

# Harlington Roman Cemetery

MICHAEL DAWSON

## SUMMARY

*Part of a late Iron Age and Roman cremation site at Maskell's Quarry, Harlington, was excavated during the early 1990's. This report catalogues the evidence and provides a brief discussion.*

## INTRODUCTION

Sheepwalk Hill is a prominent sand deposit, a southerly remnant of the Greensand Ridge in an area of boulder clay and chalk in the Icknield Belt west of the Bedfordshire village of Harlington. The soil types on the southern hillslope are a mix of gleyed brown earths of the Flitwick Association and heavier non-calcareous gley soils of the Oak Series over the clays. The hill itself is a prominent feature in the landscape, providing extensive views over the surrounding countryside (Fig 2).

The Roman cemetery, which is the subject of this report, lay on the north face of Sheepwalk Hill in a field known as 'wickhern'. In 1861, on the south facing slope, the first skeleton of what was subsequently recognised as an Anglo-Saxon cemetery was recovered (VCH 1904, 185 (R A Smith)). The evidence from this site was collated in 1962 and was referred to in Meaney's Gazetteer as Toddington I (Morris 1962, 74; Meaney 1964). The location of one of the skeletons found in the 19th century "lying on a bed of concrete" was interpreted by Simco as the remains of a substantial Roman building (Simco 1984, 120).

In 1960 planning permission was granted to Mr G Maskell to extract sand at Harlington (February 1960, No. 1889). The quarry, which is now owned by J Murphy & Sons of Highgate, has been operated since 1960 by Mr Maskell.

In April 1990, archaeological material was recovered from spoil heaps in the quarry by Stephen Castle of Harlington, who brought his findings to the attention of Bedfordshire's County Archaeologist and Luton Museum. Initially, it was material of predominantly Iron Age date that was recovered, but, in August 1990, two Roman period cremations were identified *in situ* in the quarry area.

Negotiations with the quarry owners led to the recovery of the two cremations and in 1991, a small scale evaluation was mounted, funded by Murphy & Sons, to determine the extent and quality of archaeological survival at the site. Eight cremations were

recovered during the evaluation and the results of this work were used as the basis of a voluntary strategy to preserve *in situ* whatever remained of the cemetery. The site was covered over with sand and topsoil and isolated from the active quarry area.

However, by 1994, the condition of the site had begun to deteriorate as heavy winter rain eroded the edges of the preserved island, and some slippage took place. The salvage of what remained of the cemetery was undertaken with County Council funding and with machinery provided by the operator. Rescue excavation began on 5th October 1995 when the remains of the cemetery, a single cremation, and several surviving features were cleared.

## THE REPORT AND BACKGROUND TO THE EXCAVATION

The following report is based on the discoveries made at Maskell's Quarry from April 1990 until April 1996. During this period finds were made at 32 locations in the area of quarrying by Mr Stephen Castle and colleagues. Of these, only four were *in situ*; the remainder constituted displaced material recovered from individual spoil heaps. In some cases it was clear that the spoil heaps may have been moved more than once. The four *in situ* assemblages were small, but it has been possible to characterise them as an area of 4th century Roman activity; a late Iron Age assemblage; an early Roman period cremation cemetery (the subject of this report), and several other miscellaneous features including a Saxon period pit close to the cemetery.

The principal focus of this report is the early Roman period cremation cemetery investigated in 1991, 1992 and 1995. The earliest cremation was discovered shortly after it had been disturbed by the earthmover during topsoil stripping. Initially designated CS (cremation from spoil heap), it was soon clear there may have been up to three cremation groups in this area. At almost the same time two cremations, initially designated C1 and C2 were found still *in situ*.

Formal assessment and excavation followed with cremations assigned context numbers and designated project codes H91, H92 and H95. For the purposes of this report, the cremations have been numbered sequentially, with their original context numbers noted to ease access to the archive. The finds from

