

NORTON FITZWARREN HILLFORT: A REPORT ON THE EXCAVATIONS BY NANCY AND PHILIP LANGMAID BETWEEN 1968 AND 1971

PETER ELLIS

Summary

An unstratified flint assemblage indicated Mesolithic and Neolithic activity prior to the commencement of a major occupation sequence. A ditch and outer bank associated with Early to Middle Bronze Age pottery was located beneath the later Iron Age defences of the hillfort. Excavation confirmed the findings made earlier this century and added evidence for the position of a gateway, and a possible later Bronze Age palisade. A hoard of Middle Bronze Age ceremonial items was recovered from outside the defended zone and Late Bronze Age metalworking moulds were found in a pit interpreted as intended for a gatepost. The presence of Late Bronze Age/Early Iron Age pottery suggested continuity and the establishment of a defended site. A restructuring of the hillfort defences is suggested to be associated with house ring-ditches dated to the Middle Iron Age by Glastonbury ware pottery. A possible continuity of prehistoric occupation from at least the Early Bronze Age was completed by the finding of Late Iron Age pottery in secondary contexts. Romano-British occupation was demonstrated, particularly by a large pottery assemblage remarkable for the absence of non-local wares. The hillfort ditch was recut and the bank refurbished, apparently in the Roman period.

INTRODUCTION

Three seasons of excavations were mounted at the Iron Age hillfort at Norton Fitzwarren (NGR ST196263) in the late 1960s and early 1970s. The 1968 excavation was directed by Philip Langmaid, then Assistant Curator of Somerset County Museum, the 1970 and 1971 excavations by Nancy Langmaid, and all three seasons were undertaken on behalf of the Somerset Archaeological and Natural History Society with additional financial support from the Maltwood Fund. The finding of a Bronze Age enclosure with an associated hoard of Middle Bronze Age metalwork has been the subject of much discussion, despite the fact that apart from brief interim notes (P. Langmaid 1968; N. Langmaid 1970) only a short account of the find and its context has been published (N. Langmaid 1971).

The hillfort site overlooks the River Tone to the south and lies at the junction of the Tone and Doniford valleys (Fig. 1). To the west lie the Brendon Hills, to the south the Blackdowns and to the north the Quantock Hills. Norton Fitzwarren hill itself is of Mercia Mudstone (Keuper Marl) and the surrounding terrain is composed of valley gravels deposited as river terraces in the Pleistocene (Edmonds *et al* 1975). These gravels have been described as containing flint, chert, quartz,

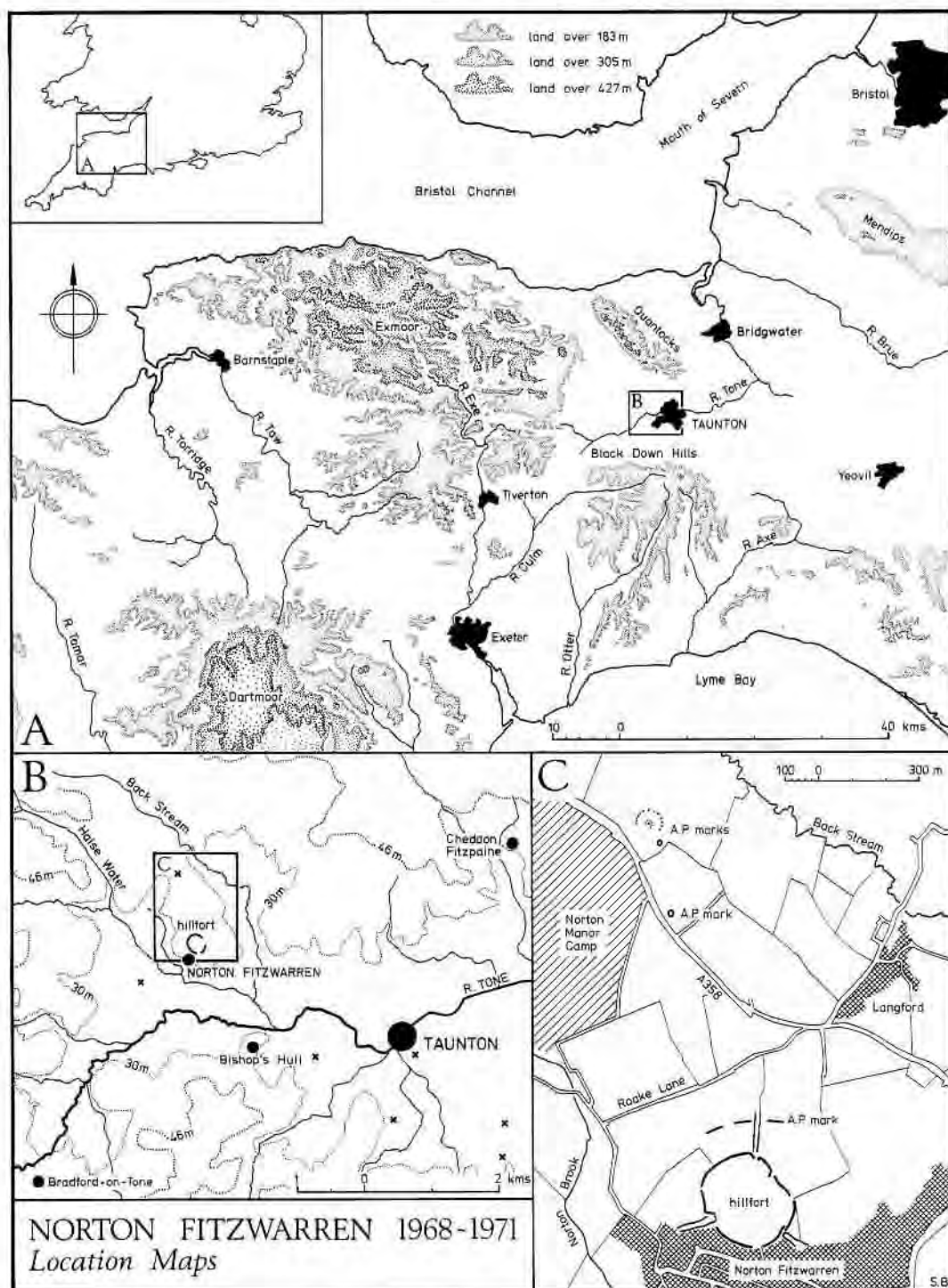


Fig. 1 Location maps, B with Romano-British sites indicated (x); drawn by S. Banks.

