

EXCAVATIONS AT BRAMDEAN, HAMPSHIRE, 1973 TO 1977.

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ABSTRACT

The excavations carried out between 1973 and 1977 at the 'banjo-shaped' enclosure at Bramdean, Hampshire, continued those undertaken on the site in 1965 and 1966. The excavations concentrated principally on the interior of the enclosure and were concerned mainly with trying to clarify its internal arrangements and function. About a quarter of the interior of the enclosure has now been uncovered.

On the basis of excavation and gradiometer survey, the enclosure contained about 25 pits concentrated around its internal perimeter, the central part being devoted to 'activity-based' structures. The excavations produced further evidence of both stock and arable farming as well as domestic activity on the site. Two periods of Iron Age occupation of the enclosure can now be defined, the later and main one characterised by 'saucepan pots'.

The animal bone included the usual range of domesticated species but suggests an increase in sheep during the second phase of occupation. Although occupation does not seem to have been intensive the available evidence indicates that the enclosure might best be interpreted as part of a mixed farming complex, one of many settlements and enclosures which appear in increasingly diversified form in the later part of the Iron Age, as part of the response to increasing population pressure and the intensification of arable and pastoral activity. A microfiche section is included.

INTRODUCTION

This report summarises the results of five seasons of excavations and field work carried out at the Iron Age and Romano-British site at Bramdean, Hampshire (NGR 627281) between 1973 and 1977, as a follow-up to the earlier excavations of 1965 and 1966 (Perry 1974).

The site as a whole (Fig. 1) has two major components—an Iron Age 'banjo-shaped' enclosure revealed through air photography and an adjacent Romano-British building. The latter reached the highpoint of its development

as a fourth century courtyard villa equipped with mosaics and bath-house. It was partially excavated in 1853 and, although very inadequately recorded, the location of its main building is precisely located by a now ruinous structure erected over the mosaic pavements (full list of references in Perry 1974).

The 'banjo-shaped' enclosure lies on a southeast-facing slope of a dry valley, the Romano-British site on level ground at the top of the slope. Like most settlements of this age with a long history of development the site is complicated by numerous other ditch features, some related to the enclosure, others to the Romano-British occupation.

The excavations have been directed principally towards that part of the site occupied by the 'banjo' enclosure. This term 'banjo', first prompted by the superficial appearance of sites of this type (Perry 1966) although not entirely satisfactory, has gained a good deal of general acceptance (for example, Bowen 1979, 179; Bradley 1978, 48; Cunliffe 1978, 165; Harding 1974, 83; Megaw and Simpson 1979, 354). The author's interest was first attracted to these very distinctively shaped enclosures through a study undertaken between 1963 and 1966 of newly discovered Iron Age and Romano-British enclosures and settlements on the Hampshire chalklands (Perry 1967).

This study revealed that out of approximately sixty sites that could, with reasonable certainty, be ascribed to the Iron Age—the number would now be much higher than this—the 'banjo' shape was both one of the most common and certainly one of the most readily recognisable enclosure forms in the area.

Close definition of this, and other distinctive settlement types is clearly important, and it is unfortunate that the term 'banjo' has in some

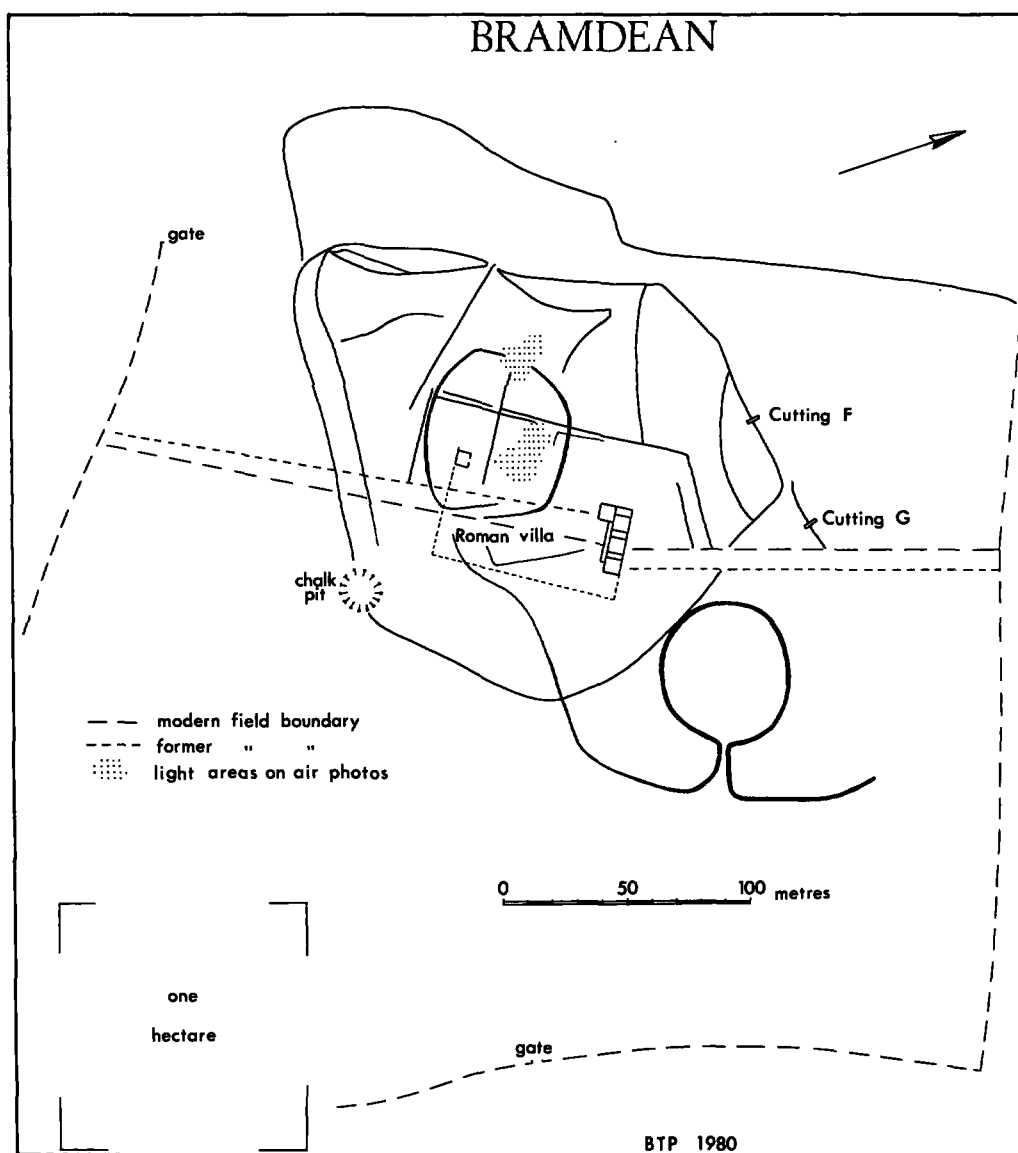


Fig. 1.

instances been inappropriately applied to sites significantly different both in shape and size. The following definition, agreed between the writer and Mr H. C. Bowen as a working definition for sites of this type, is closely similar to previous published definitions (Perry 1970, 37; 1974, 41).

Essentially they are small enclosures, usually

circular or subcircular in shape, with an enclosed area of between 0.2 and 0.6 hectares ($\frac{1}{2}$ and $1\frac{1}{2}$ acres), or having an approximate internal diameter of 50 to 80 m (150 to 250 feet). The small enclosure is approached by a distinctly long entranceway with parallel or broadly parallel but narrowing sides, defined, like the enclosure, by V-shaped ditches, and with an

available width for traffic of about 4 m. These ditches continue beyond the extremities of the entrance arrangement to form a variety of larger ditched complexes which frequently encompass the smaller 'banjo'. Where they survive, the banks of the enclosure and the entranceway are

usually external to the ditches. The 'banjos' do not appear to have any particular circumstance of slope, aspect or alignment, though it is clear from their siting that they were not primarily defensive.

