

AN IRON AGE AND ROMANO-BRITISH SITE AT CHOSELEY FARM, ODIHAM: THE EXCAVATIONS OF DOROTHY LIDDELL, 1937

By MICHAEL MORRIS

*with a foreword by C F C Hawkes and contributions by D Allen, R Ball, S Browne, R H Clark, A C King,
F Pritchard, R Reece and A P Turner*

ABSTRACT

The excavations, covering an area of approximately 450 sq m, revealed evidence of Middle Iron Age activity in the form of a beehive pit; and of extensive Roman activity dating predominantly from the late first to the late fourth centuries AD. This included numerous quarry pits and hollows, two inhumations, and a kiln.

These features appeared to represent activity peripheral to a 'native' settlement. The pottery assemblage was dominated by products from the Alice Holt and Farnham kilns. The small faunal assemblage suggested specialised meat processing. A wide range of other Roman finds was also recovered.

Some detailed site description and the full pottery and finds reports are presented in the microfiche section.

FOREWORD: CHOSELEY FARM AND DOROTHY LIDDELL

by C F C Hawkes

It was a pleasure to find myself invited by Michael Morris, in the August of 1985, to contribute this Foreword to the report he has prepared, from the archive left and the material recovered by Dorothy Liddell, as the record of her excavation at Choseley Farm.

Her work there was done in the summer of 1937. But its sequel was tragic: what proved to be her last illness came in the directly following winter, and her death came early in 1938. The site, near Odiham in north-east Hampshire, was not very far from her home, Sherfield Hall at Sherfield-on-Lodden. Very much nearer to Sherfield is the trivallate Iron Age fort at Bull-down (Williams-Freeman 1915, 314-15, 361

with plan); and already in 1934 she found, by observations which she went over on the ground with me, that a further line of entrenchment had existed outside it (Williams-Freeman 1934, 111). Her intending a future excavation there was natural: she was about to complete her four seasons on the Iron Age Hembury Fort in Devon (reported 1930, '31, '32 and '35), where her finding a prior Neolithic work suited her previous acquaintance, in Wiltshire, with Alexander Keiller's great site of that period on Windmill Hill, near Avebury. But in Hampshire, since at Chilworth Ring her careful campaign had yielded no finds (Williams-Freeman 1915, 259, 368 with plan; 1929, 202; Hawkes 1930), she turned from hill-forts to Iron Age rural settlements: Meon Hill above Stockbridge, 1932 and '33 (reported 1932, 1935), and secondly and lastly at Choseley, hoping that 1937 would be the first of several seasons.

Her assistants there were Barbara Laidler and Mary-Eily de Putron; how after her death Miss de Putron received her archive and all the material, worked on it on through 1938 and into 1939, but then enlisted in the WAAF to serve through the War, was recorded by her and myself for the Club in a note that we wrote that autumn, going on to give a preliminary account of the results, in terms then current for Iron Age and Romano-British archaeology (de Putron & Hawkes 1940).

The mention in my 'Hampshire and the British Iron Age', in the Club's volume in honour of Frank Warren, its long-serving Hon Secretary (Hawkes 1956, 18) was purposely brief because

of my hope for a full report by someone else. Nearly thirty years later, this has proved to be Michael Morris; but I cannot mention Warren without attesting his faithful attention, since Miss de Putron's home was in Guernsey, to the despatching of the material and archive there, in a stout wooden packing case – which lay safe in the basement of the island's museum throughout the German occupation that we never expected – and to its return at the end of the War to the keeping of the Club, at Winchester where in due course it passed to the Hampshire County Museum Service, there to be studied at last by Michael Morris for the present publication.

Readers will find how full is the justice he has done it: a worthy memorial to Miss Liddell's last dig.

INTRODUCTION

The site lies 1.5km south west of Odiham at SU 725 500 at a height of approximately 90m OD on a gentle south west facing slope on the downland (Fig 1). The local surface geology consists of upper chalk, with patches of clay with flints in the vicinity. To the west along the River Whitewater are valley gravels, sand and alluvium. Some 3km to the north are the extensive clay deposits of the Reading beds and the Lon-

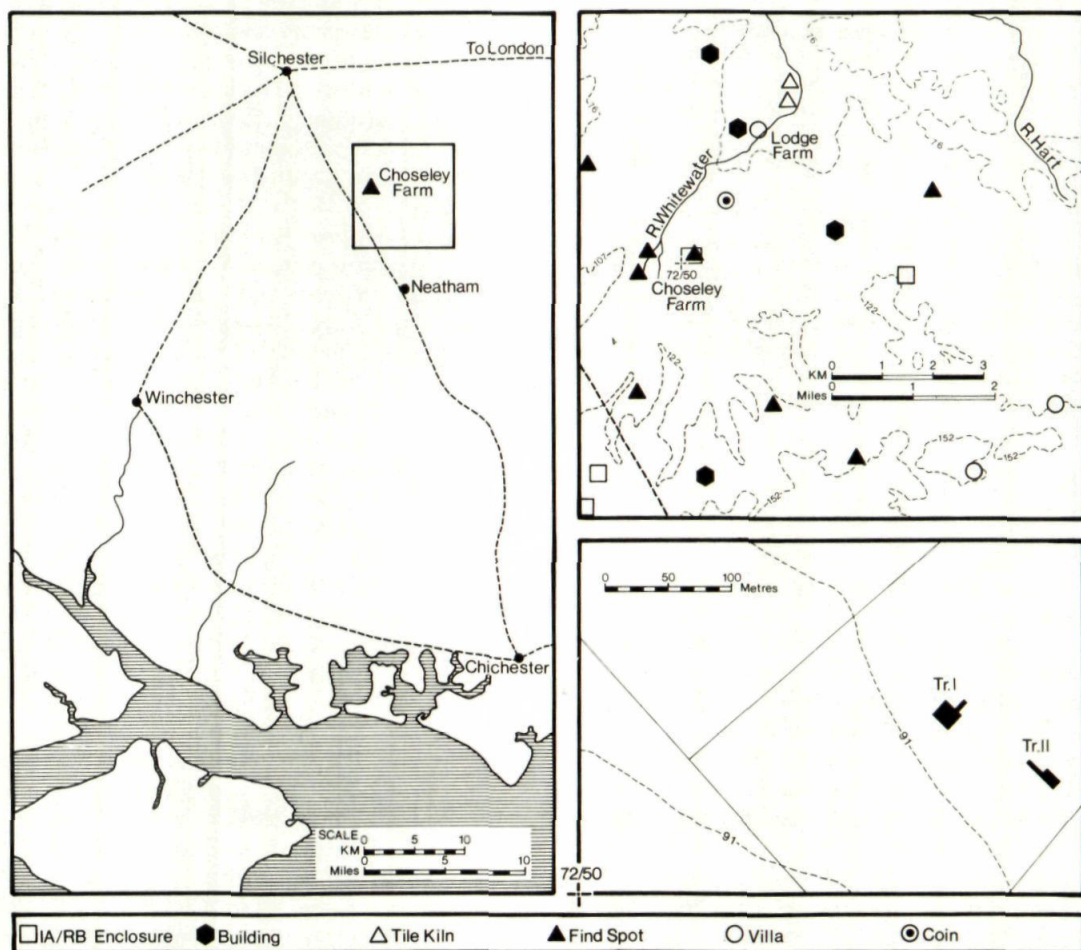


Fig 1. Choseley Farm: site location.



Fig 2. Choseley Farm: Trench I view east. Grave 1 is visible in the foreground. Trench II can be seen at the top left.

don clays (Geological Survey of Great Britain 1:50,000 sheet 284). The site is located in an area of clayey soil, the chalk lying approximately 0.3m below the modern ground surface.

