) and late iron age/Romano-British.

belonging to the intrusive feature of late iron age/Romano-British date.

4. Knife from Feature 38. The associated pottery indicates a date in the 4th century AD.
5. A curving blade with tang, perhaps a sickle. Unfortunately the feature in which it was found, No. 20, cannot be dated with certainty, though it is probably early pre-Roman iron age.
6. Object of uncertain purpose, c.f. the example from a well at Purberry Shot in Surrey (Lowther 1946-7, Fig. 12, 4). This one is from a Romano-British level on Site B.
7. Pin, head missing. From the top layer of Feature 26 and therefore of uncertain date though probably early pre-Roman iron age.
8. Object of uncertain function, possibly a casket fitting. From an iron age pit, Site C.
9. Fragment of currency bar or plough-share. There is some doubt as to whether there is a real difference between the currency bars of this type and the iron age type of plough-share (Allen 1967, 312-14, type CO). Whatever the function of the object it is clear from Allen's distribution map that the type is found regularly in the Thames Valley. This specimen was found in an early Romano-British context (Feature 35).

## OBJECTS OF CLAY

*(Fig. 25)*

10. Spindle whorl bearing three small incised lines. From Feature 26, an early iron age hollow.
11. Spindle whorl in red-orange clay, with incised decoration on one side only. Unstratified.
12. Object in dark brown clay, perhaps the lug handle of an early iron age jar (Clark and Fell 1953, Fig. 18, 1). From one of the early pre-Roman iron age pits (Feature 17).
13. Oval sling shot of baked clay containing a stone. Its shape and weight make it comparable to the specimens from Maiden Castle and Glastonbury (Wheeler 1943, Pl. XXXII, B. and Bulleid and Gray 1917, Pl. XC, 1-23). Unstratified.

## OBJECTS OF STONE

*(Fig. 25)*

14. Quern fragment from a late Roman feature on Site B (Feature 38).

## OBJECTS OF WOOD

*(Fig. 25)*

15. Point of stake, carbonized. Found together with the shouldered jar in the lower filling of the pit on Site J (Feature 21).