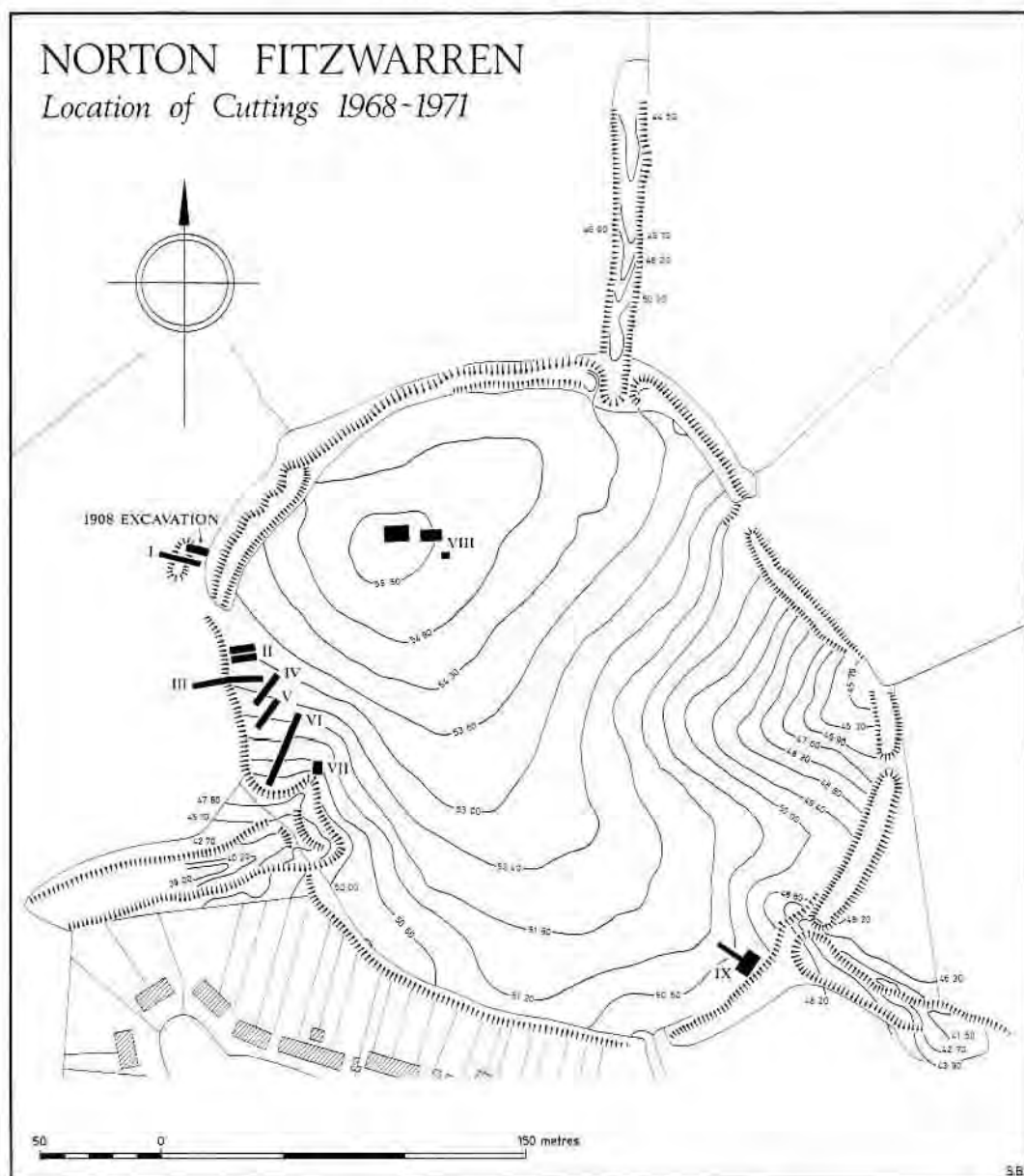


Fig. 2 The hillfort and location of cuttings; drawn by S. Banks.

slate and grit fragments, as well as redeposited marl and loam (Ussher 1908, 77). They also form a surface capping on Norton Fitzwarren hill itself. During the excavations these layers were recorded as ranging from large pebbles to fine sandy gravel. The surviving earthworks on the hill represent a univallate Iron Age hillfort. Three deep hollows run up to the defences of the hillfort and there has been speculation as to whether these indicate well-used entrances from the west, north and east, marl-quarrying pits of Romano-British or later date, or natural features.

In 1908, excavations by St George Gray located Bronze Age pottery underlying Iron Age pottery in a ditch between the hillfort bank and what appeared to be a counterscarp bank on the north-west (Fig. 2; Gray 1908). The evidence suggested that this counterscarp bank belonged with an earlier Bronze Age ditch rather than with the Iron Age rampart. The outer bank is visible only at this one point, indicating that only a short section of Bronze Age ditch and bank lay outside the hillfort.

An examination of the aerial photograph evidence has revealed some indications of the prehistoric landscape in the area north of the hillfort (Fig. 1). Apart from the RAF 1947 runs and the SCC 1971 and 1981 sets, there is a group of aerial photographs held at the National Monuments Record, principally deriving from a flight in August 1972. One km north of the hillfort the RAF 1947 photograph shows an impressive cropmark strongly indicating a Late Neolithic henge monument. Three concentric half and complete circles with diameters of 60m, 20m and 8m of apparent post pits are strikingly clear as dark marks against the pale background of a spring crop. To the east is a circular mark on the same photograph paralleled by a further circular mark 200m further east on the 1972 photos. The marks suggest the ditches of ploughed down barrows. In addition, 100m north of the hillfort are marks indicating three segments of an interrupted ditch running on a slight curve and traceable for 250m.

Prior to the excavations described here, deep ploughing of the hillfort interior produced surface scatters of Romano-British and Iron Age pottery, particularly concentrated on the west side, evidence that archaeological strata might survive better in the lee of the bank. Accordingly, the 1968–71 excavations were intended to clarify the occupation sequence by means of a series of trenches in the area where the ditch located by St George Gray was suspected to run and where relatively undisturbed deposits were known to lie.

The sequence of excavation cuttings was as follows (Fig. 2). In 1968 a 3m-square trench was cut on the inside of the Iron Age bank (later re-excavated and extended as Cutting IV) and a c. 30m by 15m area (Cutting VIII) was opened at the highest point of the hill within which three smaller areas were excavated. Location of the Bronze Age ditch to the west led to further excavation in 1970, following the failure of geophysical surveys in 1969 and 1970 to locate subsurface features. Cutting I to the south of the 1908 excavation trench, Cutting IV reopening the 1968 square, and Cutting V to the south clarified the ditch alignment. In 1971 five further trenches were excavated. Cuttings II, VI and VII were located on the west side of the hill and Cutting IX in the south-east corner. A machine trench, Cutting III, was excavated across the line of the Iron Age rampart on the west side at the only accessible point.

Some initial post-excavation work was carried out on the finds, and a draft excavation report prepared. In 1985 the surviving record comprised scale drawings in section and plan, site daybooks for the 1970 cuttings, notebooks, a preliminary account of the excavation, and photographs. The archive is held at the Somerset Record Office and the finds at the County Museum, Taunton, together with microfiche of the archive records. The latter are also available at the National Archaeological Record of the RCHM(E).

THE EXCAVATIONS

The excavated features have been assigned to four periods on the basis of the stratification and associated finds.

<i>Period 1</i> Bronze Age:	c. 2000 BC–7th century BC: successive phases of an enclosure ditch and bank. E/MBA to LBA pottery, MBA metalwork, LBA metal-working moulds.
<i>Period 2</i> Iron Age:	7th century BC–1st century AD: phases of hillfort defences, EIA, MIA (with ring ditches) and LIA pottery.
<i>Period 3</i> Romano-British:	late 3rd-century AD and 4th-century occupation.
<i>Period 4</i> Post Roman/modern:	?medieval marl quarrying, 20th-century activity.

A synthesis of the excavation evidence follows a detailed account of the stratigraphic sequence in each of the cuttings, and the descriptions of the various categories of finds.

CUTTING I (1970): Figs. 2–6

Excavated 4m to the south of the 1908 trench. The record comprises a scale section, sketch plans of some upper features, and a daybook.

Period I (Figs. 3 and 6)

The western half of a ditch (F7) cut to 3m below the natural surface was excavated at the east of the cutting. The full ditch profile is likely to be V-sectioned with a clearance channel at the base. On the west side of the ditch a layer of silt (37) was overlain by a spill of gravel (36). Above 37, at the base of the ditch, a layer of red clay (35) was sealed by a succession of deposits. Layers 33, 31 and 29 were of grey silt similar to 37, and interleaving layers of red clay (32, 30 and 28) were similar to layer 35. Amongst these layers was a mass of black silt (34). The fills may indicate a sequence of weathering (layers 37 and 36) followed by a process of silting alternating with the collapse of clay, but a deliberate cutting (F10) above layers 36 and 37 is more likely, with the regularity of the deposition of layers 35 to 28 suggesting a deliberate infilling. A uniform red marl was reported in these levels from the 1908 excavation 4m to the north (Gray 1908), and it may be F10 was confined to the area of Cutting I, in other words evidence of a pit rather than a ditch.