The initial excavations were prompted by the then landowner Mr P L Parsons who discovered 'black earth' and pot sherds in mole diggings in the field in 1933 (Southern Daily Echo 16/9/37). He undertook small-scale trial excavations which produced a large amount of Roman pottery. As a result of this work a controlled excavation was carried out in the same area by Mr W E V Young for Miss Liddell in the spring of 1933 (Fig 2; de Putron n.d.). The 1937 investigations were carried out in an attempt to elucidate further the nature of the settlement. Two main trenches were excavated. Trench I was deliberately centred on the site of the pre-

vious excavations, covering a significantly larger area. The results of the work of 1933 are consequently incorporated into the description of this trench. Trench II was excavated at the spot where Mr Parsons had already partially excavated a pit containing pottery.

Perhaps understandably, several problems were encountered in preparing this report so long after the excavations: although the original site plans have survived, most of the site notes are missing. Fortunately a preliminary draft report was partially completed before the war and this has formed the basis for much of the description (de Putron n.d.). No site location plan has been found and the trench positions shown on Fig 1 have been plotted using the grid reference on the OS card for the site (Antiquity No SU75 SW 27).

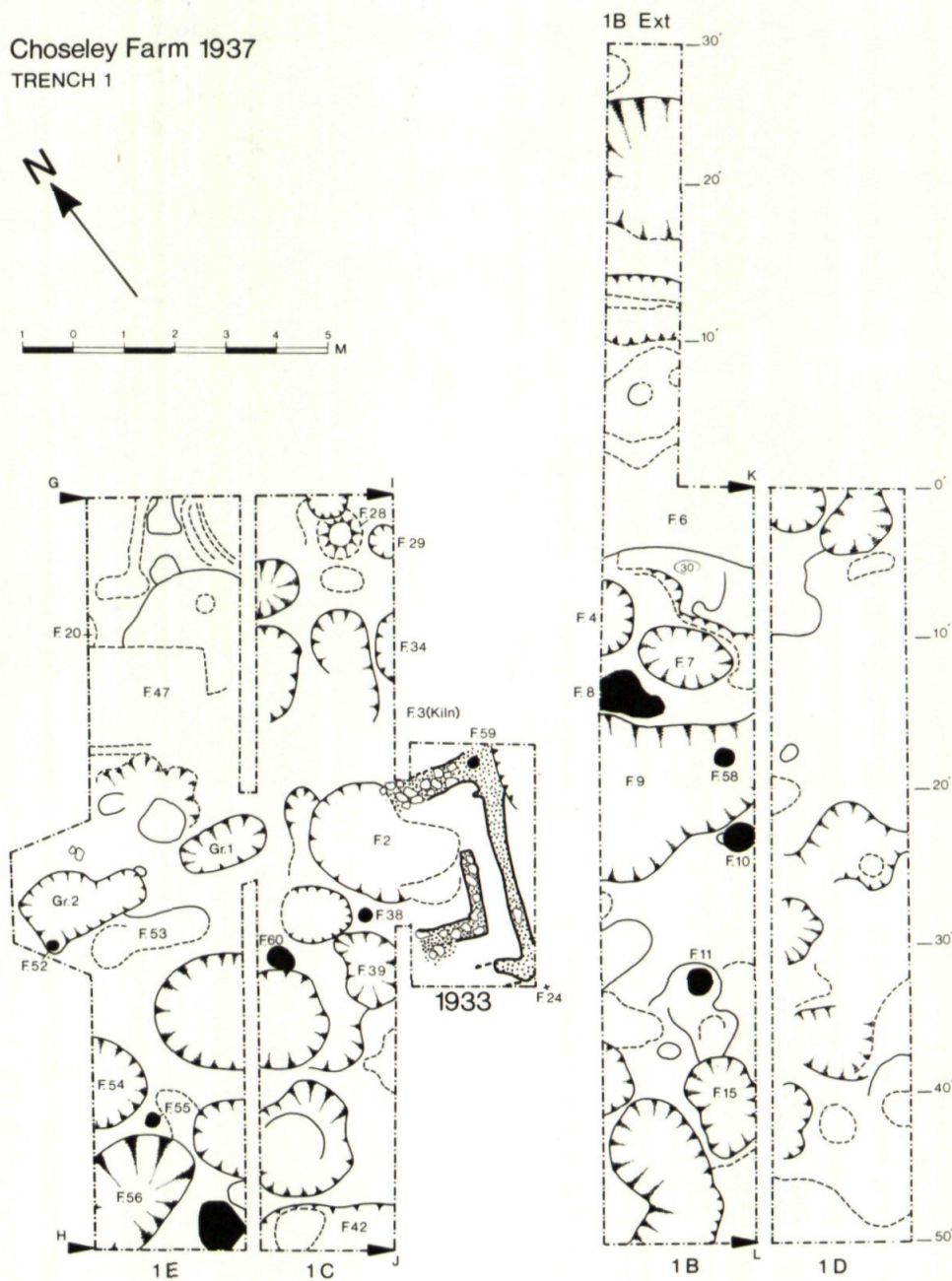


Fig 3. Choseley Farm: plan of Trench I. The area of the 1933 excavations is located in the centre of the trench. It should be noted that Trench 1B Extension was 50' long but only 30' was drawn.

EXCAVATION AND POST-EXCAVATION METHOD

Both main trenches were excavated in a series of narrow cuttings, usually about three metres wide, with narrow standing baulks (Figs 3 & 4). Plans were made of excavated features for each trench and both faces of each standing section were drawn. All the section records show that the boundary between the ploughsoil and the Roman features and layers was clearly delineated (Fig 6) and there was very little contamination by medieval pottery within the Roman deposits.

Some feature and layer numbers were given in the draft report and on the finds bags and boxes, but none were recorded on the drawings. In some instances these numbers can be unambiguously related to drawn features, e.g. the graves and the kiln. In most cases however, only a general cross-reference can be established: a typical reference will include the 'cutting' letter and the distance in feet from the trench baseline, e.g. Trench I, Cutting E, 10' to 20'. The relevant information is shown on both trench plans. It should be noted that Trench IB ext. was 50' long but only 30' was drawn. Also the referencing system of Trench II Cuttings B to E, where no standing baulks were maintained, is rather ambiguous. Unfortunately no solution to this problem has been found. For post-excavation purposes, a separate numerical sequence for features and layers has been applied to the site in an attempt to correlate the various records. This numbering sequence has been retained for the features and layers described in the published report but it should not be confused with the primary referencing system which was used in the original site archive and for the finds.

The excavator apparently made little attempt to relate features or general layers across cutting boundaries and given the bewildering jumble of layers presented by quarry pit complexes, this is perhaps understandable (cf Bersu 1940, 64-76, esp. fig 19 and Fasham 1985, 7). The site evidence is as a result rather disjointed. The writer has chosen not to cross-relate layers or to attempt a stratigraphical phasing. The evidence is instead grouped largely by feature type.