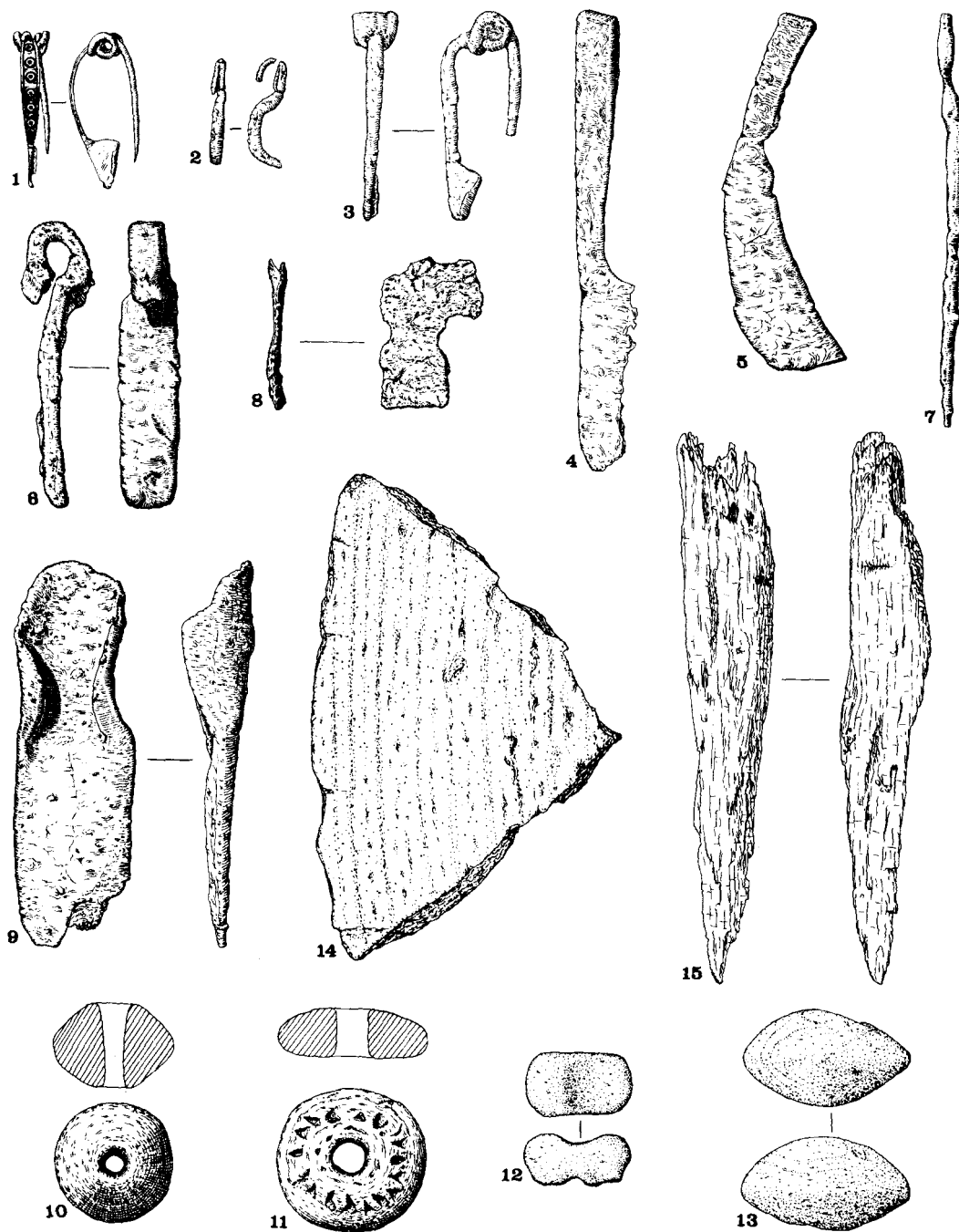


Fig. 25. Heathrow: The small finds. Nos. 1-15 (1:2).

## EARLY PRE-ROMAN IRON AGE (Fig. 26)

The bones used to calculate the minimum number of animals represented are shown in Fig. 26. These amount to 11 cattle, 3 horses, 16 sheep and 4 pigs. All the animals are rather small, similar to those found on other early iron age sites such as Hawks Hill (Hastings 1965), Staple Howe (Brewster 1963), All Cannings Cross (Cunnington 1923), and Glastonbury Lake Village (Bulleid and Gray 1917).

Cattle and sheep appear to have formed the main source of food. The scarcity of pig is a feature of other early iron age sites such as All Cannings Cross and Little Woodbury. Clark (1952, 117) points out that there appears to be a decline in pig-keeping and a corresponding increase in sheep-rearing between the neolithic and early iron age.

The lack of evidence of wild animals indicates that there was little or no hunting. It was significant that very few vertebrae, rib or skull fragments were found on the site. With the exception of the jaw-bones, the majority were meat bones suggesting that the scene of slaughter and butchery was elsewhere.

## CATTLE

Such evidence as there is to indicate size suggests the small 'Celtic ox' breed. There are only two complete metatarsals of mature animals, having lengths of 203 and 210mm. These compare well with those found at All Cannings Cross and are similar to the Kerry cattle. Sex determination, based on breadth/length indices (Chaplin 1971, 103-4) indicates that both are female, and by multiplying the length by a factor of 5.65 their height is estimated to be 1.147m and 1.187m, a little smaller than the cattle at Durrington Walls (Harcourt 1971, 340). The teeth and jaws form a large sample of the bone, the loose teeth all being from the lower jaw. There are very few skull fragments and only two horn-cores. It is possible to age 28 of the bone fragments.

