

AN EARLY BRONZE AGE CREMATION CEMETERY AT BEGGARWOOD LANE, BASINGSTOKE, HAMPSHIRE

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ABSTRACT

An archaeological excavation was undertaken by Cotswold Archaeology in February 2016, on land at Beggarwood Lane, Basingstoke, Hampshire. The excavation area was targeted on archaeological features identified by evaluation.

Excavation identified a small Early Bronze Age cremation cemetery, comprising twenty-three pits containing deposits of cremated bone or pyre debris, seven of which were associated with urns. The identified vessels included both collared urn and 'food vessel' types, which are well-represented in cremation cemeteries of this date elsewhere in Hampshire. Cremated human bone was recovered from only nine features, of which three were associated with urns and six were unurned.

Two pits contained possible evidence of post settings, and a small number of undated features had no association with cremation-related material, and were of unknown function.

A single feature, of Roman date, contained a deposit of iron nails which, together with charred plant remains, suggested settlement or agricultural activity in proximity to the site. A number of ditched field boundaries of post-medieval date were identified during the evaluation.

The Early Bronze Age cremation cemetery represents a rare example of its type in southern England, and one of at least regional importance.

INTRODUCTION

In February, 2016, Cotswold Archaeology (CA) undertook an archaeological excavation on land south of Beggarwood Lane, Basingstoke, Hampshire (centred on NGR: SU 5984 4829; Fig. 1), at the request of Bellway Homes Ltd.

The excavation was targeted on features identified during an evaluation (CA 2016c).

The site

The development area was 2.44ha in extent, and comprised agricultural land bounded by the A30 Winchester Road to the west, the Basingstoke Golf Course to the south, and residential housing to the east (Fig. 1). Beggarwood Lane forms the northern and eastern boundaries of the site, which is situated on a prominent chalk ridge, at an elevation of 165m aOD.

The underlying geology of the site comprises Lewes, Seaford and Newhaven Chalk Formations, and superficial clay-with-flints deposits were recorded within all evaluation trenches (British Geological Survey 2015).

The full report, including specialist reports and data (CA 2016), can be found on the Cotswold Archaeology website: <http://www.cotswoldarchaeology.co.uk/>. The archive will be deposited with the Hampshire Cultural Trust (Accession Number A2016.30).

Archaeological background

Neolithic period

Concentrations of Neolithic flint-work have been recorded on the downland environs of Basingstoke, which are otherwise associated with a low density of Neolithic monuments (Bradley 2014, 89). Worked flint, of Neolithic and Early Bronze Age date, was recorded 200m to the north of Beggarwood Lane (Gingell & Trott 1995, 63), and a large assemblage of Neolithic flint-work recorded at Kempshott,

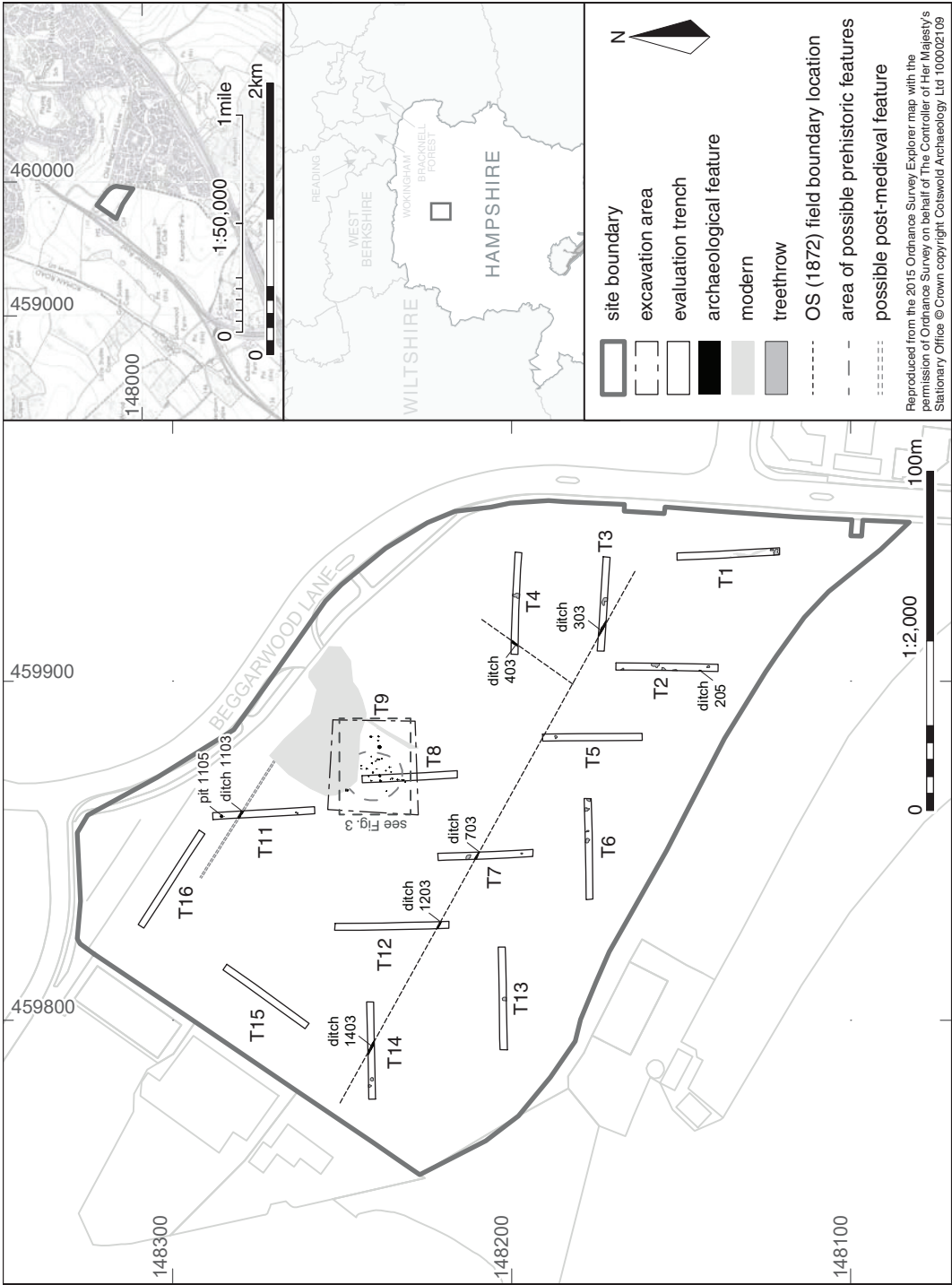


Fig. 1 Site plan showing location of evaluation trenches and excavation area (1:2000)

1km to the north, may represent an extensive settlement. Evidence of Late Neolithic and Beaker-period activity has also been recorded locally, notably at Marnel Park, Basingstoke (Wright *et al.* 2009, 20–21).

Bronze Age

Early Bronze Age barrows are locally represented by both extant earthwork mounds and cropmark ring ditches, including three extant examples 2.5km to the north-west. Barrow cropmarks are recorded *c.* 300m to the north-west (Hampshire AHBR18786, SU 59790 48660; AHBR18787, SU 59810 48670), and non-barrow burials of Early Bronze Age date include contracted beaker inhumations, both from Old Beggarwood Lane, to the east of the site (AHBR 50276), and from Kempshott Park, to the west (AHBR 42274).

Iron Age

Extensive evidence of Iron Age occupation and ditched land boundaries includes a small, Early-Middle Iron Age ditched enclosure, recorded *c.* 200m to the north-west (Northamptonshire Archaeology (NA) 2001; Gingell & Trott 1995; AHBR 33749). Occupation of a 'banjo' enclosure, *c.* 400m to the north-west, continued until the 1st century AD (NA 1998; AHBR 33854), and approximately 400m to the north-west, an Iron Age and Roman enclosed settlement and field system were investigated in 2015 (Massey & Nichol, *forthcoming*).

Roman

The earthwork remains of the *agger* of the Silchester to Winchester Roman road, Margary 42a, (Margary 1973, 90), are visible 600m to the north-west. Two suggested villa sites, each located in close proximity to this road, have been identified from aerial survey and surface finds. (AHBR 189704–7; Scott 1993, 88). Iron Age settlements in the Basingstoke area commonly display evidence of continuity into the Roman period, including the Kennel Farm and Winchester Road settlements referenced above, Brighton Hill South (Fasham *et al.* 1995), Oakridge (Oliver 1992), and Daneshill (Millett & Schadla-Hall 1992) amongst others. A Roman urned cremation burial was recorded from Beggarwood Lane, to the east of the site (AHBR 42356).

Medieval

A manorial site at Kempshott, located 1–1.5km to the north, was recorded by Domesday Survey as *Campesotte* (Morris 1982), and is now represented by the remains of a deserted village in Kempshott Park, immediately to the west. The Beggarwood Lane site appears to have comprised an area of pastoral downland during this and later periods. Surrounding nucleated medieval settlements include the villages of Oakley and Dummer, respectively to the north-west and south-west, and an investigated deserted village site, at Brighton Hill South, Basingstoke (Fasham *et al.* 1995).

ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION

The evaluation identified evidence of prehistoric activity, represented by a series of small pits in Trench 8 (Fig. 1), which were identified as cremation-related deposits (CA 2016a) (Fig. 2). Further to the west, and aligned on a north-west/south-east axis in three different trenches, a number of ditched field boundaries, of post-medieval date, were also encountered (Fig. 1).

RESULTS OF EXCAVATION

Excavation identified three phases of activity, representing the Early Bronze Age, Roman and post-medieval periods. Of these, a small Early Bronze Age cremation cemetery comprised by far the most significant group of features, with twenty-three pits containing cremation burials or cremation-related material. A single feature of Roman date, pit 2023, contained a deposit of iron nails with charred plant remains.

Topsoil cover averaged 0.25m in depth across the site, and all fills had been partly truncated by cultivation. Only a few features could be positively dated by artefacts, and in the absence of horizontal stratigraphic relationships, most were dated by spatial relationships, or by the common character of their cremation-related fills.

A small number of features, including pits 2036, 2064 and 2059, remained unphased due to the different character of their fills and an absence of finds.

Geology and soils

The natural geological substrate, 2001, comprised heavily-fractured natural chalk, with rare, irregular flint nodules, and patches of very pale, yellow-brown silty clay, which filled periglacial features. This was sealed by layer 2000, a ploughsoil comprising a brown/grey silty clay loam, with small quantities of chalk and sub-rounded and angular flints.

Period 1: Early Bronze Age (Figs 2–9)

The earliest phase of archaeological activity on site comprised 23 individual pits containing both cremation burials, and fills of charcoal-rich pyre material, without cremated bone. A small number of other pits, although undated, may represent post settings associated with individual burials. All features were fully excavated, unless otherwise stated.

The dimensions and attributes of the pits are summarised in Tables 1 and 2, below. Of the 23 recorded features, seven were associated with the remains of pottery vessels, including both collared urn and food vessel types. Cremated bone was recorded from nine features, of which six were unurned burials and three were associated with urns or the remains of pottery

vessels. Four pits produced evidence only of pottery vessels, all but one of which was in incomplete condition, while 12 pits contained dark, silty, charcoal-rich fills comprising deposits of pyre debris, without cremated bone.

A group of pits was recorded within the northern part of evaluation trench 8 (CA 2016a). A large cremation pit 813 (cremation burial 812), with concave profile and uneven base, contained a succession of three postholes, 808, 809, and 810 (Fig. 2).

Cremation-related pits displayed considerable variation in dimensions and profile, with maximum diameters ranging from 1m (2017) to 0.2m (2011 and 2025), with an average of 0.42m. Surviving depths varied from 0.49m (803) to 0.1m (2011), with an average of 0.2m. However, there was a notable contrast between the average dimensions of pits containing cremation burials and those containing pyre deposits. The former displayed an average maximum diameter of 0.54m and average surviving depth of 0.24m, compared to an average diameter of 0.34m and depth of 0.16m for the pits containing pyre debris. Even allowing for the effect of truncation, which will have been consistent over such a small area, these differences are significant, and suggest

Table 1 Summary of pits associated with human bone, pottery vessels and pyre debris

<i>Unurned human bone</i>	<i>Urned human bone</i>	<i>Urn only</i>	<i>Pyre debris only</i>
803	2066.1 Food vessel	2027.1 Food Vessel	818
813	2057.1 Collared Urn	2029.1 ?Biconical Urn	2009
814/2015	2032 a Single, Indeterminate unfeatured sherd (8g).	2051.1 Collared Urn	2011
816		2061.1 Collared Urn	2013
2002			2016
2007			2017
			2021
			2025
			2041
			2043
			2053
			2055
			2062

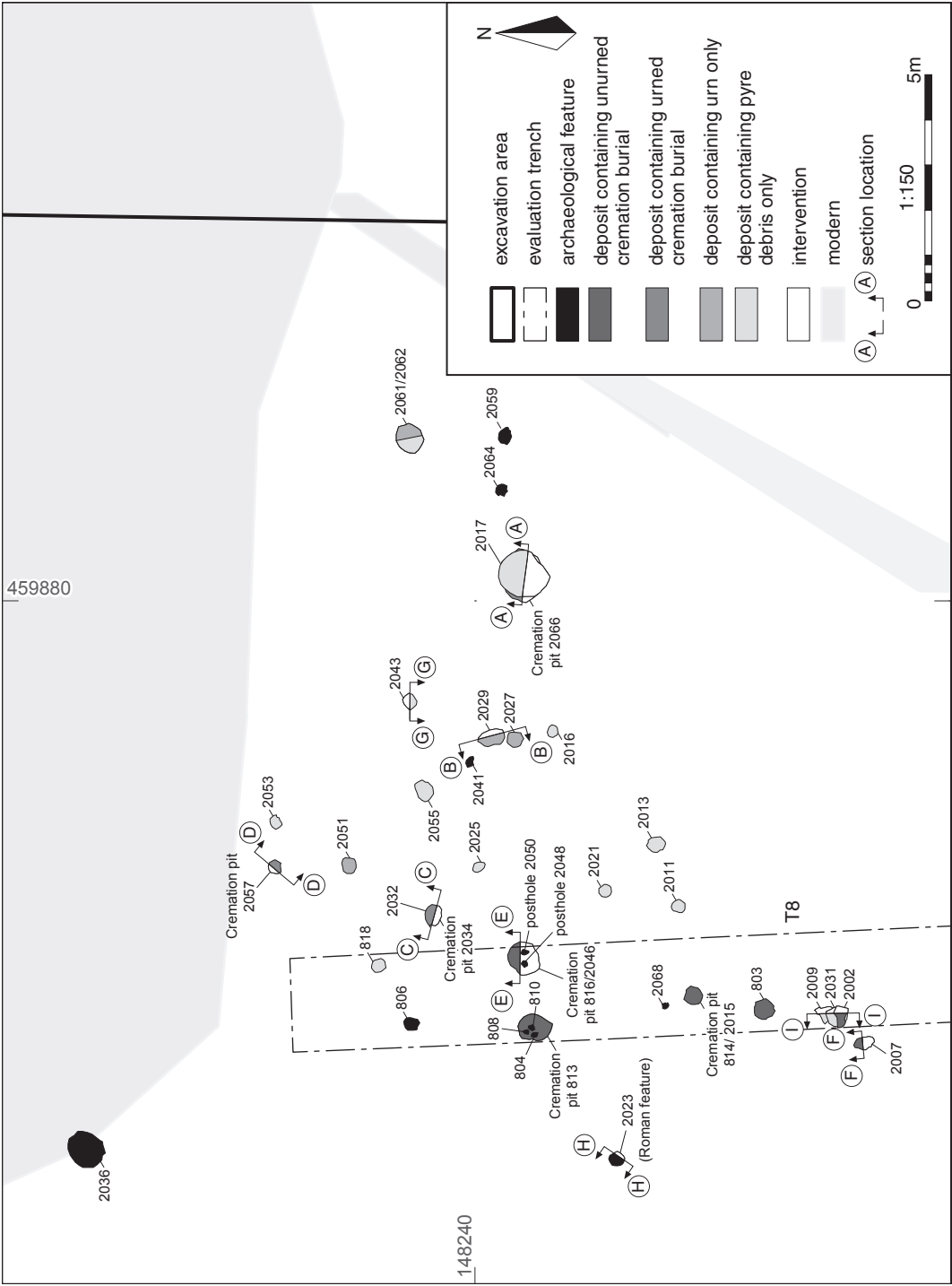




Fig. 3 Photograph. South-facing section of unurned cremation pit 816, with earlier undated postholes 2048 and 2050 (0.5m scale)

unequal treatment of different cremation-related deposits.

Quantities of cremated bone recovered from burials were small, ranging from less than one gramme (2057), to 658 (816), with an average of 170g. Some possibly paired pits (2027 and 2029; 2002 and 2009) displayed close spatial relationships, suggesting kinship. Examples of secondary deposits within pits, including fills 2062 and 2063 in 2061, and the cutting of pits into earlier fills, (pit 2017 in pit 2066) may similarly indicate close family relationships. Closely-related pits 2002 (cremation burial) and 2009 (pyre deposit) were not spatially isolated features, but were cut within a larger feature, 2031, and were sealed, presumably deliberately, by two later fills within this (Fig. 6(e)).

Six pit fills of the 15 which were sampled, together with two postholes, produced small quantities of charred plant material, principally hazelnut shells (*Corylus* sp.) Apart from remains

of pottery vessels, deposited items within cremation-related pits were confined to unburnt flint flakes and chips, notably in cremation pit 813, pit 2017 and 2021. Cremation pit 813 also contained burnt flint flakes, which may represent pyre offerings. Two pits containing unurned cremation burials, 813 and 816/2046, were associated with internal postholes, which possibly indicate a sequence of grave markers or structures associated with the burials (Fig. 2). The disturbed primary fill, 811, of pit 813 suggested that the posts had been deliberately removed. A secondary backfill deposit (812) contained 15 probably stratified flint flakes, and a small quantity of cremated human bone representing an adult individual.