Layers 32 and 33 in F10 contained Middle and Late Bronze Age pottery (FSN 3, 4 and 5, a shouldered jar, Fig. 19.29).

In the west part of the trench a second and much smaller ditch was located. F8 was a 0.75m cut with an almost vertical east and almost horizontal western profile. A hollow (F9) was thought to have been excavated horizontally for 0.5m into the east face of the ditch, and it was here that the hoard of Middle Bronze Age metalwork was found (Figs. 15–17). The base fill of F8 comprised a layer of pebbles (13) sealed by a secondary fill of gravelly clay (12). Between these two ditches lay a 0.6m high bank (F4) formed of layers of red gravel (11) overlain by grey gravel (10) and a further layer of gravel (9) with a higher soil content than 10. Layer 11

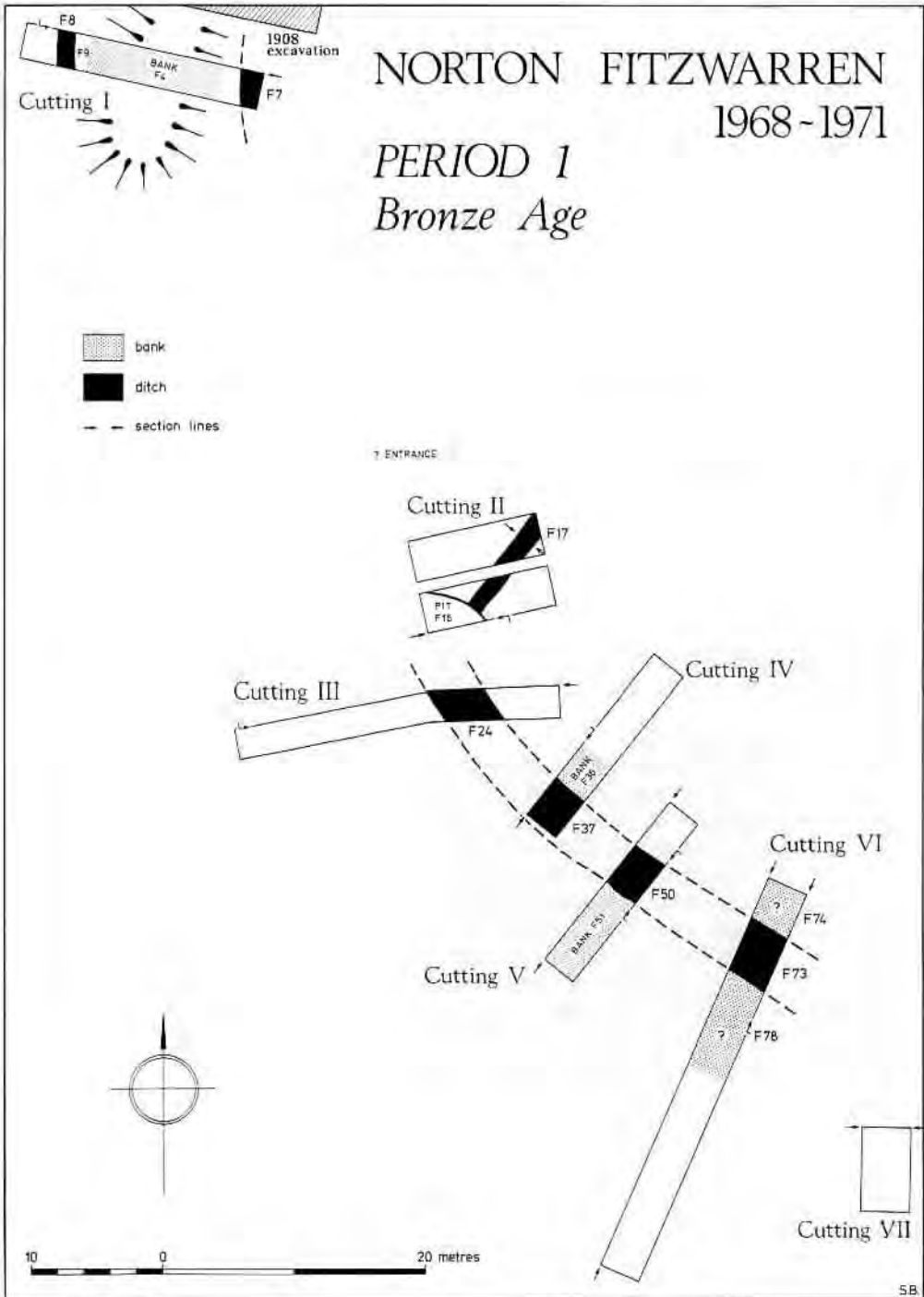


Fig. 3 Period 1; drawn by S. Banks.

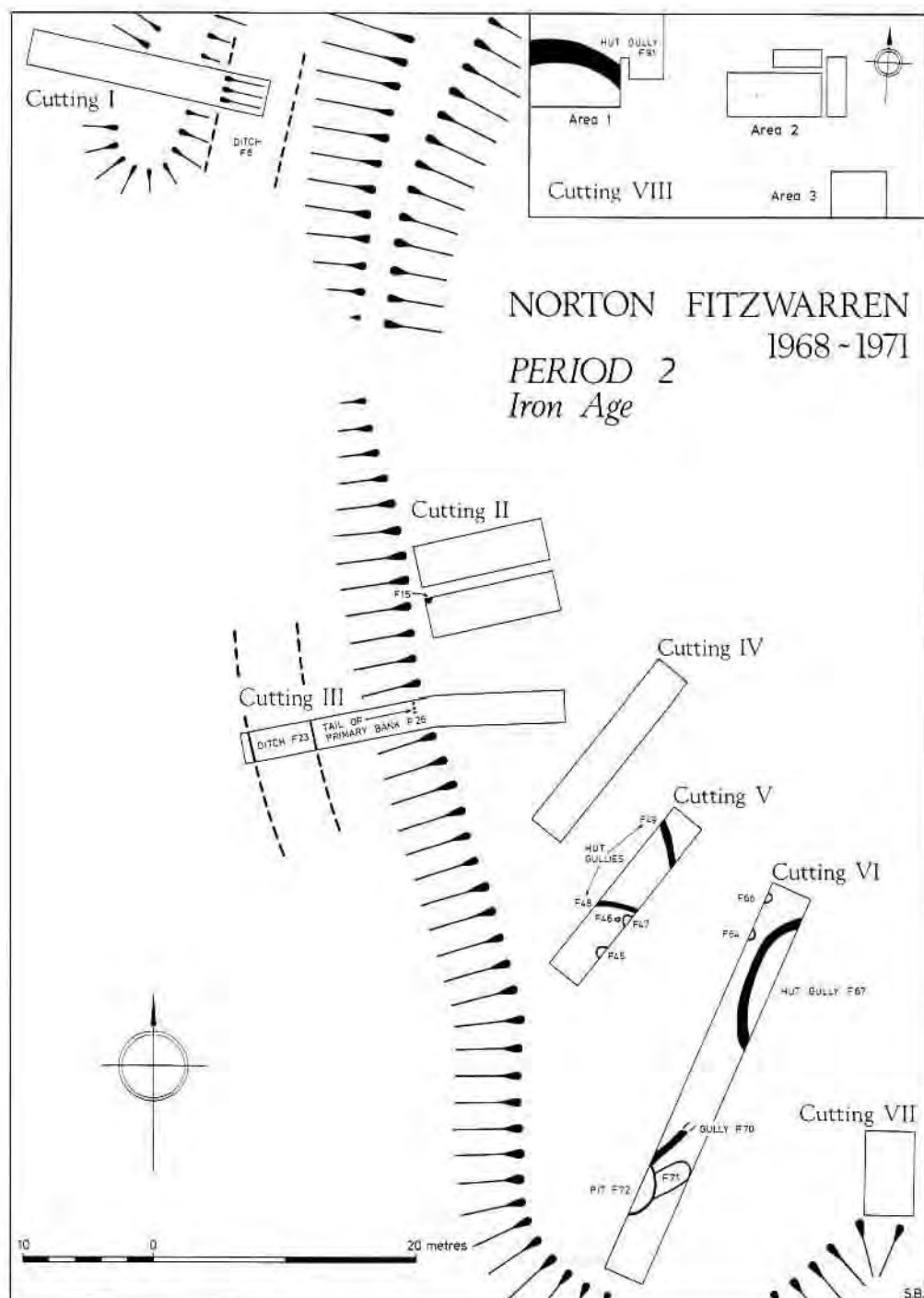


Fig. 4 Period 2; drawn by S. Banks.