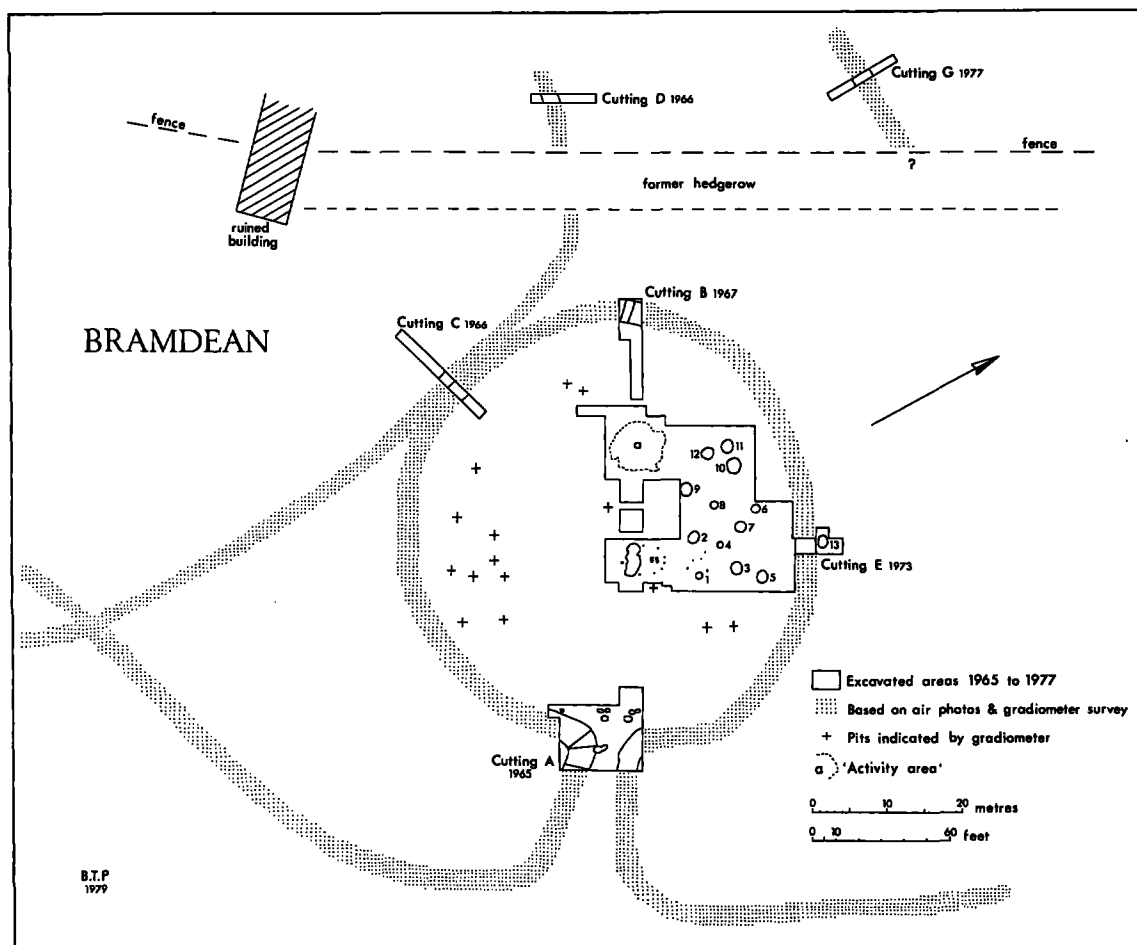


Fig. 2.

Excavations at Bramdean have been undertaken as a long-term but small-scale project, principally aimed at providing evidence for the date of construction, occupation and abandonment, and the internal organisation and function of the 'banjo' enclosures in order to place them within the broader context of the evolution of

Iron Age settlement forms. It is intended that excavation on the site will continue.

THE EXCAVATIONS

General

The excavations undertaken in 1965 and 1966

opened up an area at the entrance to the enclosure, sectioned the enclosure ditch (Cuttings A, B and C) and sampled part of the interior (Fig. 2). A section was also cut through an adjacent ditch belonging to an early phase of the villa (Cutting D). The V-shaped enclosure ditch was found to be between 1.8 m and 1.10 m in depth (all measurements are taken from the chalk surface), with the bank thrown up externally at least at the entrance. Postholes revealed at the entrance were interpreted as a four-sided double gateway, a mock-up of which was constructed by the writer as part of the Iron Age experimental area at the Avoncroft Museum of Buildings in 1972 (Reynolds 1972, 7). The small area sampled in the interior of the enclosure produced four pits (Pits 1 to 4), and the postholes of a small subcircular structure about 5 m in diameter. The evidence did not suggest that this was a dwelling. One possible reconstruction of it was built by the writer at the Butser experimental farm in 1974.

Between 1967 and 1972 the site was not available for excavation and the writer was abroad for part of this period. However, efforts on the site were renewed between 1973 and 1977. About a quarter of the interior of the enclosure has now been uncovered, revealing a further eight pits and the flint floor of an 'activity area'. An additional section, Cutting E, has been made through the enclosure ditch. Outside the main enclosure two further cuttings have been made through adjacent ditches. (Cuttings F and G; Figs. 1 and 2).

Excavations were greatly assisted by a Fluxgate gradiometer survey (Fig. 3) of the 'banjo' enclosure, undertaken by Dr A. J. Clark of the Department of the Environment in May 1974, which revealed very clearly the line of the enclosure ditch and proved to be extremely accurate in locating the pits and the 'activity area' (Clark 1977, 187). Since the Fluxgate rarely responds to the many natural clay pockets found on the site it is possible on the basis of this survey to predict with some confidence the total distribution of pits in the unexcavated parts of the site (Fig. 2).

The particularly favourable conditions which existed for air photography during the summers

of 1975 and 1976 considerably added to and complicated the overall site plan (Fig. 1; Perry 1974, 42, Fig. 18). Most noticeable is a previously unrecorded circular enclosure comparable in size to the 'banjo' enclosure and apparently underlying part of the courtyard villa. A further gradiometer survey undertaken at Easter 1977 enabled most of these associated features to be accurately surveyed onto the site plan.

The Pits

Excavations in the interior of the 'banjo' have been concentrated in an area which the gradiometer survey suggested was likely to produce the most occupation evidence in the form of an apparently regular distribution of pits.

The method of excavating the pits differed from usual practice on archaeological sites in that they were excavated in plan rather than in section. In the light of previous experience on this and other sites it was felt that excavating in section can be unnecessarily destructive by arbitrarily cutting through layers. Excavating in plan enables each layer to be removed in the reverse order of its original deposition and also enables as many sections as required to be surveyed and drawn as each layer is removed.

Clearly such a method depends upon an accurate method of recording since it is necessary to make continuous measurements as each layer is removed. This was made possible by the use of a device known as the 'Protophit', originally devised by Dr P. J. Reynolds as part of his research at the Butser experimental farm. A modified version of his original design was built for the author at the Napsbury Rehabilitation Hospital, St Albans. It consists of a 3 metre horizontal bar, extendable to 5 m, constructed from 1 inch x 1 inch hollow steel; along this slides a movable chuck with built-in bubble levels, into which is inserted an adjustable vertical rod. The device, for which there appears to be no commercially available equivalent, proved ideal for the purpose.