Period 2: Roman

Roman pit, 2023 (Figs 2 & 6(d)) was of sub-circular plan, and measured 0.35m in diameter

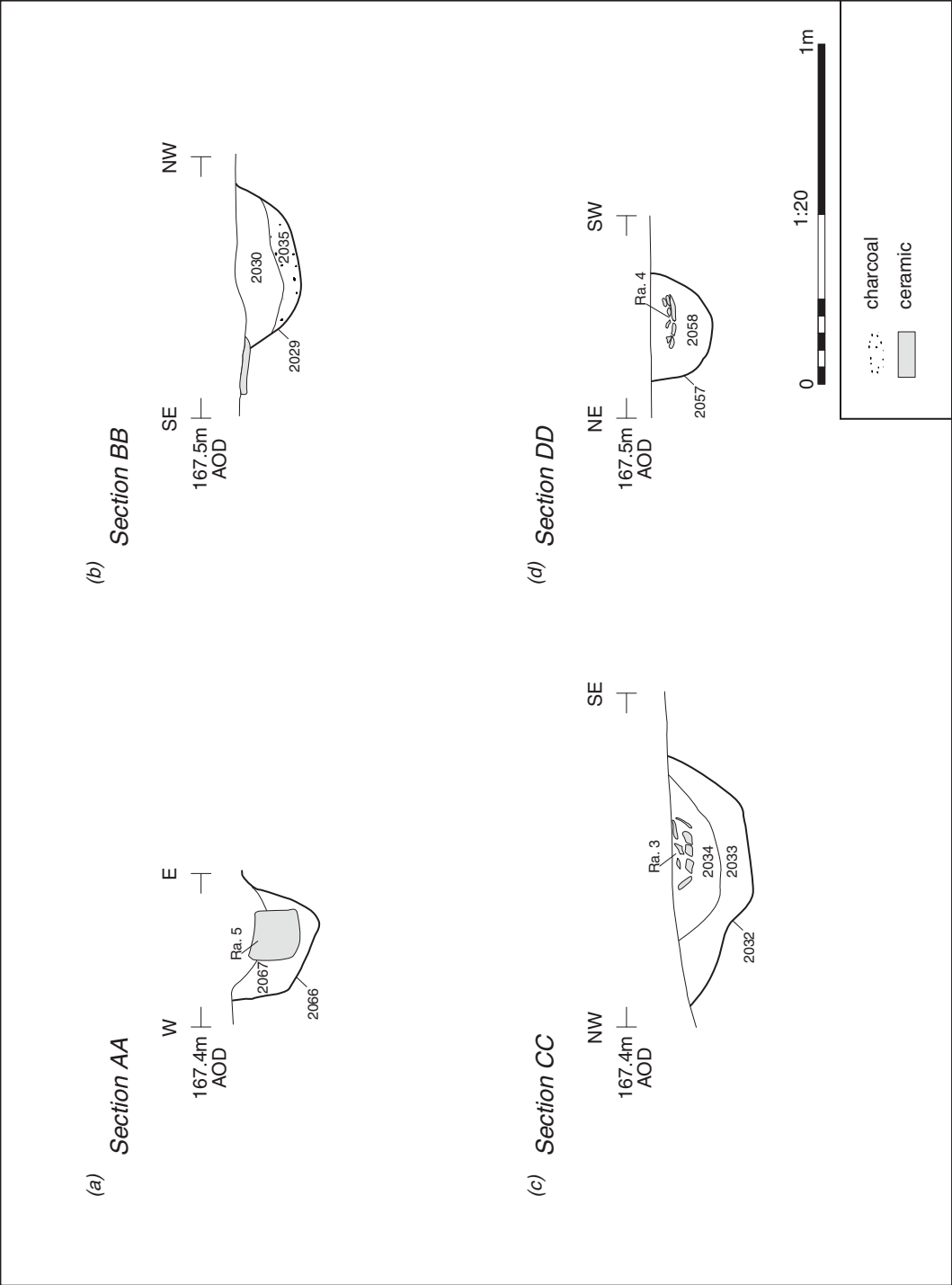


Fig. 4 (a) Section (AA) of cremation pit 2066 (1:20); (b) section (BB) of pit 2029 (1,20); (c) section (CC) of cremation pit 2032 (1,20); and (d) section (DD) of cremation pit 2057 (1:20)

and 0.14m in depth (Table 2). It contained a deposit of 90 iron nails of Roman type, together with carbonized plant remains including hulled wheat and indeterminate cereal grains (sample 2010). As the only feature of confirmed Roman date, the fill of pit 2023 suggests a domestic or agricultural origin. The Roman road, Margary 42a, ran only 600m to the north-west of this site, and further evidence of local Roman-period activity is suggested by the sherd from tree-throw fill 203, recorded during the evaluation (Fig. 2).

Period 3: post-medieval (Fig. 1)

Evaluation trenches 3, 4, 7, 12 and 14 produced evidence of post-medieval field boundaries (Ditches 303, 403, 703, 1203, and 1403, Fig. 2). None of these features was investigated further. Ditch 303, within Trench 3, contained redeposited items of worked flint.

Undated

A number of undated pit features included isolated pit 2036, and pits 2059 and 2064 on the eastern margins of the group (Fig. 2; Table 2). These contained fills of orange/brown and grey/brown sandy clays, with a notable absence of charcoal, suggesting non-funerary associations. In the absence of dateable material, no function could be ascribed to these features, and they may not be contemporary with the group of cremation-related pits.

THE FINDS

Lithics by Jacky Sommerville

A total of 20 worked lithics (48g), and 106 pieces of burnt, unworked flint (108g), was recovered from seven separate deposits during the evaluation and excavation of the site. All this material, with the exception of one flake, was retrieved through bulk soil sampling.

The material comprised flint in all cases, which was grey or brown in colour. Cortex remained on four items, and was chalky on three and abraded on one. The source is probably local chalk, or from superficial deposits of clay-with-flints.

The lithics were in mixed condition: most from cremation pit 813 (fill 812) displayed minimal edge-damage and rolling, although redeposited flakes from the post-medieval ditch 303 (Fig. 2), and pit 2017 (fill 2018) were more heavily damaged and rolled. No flints displayed any degree of recortication. Six of the 10 flakes had been broken, and three (the latter all from cremation pit 813) were substantially burnt, possibly reflecting an association with the cremation process.

The majority of worked flint items were recovered from features without associated pottery. However, two unburnt flakes were from pit 2017, which also contained an Early Bronze Age food vessel (vessel 2066.1, Ra. 5, Figs 10(1) & 11), and could represent stratified items.

All items of worked flint represent primary technology, and comprise 10 flakes and 10 chips (Table 3, below). However, although (by count)

Table 3 Flint assemblage composition

<i>Feature</i>	<i>Flake</i>	<i>Chip</i>	<i>Burnt (unworked)</i>
Cremation pit 816			1
Cremation 2017	2		
Pit 2021		3	
Ditch 303	1		
Pit 1105 (Eval)			1
Cremation 803			46
Cremation 813	7	7	58
<i>Total</i>	<i>10</i>	<i>10</i>	<i>106</i>



Fig. 5 Photograph. Intact Food Vessel 2066.1 (Ra 5), during excavation in pit 206. North-facing section. (0.2m scale)

the flakes comprise 50% of the recovered flints, such a small assemblage precludes any interpretation of *in situ* or dumped knapping waste. The debitage is not chronologically diagnostic, although the assemblage as a whole would be consistent with a Phase 1 (Bronze Age) date.

The pottery by E. R. McSloy

Evaluation

Two sherds (34g) were recorded from Trench 2 during the evaluation stage. Both sherds occur in a similar, black-firing quartz-rich fabric. An abraded body sherd from secondary fill 207, of pit 205 (Fig. 2), appears to be handmade, and an Iron Age date is tentatively suggested. The second sherd, from tree-throw fill 203 (Fig. 2), exhibits clear throwing-lines, and is identifiable as a large, thick-walled vessel with a shoulder or girth cordon, for which an earlier Roman date is probable.

Early Bronze Age pottery

Pottery representing eight individual vessels (246 sherds; 1984g) was hand-recovered. A further 266 sherds (229g), mainly small crumbs/flakes derived from the eight vessels described in the catalogue, was recovered from bulk soil samples taken from suspected cremation burials.

An intact Food Vessel (no. 2066.1, Ra 5, Figs 7(1), & 8) was associated with cremated human bone, and had been placed upright in a small pit of sufficient depth to preserve the vessel. The other vessels, two of which were also associated with cremated bone (2032.1, Ra. 3 (Fig. 7 (3)); 2057.1, Ra.4 (Fig. 7 (2))), are incomplete to varying degrees, due to later truncation. All of the recorded pottery vessels are representative of funerary deposits.

