

THE EXCAVATION OF A RING-DITCH AT ENGLEFIELD BY JOHN WYMER AND PAUL ASHBEE, 1963

FRANCES HEALY

with a pottery report by Rosamund Cleal

SUMMARY

The smallest of four contiguous ring-ditches was excavated. The regular, flat-bottomed ditch produced a single Beaker sherd from the base with mainly Late Neolithic pottery and flint-work from upper fills. A pit in the interior contained sherds of Grooved ware. Part of a second ring-ditch cut the first and produced a sherd of Middle Bronze Age pottery.

INTRODUCTION

Discovery and investigation

A row of four contiguous ring-ditches was discovered in 1962 at Englefield, south-west of Theale, by John Wymer and W H Manning in the course of aerial reconnaissance undertaken on behalf of Reading Museum. The smallest of the four was excavated in 1963 by John Wymer with Paul Ashbee as consultant director and a summary report published (Anon 1963-4). Full publication was postponed pending the anticipated excavation of the remaining three ring-ditches which lay on or close to a possible line of the M4. The motorway was eventually routed further north and they remained unexcavated. This account is based on the archive and finds, which form part of the collections of Reading Museum (accession number 175:63).

Location and topography (Fig 1)

The site lies in the Kennet valley at SU 6241 7016, on the gravels of the Beenham Grange terrace. The four ring-ditches lie along the terrace, just above the 50m contour, roughly parallel to and about 1km north-west of the present course of the River Kennet. The aerial photographs show that each ring-ditch cut the next, although the sequence is unclear (Anon 1963-4, pl IIa; Gates 1975, pl 2). All four are crossed by a linear ditch which continues north-eastwards for a further 100m, parallel to another ditch 100m to the north-west (Fig 1; Gates 1975, map 7). A dark, elongated feature extends north-eastwards from ring-ditch 1 for approximately 90m (Fig 1; Gates 1975, pl 3). A former watercourse runs parallel to the ring-ditches some 30m to the south-east, below the edge of the terrace (Gates 1975, pl 3), forming part of an extensive system of braided channels (Cheetham 1980, 212-17).

The surrounding area is rich in ring-ditches and other cropmarks (Fig 1; Gates 1975, maps 7 and 8). A later Neolithic scatter of domestic character has been collected from the area of the ring-ditches (Ford 1978, 15-16, 23; Holgate 1988, 98, 238, table 4). Finds made before World War II during gravel quarrying at Ballast Hole, Theale, some 550m north-east of the ring-ditches, included a complete Beaker, two crouched burials, an urned cremation probably of the Middle

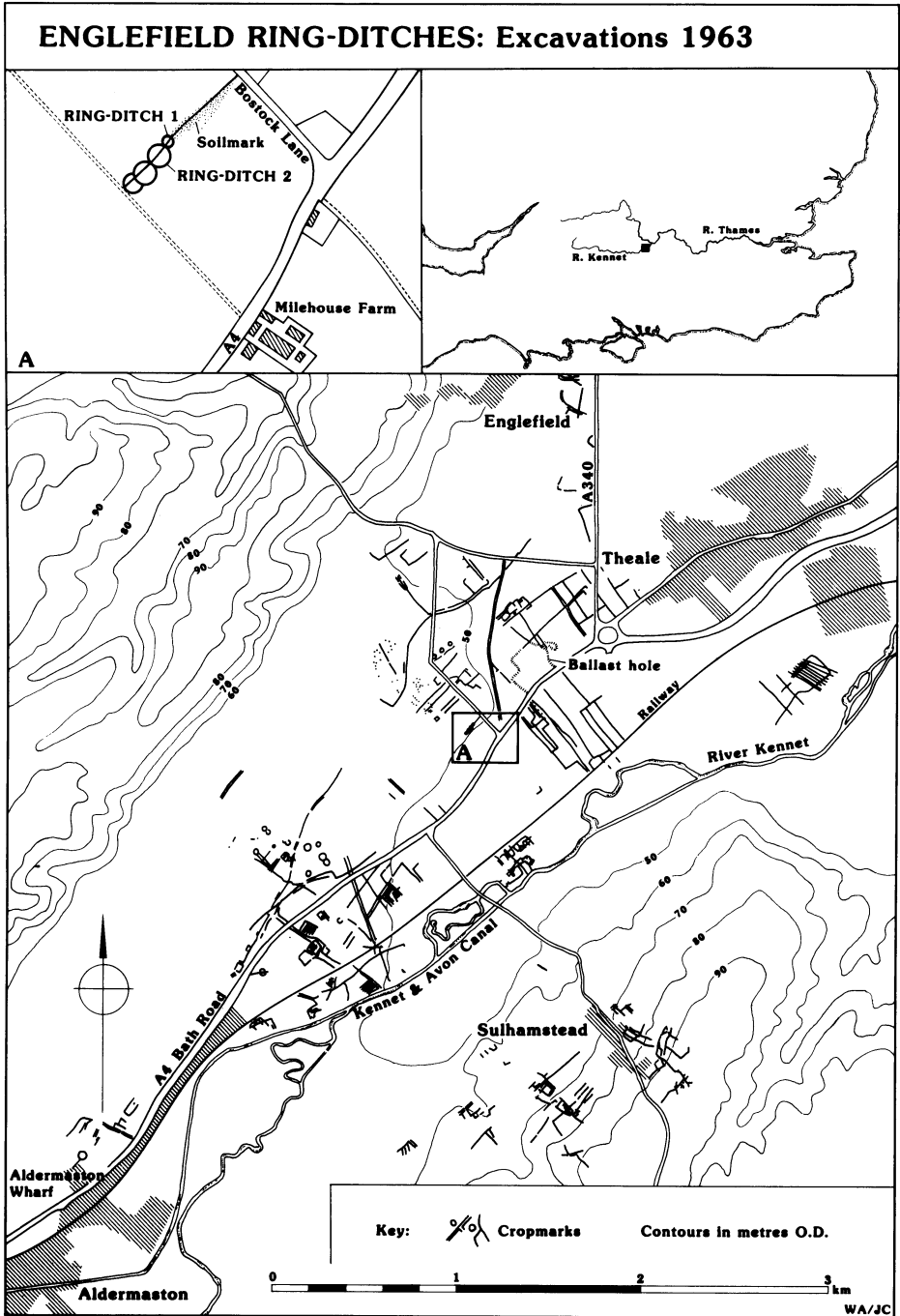


Figure 1 Location of the Englefield ring-ditches

Bronze Age, and abundant Late Bronze/Early Iron Age and Iron Age material, apparently derived from settlement (Piggott 1936; Piggott 1938).

THE EXCAVATION

Method

Ring-ditch 1 and the north-east part of ring-ditch 2 were located by means of a proton gradiometer survey. A baseline was laid from north-east to south-west, across ring-ditch 1 and through its intersection with ring-ditch 2. The mechanical stripping of 0.23–0.30m of ploughsoil left a 2ft (0.60m) baulk along the baseline, and exposed *c* 0.60m of dark yellowish-brown silty loam (layer 2) which lay between the base of the ploughsoil (layer 1) and the surface of the natural gravel (layer 3). Pegs numbered I (north-east) to IX (south-west) were set along the baseline at 10ft- (3.05m) intervals. The site was excavated in 10ft- (3.05m) squares, numbered 1–9 along the axis of the baseline, and lettered NA–NC to the north-west of it and SA–SC to the south-east. Finds were located to layer and 10ft-square. The precise findspots of almost all pottery and some other selected objects were triangulated from the pegs of the baseline, and their depths measured from an arbitrary level, apparently the tops of those pegs. These measurements indicate the relative depths of objects and their approximate relation to the sections. The central baulk was maintained until the final stages of the excavation when it was excavated after the main section had been drawn. Any discrepancies between plan and sections reproduced here are those of the field record.

Ring-ditch 1

The ditch was of regular, near-circular plan, *c* 15m in diameter (Fig 2). All the drawn sections record the same profile, with flat bottom and flaring sides (Fig 3, sections 2–4). Width varied between 1.80m and 1.00m at the surface of the natural gravel and between

0.90m and 0.60m at the bottom. Depth below the surface of the gravel ranged between 0.85m and 0.50m. At the north-east end of the main section the ditch edges could be traced for up to 0.30m in overlying layer 2 (Fig 3, section 2). It was, however, impossible to tell from what level it had originally been cut.

The primary fill is drawn as alternating lenses of gravel and silt in section 3 and recorded as gravelly silt in section 5 (Fig 3). Both this and the main fill of the ditch were excavated as layer 4, so that the only find certainly from the primary fill is a Beaker rim fragment (Fig 5, P13) from 'bottom of ditch'.

The remainder of the ditch fill consisted of a fine, apparently undifferentiated, silt or silty loam, dark brown in colour and incorporating some gravel. This deposit reached depths of up to 0.60m, its upper part merging into the base of layer 2. Sherds from it are small and abraded, regardless of date. The attributable pottery is mainly Peterborough ware (Fig 4, P1–P4, P6–P9), which was concentrated in the east part of the ditch. Also present were Beaker (Fig 5, P13–P18) and perhaps Grooved ware, with Middle Bronze Age (Fig 6, P21–P23), later Bronze Age (Fig 6, P24). Late Iron Age (Fig 6, P27), and Romano-British pottery. Pre-Iron Age wares were, however, most numerous and were unaccompanied by later material in the lowest part of the fill. A few Middle Bronze Age sherds, including P21–P23, were found in the lower part of the fill but not at its base (Table 4). The struck flint from the ditch is of predominantly later Neolithic character and was also concentrated in the east of the circuit. Charcoal flecks were sparse but widespread.