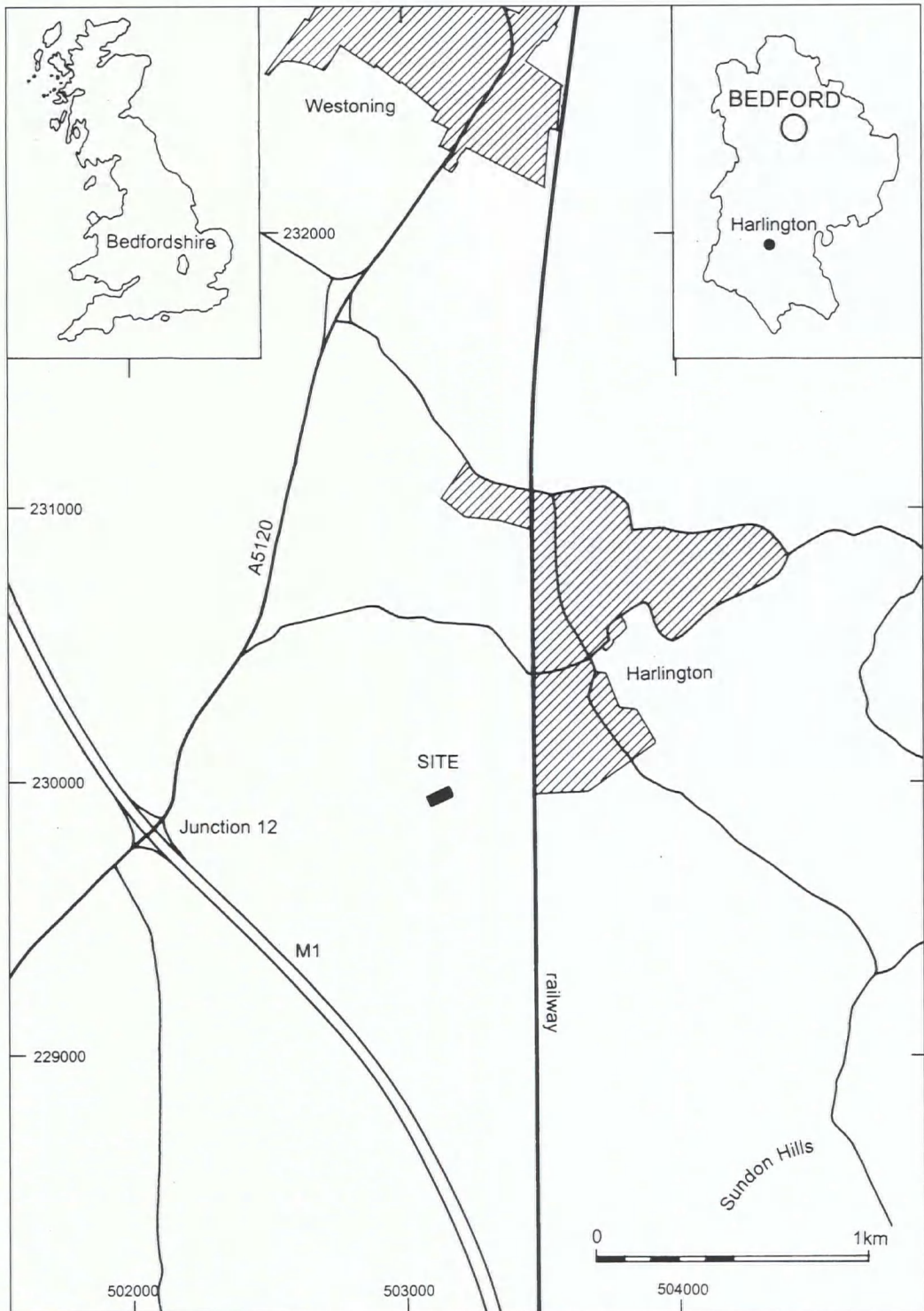


Figure 1 Location plan – Harlington

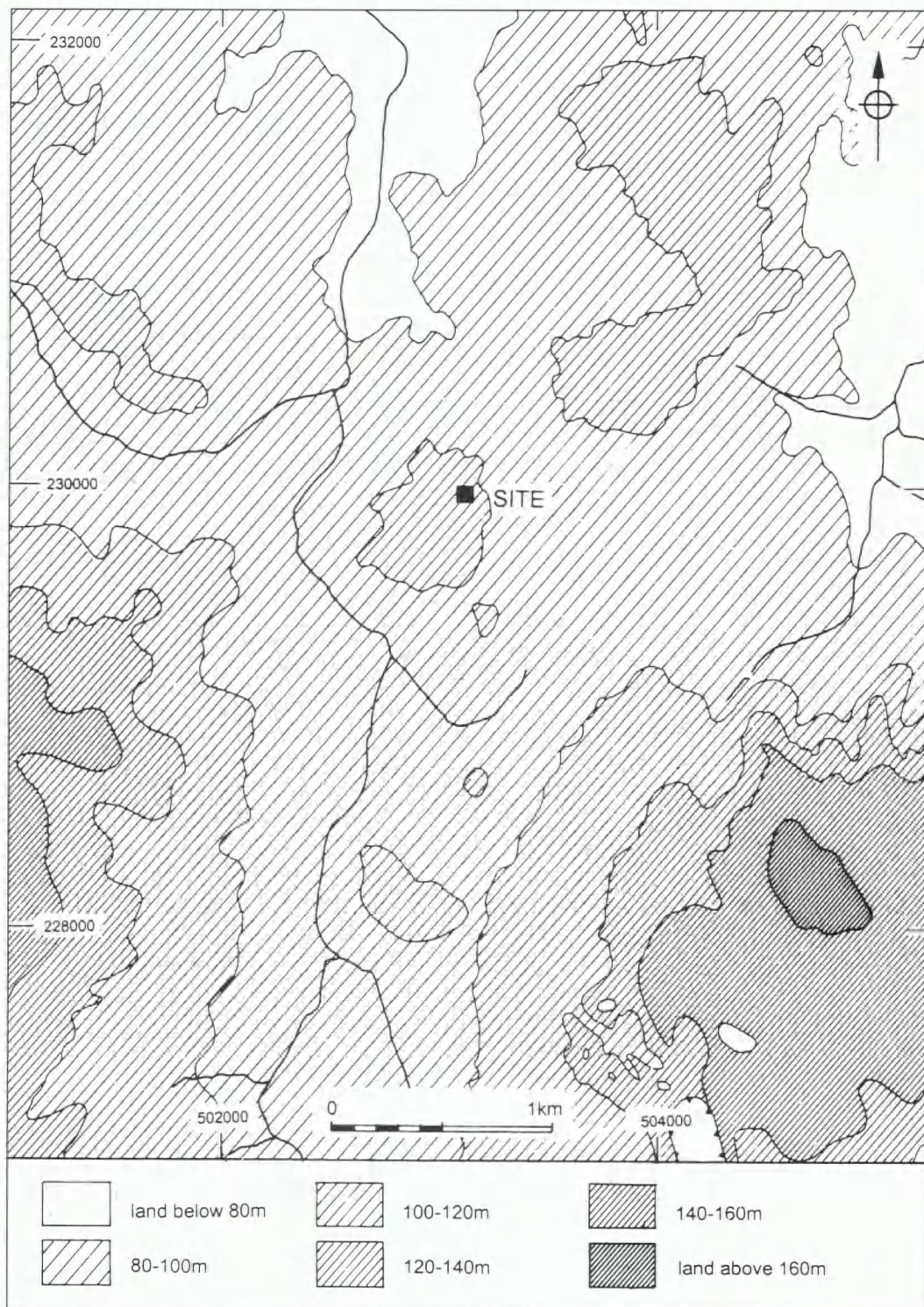


Figure 2 Topography

Harlington made by Stephen Castle and his colleagues have accession nos 1990/69 and 1991/3, those by Bedfordshire County Archaeology Service have been assigned 1991/3 and all the material is now lodged with Luton Museum.

### THE CEMETERY

The Roman period cremation cemetery at Harlington was located on the south east facing slope of Sheepwalk Hill in Harlington parish at TL 030 300 (Fig 1).

Although the cemetery was discovered during quarrying, the diligence of Stephen Castle and his colleagues, as well as the sharp eyes of the machine operator, Willy Cuthbertson, were such that it is unlikely any significant numbers of burials were lost. It seems, therefore, that the cemetery was small, comprising up to 13 cremations, in an area less than 15m across. The area was not enclosed.

The individual cremations were very shallow, located immediately below topsoil and most had been crushed by machine movements during quarrying. The majority of the cremations were grouped closely together with one outlier to the north. The latter may have been the last *in situ* survivor of a northern group, the majority of which were recovered from the spoil heap.

### SPOILHEAP FINDS (CS)

In August 1990 ceramic material and fragments of burnt bone were found in the upper layers of a long spoil heap just to the south of the then quarry face. This spoil heap was subsequently referred to as the 'cremation spoilheap' (Fig 3). The method of topsoiling, removal by a single earthmover, meant that the soil in which the archaeological material was found had travelled only a short distance. It is reasonable to assume, therefore, that the ceramics and human bone came from the same cemetery assemblage as the *in situ* cremations. The distribution of the otherwise unstratified material, retrieved from the spoilheap, indicated more than one cremation. Subsequent analysis of the complete ceramic assemblage from this area suggested three possible cremation groups:

#### Group 1

Central Gaulish samian bowl [Form Drg 18/31] 2 vessels (early 2nd century).

South Gaulish samian dish [Form Drg 36] 2 vessels (1st century).

South Gaulish samian platter [Form Drg 18] (1st century).

South Gaulish samian cup [Form Drg 27g] (1st century), Fig 6.1.

Gritty pinkware flagon (1st-2nd century).

Gritty pinkware flagon (1st-2nd century).

Fine whiteware ring necked flagon (1st-2nd century).

Lead-glazed flagon (mid-late 1st century).

#### Group 2

Sand tempered flagon (1st-2nd century), Fig 6.2.

Orange sandy jar (1st-2nd century).

#### Group 3

Fine whiteware flagon (1st-2nd century).

Micaceous carinated jar (1st century), Fig 6.3.

Sand tempered cordoned cup (1st century), Fig 6.4.

Sand tempered platter (1st century), Fig 6.5.

### Human bone

In addition to the ceramic evidence 405g of adult human bone was recovered.

### THE CREMATIONS

#### Cremation 1

*Cremation Vessel:* Hadham jar (2nd century), Fig 6.6.

*Human bone:*

Age: adult.

Sex: indeterminate.

*Grave goods:* fine whiteware flagon (1st-2nd century), Fig 6.7, Central Gaulish samian bowl [Form Drg 18/31] (2nd century), Fig 6.8, iron paring chisel (RA8), Fig 6.9, glass vessel fragment (RA9) and fourteen iron nails.

*Description:* cremation assemblage deposited in shallow pit immediately below topsoil.

#### Cremation 2

*Cremation Vessel:* none

*Human bone:*

Age: -

Sex: -

*Grave goods:* fine orange beaker (2nd century), Fig 6.10.

*Description:* a single beaker was recovered in a shallow hollow immediately below topsoil. A tiny assemblage of burnt bone extended to the north.

#### Cremation 3

*Cremation Vessel:* hand-made sand tempered jar (1st century), Fig 7.11.

*Human bone:*

Age: adult.

Sex: indeterminate.

*Grave goods:* Central Gaulish samian bowl [Form Drg 18/31] (2nd century), Fig 7.12, eleven iron nails and two hobnails.

*Description:* complex cremation deposit in shallow hollow [3]. The hollow was filled by a sandy material reflecting the background soils (4), Fig 5.