Full recording of this assemblage has been undertaken, and a descriptive catalogue is presented below. In describing the decoration and formal characteristics of the Collared Urn vessels (nos. 2051.1; 2057.1 and 2061.1), the

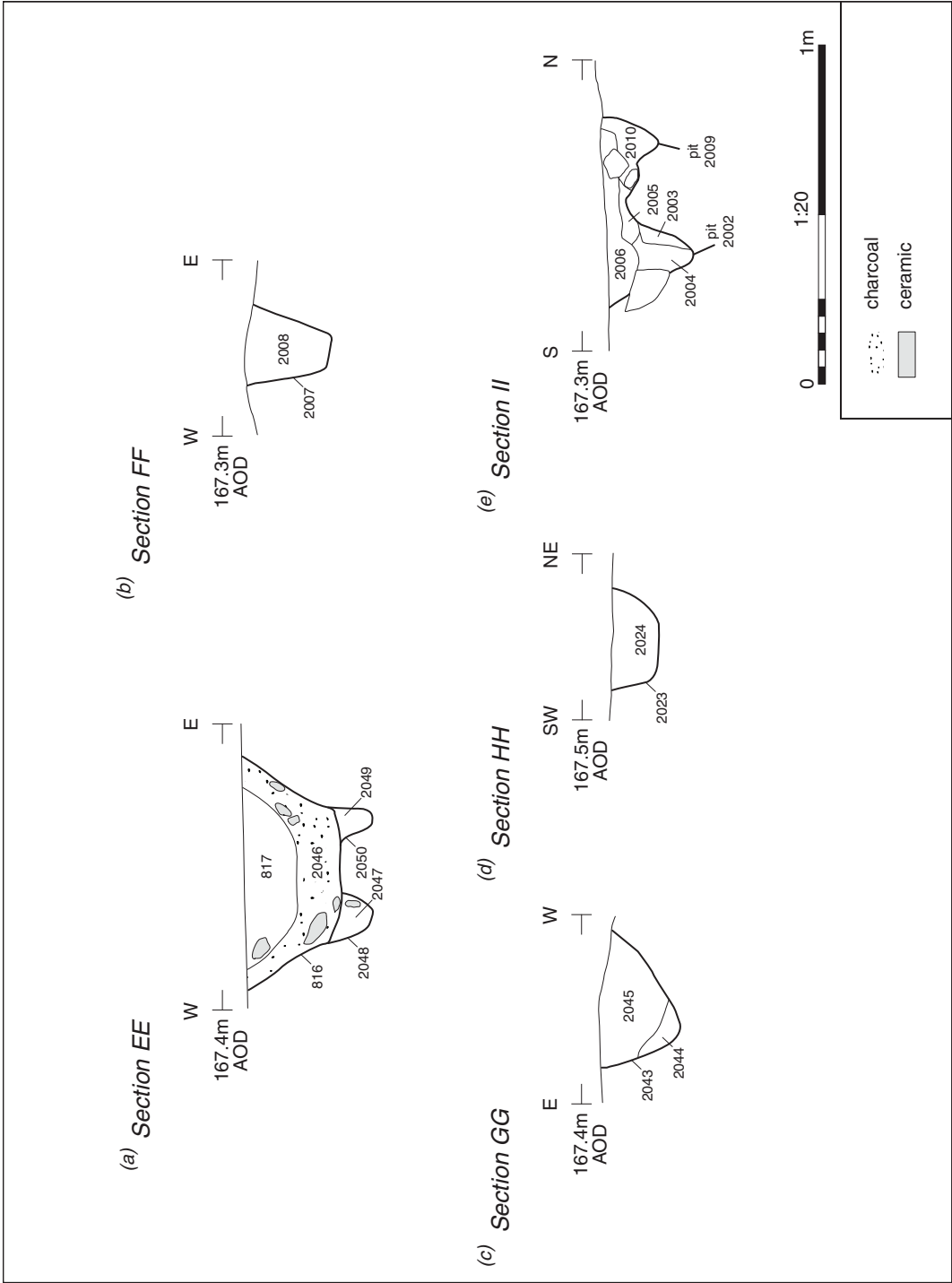


Fig. 6 (a) Section EE of unurned cremation pit 816 (1:20); (b) section FF of unurned cremation pit 2007 (1:20); (c) section GG of pit 2043 (1:20); (d) section HH of Roman pit 2023 (1:20); and (e) section II of unurned cremation pit 2002 and pit 2009, containing pyre debris (1:20)

terminology employed by Longworth in his corpus (Longworth 1984) has been employed. In discussing chronology relative to (Collared Urn) stylistic/formal traits, Burgess's scheme (1986) is preferred. Pottery fabrics are defined according to primary/secondary inclusions, and inclusion size/sorting.

Catalogue

Collared urns

2051.1 Bipartite(?) Collared Urn (Fig. 7 (4)). Incomplete, comprising portions of the rim and neck/shoulder (34 sh; 224g; 0.18 rim EVEs). Fabric GT1. Orange/brown surfaces, which are soft and well-weathered. The vessel's collar is short (40mm), and its lower edge irregular. It is slightly in-turned, and its outer surface concave and the rim-top flattened. Undecorated. RD. 150mm; Th. 6–7mm (8mm at collar). Feature 2051 (fill 2052).

2057.1 Tripartite Collared Urn (Ra. 4, Fig. 7 (2)). Incomplete, comprising portions of the rim, neck/shoulder and base (66 sh; 424g; 0.50 rim EVEs). Fabric GT1. Pale orange external surface, with grey core and interior. The surfaces of the upper vessel are soft, and the surfaces weathered. There is a thin and patchy carbonaceous deposit to the lower interior. The vessel's collar is short (40mm), slightly in-turned, and with a slight inward bevel. Decoration to the rim top is indistinct, but probably consists of double-corded lines. Decoration to the collar consists of corded horizontals, crossed at intervals by corded vertical lines, in groups of two or three (Longworth's 'hurdle' motif C). In addition, there is decoration to the shoulder carination, as a row of fingertip impressions. RD. 120mm; Th. 5–6mm (9mm max at collar). Feature 2057 (fill 2058).

2061.1 Bipartite(?) Collared Urn (Fig. 7 (5)). Incomplete, comprising portions of the rim, neck/shoulder and base (56 sh; 303g; 0.52 rim EVEs). Fabric GT2. Patchy brown/grey surfaces, which are friable and weathered, almost certainly as the result of secondary burning. The vessel collar is short (42mm), upright and slightly concave, with a flat top. Decoration is limited to the collar, and consists of corded horizontals, crossed at intervals by pairs of corded vertical lines (Longworth's 'hurdle' motif C). RD. 120mm; Th. 8mm (9mm at collar). Feature 2061 (fill 2063).

Food vessels

2027.1 Food Vessel (Fig. 7 (6)). Incomplete, comprising portions of the rim, neck/shoulder and

base (25 sh; 93g; 0.20 rim EVEs). Fabric GT1. Buff/pale orange surfaces, with grey patches. Surface preservation is good. Two base sherds preserve an internal carbonaceous residue. The vessel rim is everted, and with an internal bevel, and the neck concave. Decoration to the rim top consists of lightly-incised radial strokes. Exterior decoration extends from the rim/neck zone to below the shoulder carination, and consists of impressed diagonal lines of round-toothed comb, forming a repeated chevron design (with the lower combed lines shorter). RD. 120mm; Th. 6–7mm. Feature 2027 (fill 2028).

2066.1 Food Vessel (Ra. 5, Figs 7 (1) & 8)). Complete (1sh; 628g; 1.0 rim EVEs). Fabric GT2. Buff/pale orange surfaces. Surface preservation is mostly good, although the rim top is more heavily worn/weathered, making the decoration indistinct. The vessel rim is expanded, and with a marked internal bevel and the neck slightly concave. Decoration to the rim consists of two, angled rows of whipped cord impressions (not shown on Fig. 7.1). Exterior decoration extends from the rim/neck zone, to below the shoulder carination, and consists of whipped cord rows arranged in herringbone pattern, and defined by paired or single continuous corded bands. RD. 125mm; BD. 75mm; Ht. 118mm; Th. 7–8mm. Feature 2066 (fill 2067).

Indeterminate

2029.1 Indeterminate (Ra. 3, Fig. 7 (3)). Incomplete, comprising portions of the shoulder and base (63 sh; 301g). Fabric QZ1. Dark reddish-brown surfaces, with dark, grey-brown core. Surface preservation is good. Undecorated. Tentative identification as Biconical Urn is based on the presence of carinated shoulder sherds, although the QZ1 fabric is different and possibly atypical of Biconical Urn types, and this could equally represent a Collared Urn type. If a Biconical Urn, 2029.1 is likely to date from the end of the Early Bronze Age period. Th. 6–8mm. Feature 2029 (fill 2030).

Undefined

2032.1 Indeterminate (Ra. 2, not illustrated). Single, unfeatured sherd (8g). Fabric QZ3. Dark reddish-brown surfaces, with dark, grey-brown core. Surface preservation is good. Th. 6mm. Cremation pit 2034.

Discussion

The prehistoric pottery described comes from a confined, discrete area of funerary activity, and is thus broadly contemporary.