The method of pit excavation employed on the site also involved an attempted analysis of pit contents, whereby the individual layers might be separated and an approximate quantitative

BRAMDEAN

GRADIOMETER SURVEY

1974

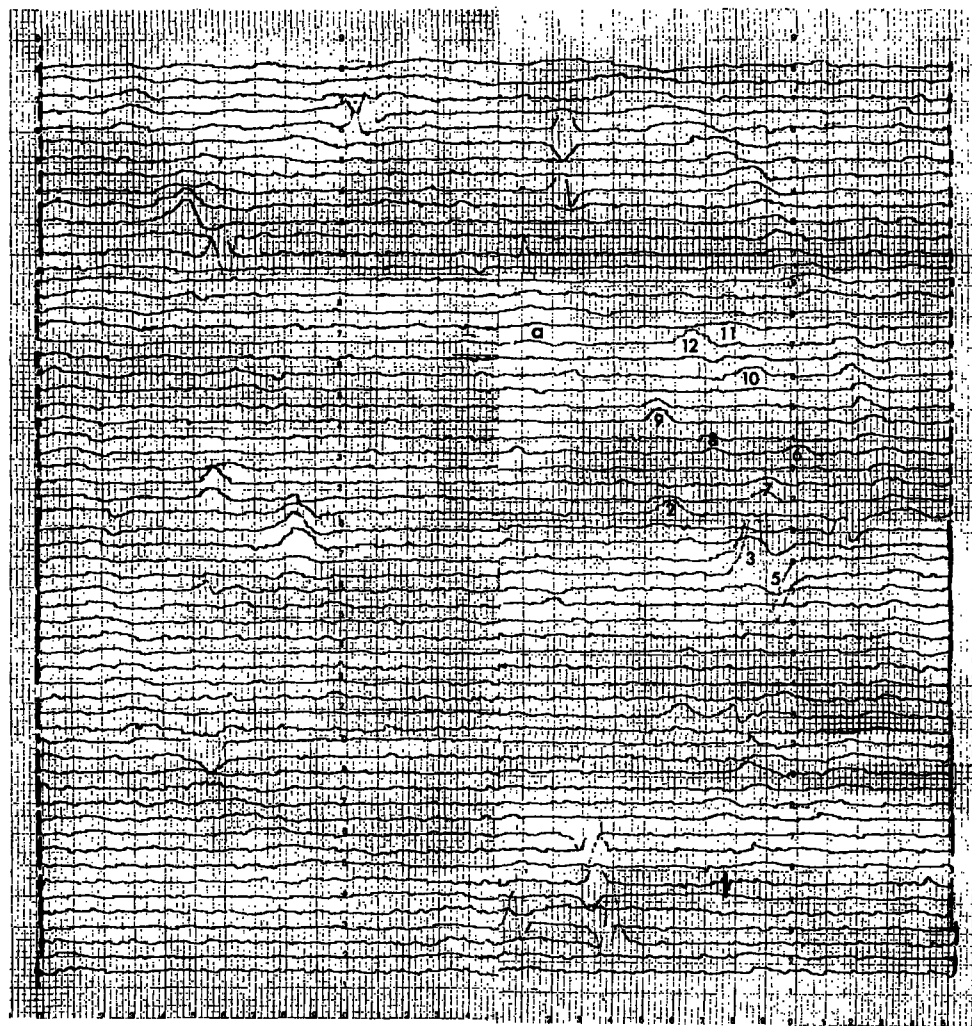


Fig. 3. Key: a. 'activity area', 2-12. pits.

analysis made of their various components. Instead of being consigned to a 'spoil heap' the contents of each layer were separated as far as possible and laid out on a large polythene sheet. Clearly, some pits lend themselves more readily than others to this method, some having very distinct layers, others a more homogeneous fill. Whilst no very positive results can be claimed at this stage, at least some approximate indications can be given of the principal materials making up the pit fill. Individual sections, as is well known, can be very misleading in this respect.

Various methods were tried out experimentally for the definition and description of pit fillings, but for the purposes of this report eight different types of material are distinguished (Fig. 4) consisting of varying combinations of earth; dark earth, often mixed with burnt material; finer silt; chalk and clay, sometimes intermixed with layers consisting predominantly of other material; flints and burnt flints, likewise intermixed but sometimes occurring as distinct layers; cob, found in small but significant quantities. Samples from each of the layers were sieved and floated on the site for carbonised material, and larger quantities from the more promising layers kept for more thorough analysis. In the description and illustrations that follow the layers are numbered in their presumed order of deposition. The percentages relating to contents are expressed by approximate volume.

Pit 5. Layers 1 and 2 consisted principally of redeposited chalk and clay. Layer 3, a lens of dark earth in the centre of the pit, contained a horse skull and part of a saddle quern apparently thrown in as refuse. After this the pit seems to have remained open while layer 4 accumulated. Layer 5 lay assymmetrically in the pit fill suggesting further refuse disposal. The top layer (6) of compacted earth is generally found as the top layer of the pits from the site.

Quantitative analysis of the contents suggested that 59% of the fill was redeposited chalk and clay, 33% earth, principally from the top layer; 8% dark earth of layers 3 and 5, which contained most of the finds. The pottery consisted of saucepan pots and jars (Fig. 6, nos 6–9).

Pit 6 was assymmetrically 'undercut' on the

western and northern sides. Layer 1 was thought to have accumulated while the pit lay open. The loose, ashy layer 2 contained a quantity of domestic refuse and represented 52% of the total pit contents. Layer 3 may represent a brief stabilising in the process of infilling before layer 4 was deposited. The top of the pit was packed with flints (layer 5), similar to Pit 8. Pottery consisted of small fragments of coarse black sandy and flint-gritted wares (Fig. 6, nos 10–12).

Pit 7 was noticeably 'bell-shaped'. Most of layers 1 and 2 are thought to have accumulated while the pit remained open. The variegated layer 3 included burnt material perhaps comprising 24% of the contents of the pit. Layer 4 may represent a brief period of stabilising of the pit fill, and contained an infant burial. The sequence of filling is similar to Pit 6: initial accumulation of natural silt; dumping of domestic rubbish; a brief period of stabilising; and final infilling.

Pit 7 produced much pottery (Fig. 6, nos 13–29) of the saucepan pot and jar type; and other material suggesting domestic activity.

Pit 8. The fairly uniform layer 1 accounted for about 50% of the pit contents, and included a lens of burnt flints (layer 2). The top layer (4) consisted of large flints, similar to the top of Pit 5, suggesting that it was not intended this pit be reopened.

Pit 8 produced an interesting assemblage of material (Fig. 6, nos 30–40), mostly from layers 3 and 4, and including a ring-headed pin and two bones from a 'dog foot pendant' similar to those found in Pit 12.

Pit 9 presents a number of possibilities for interpretation. Layer 1 contained two complete dog skeletons, a 4–5 year old male and a 6 month old female, which should be regarded as deliberate burials. Above this was a substantial quantity of flints (layer 2) and a layer of clay (3), which were devoid of archaeological material and together made up 55% of the pit contents. In the centre of the pit was a distinct deposit of red clay (layer 5) with fragments of pottery and a quantity of coarse unfired pot. All the pottery from this pit belongs to the saucepan pot and jar group (Fig. 7, nos 41–53).