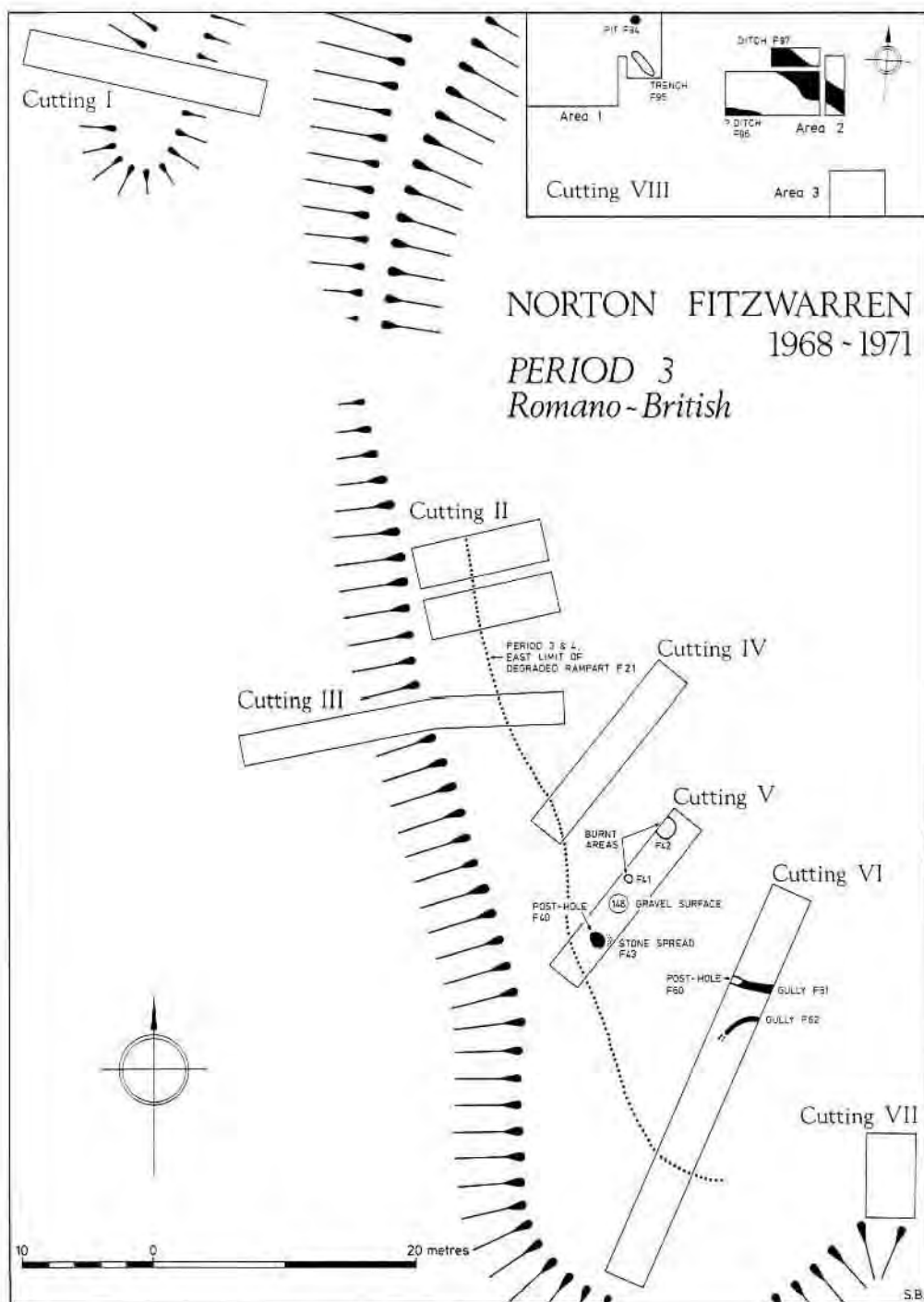


Fig. 5 Period 3; drawn by S. Banks.

continued to the west over the irregular natural surface. On the west face of layer 10, grey brown soil (8) was recorded sealed by an overall upper bank layer of large pebbles (7) continuing to the west and sealing F8. The origin of the bank is likely to be the natural gravel. It should also be noted that there is no demonstrable stratigraphic link between the bank and the inner and outer ditches. Nor is the hoard securely stratified. There were no finds of pottery from F8, F9 or F4.

Period 2 (Figs. 4 and 6)

The Bronze Age ditch (F7) was cut by a second ditch, F6. The portion of ditch profile within the cutting shows that the ditch was wider and shallower than F7. Above a base fill of black soil (27) was a layer of clay (26) and sand (25) sealed beneath a uniform layer of clean red clay (24). Although the western edge of the ditch was obscured by later features, layer 24 appeared to overlie a level area to the west and it may be that here the ditch was stepped. The ditch may have cut layers 36 and 37, but layer 28 does not appear to have been truncated with layer 27 lying conformably above. Layer 27 may represent stabilised turf within the ditch while layers 24, 25 and 26 seem to indicate a deliberate deposition of unmixed rampart material. The upper fill of F6 was cut by a ditch or pit (F5), only recorded in section. Fills of red clay (22), gravel (21) and silt (19 and 20) were sealed beneath further silts (18).

A succession of ditch recuttings is apparent. The associated finds present some conflicting dating evidence. Layers 20, 21, 22, 25, 26 and 27 contained both Bronze Age and Iron Age pottery, the latter predominating. Diagnostic Iron Age sherds were found in layer 27 (Late Bronze Age/Early Iron Age jar rim, FSN 30, not ill.), layer 25 (a possibly Early Iron Age decorated body sherd FSN 102, not ill.) and layer 20 (Middle Iron Age Glastonbury ware sherds, FSN 85–89, not ill.). Eight sherds of Romano-British pottery were found in layers 26 and 25 and a larger group in layer 18.

The evidence from the 1908 excavation a few metres to the north needs to be added to this data. Two distinct changes in the pottery inclusions were reported (Gray 1908), the first at c. 1m below ground level, beyond which there was very little Romano-British pottery, and the second at c. 1.5m, below which there was Bronze Age pottery only. Iron Age pottery was found in the zone between. It seems likely that the area above 1.5m corresponds with F6 in Cutting 1 and represents the primary hillfort ditch open in the Early Iron Age. The pottery in F5 suggests a Middle Iron Age recutting. As with the Romano-British pottery recorded by Gray below 1m, the sherds in layers 25 and 26 must be regarded as intrusive, while the quantity of pottery in layer 18 suggests that the layer is a sinkage horizon over the Iron Age ditch and should be viewed as part of layers 14 and 16 above. The base of layer 18 below the top of the ditch corresponds with the illustrated base of the Roman strata recorded in 1908 (*ibid.* fig. 2).

Period 3 (Fig. 6)

A thin layer of gravel (17) lay across the upper level of layer 24. Above 17, silt layers (16 and 14) divided by a band of charcoal (15) were recorded sealing the Period 2 ditches. These layers contained a large assemblage of 3rd and 4th-century Romano-British pottery. It would seem that this material represents an accumulation of silt and rubbish at the foot of the rampart, but the possibility of a recutting of the ditch (perhaps obscured by the Period 4 trench F2) cannot be ruled out. Layer 17 may represent a slumping of the bank F4. A few sherds of post-medieval pottery in layer 16 are likely to be intrusive.