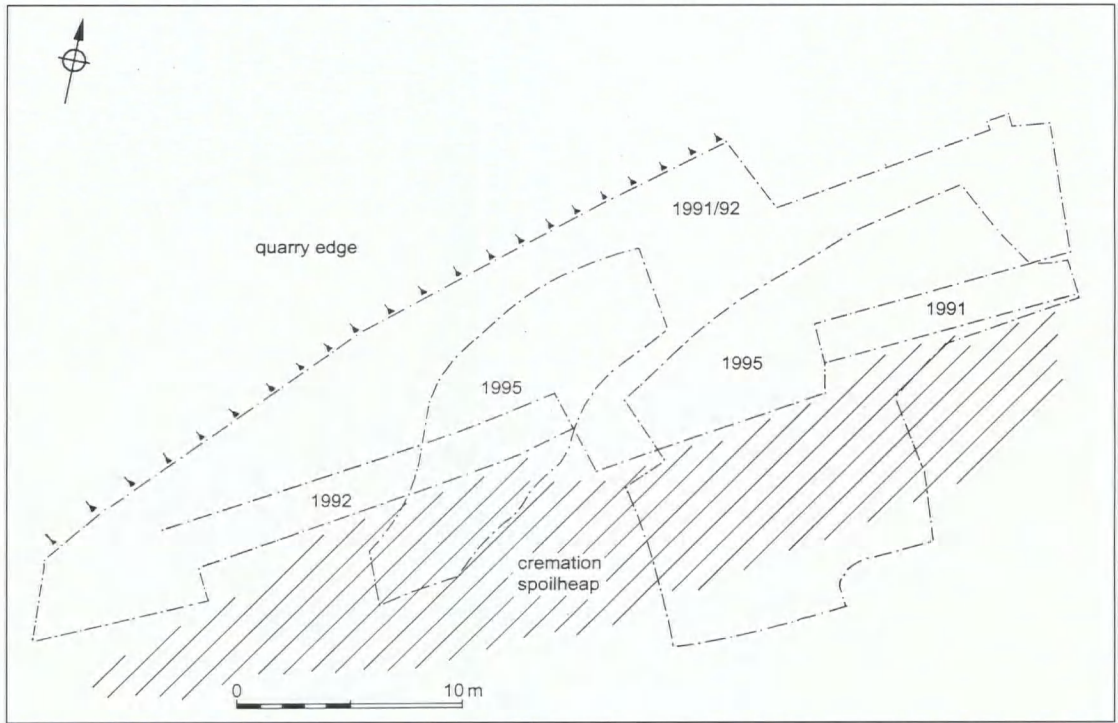


Figure 3 Area of Excavation

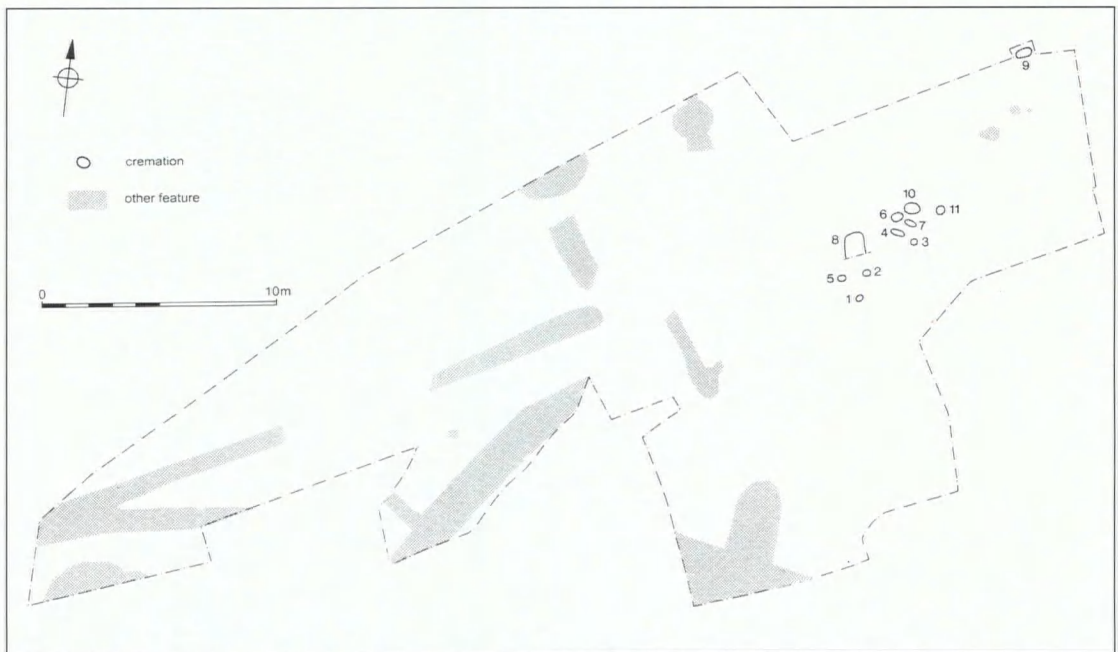


Figure 4 All archaeological features

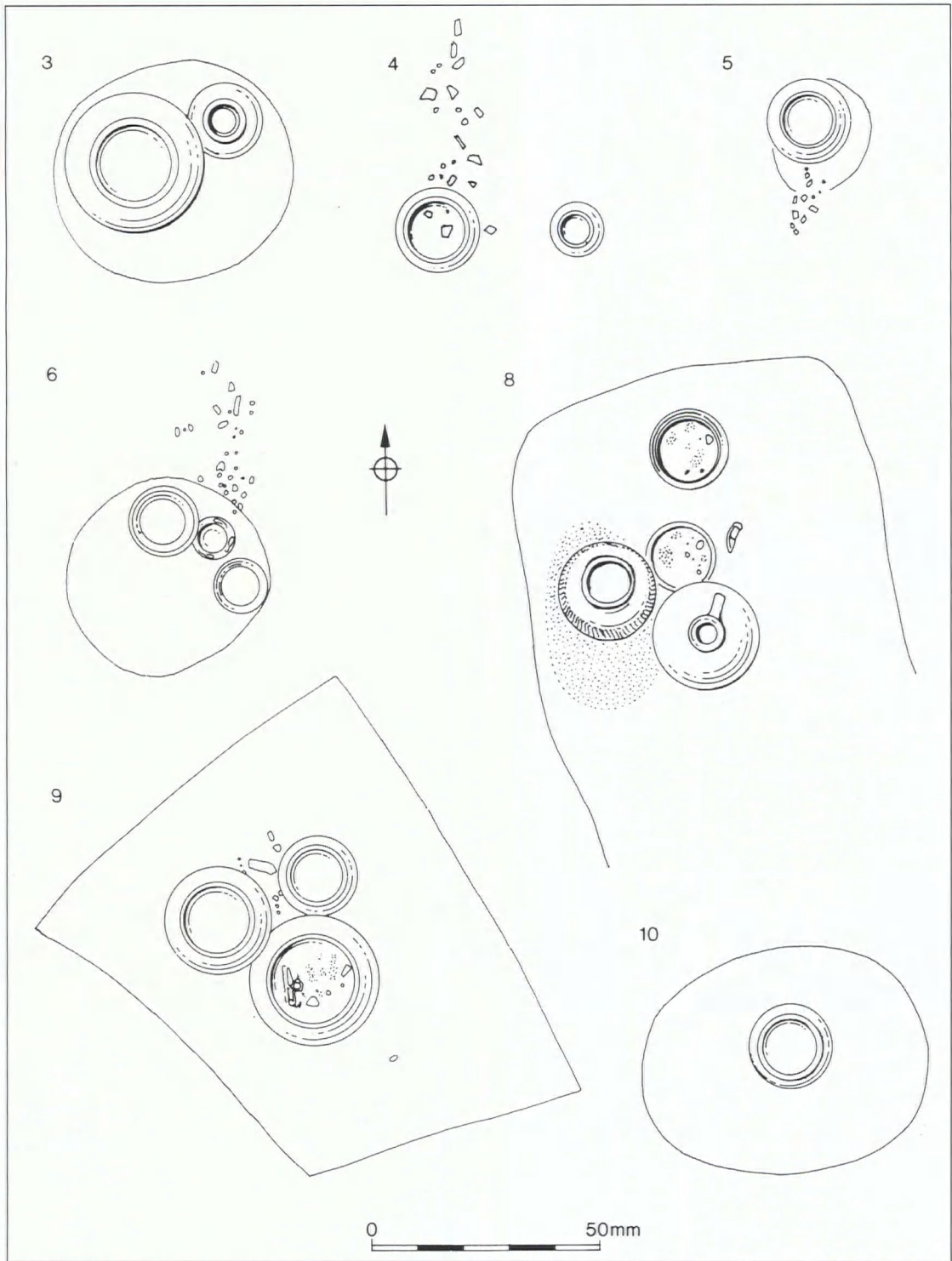


Figure 5 Cremation Groups

**Cremation 4**

*Cremation Vessel:* Shell tempered vessel (1st-2nd century).  
Not Illus.

*Human bone:*

Age: indeterminate.

Sex: indeterminate.

*Grave goods:* gritty pinkware vessel (1st-2nd century). Not Illus.

*Description:* very disturbed cremation in shallow hollow [5], filled by sandy material (6), Fig 5.

**Cremation 5**

*Cremation Vessel:* none.

*Human bone:*

Age: indeterminate.

Sex: indeterminate.

*Grave goods:* South Gaulish samian platter [Form Drg 18] (1st century), Fig 7.13.

*Description:* small shallow hollow [7] filled by sandy silts which contained some charcoal (8), Fig 5.

**Cremation 6**

*Cremation Vessel:* none

*Human bone:*

Age: indeterminate.

Sex: indeterminate.

*Grave goods:* Central Gaulish samian bowl [Form Drg 18/31] (2nd century), South Gaulish samian cup [Form 35] (1st-2nd century), sand tempered bowl (1st century), Fig 7.14,15,16 and three iron nails.

*Description:* shallow hollow [9] containing sandy material with some small stones (10), Fig 5.

**Cremation 7**

*Cremation Vessel:* gritty pinkware vessel (1st-2nd century).  
Not illus.

*Human bone:*

Age: indeterminate.

Sex: indeterminate.

*Grave goods:* none.

*Description:* shallow hollow [11] filled by sandy material (12).

**Cremation 8**

*Cremation Vessel:* none.

*Human bone:*

Age: young adult.

Sex: indeterminate.

*Grave goods:* whiteware flagon and butt beaker (1st century), Fig 8.17, 8.18, respectively, sand tempered lid (1st century), Fig 8.19, and stamped Terra Nigra platter (1st century), Fig 8.20, and copper alloy Colchester brooch (RA2), Fig 8.21.

*Description:* complex cremation group of 4 vessels laid in a line north to south in a rectangular shaped hollow [17] filled by sandy material (18). The cremation was deposited in the western half of the hollow with a brooch on the opposite side, Fig 5.

**Cremation 9**

*Cremation Vessel:* two hand-made grog and sand tempered jars (1st century), Fig 9.22, 9.23. The cremated bone had been placed inside the jars together with a pair of brooches which had become attached to bone fragments by their corrosion products.

*Human bone:*

Age: adult.

Sex: indeterminate.

*Grave goods:* grog and sand tempered jar (1st century), Fig 9.24 and two iron La Tene III developed brooches, iron chain and iron lugged ring (RA 6), Fig 9.25.