The red clay of layer 5 was at first assumed to

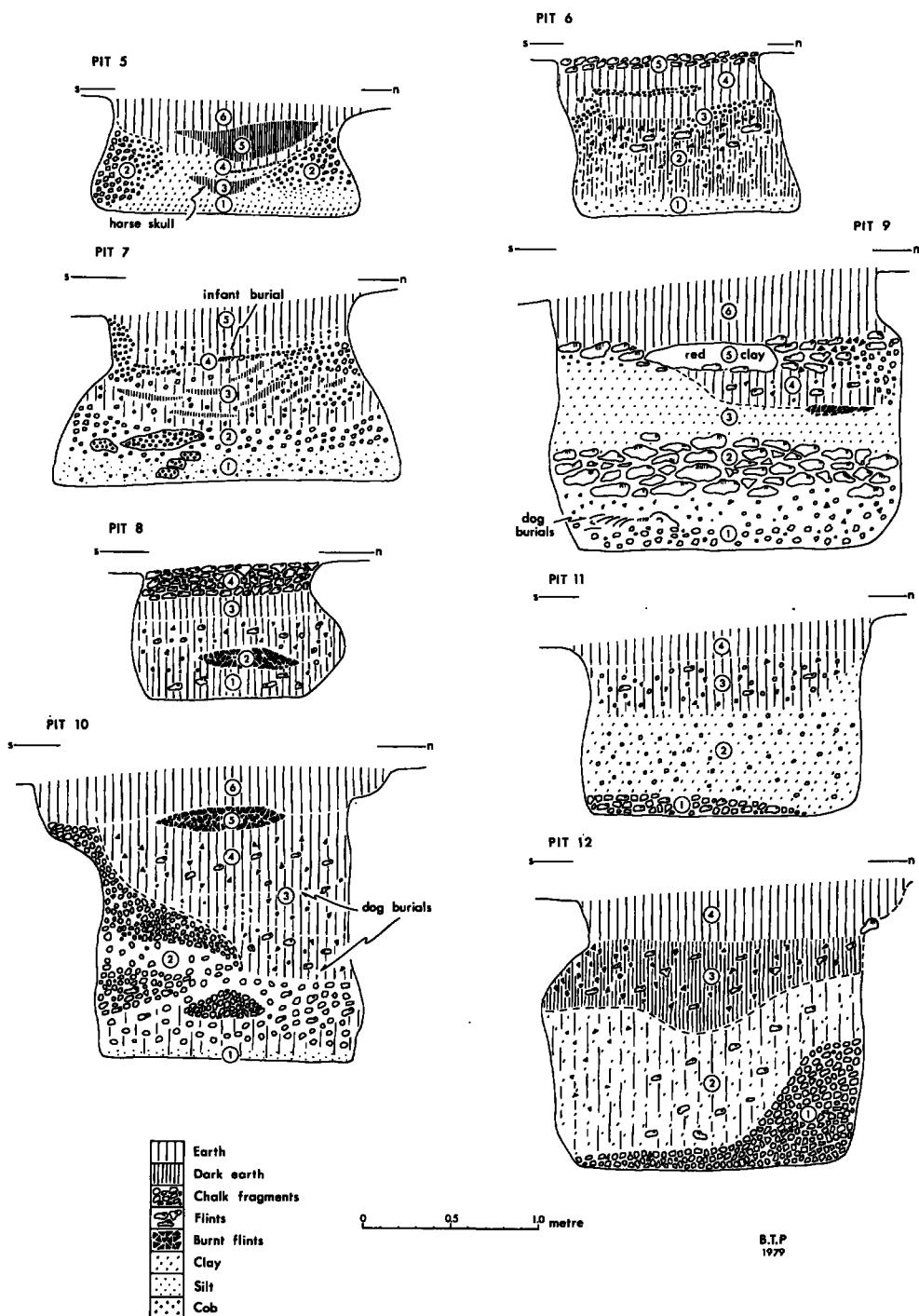


Fig. 4. Bramdean, sections across Iron Age pits.

be potters' clay, but petrological analysis (microfiche) showed it did not resemble any other pottery from the site. Comparison with clay from layer 3, using X-ray diffraction, revealed a very close similarity between the two. This suggests the 'red clay' was derived from locally obtained clay-with-flints, which occurs in pockets on and around the site, and stored for later use such as making daub, ovens, sealing grain pits, etc., but not for making pottery.

The large flints of layer 2 might be similarly interpreted as a stored commodity, or as a protective layer to prevent disturbances of the dog burials below.

Pit 10. Neither layer 1 nor 2 produced any significant finds, in marked contrast to layer 3 which contained an abundance of animal bone, including a dog burial and the skeleton of a piglet, and pottery of the saucepan pot and jar type (Fig. 7, nos 56–60).

Pit 11. About 70% of the contents of the pit consisted of archaeologically sterile chalk and clay, though layer 3 contained some pottery, including a partially complete jar (Fig. 7, no. 61). A similar interpretation to that relating to Pit 9 may be appropriate.

Pit 12. Layer 1 contained an unusual lugged jar and part of a well made burnished bowl (Fig. 7, nos 77 and 79). Layer 2 contained few finds and was clearly differentiated from layer 3 which contained pottery with flat-topped and finger-impressed rims, an iron ring-headed pin, part of a spindle whorl and a 'dogfoot pendant' (Fig. 7, nos 66–76). This assemblage of material closely resembles that from Pit 8.

Summary

The pits were found to be evenly distributed in the area excavated and the gradiometer survey suggests an equally even distribution on the opposite side of the enclosure, so that the pits were grouped in two concentrations away from the central part of the enclosure. There may be about twenty-five pits altogether, comparable to the banjo enclosure in Micheldever Wood excavated by Fasham (1977, 348), so either occupation within the enclosure was not as intensive as in larger enclosures such as Little Woodbury or Gussage All Saints, or else the

function of the enclosure was different from these.

The shallower pits seemed more noticeably bell-shaped and the evidence suggested that they had been left open from time to time. The compacted flints at the top of Pits 6 and 8 suggested that, once they had been finally infilled, it was not intended that they should be reopened.

Domestic activity on the site is suggested particularly by the material from Pits 8 and 12 (Phase 1, see below) and Pit 7 (Phase 2). The archaeological material tended to be concentrated in clearly defined layers, several of the pits containing substantial layers without finds. For example, in Pit 5 the finds were concentrated in layer 5; in Pit 10, layer 3. Similarly, in Pit 9, layers 2 and 3, and in Pit 11, layers 1 and 2, were devoid of finds. Pit 9 and perhaps Pit 11 may have been used for the storage of locally derived clay and other material.

The activity area (Fig. 2 'a'; Fig. 5)

The presence of this feature was indicated by the Fluxgate gradiometer survey as a series of very slight anomalies (Fig. 3). The feature was revealed at the chalk surface as an irregular area of dark soil measuring approximately 6.0 m by 4.80 m. It was excavated in plan by removing 5 cm at a time.

The top 20 cm consisted of a uniform layer of dark earth (Fig. 5, layer 4), in which small eroded sherds of Iron Age and Romano-British pottery were present. At a depth of about 20 cm the feature had narrowed down to measure about 4.0 by 3.20 m and consisted of a tightly compacted floor of burnt and unburnt flints (layer 3). A sample of 500 flints gave 77% unburnt as against 23% burnt, with a size breakdown as follows (maximum dimensions in each case):

	unburnt	burnt
0–4 cm	153	50
5–9 cm	186	62
10–15 cm	49	–
16–20 cm	3	–

In the immediate vicinity of the flint floor were a number of solution hollows of the kind which