Period 4

The latest recorded features were the remains of civil defence trenches dating from the 1939–1945 war. Two trenches (F1 and F2) were excavated together with a bank of clay above F4 (F3), and remnants of sandbags were noted. A shallow deposit of red gravel (6) may be associated. The trenches had subsequently been backfilled with clay and a thin topsoil (1) had developed across them. Twentieth-century pottery and coins were found in layers 1 and 5, together with a little Romano-British pottery.

CUTTING II (1971): Figs. 2–6

The record comprises: sections, a plan, and a draft written account. A narrow baulk was retained across the cutting. The location of the north-eastern section across F17 is not known, but a presumed position is indicated on Fig. 3.

Period 1 (Figs. 3 and 6)

A ditch F17 was recorded running north-east/south-west across the cutting, at right angles to the line of the ditches F7 in Cutting I and F24 in Cutting III (below). F17 was cut by a later feature to the south, but in the north its profile was V-sectioned, with a uniform clay and stone fill (72) which was noted in the draft account to be difficult to distinguish from the surrounding natural clay. The depth of the ditch here was 1.5m, slightly shallower than to the south where a complicated sequence of fills was recorded. Layer 69 may represent a fall of gravel sealed by gravelly soil (67) with a slump of clay above it to the east (64), in turn sealed by two layers of loamy clay (63 and 61) separated by a deposit of clay (62). A possible recutting of the ditch (F18) with a wider shallower profile was clear in the north section, with a band of charcoal (66) below loamy clay and stone (75). Layers 61 and 72 in F17 contained Early/Middle Bronze Age pottery (including FSN 6–10, Fig. 18.4–7).

The ditch was cut by a pit (F16), only part of which lay within the cutting. The base fill was of stoney loam (60) below a lens of charcoal (59) and layers of clay (56, 58) separated by loam (57) and stoney lenses. An upper fill of black loamy clay (55) sealed these fills.

Layers 55 and 60 in F16 contained some residual Early/Middle Bronze Age pottery (FSN 24, Fig. 18.8) and much Late Bronze Age pottery including vessels FSN 23 and 25 (Fig. 19.27, 28) and some Late Iron Age sherds which are likely to be intrusive. The Late Bronze Age vessels were associated in layer 60 with fragments of fired clay forming moulds used in metalworking (Fig. 14).

Period 2 (Figs. 4 and 6)

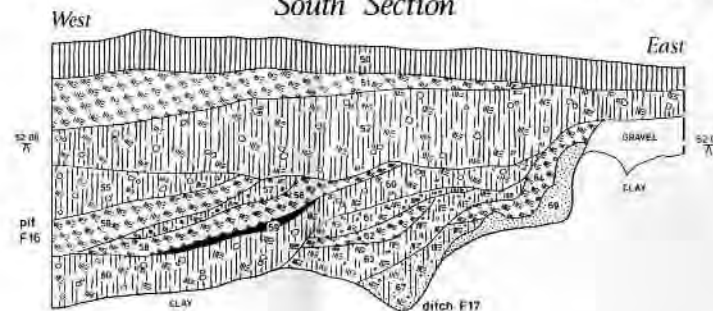
A vertical-sided post-hole (F15) cut the F16 pit fills and both the post-hole and pit were sealed beneath a thick band of loam and clay with stones (52). This deposit was in turn sealed beneath the tail of the Iron Age hillfort rampart (F13 layer 51). Layer 52 may represent a cultivation soil perhaps terminating westward at the initial or secondary hillfort bank (see F26 and F29 in Cutting III below), in which case layer 51 represents part of the final phase rampart also identified in Cutting III. Layer 52 contained a relatively large group of Bronze Age and Early Iron Age pottery (FSN 26–29, Fig. 18.9, Fig. 19.30, 31), while a few Bronze Age and Iron Age sherds were found in layer 51. A single, presumably intrusive, Romano-British sherd was found in layer 52.

NORTON FITZWARREN 1968-1971

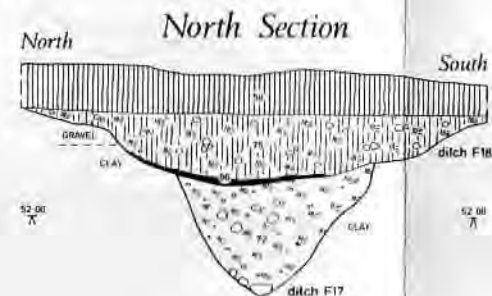
Cutting I



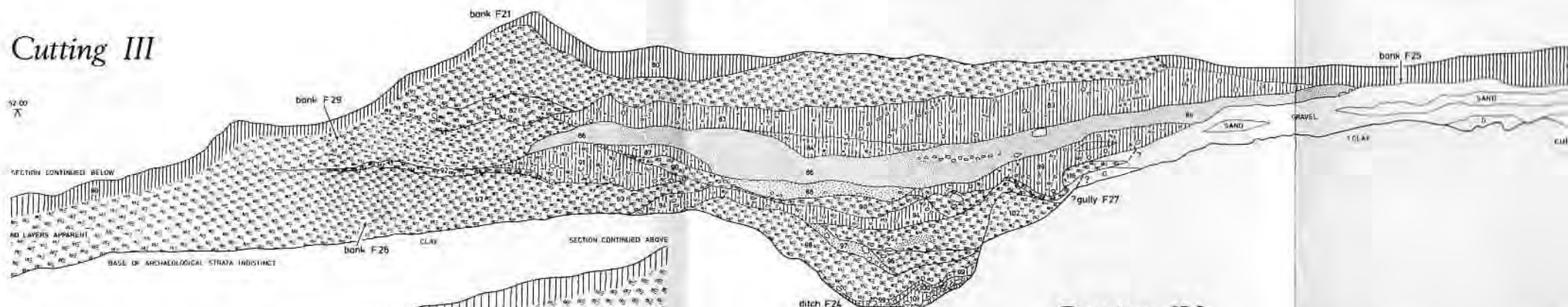
South Section



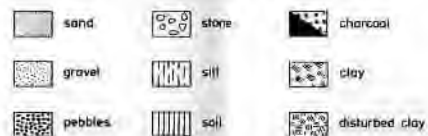
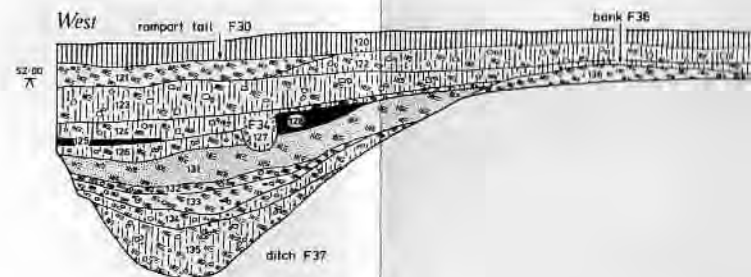
Cutting II