Interior of ring-ditch 1

The lowermost part of layer 2, through which the ditch had been cut, was tentatively distinguished from the rest of the layer by an orange colour and a rather stonier texture. This zone, more readily seen in section than in plan, was thought at the time of excavation to be a remnant of the pre-ring-ditch soil. It was much disturbed by tree-roots in the

EXCAVATION OF A RING-DITCH AT ENGLEFIELD

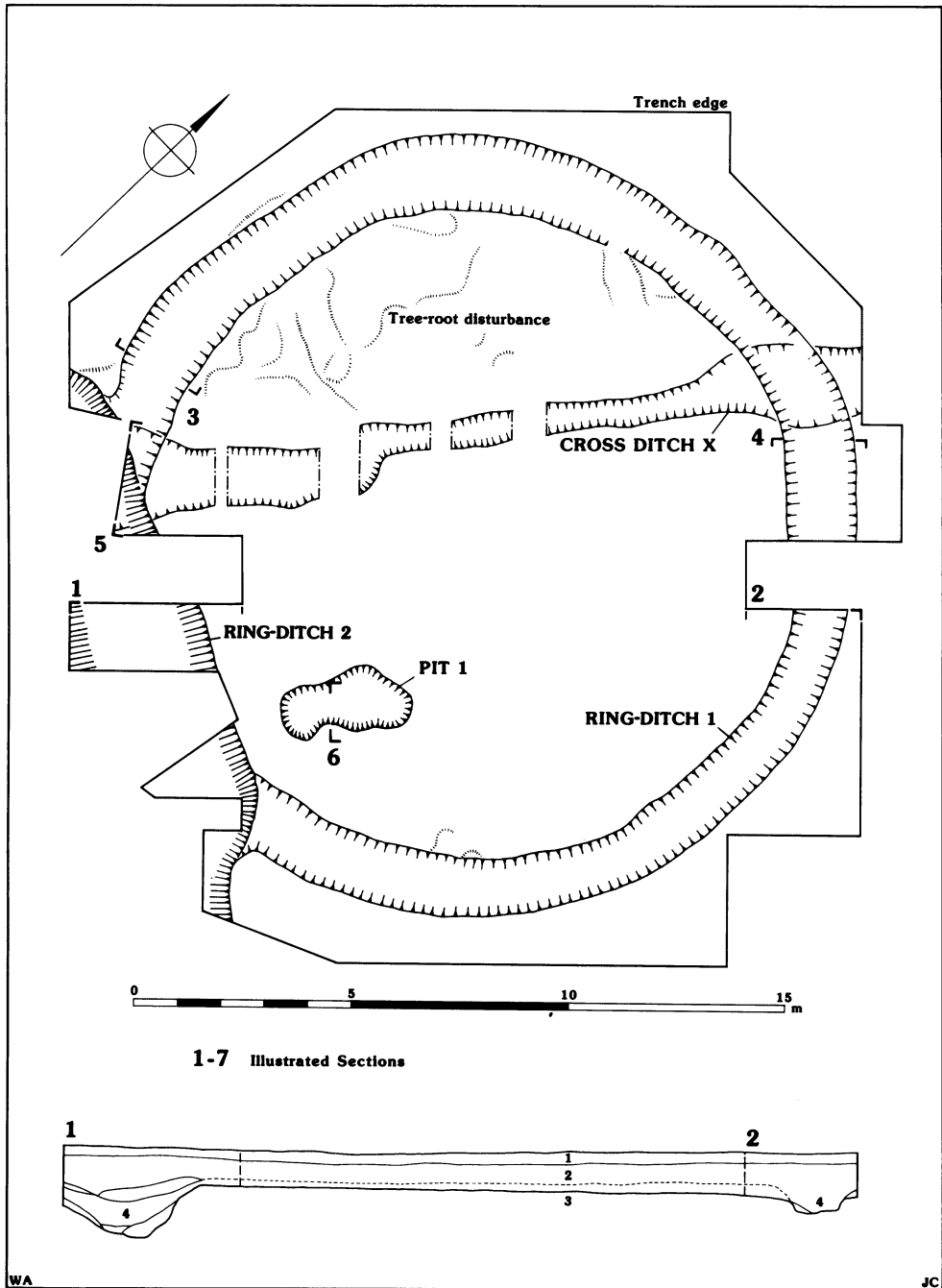


Figure 2 Englefield: plan and outline section of ring-ditch 1

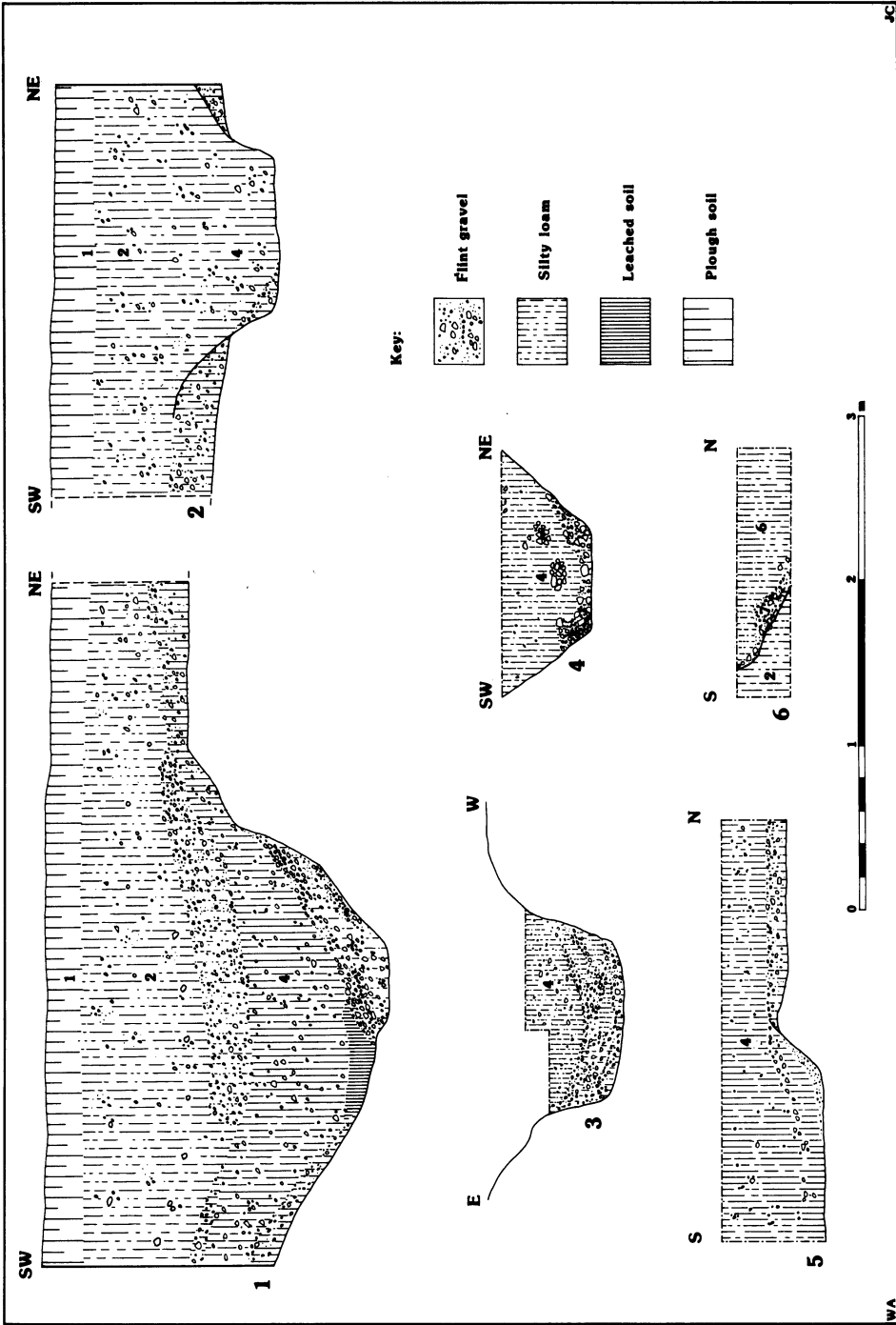


Figure 3 Englefield: sections through ring-ditch 1 (2-4), intersection of ring-ditches 1 and 2 (5), ring-ditch 2 (1), and pit 1 (6)

western part of the interior (Fig 2), and contained artefacts of historic as well as prehistoric date. Finds from the surface of the gravel (layer 3) and the disturbed interface of the gravel and the overlying deposit (layers 2a and 3a) included an amorphous fragment of copper alloy, struck flint, sherds in fabrics corresponding to those of the Peterborough ware, Middle Bronze Age, and Late Iron Age or Romano-British pottery from the site, burnt flint in unspecified quantities, and scattered charcoal flecks.

Pit 1, the only feature within the ring-ditch, was, like the ditch itself, distinguishable in the lowermost part of layer 2, since its initial gravel fill (layer 7) extended up into that layer (Fig 3, section 6). Its main fill (layer 6) was a silty loam deposit merging into the base of layer 2. The feature survived to a maximum depth of 500mm. Its irregular, sinuous plan (Fig 2) and undulating base might relate it to the tree-root hollows excavated to the west, as might darker streaks observed in the centre of the pit, close to the base, which were thought to be the staining of decomposed organic material. The finds are, however, more consistent with its having been a cut feature, since they include relatively large, well-preserved sherds of Grooved ware (Fig 5, P10–P12) and struck flint in fresh condition. There were, however, two sherds (5g) in Iron Age or Romano-British fabric Q199, one each in layer 6 and layer 7 (Table 4).

Ring-ditch 2

Only the extreme north-east edge of ring-ditch 2 was excavated (Fig 2). Air photographs (eg Anon 1963–4, pl IIa; Gates 1975, pl 3) indicate that it is approximately 30m in diameter. Its profile was more rounded than that of ring-ditch 1 (Fig 3, section 1). The ditch was at least 3.00m wide at the surface of the natural gravel and survived to a depth of slightly over 1.00m. On the line of the main section more primary fill, described as gravel silt, seemed to have entered the ditch from the exterior than from the interior. The subsequent fills had a

generally higher gravel content than the main fill of ring-ditch 1 (Fig 3). They were recorded as, from the bottom up, leached soil, compact loam and gravel silt, and loamy gravel. Some 3.00m to the west, 15mm of primary fill, described as gravelly silt, were overlain by a dark silt with stones, which merged into both the main fill of ring-ditch 1 and layer 2. It was clear that ring-ditch 2 had been cut through 20mm of primary silt accumulated in the bottom of ring-ditch 1. It was, however, impossible to tell whether it had also been cut through the main fill (Fig 3, section 5). The only finds from the fill are a flint core (Fig Mf2, L11) and a body sherd in a Middle Bronze Age fabric.

Cross-ditch X

This linear feature, crossing all four ring-ditches and extending to the north-east (Fig 1), was readily distinguished in the natural gravel, less readily so in the ring-ditch fills, which it was eventually found to cut. It was 0.80–1.20m wide and up to 0.30m deep in the natural gravel. Its dark loam and gravel fill (layer 5) was marked by the presence of nodular iron concretions, iron pan, and perhaps manganese pan, all absent from other contexts on the site. Finds from it include sherds in the fabrics of the Peterborough ware, later prehistoric and Late Iron Age or Romano-British pottery from the site, struck flint, and a clay pipe fragment.

Layer 2

Layer 2 was a yellowish-brown silty loam which extended over both ring-ditches and underlay the ploughsoil throughout the excavated area, with a depth of approximately 600mm (Fig 2). Both prehistoric and later material were present to its base, often in a fragmented and abraded state. Finds from it comprise struck flint (Fig Mf2, L9–L10); a lava fragment, probably from a quern; sherds of Peterborough ware, Middle Bronze Age (Fig 6, P19–P20), later Iron Age (Fig 6, P25–P26), Romano-British, and post-medieval pottery; a few brick and tile fragments,

ranging from Romano-British to post-medieval in date; a clay pipe fragment; a fragment of smithing slag; a few iron objects; burnt flint; and charcoal flecks.

Soilmark

The elongated soilmark extending north-eastwards from ring-ditch 1 (Fig 1) was sampled by Dr Bernard Levy. There was approximately 1m of soil in the area of the mark, in contrast to 0.30–0.45mm outside it. Analysis of the samples by the Soil Chemistry Department of the National Agricultural Advisory Service revealed little difference in pH or chemical composition and its origin was not determined.

THE FINDS

Only a brief summary of the finds is presented here. Fuller reports are contained in microfiche.

Stone

Non-flint lithic material consists of a flake, possibly struck, of sarsen or gritty sandstone, from the top of the ditch fill in the north

part of ring-ditch 1 and a lava fragment, possibly from a quern, from the north-east part of layer 2. Sarsen occurs in the local gravels. The lava fragment may be of Rhenish origin.