Vessel no. 2066.1 (Figs 7 (1) & 8)) shares

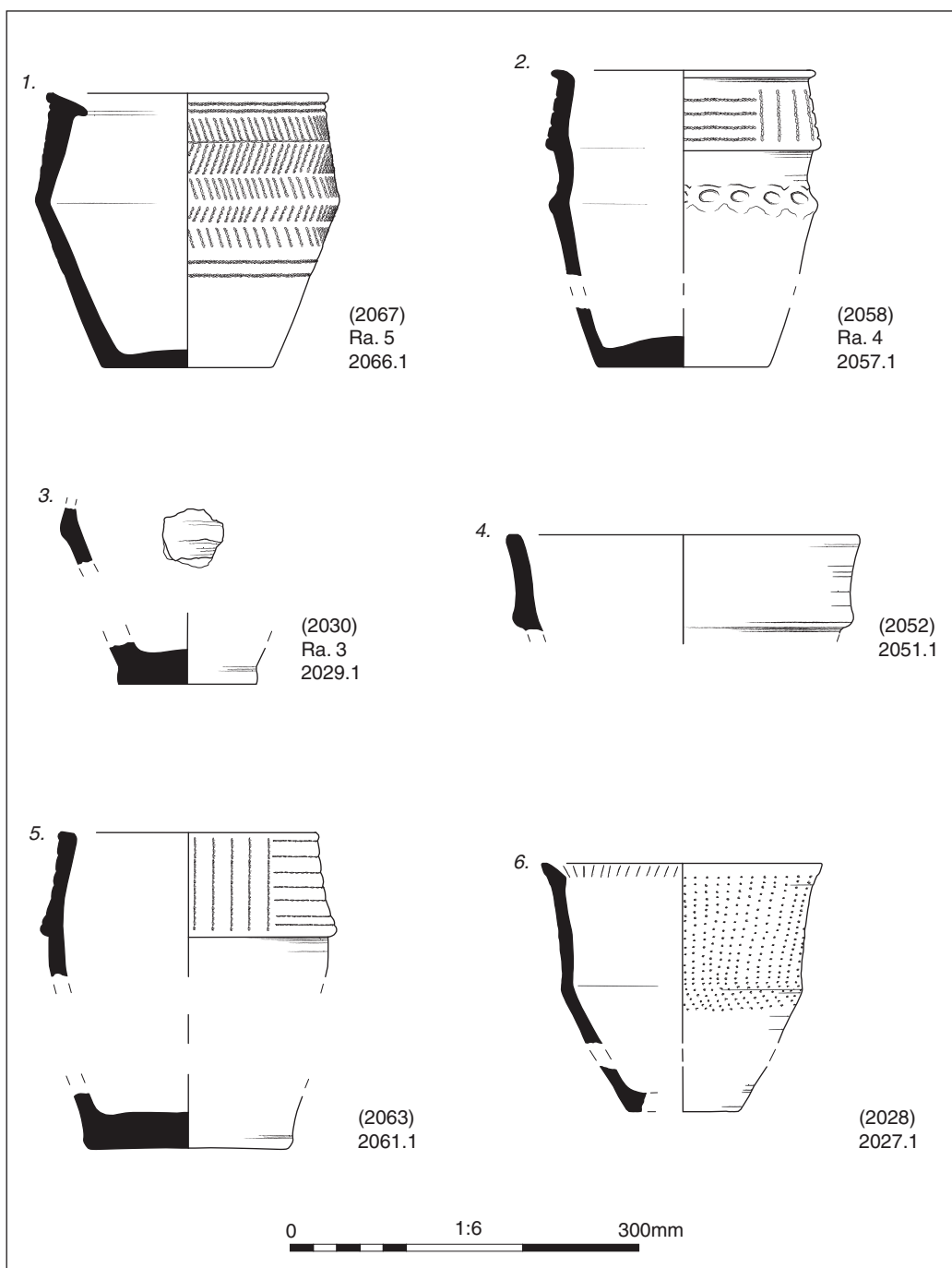


Fig. 7 Early Bronze Age pottery vessels (1:6): 1. intact Food Vessel Ra. 5 (2066.1) from cremation pit 2066; 2. Collared Urn Ra. 4 (2057.1), from cremation pit 2057; 3. fragmentary Biconical Urn Ra. 3 (2029.1), from pit 2029; 4. fragmentary Collared Urn 2051.1, from pit 2051; 5. Collared Urn 2061.1, from pit 2061; and 6. Food Vessel 2027.1, from pit 2027

features in common with the Biconical Urn series, although the expanded rim, concave neck and extensive whipped cord decoration identify it as belonging to the Food Vessel class. Nos. 2066.1 and 2027.1 (Fig. 7 (1) & (6)) may both be further categorised as bipartite vase forms with single carinations. Food Vessels are far less common in southern Britain compared with the north (Gibson & Woods 1997, 162–3), and vessels 2066.1 and 2027.1 share the characteristics of most southern forms, where decoration is restricted to the upper two-thirds of the vessel (cf. Annable & Simpson 1964, 117, nos. 488–497). A suitable parallel with vessel no. 2066.1 was recorded from the Great Barrow at Bishop's Waltham, Hants (Ashbee 1957, 158–9, fig. 9).

Some 35 finds of Collared Urn are listed from Hampshire in Longworth's 1984 corpus, including an antiquarian find recorded from Basingstoke (Longworth 1984, 201, no. 617). The use of grogged fabrics for both styles would appear to be typical, and is evident in recently-recorded Collared Urns from Andover (Mephram 2015, 15), and for Food Vessels recorded from Mockbeggar Lane, Ibsley, Hants (Raymond 2004, 41). The hurdle motif evident in the decoration of Collared Urns 2057.1 and 2061.1 is characteristic of Longworth's Secondary Series South-East style, and comparable vessels from Hampshire include examples from Chalton and Warsash (Longworth 1984, Pl. 159(c) and Pl. 186(b), respectively). The rather unusual profile of vessel 2057.1 (Ra. 4) can be matched at Ibsley Common VI (*ibid.*, Pl. 169(e)). Associations of Food Vessels with Collared Urns are notably rare, and seldom recorded in the south (Longworth 1984, 50).

The Food Vessel and Collared Urn styles share overlapping date-ranges, centred on in the earlier 2nd millennium BC (Needham 1996). A study of Food Vessels from northern Britain suggested that the date-range for these types spans the period *c.* 2200–1800 cal. BC (Wilkin 2013). The Collared Urn tradition may begin later, and within the range *c.* 1950 to *c.* 1550/1500 cal. BC (Needham *et al.* 2010). The Biconical Urn series, which is possibly represented by fragmentary vessel no. 2029.1 (Fig. 7 (3)), may have emerged a little later, by *c.* 1800/1700 BC, and from a continental tradition

(Tomalin 1988). Stylistically, the Collared Urns (nos. 2052.1 (not illustrated), 2057.1 (Fig. 7 (2) & 2061.1; Fig. 7 (5)), lack traits such as internal decoration, use of whipped cord or other 'short line' motifs, which Burgess observed as characterising 'early' vessels (Burgess 1986, 345). They also lack some 'late' traits (deep collar, bipartite form and disproportionately narrow bases), which makes a date within the middle of the given range, most likely.

A feature uniting the vessels from this group is their small size, with rim diameters all within a range of 120mm–150mm. Among the Collared Urns from Longworth's study (1984), smaller vessels are not uncommon. Longworth discerned no chronological bias in comparing his Primary and Secondary series. The levels of disturbance evident on this site preclude any confident identification of vessels as accessories accompanying cremation burials, as might be inferred from their small size. The quantities of cremated material associated with vessels 2032.1, 2057.1 and 2066.1 were in all cases very small, and it is possible that such smaller vessels functioned as receptacles for selected cremated remains.

There is some evidence for prior 'domestic' use of some vessels (nos. 2027.1, 2057.1) in the form of internal carbonaceous residues. Additionally, Collared Urn no. 2061.1 exhibits clear indications of secondary burning, resulting from prolonged exposure to heat of very high intensity, possibly resulting from former use or proximity to the pyre.

Pottery fabrics

GT1 Grog-tempered. Most commonly buff/light-brown surfaces, and with grey core. Soft, with smooth feel and irregular/uneven break. Common, well-sorted, self-coloured angular grog, (0.5–1mm); may contain sparse, sub-angular quartz, or sparse angular flint (1–2.5mm) and voids from burnt-out organics.

GT2 Grog-tempered, with quartz and some flint. Light-brown throughout, or patchy brown/grey where burnt (no. 2061.1). Soft, with slightly sandy feel and irregular break. Common, well-sorted angular/sub-angular grog (0.5–1mm); common sub-angular quartz (0.3–0.5mm), and sparse angular flint up to 2mm.

QZ1 Coarse, quartz-tempered. Dark, red-brown



Fig. 8 Intact Food Vessel 2006.1 (Ra. 5) (10cm scale)

throughout, or with darker core. Soft, with sandy feel and irregular break. Common, poorly-sorted angular/sub-angular quartz (0.3–0.5mm), polycrystalline quartz (0.5–0.6mm), and sparse angular grog/argillaceous inclusions up to 3mm.

Roman nails by Katie Marsden

A total of 90 iron nails (108g) was recorded from fill 2024, of pit 2023. All are of probable Roman date. The nails are forged, flat-headed types occurring in a range of sizes, which are typical of Roman (and later) forms, and equivalent to Manning's (1982) type 1b. Most are incomplete, with measurable examples ranging from 16mm to 44mm in length. The

nails provide only broad dating for this feature. Their presence within fill 2024, together with carbonised grains, suggests a domestic or agricultural origin.

THE BIOLOGICAL EVIDENCE

Human cremated remains by Sharon Clough

Osteological analysis followed the standard procedure recommended by McKinley (1994, 2000). Full details of human remains are provided in the archive report (CA 2016b).