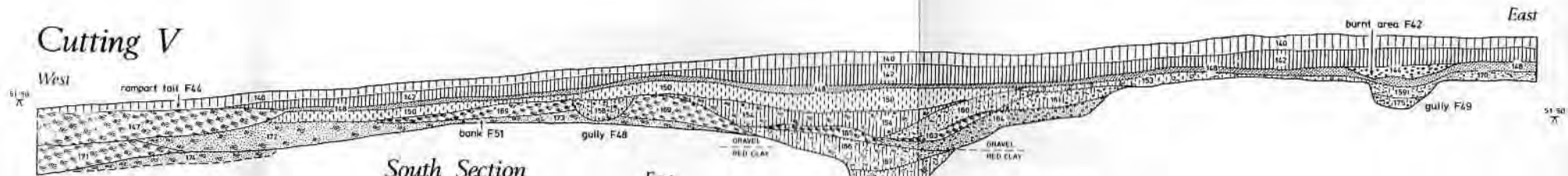
Cutting III



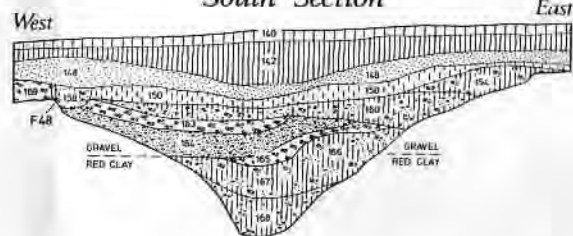
Cutting IV



Cutting V

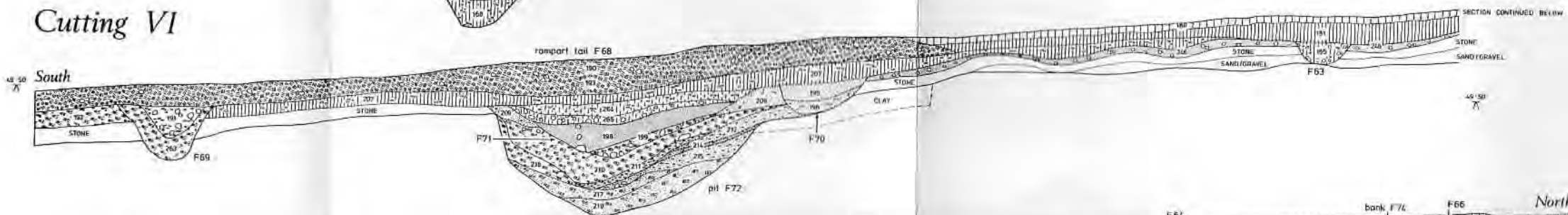


South Section

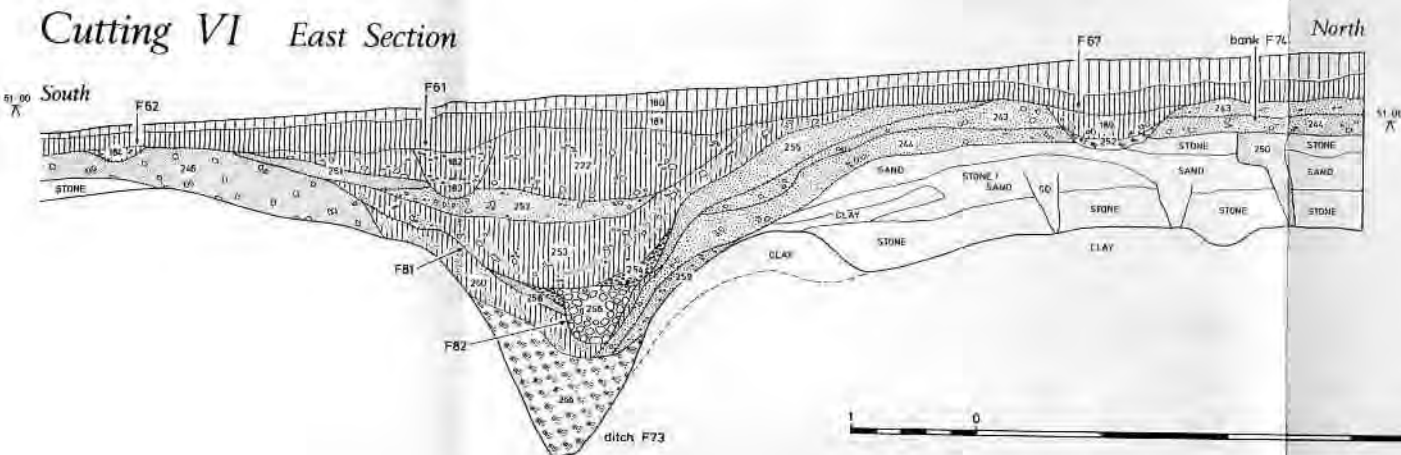


NORTON FITZWARREN 1968-197

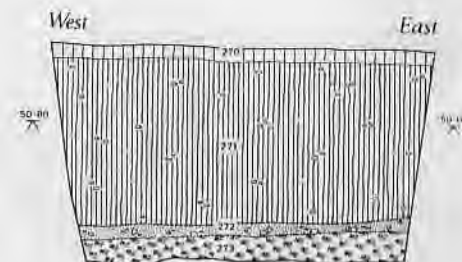
Cutting VI



Cutting VI East Section



Cutting VII



1 0 5 metres

Period 4

A layer of ploughsoil (50) with no clear interface with layer 52 was recorded overlying layers 51 and 52. The layer contained Romano-British and later pottery as well as further Early/Middle Bronze Age sherds (FSN 108–110, Fig. 18.1, 8, 10).

CUTTING III (1971): Figs. 2–6

The cutting was machine-excavated and the drawn section is the only record.

Period 1 (Figs. 3 and 6)

A 1.2m deep flat-bottomed ditch with sloping sides (F24) was recorded with a slightly uneven steep section on the east side. At the base of the ditch were layers of red loamy clay and stone (101), black loam (99) and a lens of red clay (100). Above was a thick deposit of red clay (98) and further deposits of red clay (96 and 95) interleaved with gravel lenses (eg 97). A mass of clay to the east (102), although not securely identified as ditch fill is unlikely to represent the natural clay. Further to the east the distinction between natural sands and gravels and the archaeological strata was indistinct, possibly as a result of disturbance by a later gully.

Period 2 (Figs. 4 and 6)

A possible soil horizon (94) surviving in the subsidence over the ditch was sealed to the west beneath layers of clay (92 and 93) and a deposit described as red soil (91) together forming a probable bank (F26). Above layer 91 a layer of grey clay (90) continued eastward across the Period 1 ditch. A possible gully (F27) filled with gravel and clay was noted at this horizon. Layers of gravel (88), loamy clay and stone (89, 87), and sand (86) filled the depression over the ditch and levelled up to and over the bank. On this level a layer of red clay (85) formed a succeeding bank (F29) curtailing the western spread of a layer of loamy clay with stone (83). Further clay deposits above (82, 81) succeeded the deposition or accumulation of layer 83, and formed a third possible bank phase (F21). To the west a U-shaped ditch F23, 5m wide and 3m deep, was filled with primary deposits of red clay (113) and brown clay (114). The profile of a probable recutting of the ditch (F22) was clear in the section.

The evidence suggests that the primary hillfort bank (F26) was constructed directly onto the natural clay and the filled-in ditch F24, and a succession of rebuildings and refurbishings were related to levelling and land use in the interior. Of these, two stages of rampart construction may be noted, the first represented by layer 85 (F29) and the second by layers 81 and 82 (F21). Layer 83 may represent a cultivation horizon contemporary with F29.

Period 4

A disturbed layer of red clay (111) sealing the ditches F22 and F23 must represent eroded material from the rampart. An intermittent topsoil layer (80) was recorded on the crest of the rampart, and as a ploughsoil to the east.

No provenanced finds were recovered, but two Late Iron Age rims were noted in section cleaning (FSN 111–112, Fig. 21.56, 57), as well as some Romano-British pottery.

CUTTING IV (1970): Figs. 2-6

The cutting was excavated to complement an earlier trench cut in 1968 for which no adequate record survived. The earlier trench backfill was located in 1970 at a depth of 1.5m and the original drawing of the illustrated section notes that the edge of the Bronze Age ditch was confused by the earlier trench fills. A daybook, section and sketch plans record the 1970 trench.

Period 1 (Figs. 3 and 6)

A U-shaped ditch F37, 1.5m deep, was recorded with a base fill of compacted stoney dark soil (135). A notch in the ditch profile above layer 135 suggests that the ditch may have been recut. Above the base fill of dark stoney soil (134) were layers of different coloured stoney clay (133, 132), a deposit of sandy clay (131), and a layer of brown clayey loam (126) which may represent a turf line. To the east a low bank of clay (F36) may have resulted from the cutting or recutting of the ditch. Pottery of Early/Middle Bronze Age date was found in layer 134, including FSN 12 and 13 (Fig. 18.12 and 13). Two further Early/Middle Bronze Age sherds FSN 113 and 114 (Fig. 18.16 and 17) were associated with similar levels in the 1968 trench.