Flint

The composition of the struck flint is summarised in Table 1, with cores and retouched forms presented in greater detail in Tables 2 and 3. Selected artefacts are illustrated in Figures Mf1 and Mf2 and described in microfiche.

The raw material appears to be mostly local gravel flint. Cortication is rare throughout and most of the material is in a fresh condition. One scraper edge appears to exhibit gloss resulting from use. Most cores were worked from more than one platform (Table 2) and used for the production of flakes rather than blades. Some of the very few smaller blades seem to have been soft-hammer struck and there is limited evidence for platform preparation and rejuvenation. The retouched forms, summarised in Table 3, include one *petit tranchet* and two chisel arrowheads (Green 1980, 32–9), and a further arrowhead

Table 1 Englefield: composition of flint assemblage

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Totals	Burnt	Broken
Layer 2	1	4	0	1	74	4	12	96	1	34
Layers 2A, 3, 3A	0	9	0	0	39	4	1	53	1	12
Layer 4	0	6	0	0	137	12	10	165	6	54
Layer 5	0	0	0	0	9	0	0	9	1	3
Layer 6	0	0	0	0	5	1	2	8	0	3
Unstratified	0	0	1	0	1	0	1	3	0	1
Totals	1	19	1	1	265	21	26	334	9	107
	0.3%	5.7%	0.3%	0.3%	79.3%	6.3%	7.8%		2.7%	32.0%

1: Miscellaneous debitage.

2: Cores.

3: Core rejuvenation flake.

4: Chips.

5: Flakes.

6: Blades.

7: Retouched.

Table 2 *Englefield: flint cores*

	1	2	3	4	5	Totals
Layer 2	0	0	0	0	4	4
Layer 3	1	4	1	0	3	9
Layer 4	0	2	0	1	3	6
Totals	1	6	1	1	10	19

1: Single platform flake core.

2: Multiplatform flake cores.

3: Keeled, non-discoidal flake core.

4: Levallois or other discoidal flake core.

5: Unclassifiable/fragmentary cores.

Mean weight of complete cores 46g.

Table 4 *Englefield: pottery by fabric (sherd count and weight)*

	F1 Pet	F2 Pet	F3 MBA?	F4 MBA	F5 Indet	F6 LP?	F99	F100	G1 Bkr	G2 Indet	G99	G100	G101	Q1 Gw
Unstratified	1 4g	2 4g	-	-	-	-	-	1 2g	-	-	-	-	-	1 3g
Layer 2														
nd	2 4g	-	-	-	-	-	3 3g	-	-	-	-	-	1 5g	-
0-9"	1 4g	-	-	-	-	-	1 1g	1 9g	-	-	-	-	-	-
10"-1'6"	3 7g	-	-	1 5g	-	-	3 4g	3 6g	-	-	-	-	1 35g	-
1'7"-2'3"	-	-	1 4g	3 48g	1 4g	-	2 2g	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
2'4"-3'	-	-	-	1 2g	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Layers 2A/ 3/3A	-	2 3g	-	2 4g	-	-	2 2g	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Layer 4														
nd	-	1 2g	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
0-9"	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
10"-1'6"	-	-	-	-	-	1 10g	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
1'7"-2'3"	6 27g	6 16g	4 73g	-	-	-	6 4g	-	2 10g	-	2 5g	-	-	1 5g
2'4"-3'	10 36g	6 15g	1 21g	6 54g	2 7g	-	22 23g	-	3 9g	-	2 3g	1 3g	-	1 1g
3'1"-3'9"	2 20g	6 24g	1 8g	1 3g	-	-	12 13g	-	2* 4g	1 10g	-	-	-	2 8g
3'10"-4'6"	-	-	-	-	-	-	3 3g	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
4'7"-5'3"	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1 2g	-	-	-
Layer 4 ring-ditch 2														
3'1"-3'9"	-	-	1 14g	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Layer 5	1 27g	-	-	-	2 13g	-	1 2g	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Layer 6	3 9g	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	23 75g
Layer 7	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total	29 138g	23 64g	8 120g	14 116g	5 24g	1 10g	55 57g	5 17g	7 23g	1 10g	5 10g	1 3g	2 40g	28 92g

Overall total (excluding fired clay): 264; 995g.

Pet: Peterborough ware.

MBA: Middle Bronze Age.

Indet: indeterminate (no diagnostic sherds, but likely to be prehistoric).

LP: Later prehistoric.

Bkr: Beaker.

Gw: Grooved ware.

nd: no depth recorded.

* includes Beaker rim from bottom of ring-ditch 1.

Table 3 Englefield: retouched flint forms

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	Totals
Layer 2	0	1	0	8	0	0	3	0	12
Layers 2A, 3, 3A	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1
Layer 4	1	1	0	1	0	5	1	1	10
Layer 6	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	2
Unstratified	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1
Totals	1	2	1	11	1	5	4	1	26

1: *Petit tranchet* arrowhead.
 2: Chisel arrowheads.
 3: Fragmentary arrowhead.
 4: Scrapers.

5: Borer.
 6: Serrated pieces.
 7: Miscellaneous retouched.
 8: Indeterminate heavy implement.

Table 4 (continued)

Q2 Indet	Q3 Indet	Q4 LP?	Q99	Q100	Q101	Q102	Q103	Q104	Q198	Q199	Q400	Q900	V900	Established fabrics		Fired clay	
														E600	E610		
-	-	-	3 3g	-	2 5g	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
-	-	-	-	-	-	1 22g	-	-	-	-	1 2g	-	-	2 15g	1 11g	-	-
1 6g	-	-	-	-	-	-	1 7g	-	-	4 5g	-	1 3g	1 6g	1 8g	-	-	1 3g
1 1g	-	2 6g	3 5g	2 5g	10 47g	2 12g	-	1 12g	-	5 6g	-	1 2g	1 14g	-	-	-	3 26g
-	-	-	2 3g	-	2 7g	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1 17g
-	-	-	-	1 1g	-	-	-	-	-	2 4g	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1 1g	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
-	-	-	-	1 4g	-	-	-	-	2 2g	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
-	1 2g	4 10g	-	1 2g	-	-	-	-	-	4 5g	-	1 1g	-	-	-	-	-
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-	-	1 4g	-	1 1g	-	-	-	-	-	1 1g	-	-	-	-	-	-	1 2g
-	3 7g	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1 3g	-	2 7g	-	-	-	-	1 1g
-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1 2g	-	1 1g	-	-	-	-	-
2 7g	4 9g	7 20g	8 11g	6 13g	14 59g	3 34g	1 7g	1 12g	2 2g	19 27g	1 2g	6 14g	2 20g	3 23g	1 11g	7 49g	

fragment. The five serrated pieces are on blades or blade-like flakes.

The few small, apparently soft-hammer-struck blades may be of Mesolithic date. There is, however, no clear evidence of the Mesolithic occupation richly represented elsewhere in the Kennet valley. In technological and typological terms the material is generally of later Neolithic character, a date supported by the particular concentration of struck flint associated with Peterborough ware in the east part of the ditch. A Bronze Age component in layer 2 is suggested by a lower frequency of blades (Table 1) and of platform-edge abrasion than in layer 4, as well as by the presence of a few very coarsely-retouched forms.

Pottery by Rosamund Cleal

A total of 264 sherds (995g) was recovered during the excavation, of which 197 (711g), predate the Late Iron Age (Table 4). These, and the few Late Iron Age sherds, are discussed in detail in microfiche. Romano-British and later pottery is included in Table 4 but is not considered further, as the amount of material is small and the condition of the sherds poor. All fabrics, however, including those of the post-prehistoric pottery, are described in the fabric catalogue in microfiche.

A fabric series for the site was established using a $\times 20$ binocular microscope and the standard Trust for Wessex Archaeology recording system (Morris 1992).

Peterborough ware (Fig 4, P1–P9)

Fifty-two sherds (202g) may be assigned to this tradition on the basis of fabric, and it is likely that most of the small sherds and crumbs recorded only as fabric F99 also belong to this tradition. Both Peterborough ware fabrics (F1 and F2) are tempered with angular flint, and fabric F1 may also include added sand. At least five vessels are represented. Only two rim sherds (P3 and P5) can confidently be attributed to sub-style and these are classifiable as

Mortlake ware. The hooked rims of P1, P2, and P4 are more common in Ebbsfleet ware.

Grooved ware (Fig 5, P10–P12)

Twenty-eight sherds (92g) of Grooved ware were recovered, all but five from pit 1. All are in a sandy fabric, Q1. No more than one, or possibly two, vessels are represented. Both grooving and fingernail rustication are present, and P12 demonstrates that both occurred on at least one vessel.

Beaker (Fig 6, P13–P18)

The seven sherds of Beaker, in fabric G1, may all derive from a single vessel; they were all recovered from the ditch. The form of the vessel is not reconstructable, but it appears to have been decorated with zones of parallel horizontal lines alternating with zones filled with short oblique strokes, and to belong to Case's middle style (1977).

Middle Bronze Age (Fig 6, P19–P23)

Fourteen sherds, in fabric F4, and probably also those in fabric F3 (eight sherds) are of Middle Bronze Age date, and may be loosely attributed to the Deverel-Rimbury tradition.

Later Bronze Age (Fig 6, P24)

Only one featured sherd (P24) may be of later Bronze Age date. Although the sherd is small, the fabric, slack shoulder, and fingernail decoration all indicate an early first millennium date.

Iron Age (Fig 6, P25–P27)

Three illustrated (P25–P27) and possibly 17 other plain sherds are identifiable as being Iron Age (fabrics F100, G100, and Q101). Both the fabric and form of the base P27 are paralleled at Riseley Farm, Swallowfield (SU 735 636), 14km to the south-east (Lobb and Morris this volume, no. 47), where Morris suggests local production. The fabric of the small rim is also paralleled at Riseley Farm and occurs at Ufton Nervet (Manning 1974, fig 17, no. 119).