Cremated human bone was recovered from a total of nine features. Of these, six were

from earth-cut unurned graves, two were from within urns, and one associated with a single ceramic sherd. The cremation deposits varied in weight from 0.4g – 658.2g, with an average of 169g (Table 4). The lowest weights, of 0.4g and 2.9g, were from non-adult burials, and burial 2032 contained less than 1g of fragmented bone, which it was not possible to attribute to either human or animal origin. The lowest weights recorded were all from urned burials (Table 4).

The recovered weights of cremated bone were very low compared to recorded averages for the Bronze Age, and none of these cremation deposits represented the entire cremated individual. Such low weights may be explained by taphonomic factors, and by other later activities, including plough truncation. However, comparative regional evidence (cf. Everton 1981a, 185), clearly indicates that such burials represent selective, token deposits. A general average weight of 327–466g (McKinley 2005, 14) has been quoted, which is still substantially more than represented by the nine cremation burials from this site, which averaged only 169g. As only token quantities were deposited in such cases, it is possible that

remaining cremated material was retained as ancestral relics by the living (Brück 2006).

In addition, the high levels of bone fragmentation observed have impeded the identification of skeletal elements (Chapman & Gydarska 2007) (Table 5). Most fragmentation is thought to occur following burial, and during and after excavation (McKinley 1994). It has also been suggested that the commonly-observed phenomenon of intentionally broken artefacts accompanying Bronze Age burials represents part of the funerary ritual (Brück 2006). The deliberate fragmentation of cremated human bone would be consistent with this practice.

From the nine cremation deposits, an average of 72% of bone fragments were not identified, and conclusions are therefore tentative. There is no evident collection bias within the cremation deposits (see Table 4), as the higher-weighted cremations display a fairly consistent distribution of elements.

The cremated remains were of six adults and two non-adults, with one unidentified individual. In all but one of the deposits, the bone had been burnt to a temperature of over 650°C, and therefore sufficient to calcine bone to a bright white colour and demonstrate an

Table 4 Weight of cremated bone by skeletal area

<i>Pit No.</i>	<i>Total Weight (g)</i>	<i>Cranial (g)</i>	<i>Cranial %</i>	<i>Axial (g)</i>	<i>Axial %</i>	<i>Upper limb (g)</i>	<i>Upper limb %</i>	<i>Lower limb (g)</i>	<i>Lower limb %</i>	<i>Un-identified limb (g)</i>	<i>Un-identified Limb %</i>	<i>Unidentified (g)</i>	<i>Unidentified %</i>
803	358.3	107.1	29.8	4.3	1.2	6.2	1.7	8.4	2.3	25.5	7.1	200.4	55.9
813	167.4	13	7.7	3.9	2.3	5.1	3.04	13.9	8.3			131.5	78.5
814	205.4	44.4	21.6	0		0		0		25.4	12.3	135.6	66
816	658.2	35.4	5.37	13.3	2.02	19	2.88	90	13.67	117.5	17.85	383	58.1
2002	53.4	2.5	4.6	1.8	3.3	0.4	0.74	3	5.61	9	16.85	40.8	76.4
2007	80.6	2.2	2.7	1.8	2.23	0		0.2	0.24	13.3	16.5	63.1	78.3
2032	1											1	100
2057	0.4											0.4	100
2066	2.9	0.6	19.3							1.1	37.9	1.2	41.3

Table 5 Weight of human bone by fraction to determine level of fragmentation

<i>Pits</i>	<i>>10mm weight</i>	<i>>10mm %</i>	<i>10–5mm Weight</i>	<i>10–5mm %</i>	<i>5–2mm Weight</i>	<i>5–2mm %</i>
803	108.6	30.3	139.3	38.8	63.6	17.7
813	22.1	13.2	85.3	50.9	60	35.8
814	31.8	15.4	81.4	39.6	92.2	44.8
816	34.7	5.2	301.2	45.7	117.9	17.9
2002	7.6	14.2	26.6	49.8	19.2	35.9
2007	17.6	21.8	38.3	47.5	24.7	30.6
2032	0	0	0	0	1	100
2057	0	0	0	0	0.4	100
2066	0	0	1.7	58.6	1.2	41.3

effective cremation technology. Cremated bone from Cremation pit 816/2046 exhibited a wider range of colouration, from black to white, indicating more incomplete combustion within the pyre. A large proportion of the blackened material comprised unidentified animal bone, which had become mixed with the human bone, and may therefore represent a pyre offering. This indicates that 816 was not as efficiently cremated as the other individuals represented in this group, possibly reflecting the influence of contributory factors, including lack of fuel, heavy rain, poor pyre attendance etc. Interestingly, given that adult bodies generally cremate better than those of juveniles, the child cremation burials were all white in colour, indicating effective pyre technology. However, the recovery of adult and sub-adult remains demonstrates that the cremation process was employed for all ages of the population.

The Beggarwood Lane site displayed some broad similarities with a number of Middle Bronze Age cemeteries in the region. That at Lock's Heath, Hampshire (Ellis & McSloy 2016), produced seven cremation burials from a total of at least 15 urned deposits. At Heatherstone Grange, Bransgore (Massey & Morris 2018), 18 urned and unurned cremation burials were recorded within a total of 40 cremation-related deposits, and at Kimpton (Dacre & Ellison 1981), some 45 urned and un-urned burials were recorded. At Beggarwood Lane, the urned burials had lower weights of cremated bone than the unurned, and the same was observed in most cases at Heatherstone Grange, Bransgore (Clough 2018, 66–8, tables 11–13).

The lowest recovered weights of cremated bone appear to be at Beggarwood Lane, although this cannot be directly compared with results from Kimpton, as the quoted weights from that cemetery included mixed residues (Everton 1981b, 197–8). Mixed-age and mixed-sex groups, were represented at all cremation cemetery sites.

Animal bone was recovered at Kimpton, as at Beggarwood Lane, and species identified there included sheep, horse and cow (Everton 1981a, 187). Bone fragmentation levels were notably high at all excavated sites, and it was suggested at Kimpton that post-cremation pulverisation had occurred, which accounted for consistently-sized bone fragments of no greater than 20mm (Everton 1981b, 197).

Plant macrofossils by Sarah F. Wyles

A series of 25 bulk soil samples were analysed from Early Bronze Age (Period 1) cremation-related deposits. Five samples were also taken from the postholes within cremation pit 816/2046, with a further three samples from pits 2017, 2041 and 2055, and a single sample from Period 2 pit 2023. Three samples from undated pits 2059, 2061 and 2064 were also assessed. The samples were processed following standard flotation methods, and all identifiable charred plant remains were identified following the nomenclature of Stace (1997) for wild plants, and traditional nomenclature, as provided by Zohary *et al.* (2012) for cereals. Remarkably few charred plant remains were recovered from these samples.

Period 1: Bronze Age

Hazelnut (*Corylus avellana*) shell fragments were recorded in low numbers in cremation-related deposits within pits 2007, 2027, 2051, 2057 and 2066, fill 2056 of posthole 2055 and fill 2018 of pit 2017. Sample 2023, from cremation-related deposit 2046, within pit 816, contained a fragment of *Arrhenatherum* tuber, while tuber fragments were also observed in fill 805 of cremation pit 803, and in fill 812 of cremation pit 813, from the evaluation.

These small assemblages are comparable with others from contemporary cremation-related deposits. Plant tubers, in particular those of false oat-grass (*Arrhenatherum elatius*), are a well-recognised component of cremation deposits (Godwin 1984; Robinson 1988), most commonly in those of Middle Bronze Age date, including examples at North of Saltwood Tunnel, Kent (Stevens 2006), Kingsborough Manor, Isle of Sheppey, Kent (Stevens 2008) and Twyford Down, Hampshire (Clapham 2000). These tubers and stems are suggested to represent material uprooted while creating a fire-break around the cremation site, and then used as tinder (Stevens 2008).

Period 2: Roman

The small charred plant assemblage recovered from fill 2024, of Roman pit 2023, included hulled wheat, emmer or spelt (*Triticum dicoccum/spelta*) grain fragments, a spelt wheat (*Triticum spelta*) glume-base fragment and a seed of clover (*Trifolium sp.*). This suggests nearby domestic or agricultural activity. Spelt is recognized as the predominant wheat species during this period in southern Britain (Greig 1991).

Charcoal from the Early Bronze Age cremation burials, and associated features by Dana Challinor

Introduction and methodology

Twenty samples were examined for charcoal analysis, comprising material from urned and unurned burials, and from pits and postholes containing cremation-related debris. As these features are spatially associated, it is assumed that all charcoal assessed has derived from

cremation-related activities. Only one feature, burial 2066, was confidently dated by pottery to the Early Bronze Age period, although it is assumed that all cremation-related deposits in this group fall within this date-range.

Some of the charcoal was sparse and highly fragmented, and did not merit full analysis, although in all cases it was examined at low magnification to determine similarity to other assemblages. Likewise, samples from separate spits of the same features were scanned, with only the richest sample analysed in full. Standard identification procedures were followed, and classification and nomenclature followed Stace (1997). The results of charcoal analysis are summarized in Table 6, below.