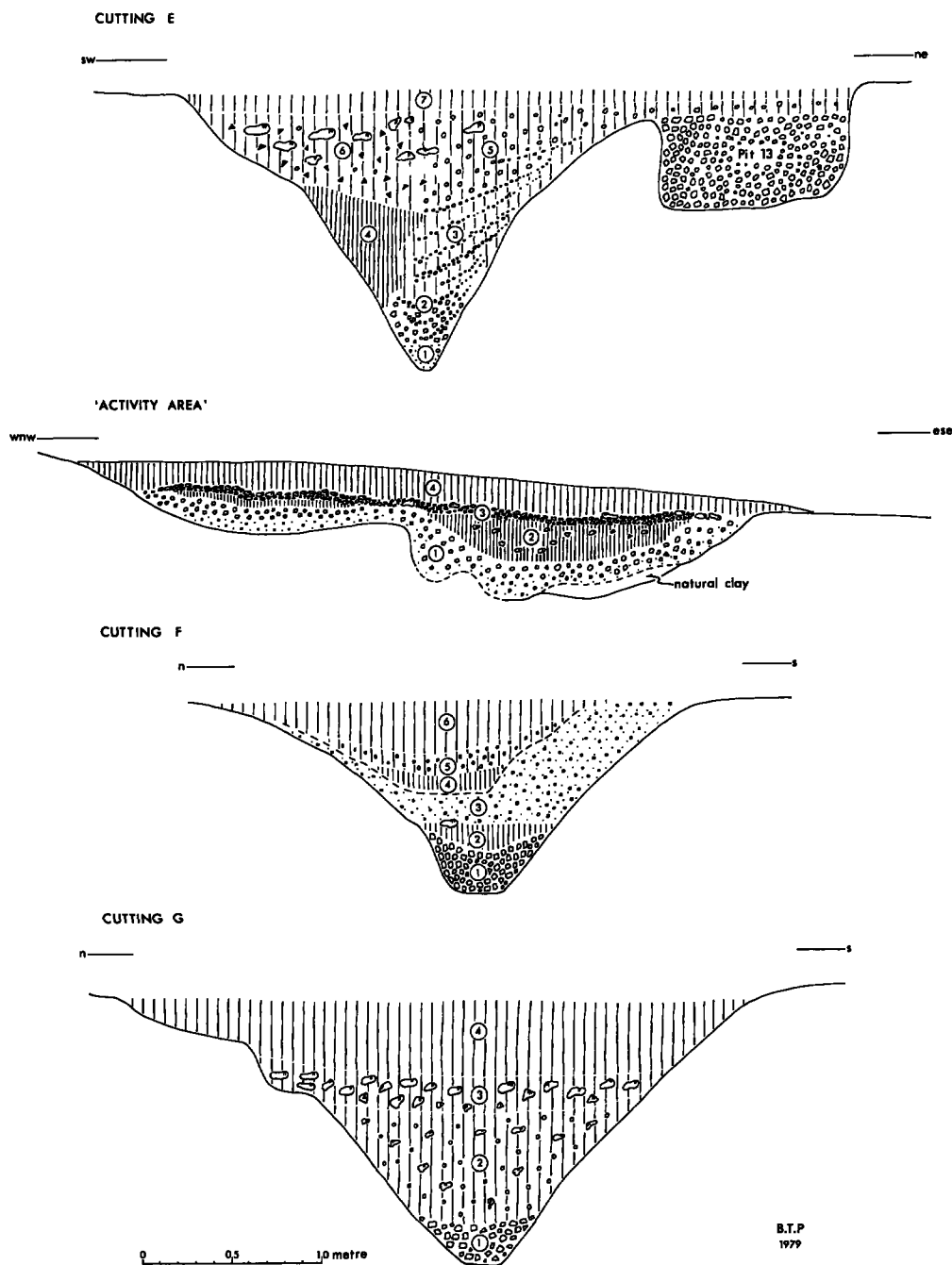


Fig. 5. Bramdean, sections across ditches and 'activity area', see Figs. 1-3.

occur sporadically on the site. An analysis of these was carried out on the site by Mr D. A. Cheshire (Geological Sciences, The Hatfield Polytechnic) which indicated that they were clearly of natural origin and not related to former postholes. There were no other positive indications of postholes either surrounding the floor nor cut into it. Since elsewhere on the site even small postholes have shown up very clearly it seems reasonable to suppose that this feature did not represent the floor of a roofed structure. Embedded within the flint floor, which was about 10 cm in thickness, were quantities of animal bone and pottery (Fig. 7, no. 80) belonging to the saucepan pot and jar type.

Beneath the floor two further layers were distinguished. Layer 2 consisted of a very dark earth containing some flints, animal bone and pottery (Fig. 7, no. 81). Beneath this again was a chalky fill, layer 1, containing a few scraps of Iron Age pottery, and difficult to distinguish in places from the natural chalk. Part of this fill, however, overlay natural clay, apparently in situ, indicating that this hollowed out area may have originally been a natural clay pocket.

On the basis of the evidence it is suggested that the following sequence of activity occurred:

1. A pocket of natural clay was dug out and the clay used or kept for future use on the site; such storage of clay is indicated by the evidence from Pit 9 and perhaps Pit 11.

2. The hollow left by this clay extraction was back-filled with chalk (layer 1).

3. The hollow was levelled off in accordance with the natural slope of the land (layer 2).

4. The floor (layer 3) was laid and was in use during the main occupation of the site, characterised by the presence of pottery of the saucepan pot and jar group.

5. After it had ceased to be used the floor was gradually buried under downwashed soil and other material, the finds suggesting that it had gone out of use before the Romano-British activity began on the site.

Cutting E (Fig. 2; Fig. 5)

A section 2 m wide was cut through the enclosure ditch which was found to be 1.55 m deep at this point. This compares with other sections

cut through the ditch as follows: Cutting A—1.80; Cutting B—1.10 m; Cutting C—1.40 m. These measurements suggest that the ditch becomes progressively shallower uphill from the enclosure entrance. The position of the ditch indicates that the enclosure is rather less perfectly circular than suggested by air photographs and indicated on earlier plans of the site.

The section proved to be rather different from the other cuttings made through the enclosure ditch, indicating that little can be concluded about a site from any one section. Seven layers were distinguished.

The bottom of the ditch was covered by a layer of chalky silt (layer 1). This and layers 2, 3 and 5, consisting of light brown earth with chalk fragments, each layer becoming increasingly chalky towards the bottom of the pit, all seem to have been part of the same process of infilling. The finds suggest that this infilling occurred rapidly; adjoining pieces of the same jar (Fig. 6, no. 1) were found between the base of layer 5 and the base of layer 3; likewise, two adjoining rimsherds of another jar (Fig. 6, no. 3) were found at the base of layer 3 and the base of layer 2. In the upper levels of the ditch, layers 5 and 6, pottery of the saucepan pot and jar type (Fig. 6, nos 2, 4 and 5) was found intermixed with early Romano-British types, perhaps suggesting that there was no significant gap between the end of the 'saucepan pot occupation' of the site and the arrival of Romano-British pottery styles.

The question remains as to the position of the bank in relation to the ditch of the enclosure. The excavations at the entrance in 1965 indicated that the bank must have been outside the ditch. The ditch section of Cutting E suggests that the greater part of the material making up layers 2, 3 and perhaps 5 may have been derived from an outer bank, while the darker material of layer 4 derived from occupation material within the enclosure. There is, however, no reason why the bank may not have been internal at this point since it need not coincide with any of the pits within the enclosure.