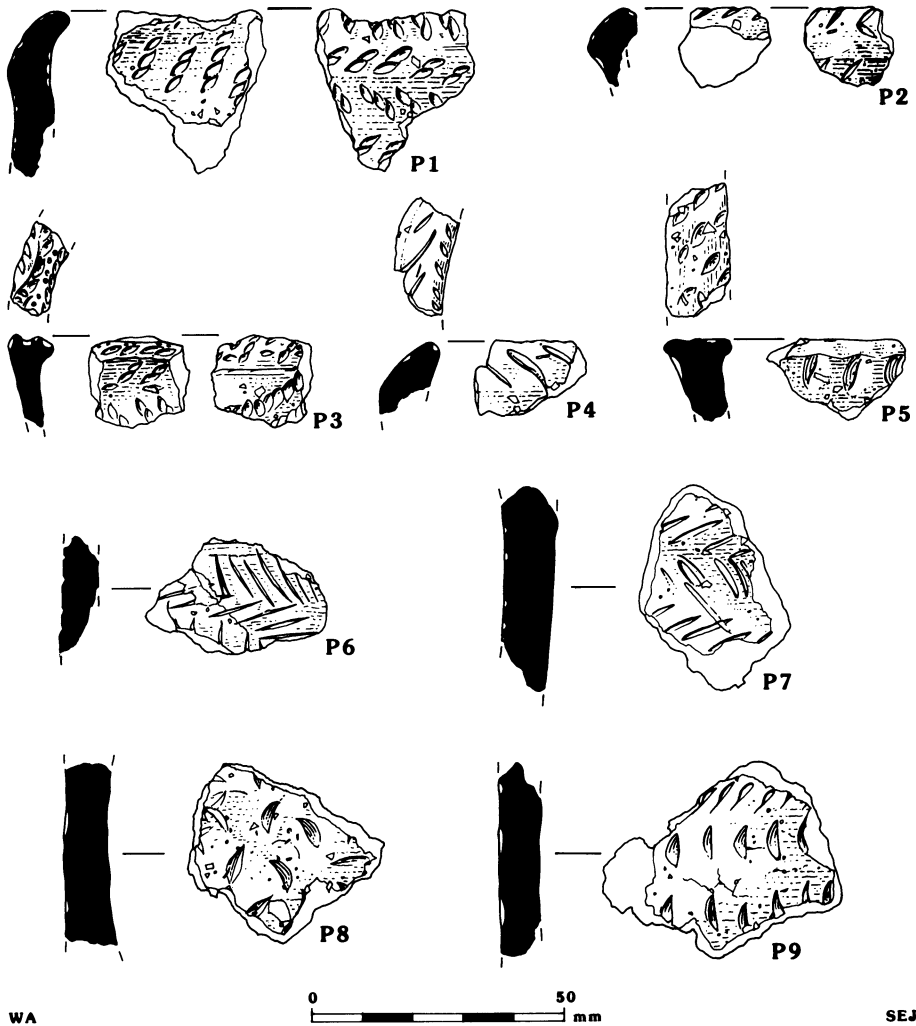


Figure 4 Englefield: Peterborough ware. Particulars in appendix catalogue. Scale 2:3

Discussion

The small size, condition, and context of the Peterborough ware suggests that it is likely to have been contained within a land surface surviving in the area at the time the ring-ditch was constructed; it seems unlikely to have been contemporary with the construction of the monument. Peterborough ware is not a common ceramic type in Berkshire, occurring as small groups of sherds or stray finds rather

than as considerable assemblages. A Mortlake ware vessel has been recovered from a ring-ditch at Field Farm, Burghfield (Butterworth and Lobb 1992, fig 18 no. 1), and a number of Peterborough ware vessels are represented in material recently excavated at Gatehampton Farm, Goring (Cleal in prep).

The Grooved ware was recovered mainly from pit 1, and the presence of sherds which are slightly larger than the majority of the

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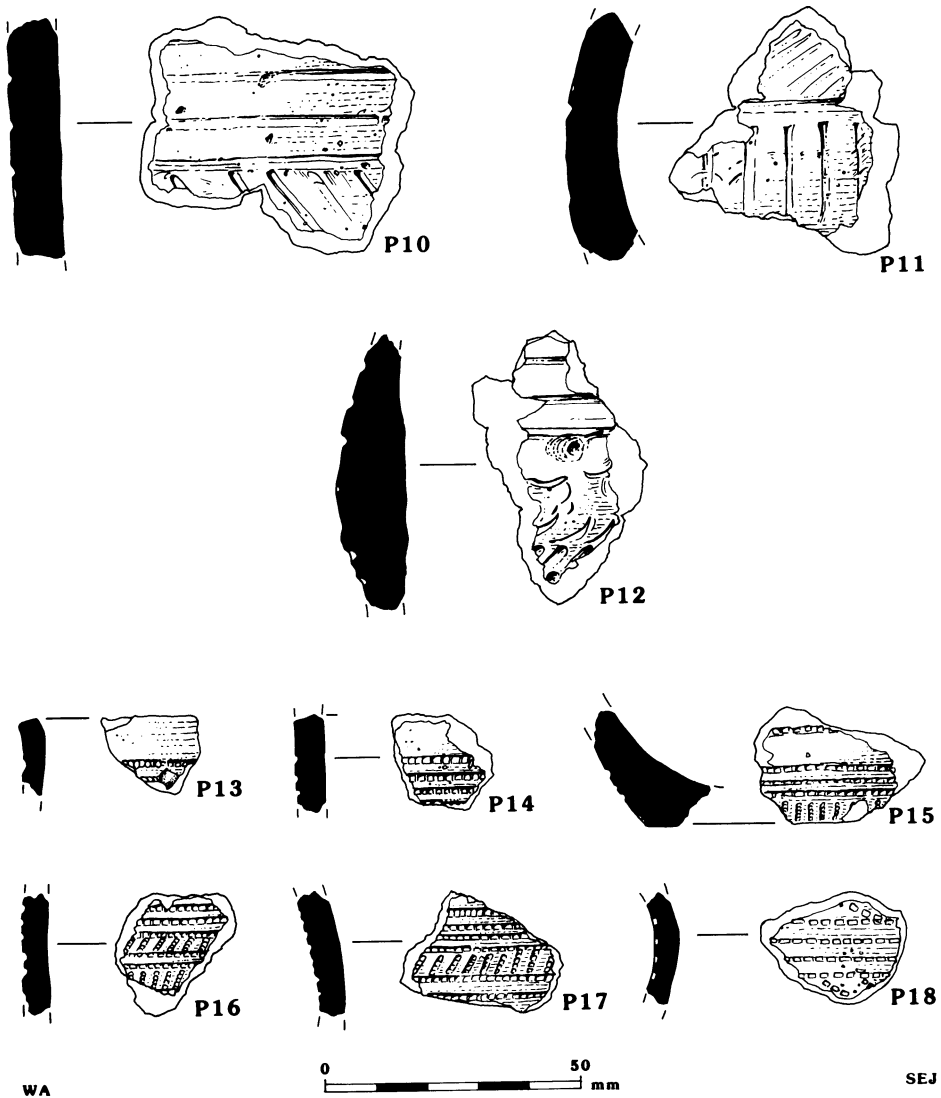


Figure 5 Englefield: Grooved ware (P10–P12) and Beaker (P13–P18). Particulars in appendix catalogue. Scale 2:3

Neolithic pottery suggests that the pottery may have been *in situ*. Five small sherds of later date associated with it must therefore be intrusive (Table 4). Grooved ware is not known in the local area, although a single sherd of possible Grooved ware has been recovered from Gatehampton Farm, Goring (Cleal in prep.).

Little Beaker pottery has been recovered from the area, although a vessel from Theale, in a stylistically later form, illustrated by Clarke (1970, fig 997) is clearly that found at Ballast Hole west of Theale (within 1km of the site: see Fig 1) (Piggott 1936).

The Middle Bronze Age material is very fragmentary, but may be the remnants of a

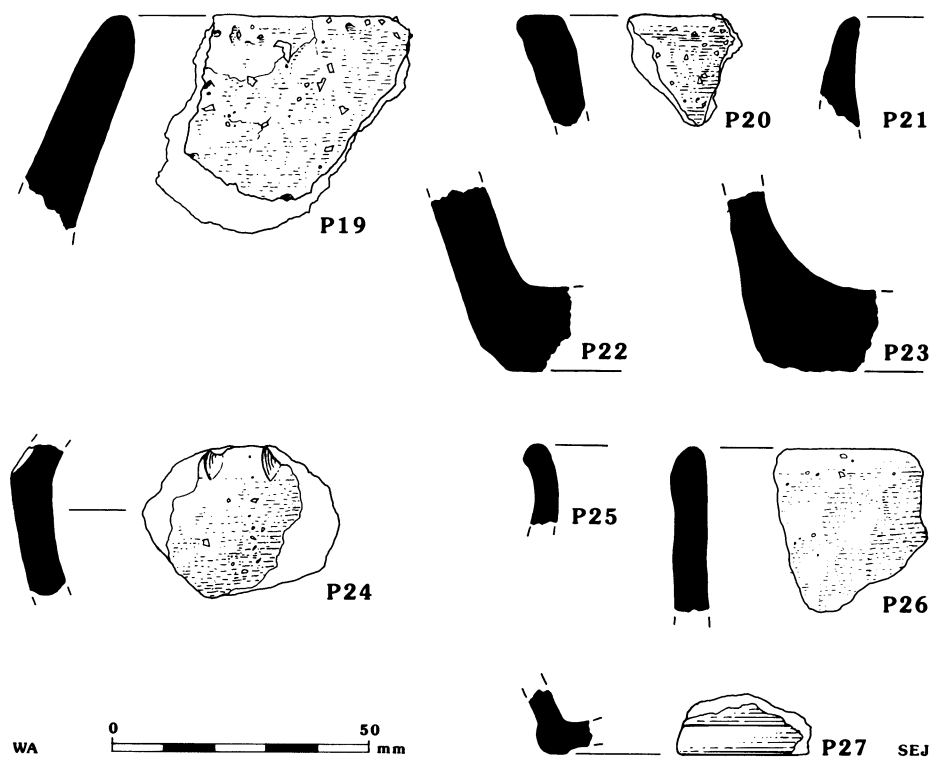


Figure 6 Englefield: Middle Bronze Age (P19–P23), later Bronze Age (P24), and later Iron Age (P25–P27) wares. Particulars in appendix catalogue. Scale 2 : 3

funerary deposit of urns in or around the ring-ditches. The Deverel-Rimbury tradition is represented locally at Field Farm, Burghfield, Sulhamstead Abbots (Butterworth and Lobb 1992), and Pingewood (Bradley 1983–5).

It is perhaps surprising that the Late Bronze Age/earliest Iron Age is so poorly represented in view of the proximity of the Ballast Hole and Aldermaston Wharf assemblages close by. Barrett places material from the former in his decorated assemblage (Barrett 1980, fig 6), appearing from the eighth century BC onwards (op cit, 308).

With the possible exception of P26, which may be 'saucepan pot' and could therefore date to the Middle Iron Age, all the Iron Age

vessels represented may belong to the first half of the first century AD, on analogy with material from the sites noted above. Considering the proximity of the site at Ufton Nervet, this is not surprising, and may represent manuring or some other activity related to that settlement.

Other finds

There are ten pieces of brick and tile, all from layer 2, ranging in date from Romano-British to post-medieval. An amorphous fragment of copper alloy from layer 3 shows no indication of having been a finished object and X-ray examination suggests metalworking debris. Several fragments of iron artefacts and one of smelting slag were also recovered from layer 2.

DISCUSSION

The original depth of ring-ditch 1, which survived to less than a metre, is unclear. Its relatively stone-free main fill suggests that a substantial part of the upcast from it may have consisted of topsoil and silty loam rather than of gravel. The sections provide no indication as to whether upcast was deposited on the exterior, in the interior, or both. The angular profile of the ditch and the slight depth of primary gravel silt (Fig 3, sections 2–4) suggest that it did not stand open long. The bulk of the silty loam fill is most readily interpreted as the material of a former mound and/or bank, displaced by natural silting and by cultivation. The absence of burials may have been original or may have been the product of cultivation and previously acid soil conditions. The probability that all the Beaker sherds come from a single vessel and the lack of any of the elements of a Beaker-associated flint industry suggest that the Beaker formed part of a funerary rather than a domestic deposit.