*Description:* cremation complex comprising three vessels laid in a shallow hollow [42], Fig 5.

**Cremation 10**

*Cremation Vessel:* gritty whiteware jar (2nd century), Fig 9.26.

*Human bone:*

Age: child.

Sex: indeterminate.

*Grave goods:* none.

*Description:* the cremated bone had been placed in a single cremation vessel buried in a small sub-circular cut [43]. The hollow was filled with sandy material (45), Fig 5.

**Cremation 11**

*Cremation Vessel:* none.

*Human bone:*

Age: juvenile and adult.

Sex: indeterminate.

*Grave goods:* none.

*Description:* simple unaccompanied cremation buried in shallow, sub-square pit [46], in a matrix of sandy material (46).

**THE CERAMIC ASSEMBLAGE****J Wells**

The ceramic assemblage comprises 37 vessels of late 1st to early 2nd century AD date. Of these 22 are cremation urns or accessory vessels recovered from ten discrete burials; the remainder derive from the area of the "cremation" spoilheap and represent an unknown number of cremations.

With the exception of the most fragmentary examples, all vessels from the cremation groups have been illustrated, as have those of intrinsic interest from the cremation spoilheap. Standard drawing conventions have been used, with vessels shown at one quarter size, external view on the right and a section and internal view on the left. Hand-made vessels are illustrated with hatched sections and wheel-thrown vessels with solid sections. The pie diagram at the base of each illustration indicates the proportion of the vessel recovered.

**TYPE SERIES**

Fifteen fabric types were identified, using common names and type codes from the Bedfordshire Ceramic Type Series. These are listed below in broadly chronological order. Full fabric descriptions are given only for those types not previously published.

**Belgic Iron Age**

F09 Grog and sand tempered.

Fabric - fully described in Dawson (1988, 13).

Forms - hand-made, otherwise undiagnostic jars.





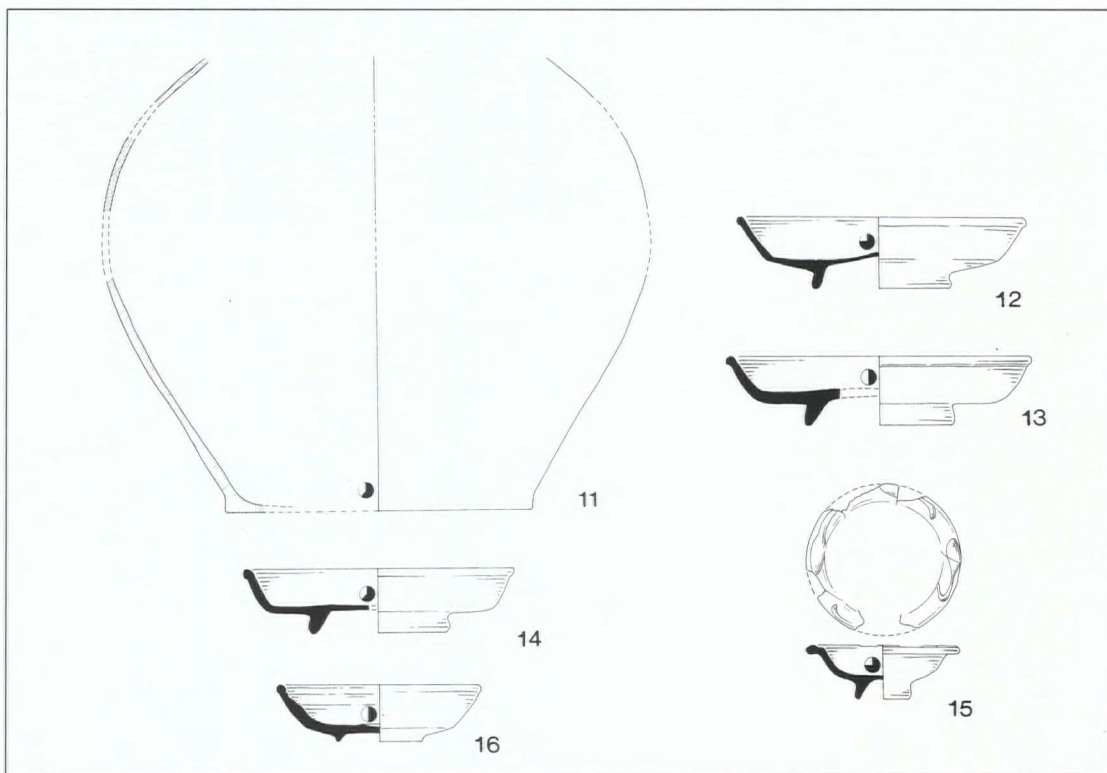


Figure 7 Pottery from Cremations 3, 5 and 6 (scale 1:4)

Dating - late Iron Age, in the Belgic tradition.

Illustrations - Fig 9.22, 23, 24.

F34 Sand tempered.

Fabric - generic grouping for sand tempered vessels in the Belgic tradition. Examples at Harlington are reduced and range from smooth, finely tempered vessels with quartz inclusions of >0.1mm to harsh, coarsely tempered vessels with inclusions of c.0.5-1.0mm.

Forms - cordoned cup, lid, bowl, platter, and undiagnostic jars.

Dating - late Iron Age, in the Belgic tradition.

Illustrations - Fig 6.4, 5, Fig 7.11,16, Fig 8.19.

#### Early Roman

R01A Central Gaulish samian ware.

Fabric - fully described by Webster (1996, 13).

Forms - bowl [Drg18/31].

Dating - see specialist report.

Illustrations - Fig 6.8, Fig 7.12,14.

R01B South Gaulish samian ware.

Fabric - fully described by Webster (1996, 13).

Forms - platters [Drg18], dish [Drg36], cup [Drg27g], and cup [Drg35].

Dating - see specialist report.

Illustrations - Fig 6.1, Fig 7.13,15.

R03A Verulamium Region fine whiteware.

Fabric - fully described by Marney (1989, 182: fabric 18g).

Forms - flagon.

Dating - late 1st-2nd centuries.

Illustrations - Fig 6.7.

R03B Gritty whiteware.

Fabric - fully described by Parminter (forthcoming).

Forms - flagons and jar.

Dating - uncertain; ?2nd century.

Comments - Similar to type R03A and to Milton Keynes fabric 39 (Marney 1989). Sources are uncertain; Oxfordshire has been suggested for the Milton Keynes fabric, although the Verulamium region is also a possibility.

Illustrations - Fig 9.26.

R04B Gallo-Belgic whiteware.

Fabric - generic grouping fully described by Parminter (forthcoming).

Flagon - fine grained smooth fabric containing sparse red quartz <0.1mm.

Butt beaker - fine buff/white powdery fabric with few visible inclusions.

Forms - flagon and butt beaker.

Dating - 1st century.

Illustrations - Fig 8.17,18.

R05A Orange sand tempered.

Fabric - fully described by Parminter (forthcoming). One vessel from Harlington varies in being extremely coarse and gritty.

Forms - flagon and jar.

Dating - 2nd century.  
Illustrations - Fig 6.2.

R05B Fine orange sand tempered.  
Fabric - fully described by Friendship-Taylor (forthcoming).  
Forms - beaker.  
Dating - 2nd century.  
Illustrations - Fig 6.10.

R08 Micaceous blackware.  
Fabric - fully described by Parminter (forthcoming).  
Forms - carinated jar.  
Dating - uncertain; ?1st century.  
Illustrations - Fig 6.3.

R13 Shell tempered.  
Fabric - fully described by Brown (1994).  
Forms - undiagnostic vessel.  
Dating - 1st-4th centuries: given its association with 1st-2nd century gritty pinkware, the Harlington vessel is likely to derive from the earlier Roman period.

R18 Gritty pink/redware.  
Fabric - fully described by Parminter (forthcoming).  
Forms - flagon and undiagnostic vessel.  
Dating - 1st-2nd century.

R22A Hadham oxidised.  
Fabric - fully described by Marney (1989, 186: fabric 37).  
Forms - jar.  
Dating - 2nd century.  
Illustrations - Fig 6.6.

R26 - Terra Nigra.  
Fabric - fully described by Stead and Rigby (1989, 126: fabric TN).  
Forms - platter stamped 'BENTO' (c. 20-65AD), with severe post-deposition lamination. Paralleled by vessel from King Harry Lane, St Albans - Burial 6.1 (Stead and Rigby 1989, 129/Burial 6.1).  
Dating - 1st century.  
Illustrations - Fig 8, 20.

R32B Lead glazed ware.  
Fabric - fully described by Marney (1989, 179: fabric 13c).  
Forms - flagon (c.f. Swan 1975, 25, plate 3).  
Dating - mid-late 1st century.

## SAMIAN WARE

B Dickinson

Excavation produced 205 samian sherds from a maximum of 12 vessels, with 79 sherds from one vessel. Erosion of the sherds made it generally impossible to estimate whether new or used vessels had been selected for deposition, but one dish (Fig 6.8) had been riveted in several places. The sherds themselves varied considerably in size.