Period 2 (Figs. 4 and 6)

Two areas of burning with occupation debris were recorded beneath a gravel layer (130) east of the bank and ditch. Over the ditch a discontinuous band of charcoal (125, 128) was cut by a gully (F34). These features and the gravel spread were sealed beneath ploughsoil deposits 123 and 124 which were not readily distinguishable. Above these layers in the west part of the cutting, clay from the tail of the hillfort rampart (121) had been redeposited, possibly by erosion and ploughing. Bronze Age and Iron Age pottery was found in 123 and 124 (FSN 31-35 and 125, Fig. 18.14 and 15, Fig. 19.32 and 33). Romano-British pottery found in layers 130 and 123 may be intrusive.

Period 4

A ploughsoil layer (120) sealed the rampart tail and the Period 2 layers to the east. Ploughing immediately preceding the excavation is likely to account for the position of the rampart tail. Its eastern terminal in the section suggests that it was not in its original position. Layer 122, apparently below the rampart, may in fact be later. A large assemblage of Romano-British pottery was found in layers 120 and 122. A sherd of post-medieval pottery was found in layer 122, and a sherd of medieval pottery and a fragment of post-medieval tile in layer 120.

CUTTING V (1970): Figs. 2-5, 7 and 8

Both the north and south sections were illustrated and phased plans were drawn. A daybook account recorded the cutting.

Period 1 (Figs. 3, 7 and 8)

The southward continuation of the Bronze Age ditch was recorded as a concave profiled cut F50, 1.1m deep on the west and 1.25m deep to the east. The base fills were of dark stoney soil (166, 167, 168) and a resemblance was noted with layers 94 and 95 in Cutting III. These layers were sealed beneath gravel (164) and clay (165) layers. To the west lay possible elements of a bank (F51). A layer of brown gravelly clay (174) was sealed beneath a bank of red clay (171) and sandy clay (172 and 173).

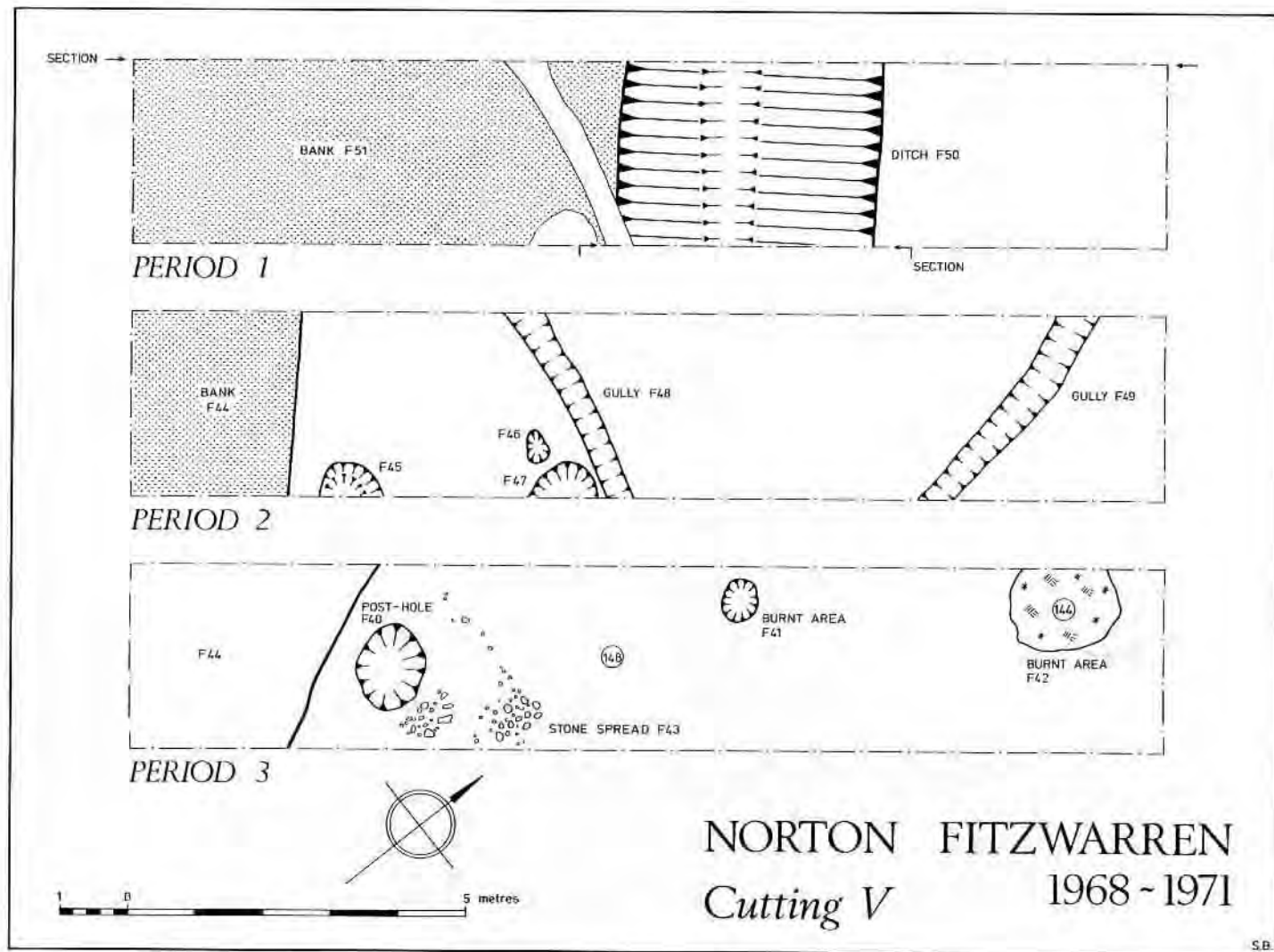


Fig. 8 Cutting V: Periods 1-3; drawn by S. Banks.

Layer 169 above 173 formed a clearly identifiable upper bank layer. Bronze Age pottery was found in layers 171 and 172 and in ditch fills 166 (FSN 1, 2, 14-16, not ill.) and 167 (FSN 11, Fig. 18.21). A Late Iron Age sherd was found in layer 172.

Period 2 (Figs. 4, 7 and 8)

Layers of sandy clay and loam (160 and 161) and clayey loam with stone (154) filled the subsidence over F50. To the west, overlying layer 171, was a layer (147) representing the tail of the Iron Age bank (F44). Two curvilinear gullies F48 and F49 were recorded in the cutting. Both were U-shaped and may represent ring gullies marking different house sites. Two postholes (F45 and F47) were recorded to the south of F48. They were steep-sided and c. 0.2.m deep and may be associated with a further smaller posthole F46 recorded only in plan. These features were sealed by layers of dark loam and stone (150, 153) and a layer of sandy gravel.

Iron Age pottery was recorded in layers 150, 154, 160 and 163 (FSN 17, 18, 40-48, Fig. 19.35 and 36, Fig. 20.37-42), over F50, and in F47, F48 and F49. The latter two features, possibly circular house foundation trenches, contained Middle Iron Age Glastonbury ware (FSN 50-52, 55-56, Fig. 21.49-53). A single Romano-British sherd in F49 is likely to be intrusive.

There are difficulties in allocating bank features to Periods 1 and 2. The west end of the cutting was not securely recorded and it may be that layers 171 and 147 and possibly 172 are Period 2 layers associated with the Iron Age defences. It is, however, more likely that there are two phases of Bronze Age bank, the first represented by layer 171, and the second by layer 169.