The relatively large size and good preservation of the Grooved ware sherds from pit 1 (Fig 5, P10–P11) suggest, as Cleal points out, that they were *in situ* in a prehistoric feature. The original depth of ring-ditch 2 is also unclear. The interval which separated its excavation from that of ring-ditch 1 is equally uncertain, since the lack of clear division between their main silty loam fills (Fig 3, section 5) means that ring-ditch 2 may have been cut through ring-ditch 1 when the latter had just begun to silt up or at any subsequent stage. This much more substantial ditch would have provided ample material for a mound. A preponderance of gravel towards the outer edge (Fig 3, section 1) suggests, however, that there may have been an external bank.

The pan deposits of cross-ditch X suggest that it held water. It is most easily seen as a relatively recent land boundary, the more so as it runs parallel and at right-angles to other cropmark ditches in the vicinity (Fig 1).

The abraded and chronologically heterogeneous contents of layer 2 mark it as part of a soil profile, sorted and disturbed by human and other agencies, including tree-roots which left hollows in the surface of the natural gravel (Fig 2). The lack of clear distinction between layer 2 and the main fills of the ring-ditches suggests a common source. This is likely to have been the superficial silts and other deposits of the Beenham Grange terrace, which had ceased to be an active alluvial surface by early Flandrian times (Cheetham 1980, 210). These would have provided the parent material for the soils which had developed by the time the monuments were built, part of the substance of the mounds and/or banks, and the parent material of subsequent soils. Levelling of the monuments by cultivation and natural erosion would have contributed to the thickness of layer 2 and to the accumulation of essentially similar material in the ditch fills.

Linear barrow or ring-ditch groups are only occasionally so close-set as to be contiguous or intersecting, as at Englefield. Examples within the Thames valley include rows of ring-ditches at Southfield Barn, Eynsham, and at Stanton Harcourt, and some elements of an extensive linear cemetery at Barrow Hills, Radley, all in Oxfordshire (Benson and Miles 1974, maps 20, 21, 31, fig 16; Case and Whittle 1982, fig 40). There are also rows of contiguous upstanding round barrows in Surrey, notably at West End Common, Chobham, where the ditches apparently intersect (Needham 1987, 106, fig 5.5). These suggest that at least the three larger Englefield ring-ditches may have surrounded and provided the material for barrows. The limited evidence from ring-ditch 2, however, is more suggestive of an external bank. It should be borne in mind that one ring-ditch in the Kennet valley, Ring A at Burghfield, seems to have been embanked rather than mounded (Lobb 1985, 11, 15), and another, at Lower Farm, Greenham, seems to have lacked a central mound (Heaton and Smith pers comm).

The relationship to ring-ditch 1 of the later Neolithic material recovered from it is unclear. The presence of parts of at least six pots and an associated flint assemblage suggests domestic occupation, as does the broadly contemporary flint scatter within which the site lies. Ring-ditches, often of comparative small diameter, were constructed in the later Neolithic (Kinnes 1979), some, at least initially, of non-funerary function (Pryor 1978, 59–60). At Englefield, however, it is impossible to tell whether pit 1 and the later Neolithic material from the ditch were contemporary with or earlier than the construction of the monument. The latter seems more likely. Rosamund Cleal points out that the abraded, comminuted state of the Peterborough ware sherds from the ditch suggests that they had already been present for some time within the contemporary land surface when the monument was built. The recovery of a Beaker sherd (Fig 5, P13) from the bottom of the ditch shows that Beaker pottery was already present at that time. The most likely scenario is one of later Neolithic occupation followed by the construction of an Early Bronze Age burial mound which remained in use, as part of a larger cemetery, into the Middle Bronze Age.

A similar sequence emerged more clearly at ring-ditch 417, Field Farm, Burghfield, 5km to the west. Here, stratigraphy combined with radiocarbon and archaeomagnetic dating indicated that a hearth, stake-holes, a Mortlake-style bowl, and a flint industry predated the construction of an Early Bronze Age barrow which subsequently became the focus of a Middle Bronze Age cremation cemetery (Butterworth and Lobb 1992, 68–9).

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APPENDIX: CATALOGUE OF ILLUSTRATED POTTERY

- * indicates that the illustrated sherd represents a separate vessel in the count of likely number of vessels represented. All other illustrated sherds may belong to vessels represented by other sherds. All pre-Roman featured sherds are illustrated, except for a few very abraded or very small examples. All entries are single body sherds unless otherwise stated. S f: small find number.
- P1* Peterborough ware. Rim sherd; twisted cord impressions (Z-twisted). Fabric F2. Ext dark grey, core black, int grey-brown; worn. S f 174. Layer 4, square NC3, depth 2'2½".
- P2* Peterborough ware. Rim sherd; single non-plastic fingernail impressions. Fabric F2. Dark grey throughout; very worn. S f 6. Layer 4, square SA2, depth 2'6".
- P3* Peterborough ware. Rim sherd; ?whipped and twisted (Z-twisted) cord impressions on ext, oval and very small round impressions on rim top. Fabric F2. Black throughout; very worn. S f 234. Layer 4, square NA7, depth 3'1".
- P4* Peterborough ware. Rim sherd; deep grooves on ext, small fingernail impressions or slashes across rim top. Fabric F2. Black throughout, traces of paler, brown, surface; very worn. S f 251. Layer 4, square SB2, depth 3'1".
- P5* Peterborough ware. Rim sherd; single non-plastic fingernail impression on ext, impressions of indeterminate form on rim top. Fabric F1. Dark grey throughout, traces of a pale brown surface remaining; worn—very worn. No provenance. Reading Museum accession no. 175.63/21.
- P6 Peterborough ware. Incision. Fabric F1. Surfaces orange, core dark grey; very worn. S f 236. Layer 4, square SB2, depth 2'9".
- P7 Peterborough ware. Grooves. Fabric F1. Ext pale orange, core dark grey, int pale orange; worn. S f 115. Layer 4, square SA2, depth 3'.
- P8 Peterborough ware. Paired non-plastic fingernail impressions. Fabric F1. Ext orange, core and int black; worn. S f 245. Layer 4, square SC4, depth 2'3".
- P9 Peterborough ware. Single non-plastic fingernail impression. Fabric F2. Ext buff, core black, int dark brown; worn. S f 250. Layer 4, square SB2, depth 3'1".
- P10 Grooved ware. Four conjoining sherds, shallow grooves. Fabric Q1. Ext pale orange-brown, core black, int grey to dark brown; very worn. S f 118bA. Layer 6, square SA5.
- P11 Grooved ware. Three conjoining sherds, ?grooves; may be same vessel as P10. Fabric Q1. Ext pale orange-brown, core black, int black to pale brown; very worn. S f 122. Layer 6, square SA5.
- P12 Grooved ware. Four conjoining sherds; plastic

- fingernail impression and grooves; probably same vessel as P10 and P11. Fabric Q1. Dark brown throughout; very worn. S f 144. Layer 6, square SA5.
- P13* Beaker. Rim sherd; square-tooth-comb impressions. Fabric G1. Ext brown, core black, int orange-brown; worn-very worn. S f 254. Layer 4, square NB2, depth 3'8", 'bottom of ditch'.
- P14 Beaker. Square-tooth-comb impressions. Fabric G1. Ext orange-brown, core black, int orange; worn. S f 41. Layer 4, square NC5, depth 2'.
- P15 Beaker. Base-angle sherd; square-tooth-comb impressions. Fabric G1. Surfaces orange, core black; very worn. S f 167. Layer 4, square NC3, depth 2'2".
- P16 Beaker. Two combs: one small square-toothed, one with larger, rectangular, teeth. Fabric G1. Surfaces orange, core black; worn. S f 124. Layer 4, square NC5, depth 2'5".
- P17 Beaker. Two combs: one square-toothed, one with rectangular teeth. Fabric G1. Surfaces orange-brown, core dark grey; worn. S f 159. Layer 4, square NB5, depth 2'10".
- P18 Beaker. Rectangular-tooth-comb impressions. Fabric G1. Surfaces pale orange, core black; very worn. S f 205. Layer 4, square SB6, depth 3'9".
- P19* Middle Bronze Age. Rim sherd; plain. Fabric 4. Ext brown, core obscured, int pale brown to pale grey; fair. S f 80. Layer 2, square SC5, depth 1'10".
- P20* Middle Bronze Age. Rim sherd; plain. Fabric F4. Grey throughout; very worn. S f 221. Layer 2, square SA3, depth 1'11".
- P21* Middle Bronze Age. Rim sherd; plain. Fabric F4. Ext brown, core dark grey, int obscured; worn. S f 196. Layer 4, square SB6, depth 2'4".
- P22 Middle Bronze Age. Base angle; plain. Fabric F4. Ext orange, core and int black; fair. S f 189. Layer 4, square NB2, depth 2'6".
- P23 Middle Bronze Age. Base angle; plain. Fabric F4. Surface buff, core obscured; worn. S f 32. Layer 4, square uncertain.
- P24* Later Bronze Age. Shoulder, slack-shouldered; shallow single fingernail impressions around shoulder. Fabric F6. Surfaces pale brown, core black; very worn. S f 171. Layer 4, square NB2, depth 1'3½".
- P25* Later Iron Age. Rim sherd; plain. Fabric Q101. Black throughout; fair. S f 84. Layer 2, square SB6, depth 10".
- P26* Later Iron Age. Rim sherd; plain. Fabric Q101. Black throughout; fair. S f 59. Layer 2, square ND5, depth 1'1½".
- P27* Later Iron Age. Base sherd; plain. Fabric G100. Surfaces black, core brown; fair. S f 207. Layer 4, square NC6, depth 2'9".

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The Excavation of a Ring-ditch at Englefield, Berkshire, by John Wymer and Paul Ashbee, 1963

by Frances Healy
with a pottery report by Rosamund Cleal

THE FINDS

Stone

Non-flint lithic material consists of a flake, possibly struck, of sarsen or gritty sandstone from the top of the ditch fill in the northern part of ring-ditch 1 and a lava fragment, possibly from a quern, from the north-eastern part of layer 2. Sarsen occurs in the local gravels. The lava fragment may be of Rhenish origin.

Flint

The composition of the struck flint is summarised in Table 1, with cores and retouched forms presented in greater detail in Tables 2 and 3. Selected artefacts are illustrated in Figures Mf 1 and Mf 2 and described in the catalogue.

Raw material

Where cortex survives it indicates that most of the flint was collected from the local gravels. The rounded, abraded surfaces of L8 are characteristic. A low mean core weight of 46 g is consistent with a gravel source. The retouch of one scraper from layer 2 cuts the iron-staining of an older flake, itself probably derived from the gravels.

Condition

Cortication is rare throughout. Material from the ditch and from pit 1 is in relatively fresh condition, with occasional gloss and/or abrasion. Material from layer 2 is more heavily glossed and abraded. A lower incidence of breakage among material from layers 2a, 3 and 3a (Table 1) may reflect a reduced level of disturbance at the base of layer 2, where a truncated relict soil was tentatively identified. The worked edge of a scraper from the uncertain junction of layers 2 and 4 in the south of the ditch circuit retains macroscopically visible gloss apparently resulting from use.