The vessels ranged from the Claudian to the Trajanic or early-Hadrianic period, and it is noticeable that they included two dishes of form 36 and a

cup of form 35, further evidence of the popularity of these two forms as grave goods.

There is no certain evidence of the use of samian in the cemetery in the later 2nd century.

## Catalogue

### *Cremation Spoilheap (Group 1)*

Form Drg 36, about half-complete in 4 pieces, South Gaulish. Neronian or early Flavian.

Form Drg 36, about half-complete in 11 pieces, South Gaulish. Neronian or early Flavian.

Form Drg 18, South Gaulish, almost complete in 12 pieces, stamped OF[MA]CAR (with MA ligatured) (Glasbergen 1955, 140, 249); Maccarus of La Graufesenque, Die 13d. Maccarus's career began in the Tiberian period, but this stamp has not been noted on any of the earlier samian forms, although it is certainly pre-Flavian. The earliest examples are a form 15/17 from Lake Farm, Wimbourne, and a form 16R from La Graufesenque, c. A.D. 40-55.

Form Drg 27g, South Gaulish, almost complete, in 2 pieces, stamped OFCOIV: A. Cosius Iucundus of La Graufesenque, Die 3a. A stamp of a Flavian potter, noted from Rottweil-Hochmauren and Ulpia Noviomagus at Nijmegen. Stamps from other dies occur at Catterick, Chester and Newstead. c. A.D. 75-100. Fig 7.1.

Form Drg 18/31, (4 sherds) Central Gaulish. Trajanic or early Antonine.

Form Drg 18/31, (5 sherds) Central Gaulish. Trajanic or early Antonine.

### *Cremation 1*

Form Drg 18/31R (32 sherds and 47 scraps and flakes), Central Gaulish; riveted in five places and with a hole for a sixth rivet. The stamp ROPPI.RVT.M comes from the Die of Roppus ii-Rut(us?) of Les Martres-de-Veyre (Dickinson 1984, Fig 70.44) This stamp presumably records the names of two potters, since the cognomen Roppus was used separately at Les Martres. There are two examples of this stamp from the London Second Fire deposits c. AD 105-30.

### *Cremation 3*

Form Drg 18/31 (25 sherds), Central Gaulish (Les Martres-de-Veyre), stamped [V+]ALISMSF (Hartley 1972a, 233, S58). A stamp noted in the London Second Fire deposits, and at Corbridge and Malton. It was used on form 15/17, which was rarely made in Central Gaul after the Trajanic period. c. A.D. 100-120. Fig 7.12.

### *Cremation 5*

Form Drg 18, South Gaulish, half-complete in 4 pieces. Flavian. Fig 7.13.

### *Cremation 6*

Form Drg 18/31, (23 sherds), Central Gaulish (Les Martres-de-Veyres). Trajanic. Fig 7.14.

Form Drg 35, South Gaulish, almost complete, in 19 pieces. Flavian or Flavian-Trajanic. Fig 7.15.

The ceramic assemblage comprises a range of late

1st to early 2nd century vessels of local, regional and continental origin. The latter are represented by Central and South Gaulish samian ware, Gallo-Belgic whitewares, Terra Nigra, and a St Remy ware flagon of Central Gaulish origin. Samian vessels were accessories in four cremations (1, 2, 5 and 6) and a further six vessels were recovered from the spoilheap (CS, group 1). A single lead glazed flagon base was also recovered from the spoilheap (CS,

group 1), while the remaining continental imports, a whiteware flagon (Fig 8.17), butt-beaker (Fig 8.18) and stamped Terra Nigra platter (Fig 8.20), derived from cremation 8. To some extent continental influences are visible in locally manufactured vessels which copy imported forms; for example the sand tempered flagon (Fig 6.2) and platter (Fig 6.5), recovered from the spoilheap (CS, group 2 and CS, group 3 respectively).

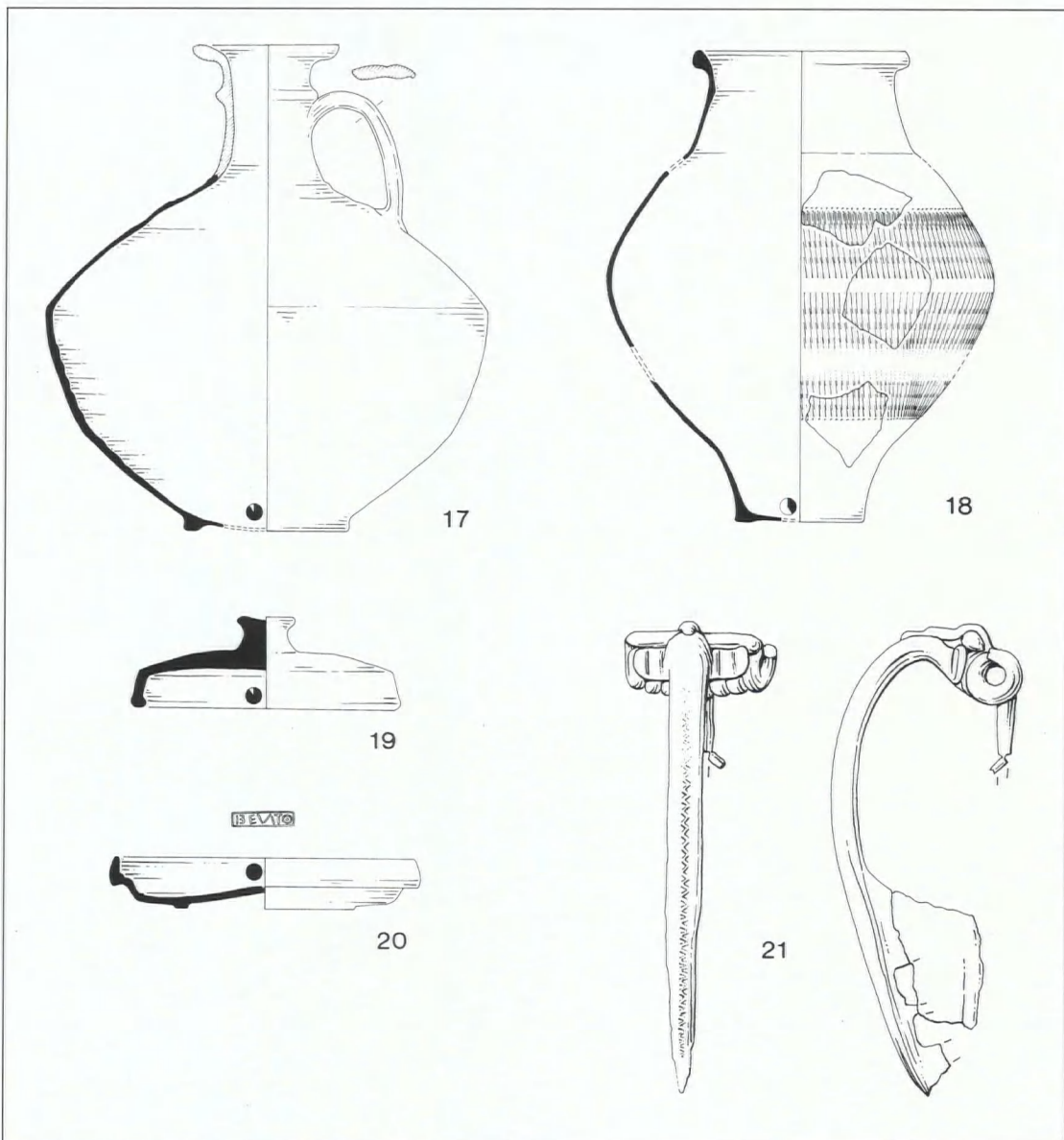


Figure 8 Artefacts from Cremation 8 (pottery scale 1:4, 21 scale 1:1)

Regional imports are predominantly represented by fine sandy flagons and jars (cremation 1, 4, and 7), the products of kilns at Brockley Hill and Radlett, and by a sand tempered jar from Hadham, Herts (cremation 1, Fig 6.6). The gritty whiteware jar (Fig 9.26) recovered from cremation 10 may derive from Oxfordshire (Marney 1989).

Of the local wares several 'Belgic' sand tempered vessels were recovered, amongst which were a cordoned cup (Fig 6.4) and platter (Fig 6.5) (CS, group 3) whose appearance and fabric suggests they were products of the same kiln and probably the same potter, although the source remains unknown. It is possible that these vessels were deposited in the same cremation. A fine walled carinated jar (Fig 6.3) in micaceous sandy fabric of unknown source was also recovered from this group, paralleled by vessels from Baldock (Stead and Rigby 1986, Fig 138/459) and the Roman settlement at Kempston (Parminter forthcoming).

An undiagnostic shell tempered vessel from cremation 4 is likely to be an early product of kilns at Harrold (Brown 1994).

Extensive post-depositional vessel damage resulting from quarrying makes it impossible to determine the presence or extent of any deliberate modification or damage to the cremation vessels. However, a single samian dish from cremation 1 has been extensively repaired using lead rivets (Fig 6.8).