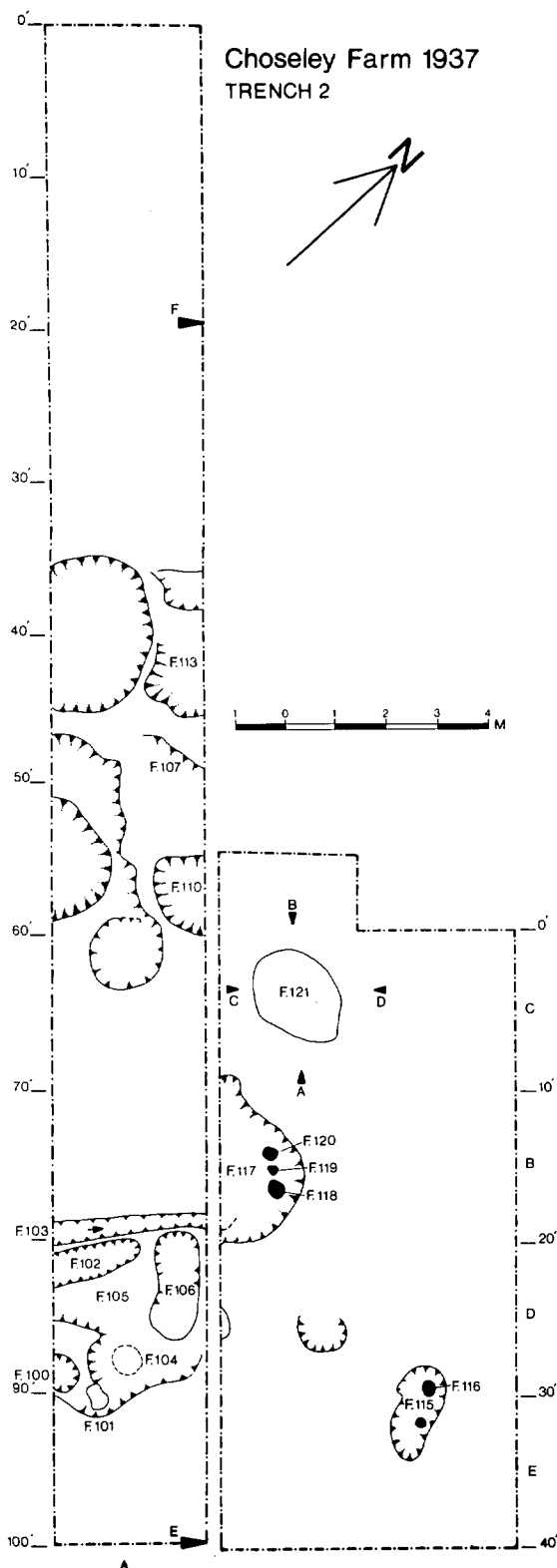


Fig 4. Choseley Farm: plan of Trench II.

THE EXCAVATIONS

PRE-ROMAN EVIDENCE

Although residual pottery of Beaker and late Bronze Age date was recovered from the site, the earliest identified feature was a Middle Iron Age beehive pit (Tr II F121; Figs 4 & 6). Its filling was not described in detail but it included daub and unburnt clay.

The section was only drawn after excavation. The character of the Iron Age pottery and animal bone suggests that the feature was undis-

turbed. A few sherds of Roman pottery are, however, ascribed to this pit which presumably represent later slumping into its upper part. Another beehive pit is mentioned by de Putron and Hawkes (1940, 366) but this could not be isolated in the surviving records.

The Pottery by Alex Turner

The Beaker and Late Bronze Age Pottery (Fig 5)

Tr II 50-70 Layer 2

One decorated rim fragment of beaker pottery (Fig 5.1) weighing 4 grammes was recovered

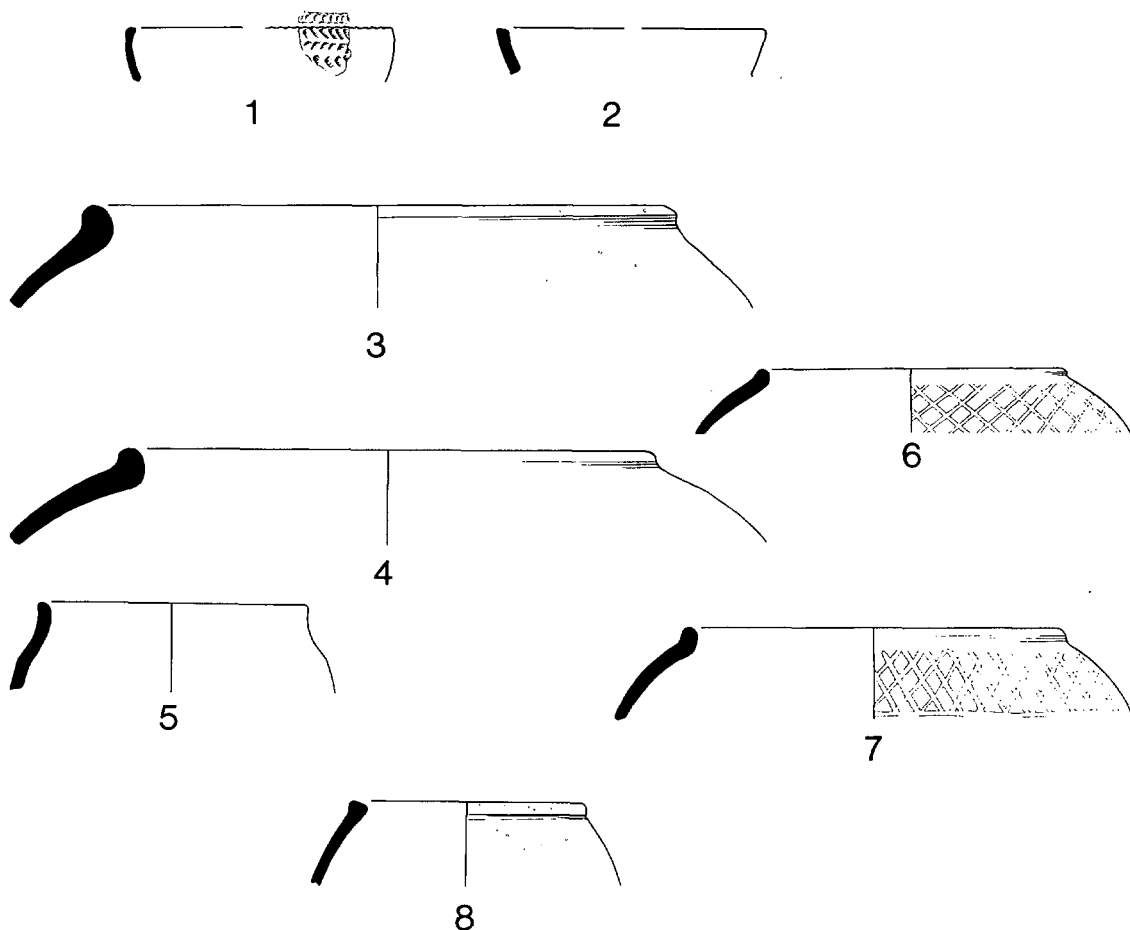


Fig 5. Choseley Farm: pre-Roman pottery (scale 1:4). 1: Beaker rim sherd 2: Bronze Age rim sherd 3: Middle Iron Age; medium sands up to 0.5mm, scatter flints *c.* 2.5mm 4: as 3 but with internal and external burnishing 5: Middle Iron Age; medium sands, scattered flints *c.* 1mm 6: as 5 but externally burnished 7: as 6 8: Middle Iron Age; medium sands, abundant flints *c.* 1.5mm.

from the site. Possibly of local origin, it contained scattered sands up to c 0.5mm and flint inclusions less than or equal to 1mm and in one case c 7mm. The sherd was also well oxidized on its internal margins.

Tr I E 20-30 Layer 1

Four Late Bronze Age sherds were also recovered: three body sherds and a rim sherd (Fig 5.2) weighing in total 30 grammes. They contained medium sands up to c 0.5mm and abundant crushed flint up to c 1.5mm with, occasionally, iron oxides. All the sherds were reduced and the rim exhibited signs of burnishing.

The Iron Age Pottery (Fig 5)

The Iron Age pottery within the Choseley Farm assemblage was in general distinctly Middle Iron Age, the bulk of which probably came from the beehive pit(s) present on the site. However in practice problems were encountered in identifying the stratigraphic origins of this pottery (see introduction in microfiche).

The Faunal Remains by Royston H. Clark

The beehive pit F121 contained part of a horse maxilla, an immature cattle mandible and three sheep/goat fragments. The presence of a horse skull in such a pit has many parallels on Iron Age sites (e.g. Danebury) and can be seen as a ritual or votive deposit (Cunliffe 1983).

ROMAN EVIDENCE

Four sections of the site are illustrated to show the stratigraphic sequence and the character of the Roman deposits (Fig 6). They are described in detail in the microfiche section.