Flint-working

The whole reduction sequence is represented. Most cores were, like L11, worked from more than one platform (Table 2) and used for the production of flakes rather than blades. Some of the very few smaller blades seem to have been soft-hammer struck. Platform rejuvenation is represented only by a single, unstratified, flake struck along the angle of platform and core face and by a rough core tablet used as a blank for a borer. Platform preparation, however, is evidenced by occasional faceting, seen on L1, and rather more frequent platform-edge abrasion, seen on L7 and on 10% of the flakes and blades from layer 4 and on 4% of those from layer 2, as well as on a few cores.

Retouched Forms

Arrowheads comprise one *petit tranchet* (L2) and two chisel forms (L3, L9), as defined by Green (1980, 32-39). A further fragmentary arrowhead, found on the surface outside the excavated area, may have been of chisel or, less probably, triangular form. An unillustrated fragmentary scraper, found with Grooved Ware in layer 6, was almost certainly of the same regularly-worked, elongated form as L7, from the same pit. Two further scrapers, including L4, are comparable. Two scrapers from layer 2, including L10, are thick, steep and coarsely retouched. Some miscellaneous retouched pieces from the same layer are of similarly rough workmanship. Serrated pieces are almost all made on blades or blade-like flakes, like L5.

Affinities

A few small, apparently soft-hammer-struck blades may be of Mesolithic date. There is, however, no clear evidence of the Mesolithic occupation richly represented elsewhere in the Kennet valley. The concentration of Peterborough Ware and struck flint in the same part of the ditch circuit suggests a Later Neolithic date for most of the collection. This is confirmed by its technology and typology which, despite the presence on the site of Beaker and Middle Bronze Age pottery, are primarily those of Later Neolithic industries, whether relatively local, as at Cassington, Oxfordshire (Case and Whittle 1982, 124-127), or more distant, as at several East Anglian sites (Healy 1985). Green documents the recurrent association of chisel arrowheads with Peterborough Ware and with the Woodlands sub-style of Grooved Ware (1980, tables V.1, V.3), while cores such as L1 provided the Levallois-like flakes on which many chisel arrowheads, including L9, were made (Green 1974, 84). A Bronze Age component in layer 2 is suggested by a lower frequency of blades (Table 1) and of platform-edge abrasion than in layer 4, as well as by the presence of a few very coarsely-retouched forms such as L10.

Catalogue of Illustrated Lithic Material

Entries are ordered thus: Category. Raw Material. Condition. Descriptive and/or other comment, if any.

Small find number, if any. 10ft square.

Ring-Ditch 1

Layer 4 (ditch fill)

L1. Levallois-like core. Indeterminate mottled grey flint. Slightly glossed. Some faceting. Small area of cortication remaining on more convex surface.

Square NC5.

L2. *Petit tranche* arrowhead. Indeterminate flint. Glossed, abraded. Made on a flake segment.

S f 23. Square NC5.

L3. Chisel arrowhead. Indeterminate flint. Abraded. Clark's (1934) form D.

S f 297. Square SB6.

L4. Scraper. Indeterminate flint. Glossed, abraded.

S f 15. Square NA7.

L5. Serrated piece. Indeterminate mottled grey flint. Fresh.

Square SA2.

L6. Heavy implement. Indeterminate mottled grey flint. Fairly fresh. Part of unillustrated face formed by thermal fractures; ?atypical 'fabricator'.

Square SB2.

Layer 6 (fill of pit 1)

L7. Scraper. Indeterminate flint. Fresh. Found 'a little below' Grooved Ware sherds including P10.

S f 118a. Square SA5.

Layer 2a (?relict soil)

L8. Single-platform core. Bullhead flint. Very slightly glossed, otherwise fresh.

Square SC4.

Layer 2

L9. Chisel arrowhead. Indeterminate flint. Glossed, abraded. Made on Levallois-like flake; unifacial; Clark's (1934) form C.

S f 4. Square SB2.

L10. Scraper. Gravel flint. Heavily glossed. Retouched edge crushed; recent damage at proximal end of left edge.

S f 222. Square SA3.

Ring-Ditch 2

L11. Multi-platform core. Indeterminate mottled grey flint. Fresh.

S f 107. Square SA7.

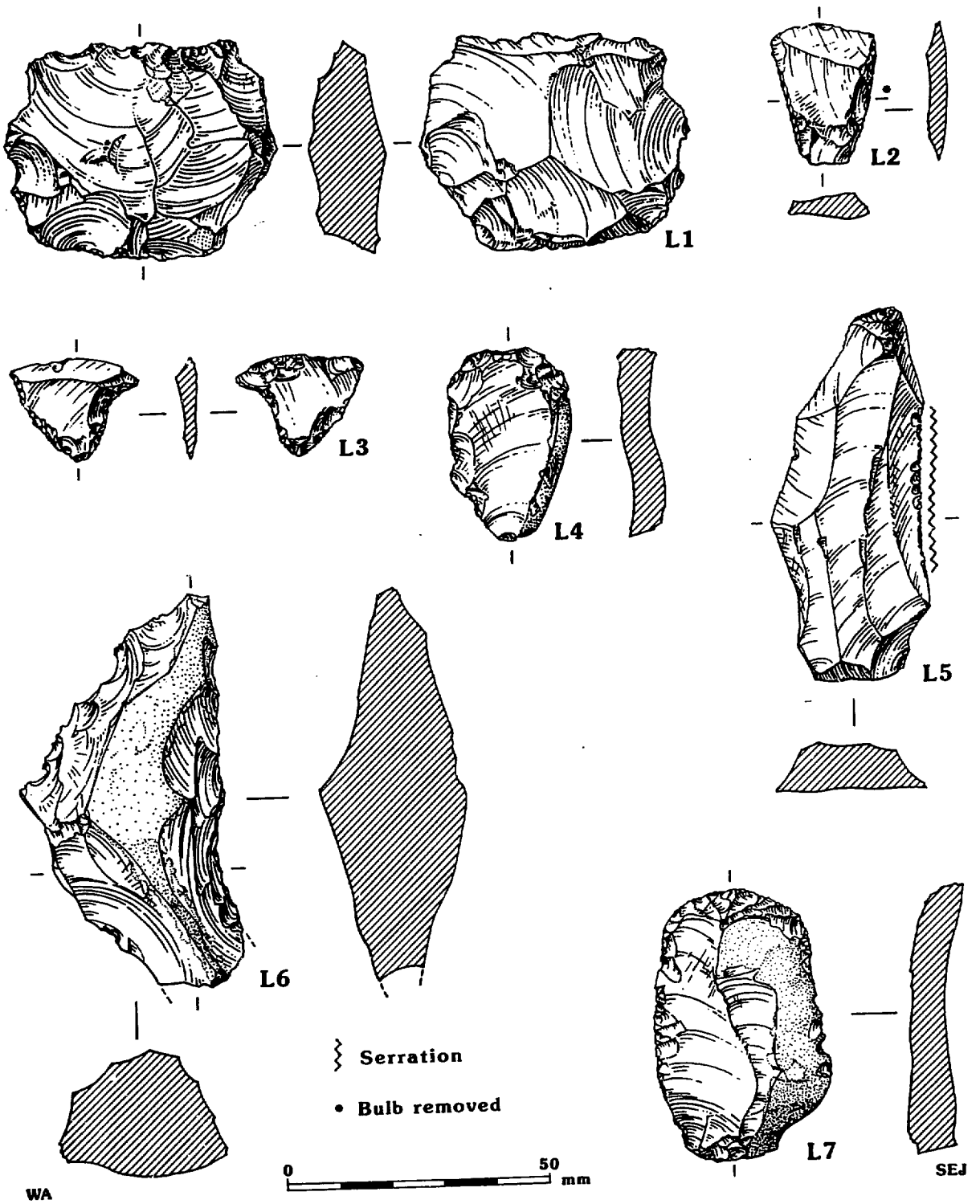


Figure Mf1 Struck flint: L1-L6 from layer 4, L7 from layer 6. Particulars in catalogue

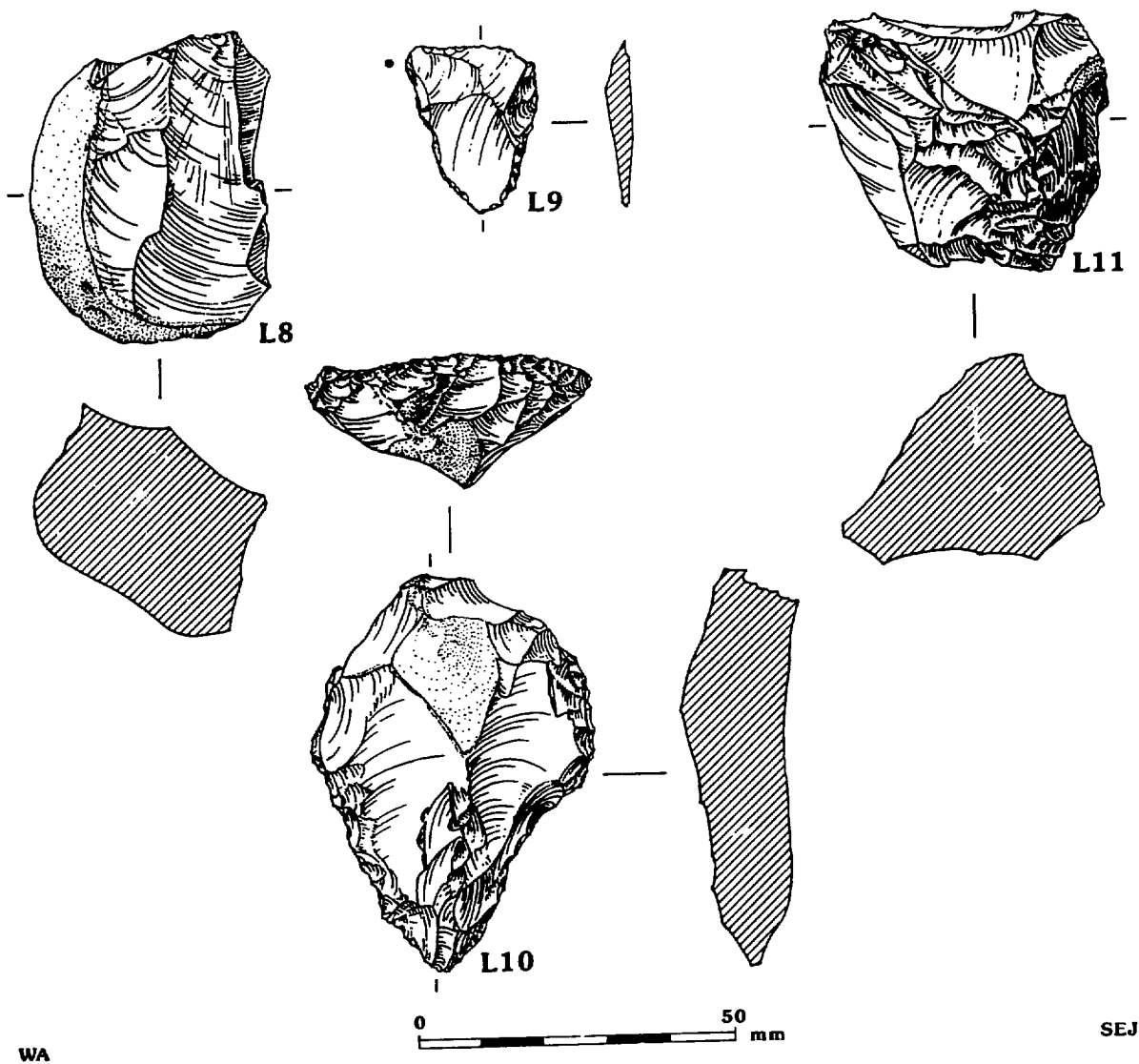


Figure Mf2 Struck flint: L8 from layer 2a, L9-L10 from layer 2, L11 from the fill of ring-ditch 2. Particulars in catalogue

Introduction

A total of 264 sherds (weighing 995g) was recovered during the excavation, of which 197, weighing 711g, pre-date the Late Iron Age. These, and the few Late Iron Age sherds, are discussed in detail in this report. Romano-British and later pottery is included in Table 4 but is not considered further, as the amount of material is small and the condition of the sherds poor. All fabrics, however, including those of the post-prehistoric pottery, are described in the Fabric Catalogue appended.