Although only a small assemblage, the functional character and range of the vessels broadly conforms to a recognisable set of standard vessels. Jar, flagon, beaker/cup and platter/dish, are commonly represented in rural cemeteries of the south-east, and clearly this combination, with the deliberate addition or omission of some elements, is of symbolic importance in the pre- and post-conquest cremation ritual (Philpott 1991, 35). Given this 'standard' assemblage, it is probable that the pots from the spoilheap (CS, group 3) represent the full vessel complement of a single cremation.

A second group of burials, cremations 2, 3, 4 and 5, contained only one accessory vessel. However, there appears to be no marked preference for drinking vessels (beakers or flagons) over food vessels (dishes or platters). The apparent absence from these burials of a cinerary vessel does not necessarily indicate that these cremations were originally unurned, as they may have been placed in perishable organic containers.

Cremation 9 is, however, different from the other cremations. Firstly it contained only jars in contrast to the standard set identified above. Furthermore the

jars, both hand-made, grog and sand tempered, were probably local wares. These vessels were associated with two La Tene III iron brooches which might suggest this group represents an earlier burial. However, in cremation 3 a similar hand-made jar to those in cremation 9, was associated with an early 2nd century samian bowl. As it is unlikely that such a vessel could have survived unbroken for several generations it may be the brooches which represent heirlooms. The absence of ironwork from early burials at King Harry Lane (Rigby *pers comm*) seems to support the contention that the brooches were heirlooms which had been curated and were eventually deposited in later vessels in the early 2nd century.

The presence of continental finewares in the cremation 8 assemblage indicates that this grave too may be significant, for it contained a locally manufactured sand tempered lid (Fig 8.19), with no matching vessel. At the King Harry Lane cemetery, lids were recovered only from comparatively rich burials, containing an average of four pots per grave (Stead and Rigby 1989, 189). The inclusion of samian accessory vessels in other graves and their absence from cremation 8 may also be important, suggesting occasionally deliberate exclusion of readily available samian in favour of less accessible continental imports.

## THE NON-CERAMIC ASSEMBLAGE

H B Duncan

### FASTENERS AND FITTINGS

The nail assemblage recovered from Harlington is small and fragmentary, with the majority in fair to poor condition. Two forms were represented, Manning's Type 1b, a general purpose nail less than 150mm long and flat, sub-rectangular or rounded heads, and Type 10, hobnails from sandals and boots with short stems and small domed or pyramidal heads (Manning 1985, 133-7). The Harlington nails derived from the fills of cremations in variable quantities outlined below (Table 1).

At least two activities, the deposition of boxes or of wooden objects from the pyre, may be represented by the Harlington nails, both suggested by evidence from contemporary cemeteries. At King Harry Lane, six groups of five or more nails, of Type 1b, in cremations appeared to be from the remains of boards or wooden boxes, whilst five nails or fewer in 43 cremations may have represented wooden objects that had been burnt on the pyre (Stead and Rigby 1989, 111). Nails occurred in graves of all phases at King Harry Lane but with greater frequency in Phase 3 (AD 40-60), representing 55.5% of the phased graves producing nails. In contrast, at Westhampton, Type

1b nails were recovered from 17 of the 26 pyre and pyre-related features and these were thought, in the main, to have been in the timbers which fuelled the pyre (Montague 1997, 106). Finds of single hobnails in graves occurred in two instances at King Harry Lane, both from Phase 3 deposits (Stead and Rigby 1989, 111).

Cremation	Context	Nail type	Quantity
3	4	Manning Type 1b	3
		Manning Type 10	2
		nail shank fragments	8
6	10	Manning Type 1b	1
		nail shank fragments	2
1	501	Manning Type 1b	14

Table 1 Nails by context

### HOUSEHOLD

A single glass vessel recovered from cremation 1 is represented by a small fragment of rim of pale blue/green glass (RA9). The rim, which appears to have been fire-rounded, may derive from a spouted jug, the curvature suggesting that the fragment formed part of the spout. The sherd is slightly distorted from exposure to high temperatures and this, combined with its fragmentary survival, precludes certainty as to original form.

Spouted jugs are never found in the same quantities as jugs with circular mouths. Jugs with pinched-in spouts, as opposed to pulled-out spouts, were in use in the 1st and 2nd centuries AD, but the form does not appear to have continued in the north-western provinces of Roman Britain much after the early 3rd century AD (Cool and Price 1995, 131).

The sherd recovered from within the fill of a cremation urn, together with evidence of fire distortion, suggests that the vessel may have been placed on the funeral pyre. From the late 1st century onwards, glass vessels are increasingly common in cremations, and during the 2nd century the increasing popularity of glass as grave offerings led to a greater diversity of forms being included. The distribution of glass vessels as grave goods clusters in the south east of England, with the majority occurring in rural or small town cemeteries (Philpott 1991, 117).

### PERSONAL ADORNMENT

**Brooch** [RA2, cremation 8] (Fig 8.21). Copper alloy (brass with traces of lead). Colchester brooch with damaged eight coil spring, external chord, side wings and tapered, curved bow sharply angled under the head. The bow, tip damaged, retains cast 'zigzag' decoration down its centre and remains of ribbing on the wings. The hook is long and may originally have been zoomorphic in form. The catchplate is broken and damaged but retains the edges of two rectilinear perforations. Present length 65mm.

**Brooches (2)** [RA6, cremation 9], chain and linking ring (Fig 9.25). Iron. Two paired brooches, heads surviving and remains of one fretted catchplate. The brooches are of similar form, of one-piece construction with four coils, internal chord and head of bow expanded into a trumpet-shape. The bows of these brooches bear three ribs or mouldings at the point at which the bow turns sharply inwards towards the expanded head. These equate with Stead's developed Aylesford type (1976, 410), a variant of the Knotenfibel, and Feugere's Type 8a (1985). Both brooches have a head loop formed from iron wire that was passed through the coils, to which an iron chain of oval links, was attached. A flat circular ring of iron, each side decorated with a central line of shallow circular depressions, has three equally-spaced, projecting perforated lugs each carrying the remains of an iron chain of the same dimensions and form to that attached to the brooches. Several lengths of detached chain were also present. A dark red corrosion layer, removed during conservation, was probably haematite which is formed on iron that has been heated above 200°C; its presence is consistent with the objects having been subjected to the cremation process.

La Tene III brooches with a boss or moulding on the bow have been defined by Stead (1976) as a type fossil for his Welwyn phase of the Aylesford culture, dating to the second half of the 1st century BC. He identified three sub-divisions of this brooch type:

- two-coil spring with external chord and simple head (early);
  - four- to six-coils with internal chord and simple head (intermediate);
  - brooches with the head of the bow expanded into a trumpet shape with internal chord (developed);
- but noted that there was little to suggest that this typological sequence had any chronological significance in Britain (Stead 1976, 410). Brooches of the developed form in iron are rare, more commonly occurring in copper alloy or silver (Stead and Rigby 1989, 96). The Harlington brooches are similar to examples from Hitchin (Stead 1976, 408 Fig 3 No. 4) and the King Harry Lane cemetery (Stead and Rigby 1989, Fig 110 grave 124 No. 4; Fig 141 grave 270 Fig 4).

More refined dating of the Stead developed form is problematic. The King Harry Lane examples derived from Phase 1 (AD 1-40) and Phase 3 (AD 40-60) graves. Mackreth has suggested, on the basis of the striking absence of well-known post-Conquest brooch types at the King Harry Lane cemetery, that the start date would sit more happily at c.15BC (Mackreth 1995). Indeed, Stead and Rigby acknowledge that the first graves in the cemetery could be this early (1989, 83). Such a revision of the dating of King Harry Lane cemetery would then place Stead's developed form brooches in cremations of 15BC-AD 25 and AD 25-45.