Results

Charcoal preservation was generally good, although occasional high levels of vitrification obscured anatomical features. A total of 613 fragments were examined, from which five taxa were positively identified (Fig. 9):

- *Quercus* sp., oak
- *Corylus avellana*, hazel
- Maloideae, incl. *Malus*, apple; *Sorbus*, service tree/whitebeam/rowan, *Crataegus*, hawthorn
- *Prunus spinosa*, blackthorn
- *Fraxinus excelsior*, ash.

It is likely that the undifferentiated *Alnus/Corylus* fragments were all hazel, since no alder was positively identified and the texture/appearance of the fragments appeared consistent.

Roundwood fragments were frequent, and were identified by moderate or strong ring-curvature, with whole stems rarely preserved. The roundwood employed was relatively wide, with ring-counts of 18–26 in some of the larger fragments. In many samples, however, the fragments were too small to establish maturity. Detached bark fragments were recorded in several samples; notably in sample 2028 from posthole 2053. Tyloses were observed in rare fragments of *Fraxinus excelsior* (ash), with mostly sapwood or roundwood identified. The *Quercus* sp. (oak) was generally too comminuted (and <1 growth-ring) to determine maturity, though a little sapwood was observed. Insect tunnels

Table 6 Charcoal from cremation burials and related deposits (showing fragment count)

Feature Type	unurned cremation pit				pit				posthole				urned cremation burial pit			
	Feature no.	814	816	2002	2007	2017	2029	2021	2051	2015	2041	2043	2053	2055	2057	2066
<i>Context</i> no.	2040	2046	2006	2008	2008	2018	2030	2022	2052	2016	2042	2044	2054	2056	2058	2067
<i>Sample</i> no.	2019	2023	2000	2001	2007	2007	2013	2016	2025	2004	2022	2027	2028	2029	2031	2035
<i>Quercus</i> sp.	oak		57 (sr)													1
<i>Corylus avellana</i> L.	hazel	5 (r)	14		1		37 (r)	44 (r)	12 (r)	22 (r)	19 (r)	25 (r)	2	12 (r)	11 (r)	
<i>Alnus/Corylus</i>	alder/hazel						12	3		8	8	9 (r)		8	9	
<i>Prunus spinosa</i> L.	blackthorn												20 (r)			
<i>Maloideae</i>	hawthorn group	26 (r)	4r	34 (r)	49 (r)	2 (r)			38 (r)			10 (r)				
<i>Fraxinus excelsior</i> L.	ash					28 (hsr)						5 (sr)		10 (rs)		49 (sr)
Indeterminate		2					1b	3b				1	8b		4b	
<i>Total</i>		33	75	34	50	30	50	50	50	30	27	50	30	30	28	50

h=heartwood; s=sapwood; r=roundwood; b=bark; brackets denotes presence in some fragments only

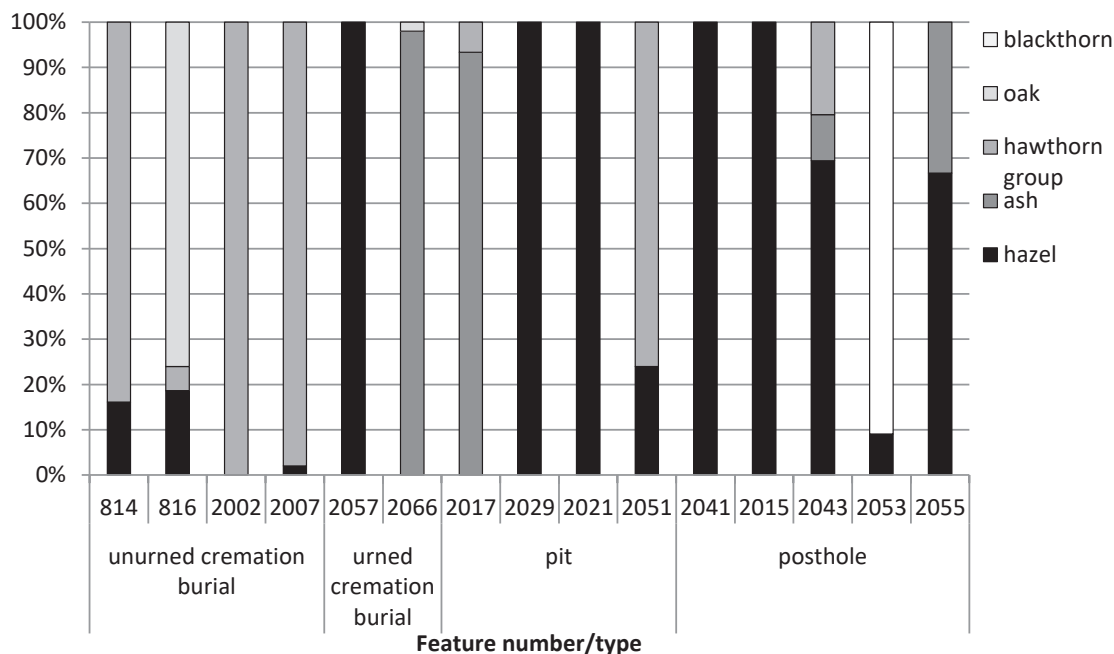


Fig. 9 Taxonomic composition of charcoal assemblages from cremation burials and related features; based upon fragment count, excluding indeterminate and bark (N=594)

were frequently recorded in fragments of *Maloideae* (hawthorn group), and in *Corylus avellana* (hazel), from features 2017, 2021, 2029, 2043 and 2051. These were generally small and asymmetric in shape, with the exception of the *Maloideae* in pit 2017, which were larger and distinctly oval.

Discussion

The dominance of a single taxon in cremation-related assemblages is a pattern regularly recorded on Bronze Age funerary sites, including at Rollright Stones, Oxfordshire (Straker 1988), Barrow Hills, Oxfordshire (Thompson 1999), Raunds, Northamptonshire (Campbell 2007), Heathrow (Challinor 2010a) and Cotswold Community, Gloucestershire (Challinor 2010b). At Beggarwood Lane, charcoal diversity within individual assemblages is low (with an average of 1.7 taxa/sample), with a single taxon dominating all assemblages. However, there is diversity in the dominant taxon: of the known burials, with three (unurned) dominated by the hawthorn group; one (urned) by hazel;

one (urned) by ash; and one (unurned) by oak (Fig. 9). The majority of deposits of pyre debris, which do not represent burials as such, were dominated by hazel charcoal.

Fuelwood selection and pyre technology

The scarcity of oak at this site, with a single fragment found in only one other sample from 2066, is distinctly unusual. Oak is the most commonly used fuel in Bronze Age cremations, and usually accounts for a significant component of any fuelwood assemblage, due to its ubiquity and strong burning properties. It is particularly intriguing that the human bone from burial 2046 in pit 816 was incompletely combusted. This cannot have been directly due to fuelwood selection, since oak wood provides the high calorific values required for efficient cremation. No heartwood, which provides the strongest and longest-lasting fuel, was recorded, but this may not accurately reflect the composition of the assemblage as a whole, since the material was highly comminuted. It is possible that a range of variable factors may have affected the efficacy of

cremation in this case (McKinley 1998). In other burials, it is evident that supplies of suitable wood were sufficient to provide the temperatures required. The other taxa employed all have good heating properties, and the presence of insect tunnels in several samples suggests that wood had been well seasoned.

Age correlation

The possibility that the choice of fuelwood was related to the age or gender of the deceased has been explored at other Bronze Age sites. Examining the Raunds, Northamptonshire, and Barrow Hills, Oxon, evidence, Campbell has suggested that adults and infants were cremated with a single taxon, with more diverse assemblages associated with children (2007, 31). At Beggarwood Lane, the four unurned burials were of adults, and it is tempting to speculate that burial 816 may have been of a different gender from the other three burials, since these produced comparable assemblages, although there is no evidence to support this. The two urned burials were both of non-adults; 2057 contained the remains of a neonate and associated charcoal was entirely hazel, while 2066 was a child, cremated with ash. It is difficult to discern any coherent pattern here, since so many of the non-burial cremation-related features were dominated by hazel, and it seems unlikely that this taxon represents pyre debris from multiple infant or neonate cremations. The assemblage from pit 2017 may represent additional pyre debris from the urned burial 2066, as this pit truncated the burial and the samples from each produced very similar charcoal assemblages.

The deposits examined from Beggarwood Lane are event-specific, and the low diversity and single-taxon dominance evident within the assemblages testifies to deliberate fuelwood selection. Even, it is possible to attribute a ritual aspect to the selection process, the practicalities of supply must have been a paramount factor. The limited use of oak at this site is unusual for Early and Middle Bronze Age cremations. However, there are infrequent examples of hazel-dominated cremations at Burghfield, Berkshire (Gale 1992), Thompson's Hill, Gloucestershire (Cobain 2016) and the A120, Essex (Challinor 2007). Examples of

assemblages dominated by hawthorn group assemblages are known from the A120 (*ibid.*), Barrow Hills, Oxfordshire (Thompson 1999) and Eton Rowing Lake (Challinor 1999).

DISCUSSION

The choice of a cemetery site on a high chalk ridge, at an elevation of 168m aOD, may owe much to the topographic prominence of this location, and cultural associations with long-range views, particularly to the north. The configuration of recorded pits suggests that these comprise a small, discrete group, and in terms of numbers typical of smaller Early and Middle Bronze Age cremation cemeteries across Wessex (Ellison 1980, 122). Within the group, no individual feature appears to be particularly identifiable as a 'founder' burial, although it is possible that the larger, centrally-positioned pits 812 and 816 may represent initial cremation burials, around which later deposits were clustered.