*Age at death*

0-2 years	1 metatarsal
0-2 years	1 metacarpal
0-3½ years	1 ulna
0-3½ years	2 femurs
0-3½ years	1 radius
over 1 year	2 mandibles
over 1½ years	2 humeri
over 1½ years	6 radii
over 1½ years	4 mandibles
over 2 years	6 mandibles
2-2½ years	1 mandible
over 3½ years	1 metatarsal

It is apparent that a substantial portion of the cattle were kept through at least one winter, and some through two, suggesting a reasonable amount of winter fodder.

## SHEEP

The slender metatarsals and metacarpals are typical of early iron age breeds. However, there are no whole metapodial bones for measurement. There is a large quantity of teeth, the majority of which are molars from the mandible and maxilla, but as with the cattle very few skull fragments were found.

The following estimates of age have been made:

*Age at death*

0-10 months	1 humerus
5 months	1 mandible
0-2 years	1 metacarpal
over 1 year	9 maxillae
over 1½ years	7 mandibles
2-2½ years	2 mandibles
2 years	1 mandible
over 2 years	11 mandibles and 6 maxillae.

All eleven tibiae found have been chopped through at both ends. Most of the sheep were kept until at least a year old. The great quantity of loose teeth may be because sheep often lose them whilst still alive.

#### PIG

There are very few pig bones present, the majority being loose teeth and jaw fragments.

Estimates of age are:

##### Age at death

0-1 year	1 humerus
1½ years	1 mandible
1-2 years	2 maxillae
2 years	1 mandible
over 1 year	2 maxillae and 6 mandibles
over 1½ years	5 maxillae and 3 mandibles
over 2 years	2 maxillae.

#### HORSE

As with the other species the horse is rather small. One metatarsal measures 239mm and two metacarpals measure 199 and 200mm, indicating that the animals stood about 12 hands high. They fall between the two varieties found at the Roman fort at Newstead (Curle, 1911) described by Professor Ewart as 'plateau' or *equus agilis* type and 'forest' or *equus robustus* type.

The following estimates of age have been made:

##### Age at death

over 1½ years	1 metacarpal
over 2 years	2 metatarsals
over 3½ years	1 femur
over 4½ years	1 mandible
11 years	1 mandible.

The majority of the horse bones indicate that the species was longer-lived than the others at Heathrow, implying a long working life.

#### THE LATER IRON AGE — ROMANO BRITISH PHASE (Fig. 27)

The amount of bone from this horizon is so small that it has been impossible to carry out an analysis. The animals represented are 8 cattle, 3 horses, 3 sheep and 2 pigs. The estimated age of death of the cattle is greater than for those of the early iron age, the majority having lived for more than 2½ years, perhaps indicating improved farming methods in providing winter fodder.

Bone Type	Cattle	Horse	Pig	Sheep
Mandible	11	3	2	16
Maxilla		1	4	6
Scapula	5	1	1	3
Humerus	3		1	4
Radius	6			3

Bone Type	Cattle	Horse	Pig	Sheep
Ulna	2	1	1	
Metacarpal	3	1		4
Ilium	6	2		
Femur	1	1		
Tibia	3			7
Metatarsal	3	2		1
Atlas	1			
Calcaneum	1			
Astragalus	1			

Fig. 26. Heathrow: The early pre-Roman iron age bone. Minimum numbers of animals as represented by bone types.

Bone Type	Cattle	Horse	Pig	Sheep
Mandible	8		2	3
Maxilla				2
Scapula	2	2		
Humerus	2			1
Radius	3	1		2
Ulna				
Metacarpal	2	2		
Ilium	2	1		
Femur				

Bone Type	Cattle	Horse	Pig	Sheep
Tibia	1	1		3
Metatarsal	1			
Atlas				
Calcaneum	1			
Astragalus	3			1

Fig. 27. Heathrow: The later iron-age — Romano British phase. Minimum numbers of animals as represented by bone types.

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