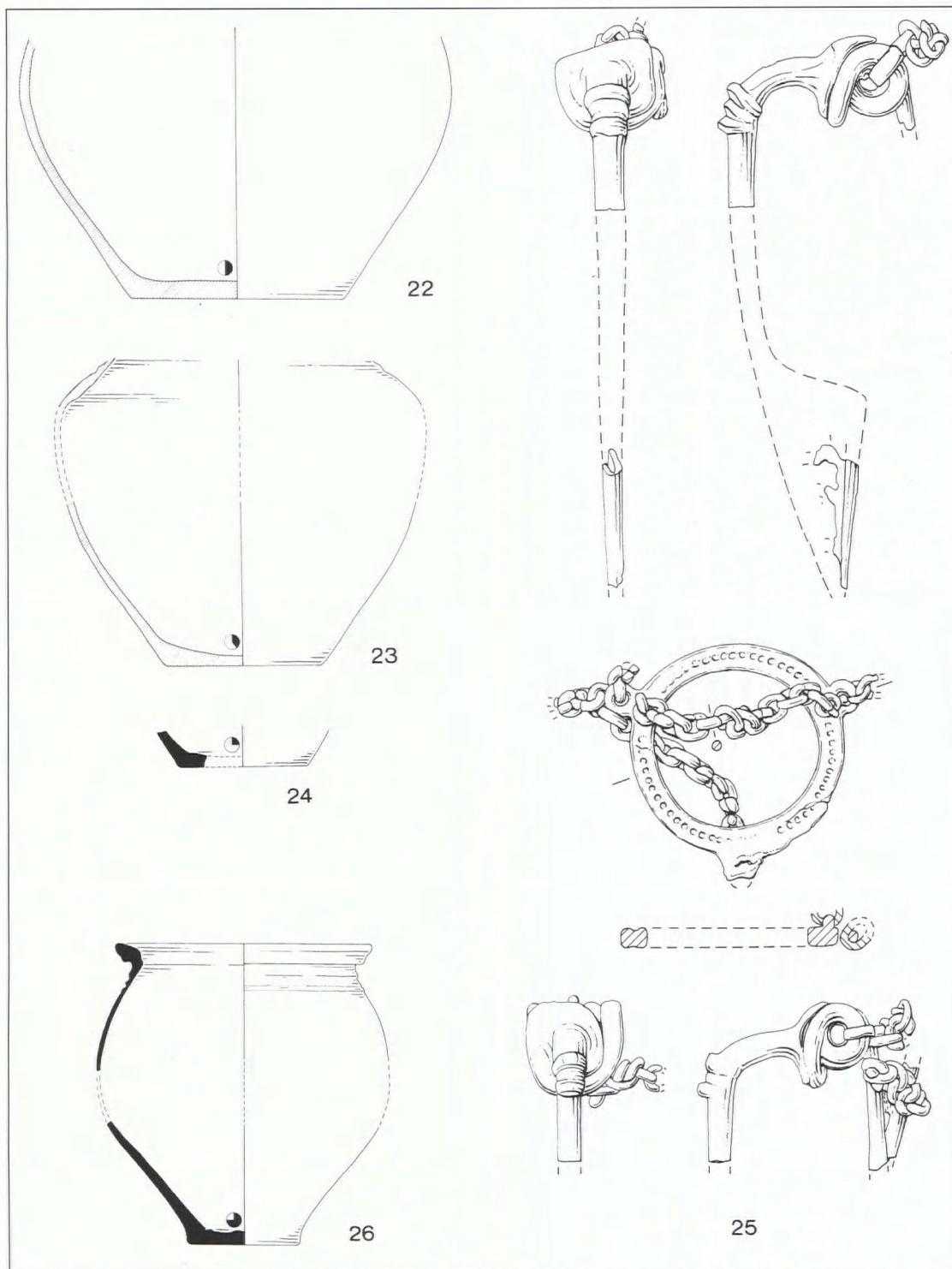


Figure 9 Artefacts from Cremations 9 and 10 (pottery scale 1:4, 25 scale 1:1)

The cemetery at Westhampnett (Montague 1997, 95-6, Fig 47), tentatively dated to 100-40BC, produced a sizeable assemblage of Feugere's 8b/Stead's early brooches (two to four coils with external chords). This brooch form is thought to start as early as 75BC, certainly passing out of manufacture before the end of the century, by 20BC if not earlier (Montague 1997, 96; Fitzpatrick and Megaw 1987, 436-8). No intermediate or developed forms were present. Excavations at Foxholes produced a group of six brooches, including a Feugere 8a/Stead intermediate, but none of Stead's developed form. Mackreth argues that this is a closed group, with a start date of c.100BC and a date limit of c.25BC (1989, 129). A small cemetery at Salford, Beds., also yielded examples of Feugere's 8a in association with Nauheim, Alesia and Feugere's 11a types. None of these brooch types would appear to date much later than c 25BC, and it may be noteworthy that no developed forms were recovered.

These instances would appear to suggest a chronological difference at least between Stead's developed form and his early/intermediate forms. More examples, however, are needed before determining whether this is a consistent pattern. On the basis of these preliminary findings, a suggested start date for the developed form of the last quarter of the 1st century BC might be proposed. How long this form continued in circulation remains unclear. Certainly one example from King Harry Lane (grave 124, Fig 110) was associated with a post-Conquest Colchester brooch (Stead and Rigby 1989, 102), but how great a role curation played in its survival cannot be determined.

Boon and Savory describe the wearing of paired and linked brooches as a female Celtic fashion dating back to La Tene I on the continent, appearing in Britain during La Tene III and persisting into the Roman period (1975, 45). In addition to those noted by Boon and Savory a regional example at Salford, Beds., contained a pair of copper alloy Feugere's type 11a brooches linked by a chain of the same material (Duncan, McSloy and Mackreth in prep), and at Westhampnett, West Sussex four pairs of brooches were linked by chains (Montague 1997, 97). Two of the pairs at the latter site were of iron (Feugere 2a and Almgren 65/Feugere 8b). The Harlington brooches, rather than being joined directly to each other, appear to have been joined to the accompanying lugged ring. A third object is assumed to have been attached to the third lug of the ring. Snape in discussing wear on the head loops of Roman brooches, suggests that some of these

brooches may have had a pendant or chatelaine suspended from them. She notes two possible examples from Carlisle and a sawfish brooch retaining a short length of silver chain with the remains of a silver disc attached (Snape 1993, 6). The Harlington brooches and accompanying ring may represent an earlier, and perhaps more elaborate, manifestation of this fashion.

An alternative interpretation is that the third lug on the iron ring was linked to another brooch. Several examples of three brooch groups in late Iron Age cremations are known. At Salford, Beds., one group retained the remains of copper alloy chain (Duncan, McSloy and Mackreth, in prep), while King Harry Lane produced 10 instances of three brooches, and 10 instances of four or more brooches, one of the latter retaining the remains of a linking chain (Stead and Rigby 1989). The King Harry Lane examples occurred in cremations of Phases 1-3 (AD 1-40 to AD 40-60) in roughly equal numbers. The late Iron age cemetery at Alkham Kent also has at least one instance of three brooches, together with quantities of brooch chain and associated rings (*pers comm* Val Rigby) and Hinxtion Rings, Cambs., produced a cremation containing four brooches, two with the remains of chains (Hill *et al* forthcoming). This may indicate a change in the way in which brooches were worn in the late Iron Age. This change may be an early example of Romanising influences from continental Europe where three brooches in a grave is a common element of female costume (Fitzpatrick 1997, 109).

A third possible function for the ring may be that of a headdress, late Iron Age examples of similar form (Type III) being known from Stony Stratford, Bucks, Wansborough, Surrey and Newnham Croft, Cambs (Parfitt 1995, 81-3, Fig 31). Central rings or top pieces on headdresses, however, normally have four places of attachment, as opposed to the three lugs on the Harlington ring.

As noted above, it is rare to find an instance of this brooch type in iron, and even more unusual in what appears to be a set of jewellery. With the exception of coins, objects of precious metal are rare in later Iron Age Europe (Fitzpatrick and Megaw 1987, 438). It may be that this jewellery was specifically made for deposition with the burial.

Olivier (1988, 39-44), following on from Hull (Hawkes and Hull 1947, 310) has carefully distinguished the differences between the Simple Gaulish brooch, exhibiting features of Continental form, and the more numerous British variants which presumably developed in Britain from continental proto-

types. RA2 would appear to be a true 'Colchester' distinguishable by its bow with a curved profile and a triangular catch-plate. This brooch form commonly possesses a catchplate with three rectilinear perforations, although examples with four or more perforations are known (*c.f.* Stead and Rigby 1989, Fig 48). The Harlington example falls between the defined King Harry Lane Colchester sub-types Ca, sharply angled under the head and Cb, decorated bows of a much more rounded profile (Stead and Rigby 1989, 89-90). Seriation of the King Harry Lane brooches suggests that types Ca and Cb were current during the early phases of the cemetery, but that type Cb had a long currency, continuing into Phase 3 (AD 40-60). It was suggested that the decoration on the bow may be a late trait, not occurring on brooches until Phase 2, AD 30-55 (Stead and Rigby 1989, 100). Olivier notes that what he terms standard Colchesters occur in both pre- and post-Conquest contexts, but comments that excavated parallels indicate that a catchplate with four slightly elaborate perforations are almost exclusively found in deposits of early to mid 1st century AD (1988, 44). The damage and incomplete nature of the catchplate on RA2 prohibits certainty as to its original form.

#### OBJECTS OF UNCERTAIN USE

**Paring chisel?** [RA8, cremation 1]. (Fig 6.9). Iron. Sub-triangular in plan, thin and flaring at one end, which is now damaged, opposing end tapers in width but thickens. Possibly remains of wide paring chisel, or perhaps part of small adze blade? Length 100mm, width 47mm, maximum thickness c.10mm

The damaged condition of RA8 precludes certainty as to its function. The flaring blade-like end suggests a wide-bladed paring chisel (Manning 1985 Fig 4 no.1). The concurrent tapering and thickening of the opposing end may have originally formed the start of a solid handle or tang. Paring chisels, finishing tools, were operated with hand or shoulder pressure and have light, thin flexible blades, frequently splayed to give a wide edge (Manning 1985, 21). A tanged example is known from Housesteads (Manning 1976, Fig 15, No. 59). Alternatively RA8 may have been the remains of a small adze blade (Manning 1985, Plate 8, No. B13).