Immediately outside the enclosure ditch there was a small oval pit (Pit 13; Fig. 2; Fig. 5) containing a uniform fill of compact weathered chalk, with a few small scraps of dog bone, but

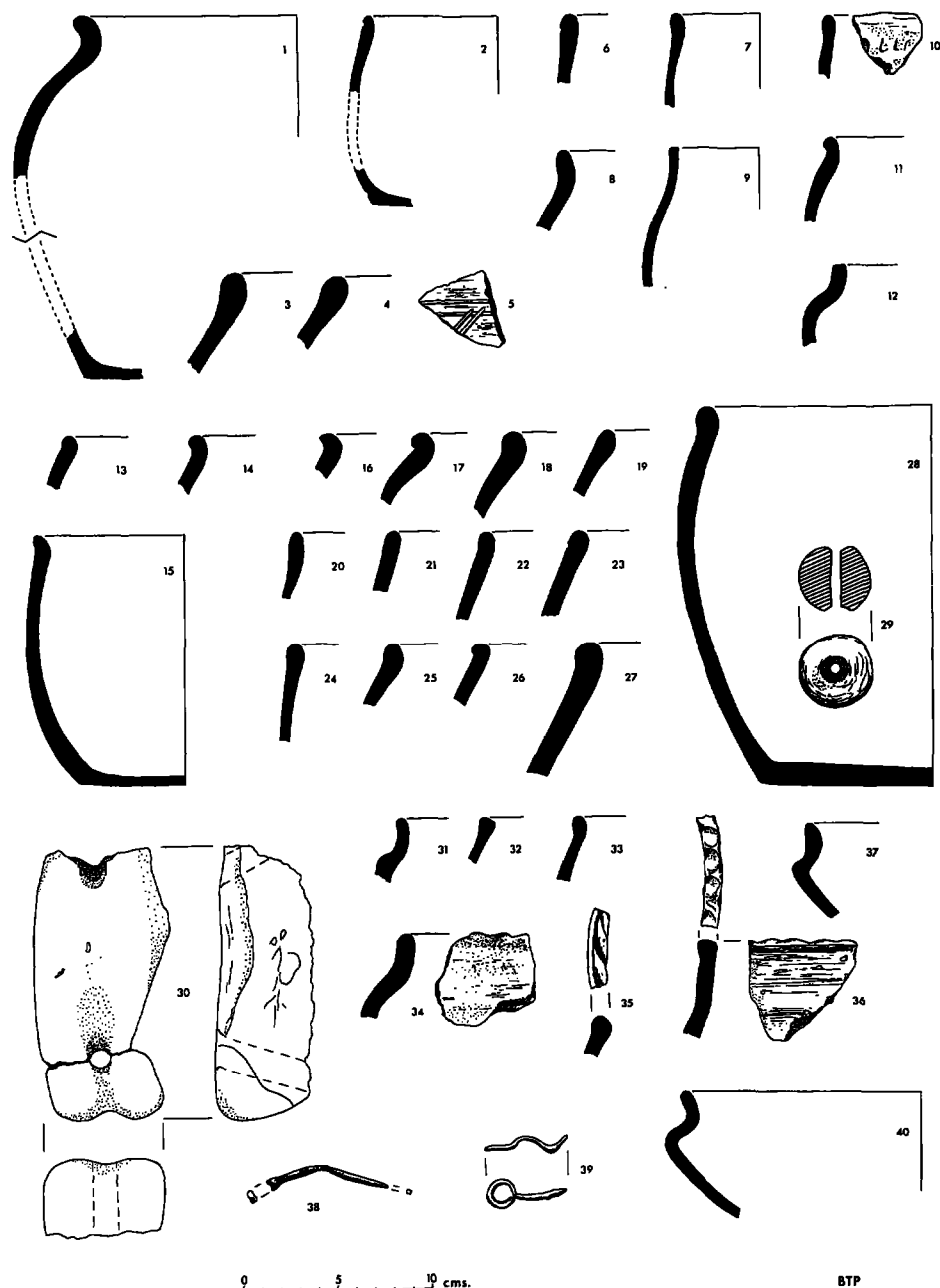


Fig. 6. Bramdean, pottery and small finds: 1-5. cutting E (1, 3, layer 3; 2, 4, 5. layer 5); 6-9. pit 5 (6, 7. layer 5; 8. layer 3; 9. layer 1); 10-12. pit 6 (10. layer 5; 11, 12. layer 2); 13-29. pit 7 (13, 14. layer 5; 15. layer 4; 16-19. layer 3; 20-29. layer 1); 30-40. pit 8 (30-33. layer 4; 34-39. layer 3; 40. layer 1). Scales: pottery $\frac{1}{4}$, small finds $\frac{1}{2}$.

insufficient evidence upon which to date it.

Cuttings F and G

Air photographs of the site show a complex of ditches in addition to the main 'banjo' enclosure. Most of these were surveyed onto the site plan in 1977 with the help of a gradiometer survey. Two sections, Cuttings F and G, were dug mainly to see whether part of this system of ditches could be related to the 'banjo'. Cutting D, 1966 (Fig. 2), had indicated that the ditch through which it was cut was related to an early phase of the Romano-British building.

Cutting F (Fig. 1; Fig. 5)

This was very clearly a two-period ditch. The first ditch, represented by layers 1, 2 and 3, cut to a depth of 1.10 m contained only fragmentary finds. The later ditch, cut into layer 3 to a depth of 0.50 m made up of layers 4, 5, and 6, contained a small quantity of Romano-British pottery and had been cut with a wide flat bottom similar to that found in Cutting D.

Cutting G (Fig. 1; Fig. 2; Fig. 5)

This cutting revealed a deeper ditch, 1.45 m deep, in which four layers could be distinguished. Layers 1 and 2 produced a very few finds, but included a fragmentary spindle whorl from the bottom of layer 2. The upper levels of the ditch, layers 3 and 4, produced a quantity of animal bone and Romano-British coarse pottery comparable to that found in the upper levels of Cutting B (Perry 1974, 57–8) for which a date in the first century AD was suggested. The lack of archaeological evidence from layers 1 and 2 means that the ditch must be regarded as undated, but the V-shaped profile would be compatible with an Iron Age date.

THE POTTERY AND SMALL FINDS (Figs. 6, 7)

The pottery

The pottery from the 'banjo' enclosure falls into two groups indicating two phases of Iron Age occupation on the site. This is confirmed by the petrological analysis of samples of pottery from the site and by certain of the small finds.

Phase 1. The earlier phase of occupation is characterised by pottery in a variety of fabrics, including flint-gritted and sandy wares, some very coarse, with flat-topped rims and, frequently, finger-impressed ornamentation. The petrological analysis confirms the variety of fabrics represented—Flint fabric 4, Glauconitic fabric 2 and four individually described fabrics (see microfiche). The coarse wares of Phase 1 are generally found as smaller sherds but include the partially complete lugged jar (no. 79). Associated with the coarser wares are a few well made bowls in hard sandy ware with well burnished exteriors (nos 40 and 77). This group is represented by Sandy fabric 2.

This assemblage appears to belong to the 'Park Brow—Caesar's Camp' group as defined by Cunliffe (1978). Close parallels for most of the coarse wares and the burnished bowls are to be found at Caesar's Camp, Wimbledon and other sites mentioned in the same report (Lowther 1947, 18). Bramdean seems to be on the western periphery of the distribution of this pottery style, in an area into which the saucepan pot style later spread.

Pottery of this type is found in Pits 6, 8 and 12, and from the earlier excavations of 1965 and 1966, Pits 3 and 4. It is associated, in Pits 8 and 12, with ring-headed pins and 'dog foot pendants'.

Phase 2. The larger group of pottery consists of saucepan pots and jars in generally hard, flint-gritted paste, variously fired black to red, frequently with burnished exterior and/or interior; the rims are often internally thickened. Several examples were found as complete or semi-complete pots. A single shallow-tooled line below the rim or above the base is common. Other than this, decoration is rare but a few sherds have a punched dot decoration (no. 54). This group is represented in the petrological analysis by Flint fabric 1 and seems to belong very clearly to the 'St Catharine's Hill—Worthy Down' group as defined by Cunliffe (1978). Closely similar pottery is found at a number of sites in this part of Hampshire (Cunliffe 1964, 10), and further detailed description of individual sherds is not thought necessary. All the rims and decorated sherds are illustrated.