The Pits Tr I, II (Figs 2, 3, 4, 6)

Pits were the most numerous features on the site consisting predominantly of relatively shallow and irregular shaped scoops and hollows. Some contained a number of layers (F 39, 42; Fig 6, sect. IJ; F113, sect. EF) whilst others were filled by the general layers described below. They were noticeably shallower and less densely spread towards the south east edge of Tr I and

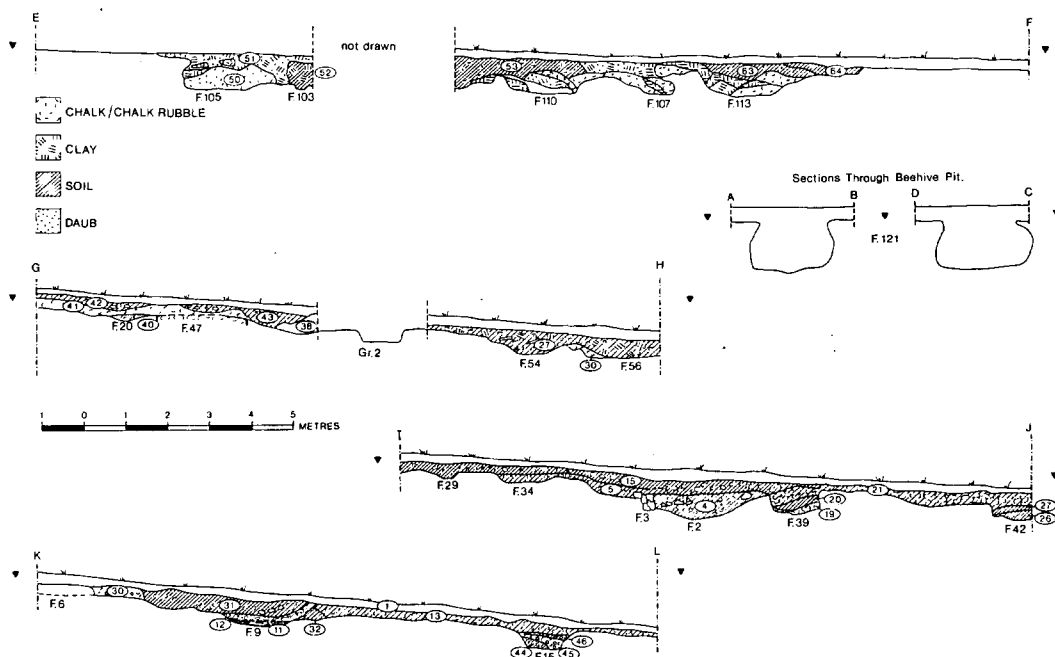


Fig 6. Choseley farm: sections.

were also less frequent in Tr II. F 9 (Fig 6, sect. KL) was of a different character to the others; the base was scorched and the backfilling contained black ashy material.

The General Layers Tr I, II (Fig 6)

A number of general layers were excavated. They were composed of a variety of materials including chalk rubble (layer 41, sect. GH), mixed soils and chalk (layer 5, sect. IJ) and clays (layers 51, 52, sect. EF). Many layers spread over and into the scooped areas. The bulk of the finds from the site were recovered from the general layers.

The Floors Tr I (Figs 3, 6)

Two floor surfaces were recorded: F 47 (TrIE) and F 6 (TrIB).

The Post-Holes Tr I, II (Figs 3, 4)

Several post-holes were observed but little stratigraphic or dating evidence is available and no patterning is apparent. They may have related to freestanding posts or to structures which are no longer discernible. Where details survive these are given in microfiche.

The Graves Tr IE (Figs 2, 3, 6, 7, 8)

Two inhumations were excavated in the north-west part of Trench I. Both were east-west burials, heads to the west:-

Grave 1 contained the remains of an adult female which was in a prone position. The body was lying face down, the spine was curved, the hips and the knees were flexed and the left arm was bent with the hand at shoulder level. The right forearm is not shown in the photograph

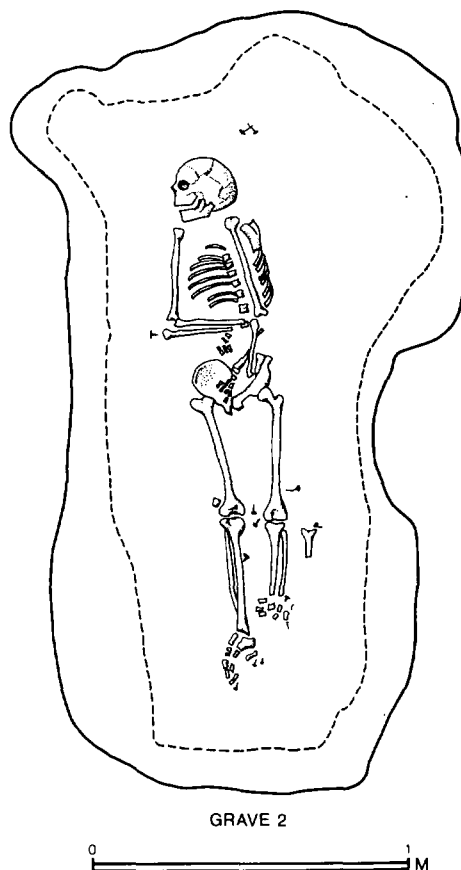
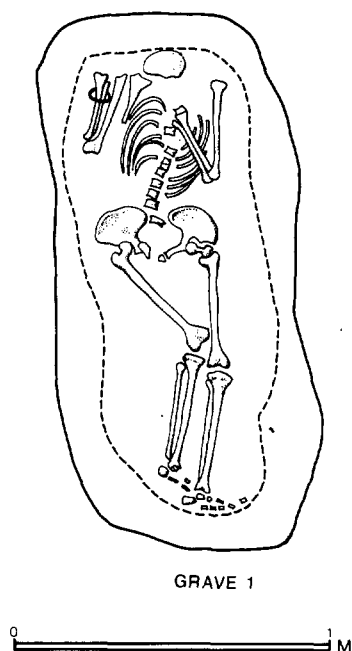


Fig 7. Choseley Farm: plan of graves.



Fig 8. Choseley Farm: grave 1, an adult female buried face down. The head had been lifted before this photograph was taken.

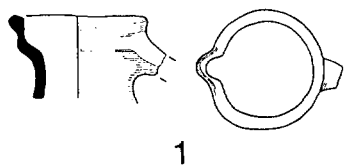
(Fig 8) but the plan of the burial (Fig 7) which presumably was drawn at an earlier stage of the excavations, shows that it was lying above the ribcage, i.e. behind the back. The grave cut was rather too short for the body. The skull was accidentally removed prior to recording. There was a plain copper alloy bracelet on the left wrist (Fig 11 no 8), and hobnails and an iron boot plate (Fig 12 no 21) were located by the feet. The filling of the grave was not recorded but it was sealed by a 'cement hard' chalk rubble.

Grave 2 was cut through F 53. It contained an adult burial with hobnails at the feet. The archive notes record that an infant burial was located at its feet but above the level of the skeleton. Examination of the provenanced hu-

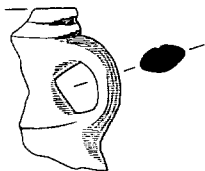
man remains however showed that three more infants were recovered from within or very close to the grave (see Browne below). Several iron nails were present in the grave suggesting the existence of a coffin or board. The grave was sealed by the same compacted chalk layer which overlay Grave 1.