Barrett and Bradley (1980, 251) identified close spatial associations between Early and Middle Bronze Age cemeteries and contemporary settlement in Wessex, which in some cases are known to be separated by distances as little as 100m (Bradley 1981, 100). In this case, the flint assemblage recorded 200m to the north of Beggarwood Lane (Gingell & Trott 1995, 63), may represent evidence of an associated settlement. However, it seems equally possible that the location of this cemetery represents the deliberate choice of a remote, marginal location, partly associated with intractable clay-with-flints deposits, and thus at some remove from contemporary settlement and farming landscapes (cf. Field 2001, 60).

This cremation group displays no successive relationship to an earlier burial monument, despite the close associations attested elsewhere (cf. Entwistle 2001). Any association with the Bronze Age barrow cropmarks c. 300m to the north-west is altogether too distant to suggest longer-term continuity of burial practice around the excavated site itself. As a group, the Beggarwood Lane cemetery pits conform to a general regional pattern identified by Ellison (1980, 122), in which mixed burial and

cremation-related deposits occur in discrete clusters of between 10 and 50, with groups of more than 25 rare. The loose, sub-circular configuration of the pit group prompted earlier speculation regarding the existence of a barrow monument. While discrete groups of cremation-related pits as preliminary stages in the construction of barrow monuments are well-attested elsewhere (Woodward 2000, 43), no trace of a barrow ditch was identified in this location, much less any indication of a mound. Despite this, the respective distributions of different types of deposit appear to display some evidence of spatial ordering. The western side of the cemetery displays an almost straight row of pits, aligned SSW/NNE (Fig. 2). The southern components of this row are all unurned cremation burials, while further to the north-east are located two urned cremation deposits and one urned pyre debris deposit. Moving eastward from this row, all deposits are of pyre debris, while on the far eastern side, there are four urned deposits, three featuring pyre debris and one a cremation burial. The suggested evidence of grouping or structure, with deposits of pyre debris appearing to occupy subsidiary positions, suggests the representation of family relationships, or equally, a desire to reference genealogy or descent through a visible sequence of burials, possibly in a manner reminiscent of linear barrow cemeteries (see Mizoguchi 1993; Garwood 2007, 37–9).

Small cremation groups of Early Bronze Age date are regionally rare, and are better-represented by those of Middle Bronze Age date, including at Weston Colley, Hants, where a small group of shallow burials, (one unurned) was associated with Deverel-Rimbury sherds and pyre debris (Gibson & Knight, 2007, 4–6). A example with Deverel-Rimbury associations, at Lock's Heath, Hants (McSloy & Ellis 2016) comprised at least 15 pits containing urns, of which seven were associated with small samples of cremated bone. Such small, discrete groups have implications for the interpretation of local settlement patterns and systems of land tenure, and it is notable that the chalklands of Wessex appear to be associated with smaller cemeteries than those recorded within the agriculturally-rich Avon and Stour valleys to the west (Dacre & Ellison 1981, 198; Bradley 1981, 101; Ellison

1981). A more extensive cremation cemetery, predominantly represented by urned burials, at Kalis Corner, Andover (Stoodley (ed) 2013, 7–8), displayed a considerably longer chronology, but with discretely clustered patterning, which appeared to represent a number of individual kinship groups (cf. Dacre & Ellison 1981, 157–8, figs 5–6). At Beggarwood Lane, the relatively narrow date-range associated with identifiable cremation vessels suggest a pattern of funerary activity over a comparably limited time-span (cf. Bradley 1981, 102).

The Food Vessel and Collared Urn styles at Beggarwood Lane share overlapping date-ranges, centred on the earlier 2nd millennium BC (Needham 1996). This is supported by an overall date-range of 1900–1500 BC for Collared Urns in southern England, identified by Seager Thomas on the basis of radiocarbon dates from associated charcoal (2008, 22). The Biconical Urn series, possibly represented by fragmentary vessel no. 2029.1, may have emerged a little later, by *c.* 1800/1700 BC. Stylistically, the Collared Urns from Beggarwood Lane (nos. 2052.1, 2057.1 and 2061.1) lack those aspects of decoration and form which make a date within the middle of the given range most likely, and these could arguably fall into Longworth's (1984) 'middle-late' and 'late' categories. On this basis, it is possible to consider a limited chronology for the Beggarwood Lane cemetery, and one perhaps centred on 1700/1800 BC, and not significantly later than *c.* 1700 BC. Early Bronze Age Collared urn cemeteries are known in the northern and western areas of Britain, but are extremely rare in the south, thus lending particular significance to this site (Longworth 1984, 48). One well-known, parallel regional example is that at Eaton Down, Winterslow, Wilts, where a series of South-Eastern Style Collared Urns were recorded, possibly beneath a long low cairn (*ibid.*, 291–20; Stone 1933). Early Bronze Age cemeteries in Areas F and D, at Easton Lane, Winchester (Fasham *et al.* 1989, 24–8, figs, 21 and 22), included cremation deposits associated with both Collared and Biconical Urns.

Woodward has suggested that the principal use of Collared Urn vessels was to represent social status in funerary contexts, together

with the identity of the individual concerned (1995, 200–1). While this may support earlier notions of these as specialised cremation vessels (Burgess 1986, 341), they have also been recorded in domestic contexts (Seager Thomas 2008, 28), and vessels 2027.1 and 2057.1 from Beggarwood Lane retain sooty residues which suggest earlier domestic use. However, the apparently limited repertoire of collared urn potters, and the evident preference for smaller vessels in funerary contexts, does suggest deliberate selection, which may also be reflected in the degree of individuality evident in the small sample of vessels recovered from this site (Fig. 10). At Oliver's Battery, Winchester, a comparable diversity of urn typologies within a broadly contemporary cremation group of similar size, indicated at least two distinct phases of burial activity on this site (King 1989, 18).

The presence of cremated bone was confirmed in only nine deposits, while most comprised dark or mid-brown clay-silts, with varying inclusions of charcoal. These were interpreted as deposits of pyre debris, which appear to represent a form of token or cenotaph burial, with cremated bone disposed elsewhere, or by other means (McKinley 1997, 137–9). Pits containing cremated bone or pyre debris deposits displayed considerable differentiation in terms of average dimensions. This contrast is paralleled to a lesser extent at a Middle Bronze Age, Deverel-Rimbury cremation cemetery at Heatherwood Grange, Bransgore, Hants (Massey & Morris 2018, 80–81), and suggests that, notwithstanding the role of urns in both cases, the burial of 'cenotaph' or pyre debris deposits may have entailed considerably less effort, and probably different rites.

Grave offerings at Beggarwood Lane were characteristically few in number, and suggest little differentiation in terms of gender, age or status within the burial community. Such deliberately-placed items may include the single sherd associated with a deposit of cremated bone in pit 2032. The presence of incomplete vessels and single sherds in such contexts appears to be widespread, although more generally associated with the later Deverel-Rimbury tradition (Barrett *et al.* 1991, 216–19; Dacre & Ellison 1981, 159; Brück 2006), and not exclusively with cremated bone deposits.

Raymond (2004, 78) has suggested that the retention of part of broken vessel by the living may have represented a tangible link with the deceased individual. The remains of the possible collared urn vessel Ra. 3, in pit 2029, is reminiscent of the 'slab burials' recorded at Kimpton, Hants, where horizontally-laid sherds derived from large vessels were placed over burial deposits (Dacre & Ellison 1981, 159–165; 191). Two unburnt flint flakes, associated with a pyre debris deposit in pit 2017, may also represent deliberately deposited items. A small quantity of animal bone (13g) comprised part of a cremation deposit in fill 2046 of pit 816, but could not be identified to species. This, together with the three burnt flint flakes associated with cremation burial 812, in pit 813, appears to represent a pyre offering.

A number of cremation pits displayed particularly close spatial associations, including the group to the south of the excavated area comprising 2002, 2007 and 2009. These infer close kinship, and such may also be the case for the two successive fills (811 and 812) of pit 813, which appear to represent successive cremation-related deposits. The contents of pit 2017 also appear to represent a separate cremation event, presumably of a closely-related individual, although no human bone was present. In this case, a secondary urned cremation burial (2066) within this feature may represent the commemoration of a significant family relationship.

The lack of evidence for the use of oak as a cremation fuel is difficult to attribute to scarcity, as this locally-abundant taxon is attested at other contemporary cremation cemeteries in Hampshire (Ellis & McSloy 2016, 4; Keepax 1991, 111–2). The predominance of hazel charcoal in cremation-related deposits at Beggarwood Lane suggests deliberate fuelwood selection, which may reflect cultural factors, or simply aspects of social status or identity. The presence of Pomoidaeae charcoal fragments (probably hawthorn, *Crataegus monogyna*) in pyre debris at Weston Colley, Hampshire, was suggested to represent a pyre offering rather than fuel per se (Gibson & Knight, 2007, 4), although this distinction does not appear to apply to deposits at Beggarwood Lane.

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