Method

A fabric series for the site was established using a X 20 binocular microscope and the standard Wessex Archaeology recording system. The fabric codes used are alpha-numeric and indicate the main inclusion type present (by letter) and the date by number. Those used in this report are as follows:

F - flint	1 - 99	prehistoric fabrics
G - grog	100 - 199	Late Iron Age or Romano-British
Q - quartz sand	400 - 599	post-Roman
V - vegetable temper	600 - 899	post-medieval
	900 +	uncertain

In addition, in order to show the likely stylistic group to which each fabric belongs, style codes are added to those fabrics in which diagnostic featured sherds occur. The style codes used are:

Pet - Peterborough Ware
GW - Grooved Ware
Bkr - Beaker
MBA - Middle Bronze Age (Deverel-Rimbury tradition)
LP - later prehistoric

'Indet' is the code used for fabrics in which no diagnostic sherds occur, but which are likely to be prehistoric. The majority of featured sherds are illustrated (Figs 4-6), only small and/or worn sherds being excluded. The prehistoric pottery is considered primarily by ceramic period and style.

Description

Peterborough Ware (Fig 4, P1-P9) Fifty-two sherds (weighing 202g) may be assigned to this tradition on the basis of fabric, and it is likely that most of the small sherds and crumbs recorded only as fabric F99 also belong to this tradition.

Both Peterborough Ware fabrics (F1 and F2) are tempered with flint, and fabric F1 may also include added sand; the sand in fabric F2 may be a natural inclusion as it is only a rare to sparse occurrence. The flint in both cases is angular, and in the case of F1 is poorly sorted; this is typical of Peterborough Ware, in which flint grits are often of greatly varying size.

At least five vessels are represented by the rim sherds P1 - P5, and the body sherds P6 - P9 (Fig 4) may belong to these vessels or to others not otherwise represented. Two of the rim sherds (P3 and P5) are classifiable as belonging to the Mortlake sub-style on the basis of their expanded forms. The rims P1, P2, and P4 are not assignable to this style: the inturned rims, with no extension on the exterior and the slight suggestion of a collar in the case of P1 and P2 are reminiscent of Fengate Ware, but the decoration and fabric do not support this interpretation. On the grounds of fabric these sherds are not markedly different from the two identifiable as Mortlake Ware, and are more likely to belong to Ebbsfleet Ware vessels, the fabrics of that style generally being more closely related to the Mortlake than to the Fengate sub-style of the tradition. There are in any case similarities between the forms and decoration of Ebbsfleet and Fengate Ware, a feature discussed by Clarke (1970, 133). The occurrence of three inturned rims suggests perhaps a local preference or peculiarity, although the decoration and fabric do not differ sufficiently from that of the Mortlake Ware to warrant postulating a separate phase of use.

Grooved Ware (Fig 5, P10-P12) Only 28 sherds (weighing 92g) of Grooved Ware were recovered, all but five from Pit 1. All are in a sandy fabric, Q1. No more than one vessel may be represented, although the curvature of P11, in comparison with the straight-walled sherd P10 hints at the existence of two vessels of different profile. No rim sherds survive, and the form of the vessel, or vessels, is not reconstructable. Both grooving and fingernail rustication are present, and P12 demonstrates that both occurred on at least one vessel. It is not possible to assign these sherds to a sub-style of the tradition, although the presence of apparently horizontal lines bounding an area of fingernail rustication hints slightly at the Clacton sub-style, in which horizontal zones of rustication are common.

Beaker (Fig 5, P13-P18) The seven sherds of Beaker, in fabric G1, may all derive from a single vessel; they were all recovered from the ditch. The form of the vessel is not reconstructable, but appears to have been decorated with zones of parallel horizontal lines alternating with zones filled with short oblique strokes. This is motif 2 of Clarke's Basic European Motif Group (Clarke 1970, 424), and as such cannot be used to determine date, as it is a long-lived motif. However, as no motifs characteristic of the Southern Group occur, it may be assumed with some confidence that the vessel is not of that tradition. As such it is unlikely to belong to Case's Late Style, and seems most likely to be assignable to his Middle Style (Case 1977).

Middle Bronze Age (Fig 6, P19-P23) Fourteen sherds, in fabric F4, and probably also those in fabric F3 (eight sherds) are of Middle Bronze Age date, and may be loosely attributed to the Deverel-Rimbury tradition of that period. Both fabrics show the frequent flint temper characteristic of this tradition, which also, especially in the case of F3, has the characteristically 'rounded' appearance which appears to be a not uncommon feature of this ceramic type. P20 and P21 appear to be bucket-shaped vessels, while the inturned profile of P19 suggests a more convex body; it cannot, however, be classified as a Barrel Urn, lacking an expanded rim and cordons.

Later Bronze Age (Fig 6, P24) Only one featured sherd (P24) may be of Later Bronze Age date. Although the sherd is small, the fabric, slack shoulder, and fingernail decoration all indicate an early first millennium date for the vessel.

Iron Age (Fig 6, P25-P27) Three illustrated sherds (P25-P27) are identifiable as Iron Age, and a further 17 plain sherds (in fabrics F100, G100, and Q101) are likely to be of similar date. Both the fabric and form of the base P27 are paralleled at Riseley Farm, Swallowfield (SU 735636), 14km to the south-east, in Fabric 35 and base type 2 at that site (Lobb and Morris this volume, pottery illustration no. 47). Morris suggests that the fabric is likely to be of local production, and cites similar fabrics at Aldermaston and Silchester (Morris, in Lobb and Morris this volume). The vessels to which base type 2 belong are likely to be long-necked bowls or jars with cordons (*ibid.*) and are likely to be 1st century AD in date. The small rim is too small to assign to a vessel form, but is in the same fabric as P26, which clearly belongs to a hand-made straight-sided jar, of a type not closely datable, but which occurs throughout the Middle Iron Age, and occasionally in the Late Iron Age. It is paralleled by rim type 12 at Riseley Farm (Lobb and Morris this volume) and also occurs at Ufton Nervet (Manning 1974, fig. 17:119), in a pit (Pit H) thought to just pre-date the Conquest (Manning 1974, 33). The fabric of the Englefield example (F6) is similar to 'saucepan pot' fabrics.

Romano-British and later pottery The small amount of post-Iron Age pottery is tabulated in Table 4, and the fabrics described in the fabric Catalogue.

Discussion

Neolithic - Early Bronze Age The small size, condition, and context of the Peterborough Ware suggests that it is likely to have been contained within a land surface surviving in the area at the time the ring ditch was constructed; it seems unlikely to have been contemporary with the construction of the monument. The mean weight of sherds in fabrics F1 and F2 is 3.8g (Table 4), but this is reduced to only 2.4g if the unclassifiable sherds and fragments in flint gritted fabric F99, which are almost certainly mainly Peterborough Ware, are included.

Peterborough is not a common ceramic type in Berkshire, and occurs as small groups of sherds or stray finds rather than as considerable assemblages. In view of the large amounts of pottery of later date discovered during gravel quarrying in the area, it would seem that if it had been present in large quantities this would have become apparent by now. However, less than 5km from Englefield a Mortlake Ware vessel has been recovered from a ring ditch at Field Farm, Burghfield (Butterworth and Lobb forthcoming), and 10km to the north-west a number of Peterborough Ware vessels are represented in material recently excavated by the Oxford Archaeological Unit at Gatehampton Farm, Goring (Cleal in prep.)

The Grooved Ware was recovered mainly from pit 1, and the presence of sherds which are slightly larger than the majority of the Neolithic pottery (in particular the four conjoining sherds of P10, and P11), suggest that the pottery may be *in situ*. If this is the case, five small sherds of later date, which occur at similar depths in the pit to the Grooved Ware, in both layers 6 and 7, must be intrusive (Table 4). It does not seem likely that the feature itself is entirely late, as the Grooved Ware sherds are unlikely to have survived, in the state and size they are, if they had lain unprotected. Grooved Ware is not known in the local area, although a single sherd of possible Grooved Ware has been recovered from a recent excavation at Gatehampton Farm, Goring (Cleal in prep.).

Little Beaker pottery has been recovered from the area, although one from Theale, illustrated by Clarke (1970 fig 997) is clearly that found at Ballast Hole west of Theale (within 1km of the site, Fig 1) (Piggott, 1936). This is a vessel of Clarke's Southern tradition, Lanting and

van der Waals Step 7 (1972, fig 1), and Case's Late Style (Case 1977), and as such is possibly later than that found in the Englefield ring ditch. The fact that only a single vessel may be present at Englefield is strongly suggestive of a funerary deposit, but this is unsupported by any other evidence and must remain conjectural.

Middle Bronze Age This material is very fragmentary, but may be the remnants of a funerary deposit of urns in or around the ring-ditches. The Deverel-Rimbury tradition is represented at Field Farm, Burghfield and at Sulhamstead Abbots (Butterworth and Lobb forthcoming) and at Pingewood, 7km east of Englefield (Bradley 1983-85). A miniature vessel recovered from Ballast Hole (Piggott 1938, plate 1, a) is also probably of Middle Bronze Age date.

Late Bronze Age/Earliest Iron Age It is perhaps surprising that this period is represented by only a single sherd, in view of the proximity of both the settlement presumably represented by the Ballast Hole assemblage, 0.5km to the north-east, and that at Aldermaston Wharf, 2.5km to the south-west. Stylistically, the sherd from Englefield, with its fingernail impressions on a slack shoulder, is closer to the Ballast hole material (Piggott 1938, fig 19) than to that from Aldermaston Wharf (Bradley *et al* figs 12 - 18). Barrett places the former in his decorated assemblage (Barrett 1980, fig 6), which may appear from the eighth century BC onwards (*op cit* 308).

Iron Age With the possible exception of P 26, which may be 'saucepan pot' and could therefore date to the Middle Iron Age (although the end of the tradition is not firmly fixed) the vessels represented may belong to the first half of the first century AD, on analogy with material from the sites noted above. Considering the proximity of the site at Ufton Nervet, this is not surprising, and may represent manuring or some other activity related to that settlement.