F 3. The Kiln Tr IA (Figs 3, 6)

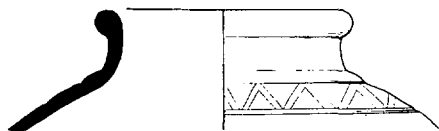
This feature, of a type traditionally referred to as a corn drying oven, consisted of two main structural elements. To the south was a rectangular fireplace measuring 1.8m × 1.5m at the top, narrowing to 1.2m square at the base. On two sides, flint walling survived in situ whilst on the south side, a step cut back 0.3m into the chalk perhaps represented the location



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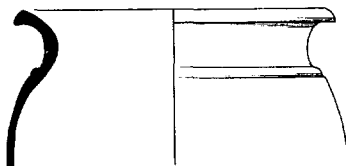
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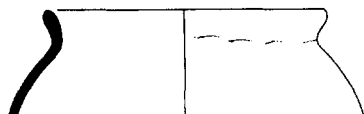
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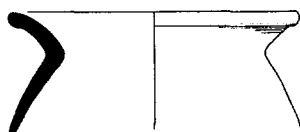
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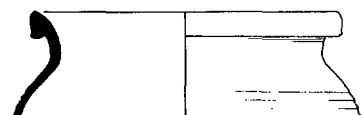
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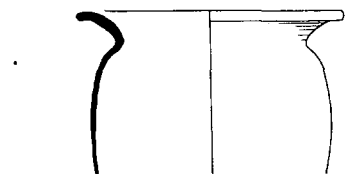
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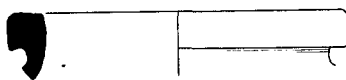
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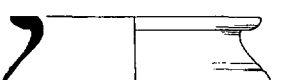
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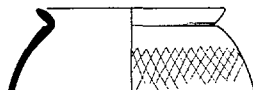
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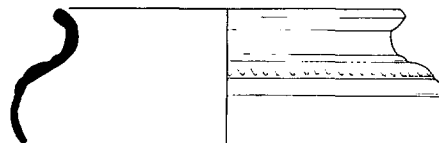
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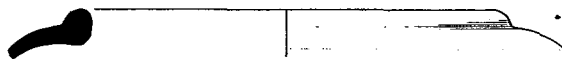
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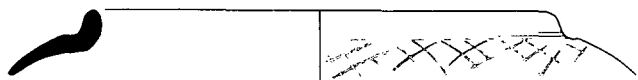
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of the stoke hole (cf Morris 1979, 10). The base of the fireplace was cut into the natural chalk and was scorched in places. Its filling consisted of black ash containing charcoal and cracked flints 0.075m deep, with much pottery and some unburnt animal bone. This was overlain by a mass of collapsed masonry which lay directly below the topsoil.

Extending north east from the fireplace was an L-shaped flue. It consisted of several courses of well constructed flint walling which survived to a maximum height of 0.5m. It was bonded by very hard puddled chalk which was scorched in places. Traces of an arched roof were noted. The north west end of the flue was not clearly defined. The archive notes state that it clearly post-dated the adjacent pits and this sequence is accepted. It should be noted, however, that section IJ suggests that it was intermediate in the stratigraphic sequence and had been partially removed by a later feature.

In the east corner of the flue was F 59, described as the matrix of a post around which the wall had definitely been built. It survived to a depth of 0.43m and contained a fine soft substance resembling decayed wood.

The Roman Pottery by Alex Turner

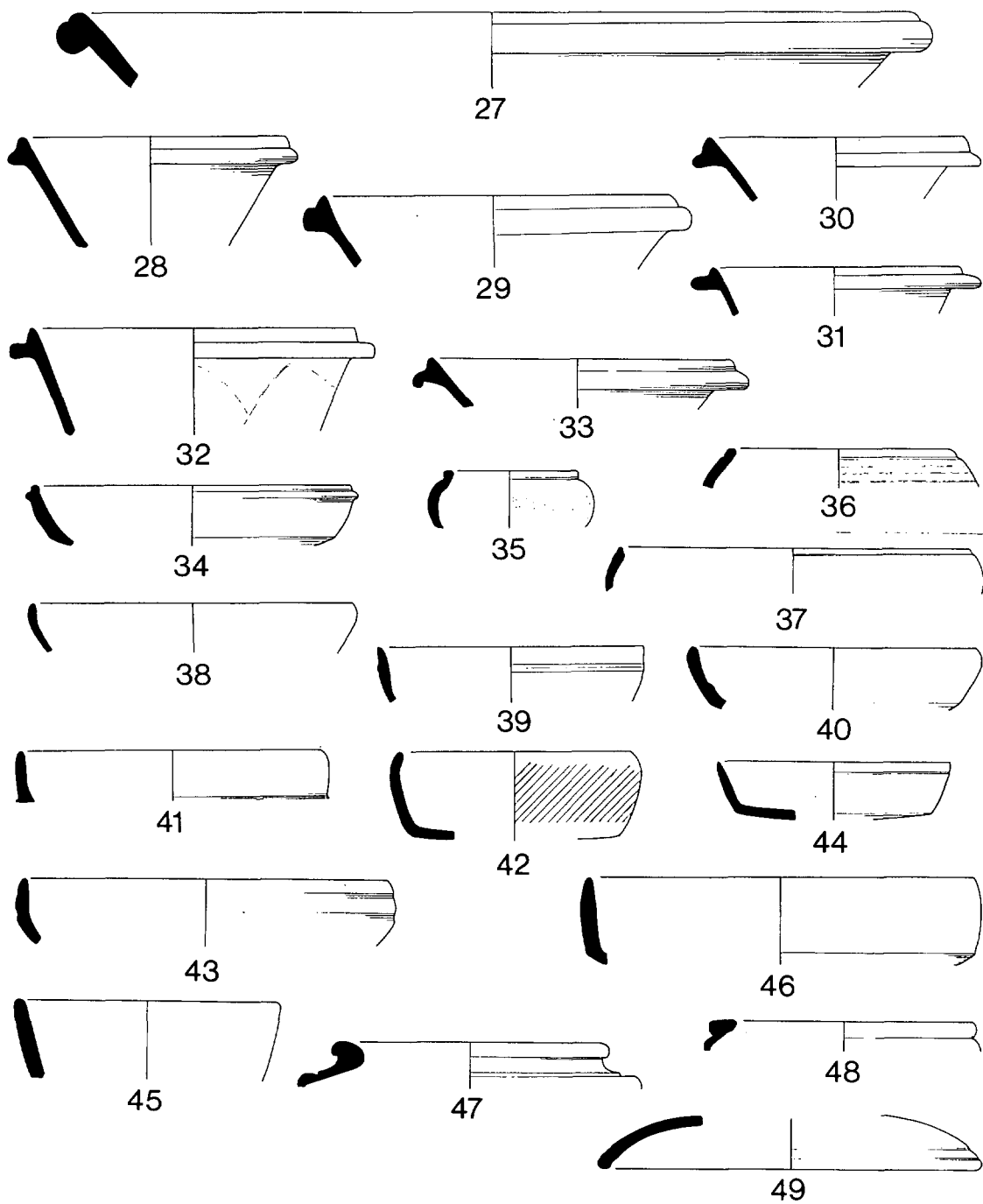
Details relating to specific forms, fabrics, and decoration of the coarse and fine wares within each specific layer or feature are contained in the microfiche, as is a description of the methodology used in this report. Illustrations contained within the printed body of the report should be considered as a representative cross section of those forms present on the site (Figs 9 & 10). However, more illustrations are contained within the microfiche (Fig 14 MF) which it is hoped will cover any omissions in the

printed text. What follows can be considered to be a brief summary of the information obtained from analysis of the pottery together with the implications this has for an understanding of the archaeology of the site.

The most immediate impression derived from a study of the pottery is the expected influence of the Alice Holt and Farnham pottery kilns. The forms present seem to cover most of the active life of these kilns and the broad dating given for many of the forms in the assemblage is a reflection of this. Other kilns such as those at Oxford and the New Forest are only represented by a small group of later products, including Oxford mortaria and a New Forest colour coated flagon/jug (Fig 9.1). The influence of kilns at Silchester is difficult to assess since, whilst flint gritted greyware body sherds were found, no jars like those mentioned by Fulford (1982, 411) were found in this assemblage.