Whichever identification is correct, RA8 functioned as a tool. Its recovery from the fill of a cremation urn is unusual, tools and domestic equipment occurring infrequently in Romano-British cremations (Philpott 1991, 186).

#### HUMAN REMAINS

T A Jackman

Of the eleven cremations from Harlington, five contained the remains of one individual each and four contained fragments of bone that are too small to distinguish the number of individuals. The cremated material recovered from the CS may represent more than one individual. All the cremations from Harlington represent incomplete individuals. The remains of an adult normally weigh approximately two kilograms; in comparison the heaviest cremation from Harlington, cremation 3, was 780g and the least amount of bone, just 25g, came from cremation 5. Only one cremation, 3, contained animal bones and they were from a small rodent.

The identification of four adults is based on the size of the bones. Cremation 8 is a young adult. The epiphysis from the distal end of the radius is present and this normally fuses by the age of 23 years. Skull fragments from cremation 10 are from a child. Only one cremation could be sexed and that is the bone from the spoilheap; it is possibly female. The supra orbital border is blunt and the occipital bone is smooth without any protuberance.

All the cremations appear to have been well burned. The majority of the bone is buff coloured and well calcined. Blue coloured fragments of bone are from the interior surfaces of the skull, tibia and other fragments of cancellous bone and show that these parts were furthest away from the hottest part of the fire.

Cremation 3 had the smallest fragments in the bottom of the vessel either deliberately placed or the result of shaking. The remains of cremation 9 were divided between two grog and sand tempered vessels.

#### BONE CATALOGUE

##### **Cremation spoilheap:** 1991/3 CS.

Age: Adult.

Sex: ?F.

Colour: Mostly buff. Some fragments of the interior surface of the skull are blue as are the inside surfaces of fragments of tibia.

Maximum length: 67.9mm (fibula).

Total weight: 405g.

Identified bone: Shafts from ribs, fibula, clavicle and femur, head of radius, acromion- right supra-orbital margin, fragment of occipital bone and other skull fragments.

Comments: As these fragments were collected from the spoilheap, it is possible that there are bones from more than one cremation. All the bone is well preserved most of the fragments have transverse cracks and the fragments are twisted and distorted.



**Cremation 1:** 1991/3 Cl.

Age: Adult.

Sex: ?

Colour: Mostly buff. Very few fragments are blue.

Maximum length: 37mm (rib).

Total weight: 540g.

Identified bone: Roots from 2 teeth and fragments from skull, right trapezoid, humeri and femora fragments, ulna, coccyx and rib.

Comments: The fragments are very small and some long bones have transverse cracks and are twisted and distorted.

**Cremation 2:** C2 1991/3.

No identifiable bone.

**Cremation 3:** H91 (4) C I.

Age: ?Adult.

Sex: ?

Colour: Mostly buff with some blue cancellous bone.

Maximum length: 49.3mm (long bone).

Total weight: 780g.

Identified bone: Fragments from the skull, ribs, long bones, vertebrae, head of a phalanx and the roots of three teeth.

Comments: The smallest fragments came from the bottom half of the cremation vessel. The fragments have transverse and longitudinal cracks.

**Cremation 4:** H91 (6) C2.

Age: ?

Sex: ?

Colour: Buff with approximately 2% of fragments blue.

Maximum length: 30.2mm (rib).

Total weight: 55g.

Identified bone: Skull.

Comments: All the fragments are very small and undiagnostic.

**Cremation 5:** H91 (8) C3.

Age: ?

Sex: ?

Colour: Buff.

Maximum length: N/A.

Total weight: 25g.

Identified bone: None.

Comments: Very tiny fragments.

**Cremation 6:** H91 (10) C4.

Age: ?

Sex: ?

Colour: Buff.

Maximum length: 33.9mm (clavicle).

Total weight: 125g.

Identified bone: Clavicle, rib, condyle of tibia, skull.

Comments: Some of the fragments have transverse and longitudinal cracks, all the fragments are small.

**Cremation 7:** H91 (12) C5.

Age: ?

Sex: ?

Colour: Buff.

Maximum length: N/A.

Total weight: 35g.

Identified bone: None.

Comments: Very small fragments.

**Cremation 8:** H92 (19).

Age: Young Adult.

Sex: ?

Colour: Mostly buff with some white fragments and some tiny of blue coloured bone.

Maximum length: 31.5mm (rib).

Total weight: 160g.

Identified bone: Tibia, other long bone fragments, rib, skull, proximal end of a phalanx and epiphysis from the distal end of a radius.

Comments: All four vessels contained bone that is uniform in colour, size and quantity.

**Cremation 9:** H92 (42).

Age: Adult.

Sex: ?

Colour: Buff, white, some small blue and blue-black fragments.

Maximum length: 34.5mm (humerus).

Total weight: 320g.

Identified bone: Vertebrae, skull, humerus and other long bone fragments; rib, clavicle, scapula and right upper molar.

Comments: Some fragments have cracked. Vessel 1 (Fig 9.22) contained the most bone (235g) while vessel 2 (Fig 9, 23) contained 14g. The lowest spit excavated in vessel 1 contained large fragments of bone weighing 140g with the brooch, RA6. The bone size and weight became progressively smaller, the higher up the vessel it was placed.

**Cremation 10:** H92 (44)

Age: Child.

Sex: N/A.

Colour: Buff and blue.

Maximum length: 43.9mm (radius), vessel 2.

Total weight: 130g.

Identified bone: Skull, vertebrae, rib, radius and humerus.

Comments: The bone fragments are very small, the thickness of the skull and prominence of the sutures show that it came from a child.

**Cremation 11:** H95 (46).

Age: Juvenile and adult.

Sex: N/A and ?

Colour: White/buff and blue/black.

Maximum length: 29.6mm unidentified long bone.

Total weight: 352g.

Identified bone: Pelvis, cranium, tooth roots, long bone, rib, phalanges.

Comments: Very small fragments of cremated material which appear to come from two individuals.

**DISCUSSION****CHRONOLOGY**

The eleven burials at Harlington may form two groups in a small unenclosed cemetery. The groups comprise cremations 1-8 and 11, with possibly a second group made up of the remains found on the cremation spoil heap and cremation 9. Identification of the latter group, somewhat to the north, is based on the supposition that the spoil heap cremations had been removed by machine from the quarry face,

where cremation 9 was located.

The date of burial in the Harlington cemetery is early in the Roman period. From cremations 3, 5 and 6 samian accessory vessels indicate a date in the 1st century AD (Flavian) and cremation 1 was buried, at the earliest, in the Trajanic/Hadrianic period. This date range is confirmed by the presence of Gallo-Belgic whitewares and the St Remy ware flagon. The late La Tene III brooches, from cremation 9, may be heirlooms.

The status of the Harlington cemetery is difficult to assess. There are few contemporary cemeteries to provide detailed comparisons. The cemetery is clearly part of the continuing late Iron Age burial tradition which is characterised by several small cremation cemeteries in the region. These include those excavated at Biddenham Loop, near Bedford, at Maulden, on the Amphill bypass (Fadden pers comm) and Salford (Dawson, forthcoming) as well as those recently published from Toddington (Pollard 1991) and catalogued by Simco (1973). In the post conquest period the tradition continued with examples of small cremation cemeteries known at Kempston, at Deepdale (Dawson and Slowikowski 1988), close to Sandy and at Fairfield Hospital, Stotfold (BCAS Report 97/12). Of the latter only the Fairfield example contains the same level of material wealth comparable with the samian collection at Harlington. A second, possibly significant factor is that the Harlington cemetery draws the majority of its ceramics from the south. This contrasts with the record of ceramic use at sites north of the greensand ridge where ceramic sources are noticeably oriented to east and west and, with the growth of the Harrold and Nene Valley industries, to the north. Although beyond the immediate scope of this report it may be that the greensand ridge was a more significant territorial division in the late Iron Age than the Great Ouse valley.

#### LANDSCAPE CONTEXT

It is tempting to see the Harlington cremations deposited over a relatively short period, however the burials probably span a period which extends from the beginning of the Flavian period to beyond the end of Hadrian, possibly three generations. The landscape context in which these burials took place therefore includes much evidence which is only just being analysed and published by Bedfordshire Archaeology Service. A preliminary model of the developing landscape in this area during the early Roman province has been proposed in which late Iron Age settlements continued to exist for a time

before the development of villa estates. The latter brought about a revolution in the countryside as emparkment led to settlement agglomeration and a decline in the number of small farmsteads. The effects of the Roman province are clearly visible in the reduced number of settlements known from the Roman period in comparison to those in the Iron Age. Harlington thus should be seen as part of a late Iron Age tradition still alive in the late 1st century close to a settlement which may have evolved or developed to become the centre of a villa estate on the south facing slope of Sheepwalk Hill.

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