Although the Romano-British pottery is very fragmentary, it is perhaps also relevant to note that at least one rim sherd may be early (L Mephams pers comm).

Fabric Catalogue

E600 WA established fabric: post-medieval red earthenware.

E610 WA established fabric: post-medieval white earthenware.

F1/Pet Soft, slightly laminated fabric with moderate flint (<15%, <10mm, most <5mm) and moderate well-sorted rounded fine sand.

F2/Pet Soft, slightly laminated fabric with sparse flint (<7%, <3mm) and rare to sparse fine sand.

F3/MBA? Hard fabric with common to very common flint (20-30%, <2mm). No featured sherds, but likely to be Deverel-Rimbury.

F4/MBA Hard fabric with common flint (20-25%, <6mm, most <3mm), sparse to moderate iron oxides (small black grains, <1mm) and rare fine sand. Distinguished from F3 by the poor sorting of the flint.

F5/Indet Soft fabric with sparse flint (<7%, <3mm, most <2mm), rare fine sand and rare fine

mica. No featured sherds present. The fabric is certainly prehistoric, and possibly later prehistoric (?LBA).

F6/LP? Hard fabric with sparse flint (<7%, <3mm, most <1mm), and moderate fine to coarse sand. Probably later prehistoric, possibly Late Bronze Age.

F99 Code used for small sherds and fragments which are clearly prehistoric, but which cannot be assigned to a fabric and in which the main or only inclusion type visible is flint. .

F100 Hard fabric with sparse flint (<5%, <1mm), sparse grog (<2mm) and moderate coarse sand. No featured sherds, but likely to be of Late Iron Age or Romano- British date.

G1/Bkr Soft fabric with moderate to common grog (<20%, <2mm), rare to sparse flint (<5mm, most <2mm), and sparse fine sand.

G2/Indet Soft, crumbly fabric with sparse to moderate grog (<10%, <5mm, most <2mm), rare fine mica and rare fine sand. No featured sherds; possibly Early Bronze Age.

G99 Code used for small sherds and fragments which are clearly prehistoric, but which cannot be assigned to a fabric, but in which the main or only inclusion type visible is grog.

G100/LIA Soft fabric with moderate to common grog (<20%, <1mm) and sparse fine sand. Probably first century AD.

G101/R-B Hard fabric with moderate to common grog (<20%, <3mm, most <1mm) and moderate fine to coarse quartz sand.

Q1/GW Soft fabric with moderate to common fine sand (<20%), moderate iron oxides (black shiny grains, magnetic, <1mm), rare to sparse grog (<2mm) and rare flint (<1 mm).

Q2/Indet Hard fabric with moderate fine to coarse sand (<15%). No featured sherds, probably later prehistoric.

Q3/Indet Hard fabric with sparse fine sand (<5%), rare to sparse grog (<3mm) and sparse flint (<5mm, most <2mm). Possibly later prehistoric.

Q4/LP? Hard fabric with sparse fine sand (<5%). Possibly later prehistoric.

Q99 Code used for small sherds and fragments which are clearly prehistoric, but cannot be assigned to a fabric because of their small size, but in which the main, or only, inclusion type is quartz sand.

Q100/R-B Greyware. Unknown source.

Q101/LIA Hard fabric with very common to abundant coarse sand (25- 40%). Middle to Late Iron Age. Probably 'saucepan pot'.

Q102/R-B Hard fabric with very common fine sand (25-30%). Probably early Romano-British.

Q103/R-B Hard fabric with moderate fine to coarse sand (<10%) and rare fine iron oxides

(<1mm).

Q104/R-B Soft fabric with sparse fine sand and sparse fine mica.

Q198 Code used for Romano-British oxidised wares, not further identified (all small scraps).

Q199 Code used for small sherds and fragments which are clearly Late Iron Age or Romano-British, but which are not further identified.

Q400 Late medieval orange sandy ware (not further identified)

Q900 Fired clay fabric with some sand and sparse voids (probably from organic material).

V900 Hard fabric with common to very common voids, representing an organic temper (<10mm long) and rare to sparse coarse sand Uncertain date.

Catalogue of Illustrated Pottery

* indicates that the illustrated sherd represents a separate vessel in the count of likely number of vessels represented. All other illustrated sherds may belong to vessels represented by other sherds.

All pre-Roman featured sherds are illustrated, except for a few very abraded or very small examples.

Peterborough Ware

P1* Single rim sherd of a vessel decorated with twisted cord impressions (Z-twisted impressions). Fabric F2. Exterior dark grey, core black, interior grey-brown. Condition: worn.
S f 174. Layer 4, square NC3, depth 2'2½".

P2* Single rim sherd of a vessel decorated with single non-plastic fingernail impressions. Fabric F2. Dark grey throughout. Condition: very worn.
S f 6. Layer 4, square SA2, depth 2'6"

P3* Single rim sherd of a vessel possibly decorated with the whipped and twisted (Z-twisted) cord impressions on the exterior, and with oval impressions, and very small round impressions, on the rim top. The decoration is very unclear, but the large oblique impression on the exterior may be whipped cord, and those on the rim twisted cord impressions. Fabric F2. Black throughout. Condition: very worn.
S f 234. Layer 4, square NA7, depth 3'1".

P4* Single rim sherd of a vessel decorated with deep grooves on the exterior and small fingernail impressions or slashes across the rim top. Fabric F2. Black throughout, although there are traces of a paler, brown, surface. Condition: very worn.
S f 251. Layer 4, square SB2, depth 3'1".

P5* Single rim sherd of a vessel decorated with single non-plastic fingernail impression on the exterior and impressions of indeterminate form on the rim top. Fabric F1. Dark grey

throughout, with traces of a pale brown surface remaining. Condition worn to very worn.
No provenance. Reading Museum Accession No. 175.63/21

P6 Single body sherd decorated with incision. Fabric F1. Surfaces orange, core dark grey.
Condition: very worn.

S f 236, Layer 4, square SB2, depth 2'9".

P7 Single body sherd decorated with grooves. Fabric F1. Exterior pale orange, core dark grey,
interior pale orange. Condition: worn.

S f 115. Layer 4, square SA2, depth 3'.

P8 Single body sherd decorated with paired non-plastic fingernail impression. Fabric F1.
Exterior orange, core and interior black. Condition: worn.

S f 245. Layer 4, square SC4, depth 2' 3".

P9 Single body sherd decorated with single non-plastic fingernail impression. Fabric F2.
Exterior buff, core black, interior dark brown. Condition: worn.

S f 250. Layer 4, square SB2, depth 3'1".

Grooved Ware

P10* Four conjoining sherds (along ancient breaks) of a vessel decorated with shallow
grooves. Fabric Q1. Exterior pale orange- brown, core black, interior grey to dark brown.
Condition: very worn.

S f 118bA. Layer 6, square SA5.

P11 Three conjoining sherds (along ancient breaks) of a vessel with very abraded decoration,
probably grooves; may be the same vessel as P10. Fabric Q1. Exterior pale orange-brown,
core black, interior black to pale brown. Condition: very worn.

S f 122. Layer 6, square SA5.

P12 Four conjoining sherds (along ancient breaks) of a vessel decorated with plastic fingernail
impression and grooves; probably belongs to the same vessel as P10 and P11, above. Fabric
Q1. Dark brown throughout. Condition: very worn.

S f 144. Layer 6, square SA5.

Beaker

P13* Rim sherd of a vessel decorated with square-tooth-comb impressions. Fabric G1.
Exterior brown, core black, interior orange-brown. Condition: worn to very worn.

S f 254. Layer 4, square NB2, depth 3' 8", 'bottom of ditch'.

P14 Single body sherd decorated with square-tooth-comb impressions. Fabric G1. Exterior
orange-brown, core black, interior orange. Condition: worn.

S f 41. Layer 4, square NC5, depth 2'.

P15 Single base angle sherd of a vessel decorated with square- tooth-comb impressions. Fabric
G1. Surfaces orange, core black. Condition: very worn.

S f 167. Layer 4, square NC3, depth 2' 2".

P16 Single body sherd decorated with two combs: one small square-tooth-comb, and one with larger, rectangular, teeth. Fabric G1. Surfaces orange, core black. Condition: worn.

S f 124. Layer 4, square NC5, depth 2' 5" ..

P17 Single body sherd decorated with two combs: one square-tooth-comb and one with rectangular teeth. Fabric G1. Surfaces orange-brown, core dark grey. Condition: worn.

S f 159, layer 4, square NB5, depth 2' 10".

P18 Single body sherd decorated with rectangular-tooth-comb impressions. Fabric G1. Surfaces pale orange, core black. Condition very worn.

S f 205, layer 4, square SB6, depth 3' 9".

Middle Bronze Age

P19* Single plain rim sherd. Fabric 4. Exterior brown, core obscured, interior pale brown to pale grey. Condition: fair.

S f 80. Layer 2, square SC5, depth 1' 10".

P20* Single plain rim sherd. Fabric F4. Grey throughout. Condition: very worn.

S f 221. Layer 2, square SA3, depth 1' 11".

P21* Single plain rim. Fabric F4. Exterior brown, core dark grey, interior obscured. Condition: worn.

S f 196. Layer 4, square SB6, depth 2' 4".

P22 Single plain base angle. Fabric F4. Exterior orange, core and interior black. Condition: fair.

S f 189. Layer 4, square NB2, depth 2' 6".

P23 Single plain base angle. Fabric F4. Surface buff, core obscured. Condition: worn.

S f 32. Layer 4, square uncertain.

Later Bronze Age

P24* Single sherd from the shoulder of a slack-shouldered vessel. Shallow single fingernail impressions around shoulder. Fabric F6. Surfaces pale brown, core black. Condition: very worn.

S f 171. Layer 4, square NB2, depth 1' 3½"

Later Iron Age

P25* Single plain rim sherd. Fabric Q101. Black throughout. Condition: fair.

S f 84. Layer 2, square SB6, depth 10".

P26* Single plain rim sherd. Fabric Q101. Black throughout. Condition: fair.
S f 59. Layer 2, square ND5, depth 1'1½".

P27* Single basal sherd. Fabric G100. Surfaces black, core brown. Condition: fair
S f 207. Layer 4, square NC6, depth 2' 9".

Brick and Tile

There are ten pieces of brick and tile, all from layer 2 and all fragmentary and abraded. Most are indeterminate. The identifiable examples range from Romano-British to post-medieval in date (information from Lorraine Mephram).

Metalwork

Copper Alloy

An amorphous fragment weighing 5.9g was found in layer 3, the surface of the natural gravel, in the northern-eastern part of the interior. Cleaning, examination and X-ray by Meg Brooks of the Conservation Centre at Salisbury (Wiltshire Library and Museum Service), provided no indication of its having formed part of a finished object. It is heavily-leaded, with numerous surface cavities, probably due to air bubbles, and lumps of red/green copper oxide/carbonate chloride. Its internal cracks and structure are similar to those of metal-working waste. Given the extent of disturbance on the site, the date of the object is impossible to determine.

Iron

The ironwork is fragmented and laminating, and some has lost its markings. Four finds are recorded, all from layer 2. Surviving fragments include a nail, a possible horseshoe and a socketed implement of uncertain form. Also from layer 2 is a fragment of smithing slag (identified by Jo Mills).