A major problem encountered with the coarse ware was the broad date ranges they produced and on a stratigraphically unsure site it proved difficult to assign more specific dates than those given in the fiche. In some cases the small amount of samian ware did contract some of these date ranges but the inherent problems with the use of such a small and possibly residual assemblage should be considered when examining the dating of layers where such fine wares are present. Since no particularly unusual forms were recovered from the site, this compounds the problem still further. Despite these problems it is possible to ascribe broad dating to the pottery from the site. A late first century date seems probable for the beginning of this assemblage but earlier mid first century material found residually in later contexts may indicate an earlier origin. Many of the forms are

Fig 9. Choseley Farm: Roman pottery (scale 1:4). 1:kiln F3; New Forest type 17 (Fulford 1975, 51) 2:kiln F3; fabric 5b 3:Tr I E 30-40 layer 2; fabric 5b 4:Tr I E 30-40 layer 2; fabric 5b 5:Tr I B 0-20 layer 2; fabric 5c, external slip on body 6:Tr I B 20-30 layer 2; fabric 5b, external slip 7:Tr I E 10-20 layer 1; fabric 5b 8:Tr I B 10-20 layer 2; fabric 5b, internal and external slip 9:Tr I E 20-30 layer 1/2; fabric 5b internal and external slip 10:Tr I E 20-30 layer 1/2; fabric 5b, internal and external slip 11:Tr II B 0-10 layer 1; fabric 5b 12:kiln F3; fabric 5b, burnished exterior 13:Tr II B 0-10 layer 1; fabric 5b, external slip 14:Tr I E 20-30 layer 1; fabric 5c, burnished exterior 15:Tr I E 20-30 layer 1/2; fabric 5b 16:Tr I B 0-20 layer 2; fabric 5b 17:Tr I E 20-30 layer 1/2; fabric 5b 18:Tr I C-E wall layer 1/2; fabric 5b, external oxidation 19:Tr I D 10-20 layer 1, 2nd pit; fabric 7a 20:Tr I E 0-10 layer 2; fabric 5b 21:Tr I B 40-50 layer 1; fabric 5b 22:Tr I E 10-20 layer 2; fabric 3a, external slip 23:Tr I D 40-50 layer 1, fabric 5b, burnished exterior 24:Tr II 80-90 layer 1; fabric 5c 25:Tr I B 40-50 layer 2; fabric 7a 26:Tr I E 10-20 layer 1; fabric 5b, burnishing on body.



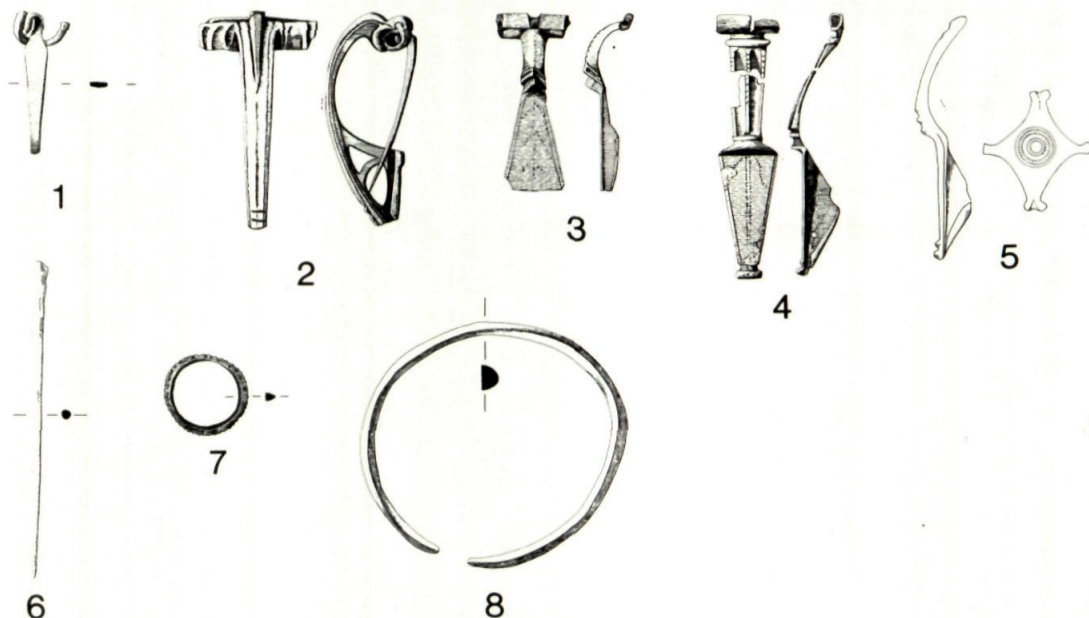


Fig 11. Choseley Farm: bronze finds (scale 1:2).

known to have been produced as late as the early fifth century, *c* 420 AD, and this would be the latest date assignable to this assemblage. The bulk of the pottery, however, indicates activity between the late first and the late fourth centuries.

The nature of the pottery in many cases seemed to suggest secondary rather than primary deposition, since many of the sherds were small and often abraded. This was in direct contrast to those sherds recovered from the kiln (F 3), which, whilst they exhibited the effects of heat seemed to be primary deposition post dating the use of this structure. However in the pits on the site where primary deposition could be expected there seems to be the same problem as is present in the general layers of the site, in that

the date ranges from the pottery are so wide that it is difficult to visualise the use of these pits over a short period of time. This also makes it difficult to determine whether any material is residual or contaminates a particular layer or feature, since the dating of the pottery is undiagnostic in this respect.

The Other Finds

Summaries of the finds reports are presented below with fuller details included in the microfiche section.

Tile by Rebecca Ball

12 fragments of tile were recovered weighing a total of 1,064 grams. All tile fragments were of the same fabric type, which is described in the

Fig 10. Choseley Farm: Roman pottery (scale 1:4). **27**:Tr I C 20–30 layer 2; fabric 5b **28**:Tr I B 20–30 layer 2; fabric 5b **29**:Tr I E 20–30 layer 1/2; fabric 5b, external slip **30**:Tr II B 0–10 layer 1; fabric 5b, internal and external burnishing **31**:Tr I B 0–20 layer 2; fabric 5b **32**:Tr II B 0–10 layer 1; fabric 5b, internal and external burnishing **33**:Tr II B 0–10 layer 1; fabric 5b, traces of white slip on the rim and flange **34**:Tr I E 20–30 layer 1; fabric 5b **35**:Tr I E 20–30 layer 2; fabric 5b **36**:pit 4 layer 3; fabric 5b, external slip **37**:Tr I B 20–30 layer 2; fabric 5b **38**:Tr I C 20–30 layer 1; fabric 5c **39**:Tr I C 20–30 layer 1; fabric 5b, burnishing on raised band **40**:Tr I E 10–20 layer 1; fabric 5b **41**:pit 3 layer 3; fabric 5b, burnished **42**:Tr I C 40–50 layer 1; fabric 7a **43**:Tr I C 20–30 layer 2; fabric 5b **44**:Tr I C 20–30 layer 2; fabric 5b, intersecting arc decoration on base **45**:Tr II B 0–10 layer 1; fabric 5b **46**:Tr II 80–90 layer 1; fabric 5b, some internal burnishing **47**:Tr I B 0–20 layer 2; fabric 5b **48**:Tr I B 0–20 layer 2; fabric 5b **49**:Tr I B north extension 10–20 layer 2; fabric 5b.