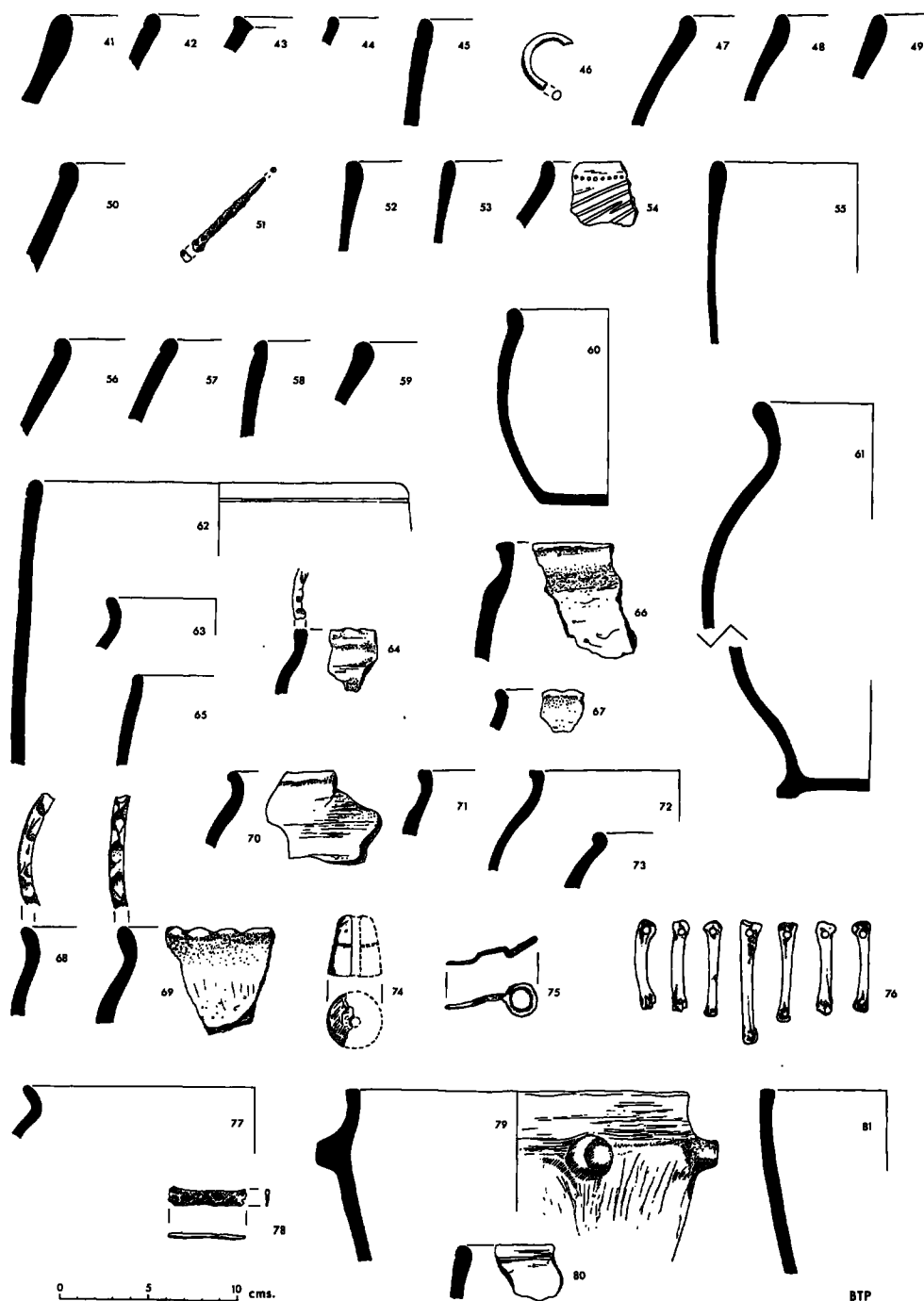


Fig. 7. Bramdean, pottery and small finds: 41-53. pit 9 (41-46. layer 6; 47. layer 7; 48-51. layer 4; 52, 53. layer 1); 54-60. pit 10 (54. layer 6; 55. layer 4; 56-60. layer 3); 61-65. pit 11 (layer 3); 66-79. pit 12 (66-76. layer 3; 77-79. layer 1); 80-81. activity area (80. layer 3; 81. layer 2). Scales: pottery $\frac{1}{4}$, small finds $\frac{1}{2}$.

The pottery and small finds from the 1965–1966 and 1973–1977 excavations are held at the British Museum. A detailed description of the pottery is lodged with the collection or is available from the author.

The small finds

The small finds were relatively few in number and are described individually.

Pit 7

29. Spindle whorl in red/black flint gritted ware (layer 1).

Pit 8

30. Clay object, coarsely made, presumably a weight, with two holes set diagonally, perhaps part of a triangular loomweight (layer 4).

38. Iron object; bent; presumably a nail (layer 3).

39. Iron ring headed pin (layer 3).

Pit 9

46. Part of iron ring (layer 6).

51. Iron object, presumably a nail (layer 4).

Pit 12

74. Part of spindle whorl or plumb-bob in flint gritted ware; tooled groove cut with a sharp object (layer 3).

75. Iron ring headed pin (layer 3).

76. Seven dog metapodial bones, pierced at the proximal ends. They are presumably part of a necklace or charm and are described in this report as a 'dog foot pendant' (layer 3). The individual bones are described in microfiche. At least two dogs are represented in this group. Two similar bones came from Pit 8. The holes are all very similar and could have been made with the same tool. Apart from a slight polish on the shafts of the bones they are unaltered except that the proximal articular end has been rubbed down in some specimens (Information from Dr J. Clutton-Brock).

78. Iron object; broken; small hole pierced through at the point of the break at one end (layer 1).

(*Not illustrated*)

Pit 7: Two pieces of broken quernstone from the lower part of a saddle quern (layer 1).

Pit 5: Nearly complete base of a saddle quern (layer 3).

The pottery and small finds—general

The following table categorises the pottery and small finds from the pits relating to the 1965–1966 and 1973–1977 seasons of excavation. The pottery from Phase 1 is associated on the site with ring headed pins and the 'dog foot pendants'. There appears to be no admixture of material from the two phases. The dog burials are associated with pottery of Phase 2. Other evidence of occupation, in the form of cow and horse skulls, quernstones, spindle whorls and carbonised grain, is found in both periods of occupation.

	Pit numbers											
	1	2	5	7	9	10	11	3	4	6	8	12
Flat topped rims & finger impressed ornamentation	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	P	P	P	P	P
'Well burnished bowl' forms	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	P	P
Ring-headed pins	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	P	P
'Dog foot pendant'	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	P	P
Saucepan pot and jar group	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	–	–	–	–	–
Saucepan pot with groove below rim	–	P	P	P	P	P	P	–	–	–	–	–
Decoration: punched dots and/or cross hatching	–	–	–	–	–	P	–	–	–	–	–	–
Dog burials	–	–	–	–	P	P	–	–	–	–	–	–
Horse and/or Cow skulls	–	–	P	–	–	P	–	P	–	–	–	–
Quernstone	–	–	P	P	–	–	–	P	–	–	–	–
Spindle whorl	–	–	–	P	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	P
Carbonised Grain	0	0	P	P	–	–	–	0	0	P	–	P

P = Present, – = Not found, 0 = Not sought (carbonised grain)

TABLE 1.

SUMMARY AND DISCUSSION

This final section attempts to relate the 1973 to 1977 excavations to the work of 1965 and 1966. The excavations have concentrated principally on that part of the site for which the term 'banjo' has now been widely adopted. At the end of the 1965/1966 report the writer concluded (Perry 1974, 72) that 'the banjo enclosure itself was constructed mainly with livestock management in mind but might be expected to contain evidence of a good deal of other mixed agricultural activity'. Some further consideration can now be given to the function of 'banjo' enclosures within the general context of developments in the first and second centuries BC.