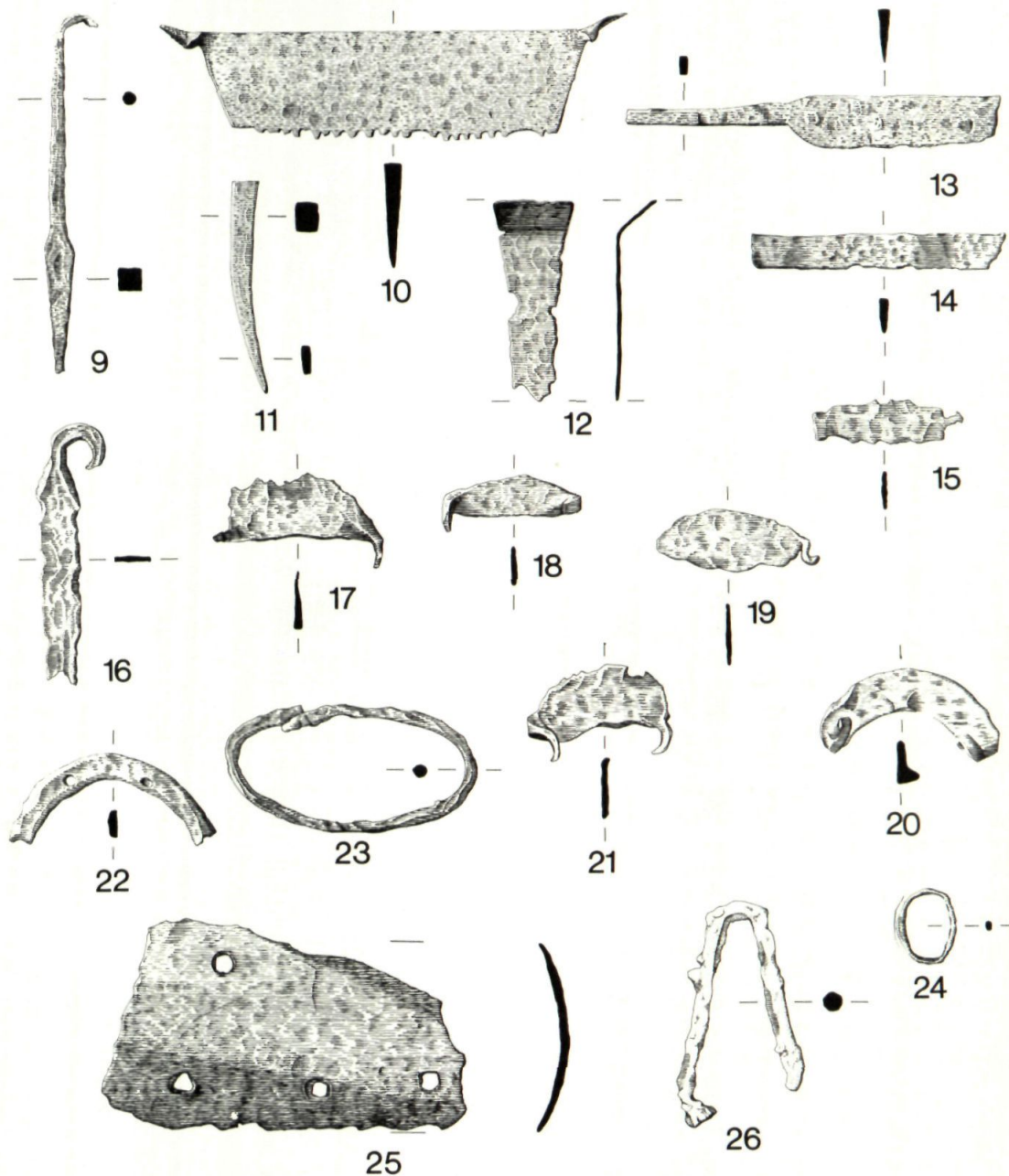


Fig 12. Choseley Farm: iron finds (scale 1:2).

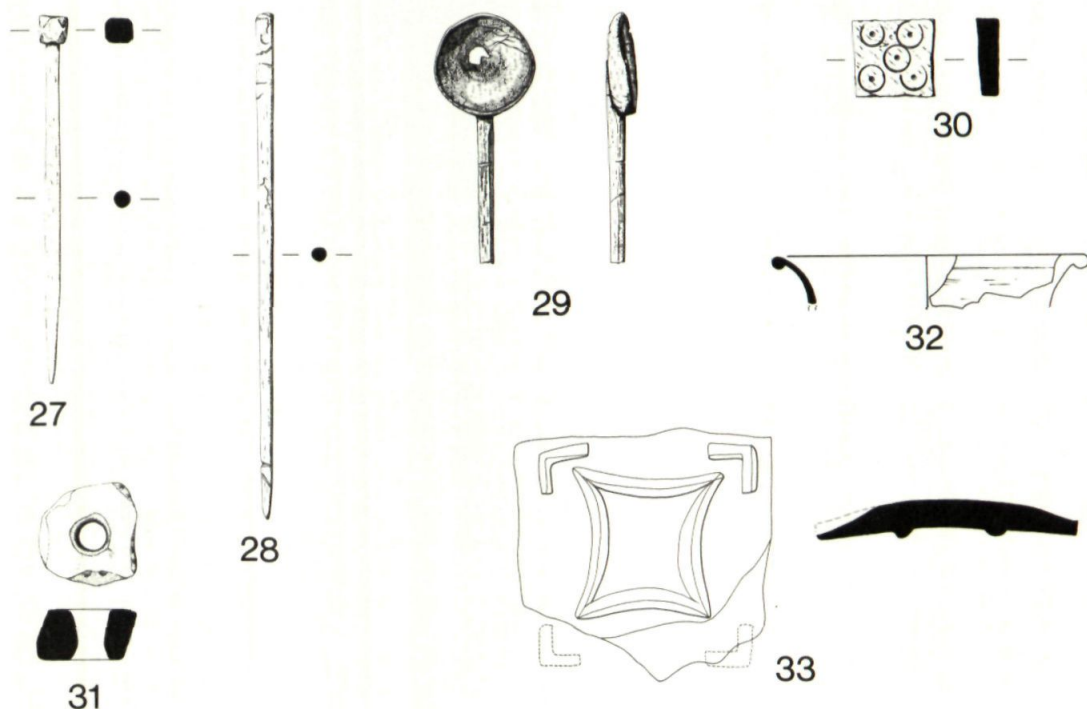


Fig 13. Choseley Farm: objects of bone, stone and glass (scale 1:2).

fiche. It is most probable therefore that all the tile was supplied from the same local kiln site. Four tile forms were recognised, 2 fragments from tegula roof tiles and 2 fragments from relief flue tiles.

The Small Finds by Andrew C King

The small finds from the site (Figs 11, 12, 13) included personal items such as rings, pins and brooches. Of the latter there are two Hod Hill types, one Nauheim derivative type and one Colchester type. Items of domestic equipment include knife blades, a spindle whorl, a carpenter's bit, a saw blade and part of a key. Although not great in number the range of objects gives the impression of an active working community and the date range of the finds adds confirmation to the occupation of the site from the first to the fourth centuries.

Worked Deer Antler by Royston H Clark

2 Fragments of worked deer antler were re-

corded. They are more fully described in the microfiche section.

Whetstones by Rebecca Ball

2 fragments of whetstone were recovered, one of fine limestone and one of pink quartzite. Both had been deliberately shaped.

Querns by Rebecca Ball

16 fragments from rotary quernstones were recovered. Of these, 8 fragments weighing 1452 grams were made of sandstone. 7 fragments weighing 2912 grams were of greensand and one fragment weighing 239 grams was of Niedermendig basalt. The majority of these were small fragments but it was possible to recognise 3 joining fragments forming part of a top stone from Tr IB extension North 20-40, one fragment of a bottom stone from Tr IE 20-30 L2 and 1 fragment of a top stone from Tr II 50-70 L1.

The Coins

Thirty Roman coins were recovered from the site. They have since been mislaid but a list was compiled by Mr John Eyton which has survived. Unfortunately context details were not included. It has been examined by Dr R Reece who writes:

'The list as a whole forms a perfect example of a rural site in Britain occupied in the later third and fourth centuries. Only an examination of the pottery could tell if the site was occupied before AD 250; such evidence rarely appears from the coin finds.'

A Republican silver denarius of the gens *Marcia* is mentioned in the note by de Putron and Hawkes (1940, 368) but this also is not with the existing archive.

The Faunal Remains and Animal Economy by Royston H Clark

Out of a total of 141 bone fragments, 112 were identifiable to a particular animal species or bone type. However, only 89 were related to stratified contexts. The general condition of the faunal sample was poor. This was due to a number of taphonomic factors such as soil chemistry and root action as well as extensive canid (and possible human) gnawing.

Sheep/goat bones proved to be the most numerous with 29 identifiable fragments. 26 belonged to cattle and horse bone consisted of five fragments: Dog was represented by 19 fragments. Also present in smaller numbers were pig, red deer and domestic fowl. Full details of the stratified faunal sample are presented in the microfiche, but some points relating to the animal economy are discussed below.

The small sample size for each animal suggests that numerical estimations, as to the relative importance of each animal species would be impossible to calculate. However, some limited conclusions based on the nature of the bone assemblage can be drawn.

It is possible to suggest that the animal economy at Choseley Farm was based mainly on cattle and sheep, with pig and horse being of less importance. It is most probable that cattle were kept primarily for milk and sheep for wool. Both

were ultimately slaughtered for their meat value.

The bones represented by the main meat providing animals consisted largely of lower leg bones with little or no meat value. The exceptions being – one cattle and two sheep/goat humeri fragments, one sheep/goat pelvis, one cattle and two sheep/goat femora and finally five sheep and cattle sized rib fragments. All the remaining animal bones had little meat value. It is therefore suggested that the bulk of the Choseley Farm faunal assemblage consisted of waste bones, unsuitable for further meat processing. This suggests two possibilities for the site economy:–

1) The area excavated could represent a peripheral area of the settlement, where activities such as the slaughter and dismemberment of the animals was carried out. Meat was then consumed in the main settlement area and the meat bearing bones were disposed of outside the excavated area (cf Halstead *et al* 1978).

2) Animals were slaughtered at the site and processed in a way that took the main meat bones away to a population centre (e.g. Silchester). Thus Choseley Farm could be seen as a rural settlement, self-sufficient in its own right, but providing food to a regional centre. This reasoning could be plausible in the context of what we know about the Romano-British rural economy (cf Hingley 1982; Maltby 1979).

To substantiate the economic argument for Choseley Farm, a larger faunal sample would be needed from a wider area of the settlement. Further analysis of the age structure of the animals could indicate whether certain animals were kept primarily as a meat supply or for their pastoral qualities. For example, it is possible that cattle provided the most meat for redistribution and sheep were the main subsistence animal.

The Human Remains by Sue Browne

The burials from two graves of Roman date, excavated in 1937, were examined. Burial 1 was an adult female. Most of the second adult burial (GR 2) is missing now but the remains of a total of four infants were recovered from this grave.

Textile

A fragment of possible textile was recovered from beneath the arm of the occupant of Grave 1. A report by Frances Pritchard is included in the microfiche section.

Roman Glass (Fig 13)

The Roman glass included bowl and bottle glass fragments. A full report by Dr Denise Allen is given in the microfiche section.

DISCUSSION

Pre-Roman

Although no features of pre-Iron Age date were found, earlier activity in the area is attested by the beaker and late Bronze Age pottery and by the two Bronze Age cremation urns discovered in 1918 and 1939, 400m to the north west of the site (Willis 1953, 60).

The Middle Iron Age storage pit indicates that a farming settlement of some kind must have been centred somewhere close by. There are several possible forms which this could have taken (Champion & Champion 1981, 40) but in the absence of further topographic, structural or economic evidence nothing more can be added.

Romano-British

Whilst some of the pits may have been dug primarily for rubbish disposal or for other individual purposes, e.g. F 9 (see below), the majority appear to have been chalk quarry pits. The chalk rubble and puddled chalk spreads presumably represent trampled areas resulting from chalk extraction. Turf lines were recorded within several pits, e.g. layers 20 and 27, sect. IJ, suggesting that this occurred over an extended period. Rubbish dumping was also taking place in the quarry area, resulting in the deposition of large quantities of abraded pottery and of other items such as animal bone and personal and domestic artifacts.

Little can be said about burial practice in the community on the basis of the two graves. They may well have formed an isolated pair or group as occurred at Owslebury (Collis 1977, 26). There is little clue to the dating of the graves; hobnails occur in burial contexts throughout the Roman period (Clarke 1979, 370). Although the pottery recovered from the graves was dated

90–150, inhumation was not widely practised in southern Britain until the third century and therefore a later date is most likely. In addition the lack of subsequent disturbance suggests that a third or fourth century date may apply. The unusual position of the female skeleton in Grave 1 requires further comment. Sue Browne writes:

'The burial from Grave 1 (Figs 7, 8) is interesting because it appears that the individual may have been alive when buried. In many respects the position of the burial is very similar to a probable live burial from Dalton Parlours, Yorkshire illustrated by Manchester (1983, Pl. 37), but prone burial does appear to be a recognised burial rite in Late Roman contexts (cf McWhirr *et al* 1982 79–81). Whether or not she was buried alive deliberately as a punishment (as has been suggested for prone burials, admittedly of a later date, by Rahtz (1960, 137) and by Hawkes and Wells (1975)), her hands may originally have been tied behind her back.'

The L-shaped kiln F 3 (Tr IA) presumably reflects a shift or expansion of activity into the vicinity of Tr 1. Such features are traditionally interpreted as corn driers (Morris 1979, 9) but this function has been questioned by Reynolds and Langley (1979). The use of the kiln must therefore be open to question. This feature could have been a more sophisticated replacement for F 9 (Tr IB). This sequence may be paralleled at Winterton Villa (Stead 1976, 35; Morris 1979, 9) and at Owslebury (Collis 1968, 29). Whilst there is no clear evidence for an enclosing structure to either pit or kiln, the floors F47 (TIE and F 6 (TIB)) may have been associated. The kiln contained pottery of a wide date span (150–420) and it is likely that the feature dated from the later Roman period.

While most of the pottery deposited in the excavated area dated from the late first to the late fourth century and perhaps beyond, the few sherds of Flavian samian, the butt beakers and the mid-first century brooches suggest that the settlement was also occupied prior to this. Whether or not occupation had been continuous from the Middle Iron Age cannot be established from the existing evidence.

For much of the Roman period the site probably did not lie at the focus of activity in the community. It is likely that a quarry complex would be located away from the main occupation area but within or adjacent to the settlement boundaries (cf Collis 1970, Fig 4, opp 251; Millett 1983, 169–172). The presence of burials also suggests a peripheral location (Collis 1977, 34; Oliver & Applin 1978, 56).

Although the chronology and dating of the Roman features cannot be clearly established, it is possible to suggest the following activities:

A) Use of the area for intermittent quarrying from the late first century perhaps into the fourth century.

B) Refuse disposal, some perhaps on a wholesale basis which introduced large quantities of heavily abraded sherds.

C) Meat processing may also have taken place in an adjacent area.

D) During the use of the area for A), the two burials were inserted, perhaps in the third or fourth century.

E) The kiln was constructed probably in the third or fourth century or later. It may have formed part of a larger agricultural processing complex. The area may have been deliberately levelled at this stage or it may have been abandoned as a quarry and backfilled with refuse at an earlier date.

CONCLUSION

In general terms the evidence suggests a settlement typical of several more extensively studied farmsteads in Hampshire occupied in the Iron Age and Romano-British period. Such sites may well have continued in use beyond the end of the Roman period; the lack of evidence may simply be a consequence of the 'poorer' material culture and of plough damage. Indeed it is only under conditions of special preservation that such occupation may be recognised (cf Millett 1983, esp. 200). For the late Roman period in particu-

lar it is important to consider these sites not just as largely self-sufficient farming settlements but as components of a sophisticated agricultural system, based on an exchange network involving specialist producers and consumers and complex social and tenorial relationships (Hingley 1982, 30–40; Stephens 1966, 108–128; Taylor 1983, 104–5).

External exchange is attested at Choseley Farm by the pottery, the coins and the craft products, perhaps funnelled through Silchester 15km to the north west, or Neatham 10km to the south (cf Millett 1979, 132). These centres may also have been the destination of any marketed agricultural produce (cf Fulford 1982, 406–7). In addition the animal bone might be seen as evidence of specialist production additional to subsistence and tax demands.

Finally, the general conclusions reached by de Putron and Hawkes in 1940 have been substantially confirmed. Despite the passage of time since the excavation and the concomitant problems, it is hoped that the foregoing report has expanded and illuminated these conclusions and has in some measure done justice to the work of the excavator herself.

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