The excavations at Bramdean have now uncovered the main part of the entrance and a quarter of the interior of the enclosure, and have sectioned the enclosure ditch in four places. Other ditches either associated with the enclosure or belonging to later developments on the site during the Romano-British period have also been sectioned. The funnel entrance has not yet been examined, nor has the circular enclosure, revealed by air photography in 1975, that apparently underlies part of the villa complex. The whole of the larger enclosure that encompasses the 'banjo' is also unexcavated.

The excavations at the enclosure entrance in 1965 and 1966 revealed a group of substantial postholes, the suggested interpretation of which was a four sided entrance structure incorporating a double gate. The evidence suggested that, at least at the entrance, the bank of the enclosure was outside the ditch, a feature noted at Hurstbourne Tarrant (Stead 1969), one of the few sites of 'banjo' type at which earthwork remains are still extant, and more recently at Micheldever Wood (Fasham 1977).

Excavation combined with gradiometer survey suggests that the interior of the enclosure contained about 25 pits in two main concentrations, leaving the central part of the interior as a functional area. The 1966 excavations revealed the postholes of a small subcircular structure, 5 m in diameter, thought to be connected with livestock handling rather than to be a dwelling. An unroofed shelter based upon its ground plan

was built at the Butser Experimental Farm in 1974, where it subsequently proved to be ideal for the individual handling of sheep. The apparent aspect of this structure at Bramdean, offering protection from the north and east, is compatible with such a function.

The evidence from the flint floored 'activity area' again did not suggest that this was a dwelling or part of a roofed structure. In some respects it resembles the 'working hollows' found on many Iron Age sites and frequently associated with grain threshing. It could well have been used for a variety of agricultural functions where an area would be needed that could be kept relatively dry and clean.

Reynolds (1974) has demonstrated that pits over 0.60 m deep can be used satisfactorily for grain storage. Using this as the criterion ten of the twelve pits could have been used for this purpose. Excluding the shallower Pits 1 and 4, the remainder range from just under 2 metres (Pit 3) to 0.60 m (Pit 5). However, it is suggested that Pit 9 and perhaps 11 were used for the storage of clay and other natural commodities. It may be significant that neither of these has the bell-shaped profile which Reynolds has shown to be suited to grain storage.

The archaeological material from the 'banjo' enclosure can now be seen as falling into two well differentiated groups, with no evidence of intermixture. The earlier pottery assemblage, Cunliffe's 'Park Brow-Caesar's Camp group' (Phase 1) was found in pits 3, 4, 6, 8 and 12. The main pottery assemblage is of pot and jar type, Cunliffe's 'St Catherine's Hill-Worthy Down group' (Phase 2). The main enclosure ditch, Pits 1, 2, 5, 7, 9-11, the entrance structure, the postholes of the small subcircular structure and the flint floor of the 'activity area', all clearly seem to belong to this. The three dog burials are also associated with this group.

No pottery of the earlier type has been found in the cuttings through the enclosure ditch. The finds from it suggested that the enclosure was in use during the saucepan pot era, although this does not preclude its having been constructed earlier and periodically cleared out. The evidence suggests that the final infilling was completed when Romano-British pottery of the

first century AD was in use on the site, by which time the enclosure will have ceased to exist as an earthwork.

The economic and social background of the later prehistoric period leading up to the saucepan pot era has been the subject of a good deal of recent discussion (eg. Cunliffe 1971, 61–2; 1978, 70–2; Bradley 1971, 77–80; 1978, 29–53; Bradley and Hodder 1979, 99–103). The first millennium BC witnessed a number of important agricultural innovations coinciding with and presumably making possible a gradual population increase. One of these, the introduction of winter-sown barley and spelt, would have had the effect of bringing forward and thereby extending the harvest season. This would have led to increased acreage of arable and intensification of production on existing arable lands.

An inevitable effect of population pressure would have been increased conflict and aggression, leading to the adoption of defensive measures for which there is ample archaeological evidence during the first to second centuries BC. Most spectacularly these are to be seen in the construction or refurbishing of well defending hillforts within clearly defined territories, under increasingly centralised authority. Major defensive activity was undertaken at the time of the 'saucenpan pot continuum' at, for example, Danebury, St. Catharine's Hill, Torberry and, presumably, at the nearby, but unexcavated, Old Winchester Hill (Cunliffe 1976, 28).

This increased defensive activity is to be found not only at the major hillforts but also at many of the smaller settlements of the same period and seems to coincide with a greater abundance and variety of settlements and enclosures, of which the 'banjo' is one of the distinctive forms.

The main period of occupation of the Bramdean 'banjo' would appear to be contemporary with these developments.

Another important feature of the later Iron Age seems to be have been the increasingly important part played by livestock. Evidence for this is provided by the greater provision for the corralling of livestock at Danebury, for example. Although the sample is relatively small, and detailed statistical analysis is inappropriate, the animal bone from Bramdean (microfiche)

suggests that sheep outnumber all other species, especially in Phase 2. In terms of the percentages of total bones of domesticated species sheep increase from about 39% during Phase 1 to about 58% during Phase 2, the majority being less than a year old. Horses increase significantly whilst cattle and pigs appear to decline in importance. Neither in Phase 1 nor Phase 2 are cattle apparently more numerous than sheep; in Phase 2 they represent only 26% of the total domesticated animal remains, although their contribution to food will have been proportionately much higher. The increase in livestock activity is fully compatible with the increase in arable farming which would have required a close association between stock and crop. The increase in sheep at the expense of cattle has been observed on other sites and may have been linked with the spread of downland arable.

The evidence from Bramdean suggests that the dog was treated differently from other animals. Whilst complete or nearly complete skeletons of a cow and a piglet were found in Pit 10, the three dogs from the site appeared to have been deliberately buried rather than merely disposed of. Apart from these burials, dog remains are few, but include the dog foot pendants which suggest that the animal may have had some special significance. In considering the possible function of the dogs there seem to be four possibilities: as hunters; as a source of meat and skin; as herding animals; as pets. Although it has been argued elsewhere (Wainwright 1979, 189) that hunted animals may be under-represented among animal bone from Iron Age sites, the two deer bones from Bramdean do not suggest that the dogs were much used in the chase. Likewise, although Harcourt has argued (1974, 171) that the finding of dog skeletons could be compatible with their having been eaten, there is no evidence of this from Bramdean. The most plausible explanation for their apparently different treatment from other domesticated species would be that they were linked with herding activities, most likely as sheepdogs, and therefore treated with some affection and regard.

Whilst domestic animals were clearly important on the site and the general layout of the

banjos has tended to invite an interpretation connected with livestock, evidence of arable farming comes from carbonised grain and quernstones found in pits belonging to both Phase 1 and Phase 2. Other finds indicate general domestic and habitation activity within the enclosure in both Phases, including the infant burial from Pit 7. The greater part of the animal bone is interpreted by Dr Clutton-Brock as food remains.

The evidence now available suggests that the banjo was part of a larger settlement complex, which was essentially a mixed farm with an agricultural economy, in which close association between crop and stock farming involved the construction of earthworks of specialised form, intended for special functions not yet precisely identified, but probably concerned with stock management. Although clearly not defensive in the military sense, banjos may be seen in the context of earthwork construction related to an expanding population and to intensification of

agricultural production, involving the need for clearer definition of land boundaries and clearer demarcation and greater protection of settlements.

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CONTENTS OF MICROFICHE

Detailed descriptions of pits; animal bones (J. Clutton-Brock); petrological analysis of pottery (S. Wandibba); solution hollows (A. Cheshire); air-photograph references.

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