Period 3 (Figs. 5, 7 and 8)

From the tail of the Iron Age rampart eastward lay an overall surface of hard packed gravel (148). A possible posthole (F40) was recorded cutting 148, and stone and burnt deposits were noted on the surface. F41 and F42 were spreads of burnt material. Large fragments of iron bloom were recorded but subsequently lost. This material may, however, have been fayalitic slag (see report on the industrial materials, below). A layer of stone F43 was associated with F40. Middle and Late Iron Age pottery was found in F41 (FSN 94-95) and 148 (FSN 96-100, Fig. 21.58) while Romano-British pottery was located in F40, F41 and F42, and in layer 148. Although the exposure was on a limited scale a Romano-British working area seems likely to be represented, one which clearly disturbed Middle and Late Iron Age levels and features.

Period 4

Layers 140 and 142 represented a sealing ploughsoil. A quern stone of Romano-British type was found in layer 140 (Fig. 12.3).

CUTTING VI (1971): Figs. 2-5, 7 and 9

Phased plans and sections were drawn. The illustrated section existed only as a publication drawing; the original field drawing is lost. The surviving drawing is unnumbered and unannotated. It is possible to key the finds to features and even to certain positions in features, but not securely to layers with the exception of the base fills of the Bronze Age ditch.

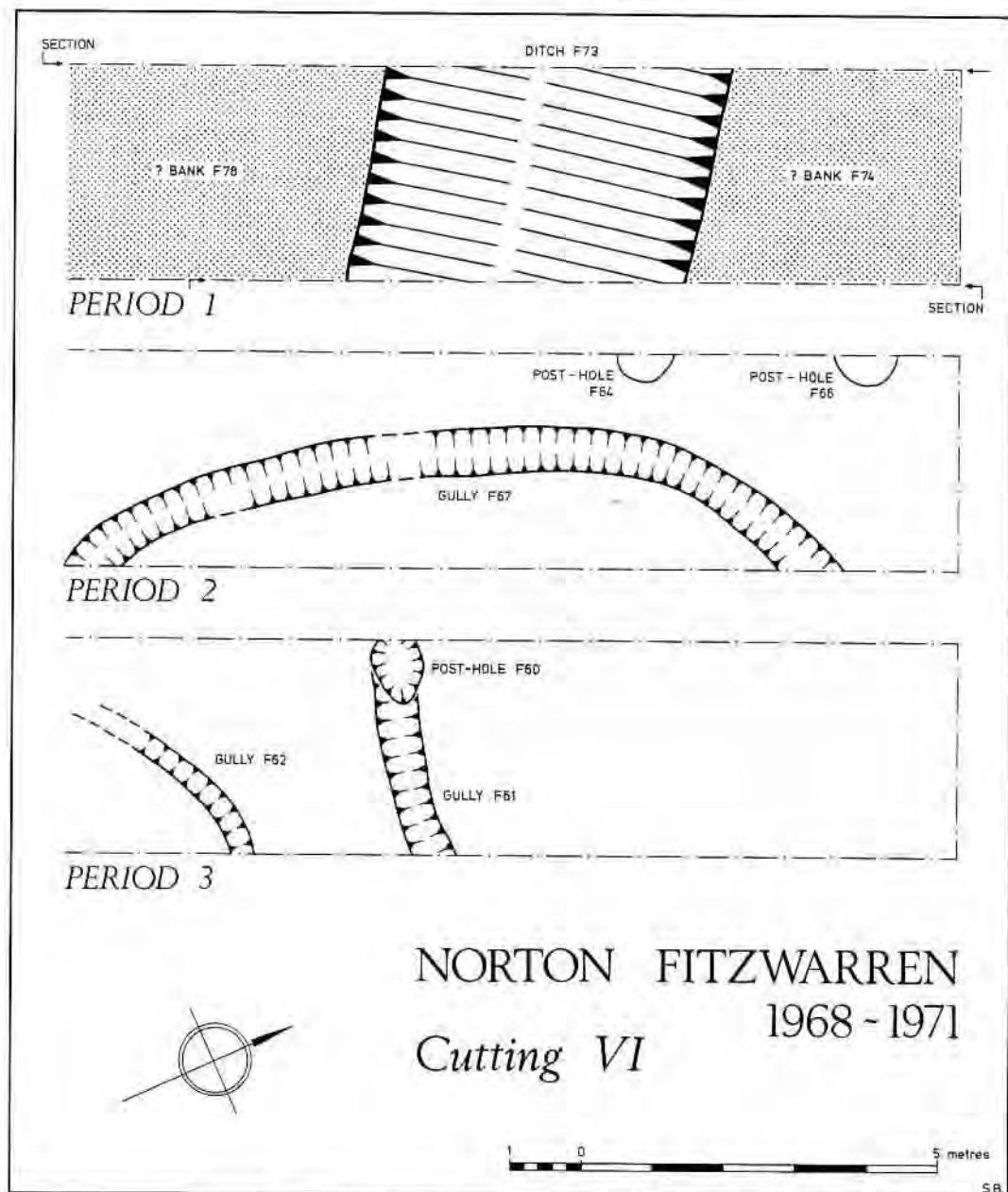


Fig. 9 Cutting VI: Periods 1-3; drawn by S. Banks.

Period 1 (Figs. 3, 7 and 9)

A ditch F73 was excavated in the north part of the cutting continuing the ditch alignments described above. F73 was 2.3m deep and between 4 and 5m wide. Its profile was sharply V-sectioned with a clearance channel at the base. The lowest ditch fills comprised layers of clay and clay with stone (235-240). Above were interleaving layers of sand, sand and stone, loamy clay, and stone and gravel

(223–233). A recutting is clear in the east section (F81) at a depth of 1m and a similar cut may be marked at the base of layer 232 in the west section. In it was the clear outline of a stone-filled post pit (F82).

Comparison of the two sections shows that the recut ditch was not only deliberately backfilled but the different levels of apparently similar deposits in the two sections indicate that the infilling may have been introduced from the line of the ditch as well as from the sides.

A bank, although much degraded, may be inferred on both sides of the ditch. To the south a layer of sand and stone (246) thickens towards the ditch and can be traced for c. 13m to the south. In the east section layer 246 fills the upper part of the ditch as slumped material. To the north, gravel and stone layers (244, 245) may also represent bank remnants. It is just possible that layer 250 represents a stakehole rather than a fissure crack in the natural deposits similar to those apparent at a lower level.

Bronze Age pottery was found at the base of the ditch in layers 239 and 240 (FSN 19 not ill., 20, Fig. 19.23, and P2, Fig. 18.22) and in layers (tentatively identified as 232 and 233) above the clay fills (FSN 21, 22, 136, Fig. 19.24 and 26, and P4, Fig. 19.25). The assemblages from both levels were uniformly Early/Middle Bronze Age. An Early Bronze Age perforated whetstone (Fig. 13.1) was found in layer 233.

Period 2 (Figs. 4, 7 and 9)

In the south part of the cutting a concave-profiled pit, F72, was partly excavated. The pit fills were of clay, sand, gravel and stone (209–218). The pit was cut by a similar profiled but linear feature (F71) which terminated to the east within the cutting. Fills of sandy clay and loam (199, 198, 265 and 264) contained a certain amount of stone rubble. Some 3m to the south were indications that *in situ* rampart material (192) lay within the cutting with a ditch or post pit (F69) defining its original limits. A ditch F70 was traced for several metres to the north east, sealed beneath a soil layer 207 which also formed a level across F71 and F72. To the north a curving gully F67 defined an area to the east; and two steep-sided and flat-bottomed pits or postholes (F64 and F66) outside the area defined by F67 may belong to this phase.

Early Iron Age pottery was found in layer 210 in F72 (FSN 64–72), in layers filling F71 above (FSN 73–80), and in F70 (Fig. 20.43–48). Layer 207 sealing these pits and F70 contained a further large assemblage (FSN 81–84, not ill.). Romano-British pottery was found in F72, F71 and layer 207 in small quantities and is likely to be either intrusive or mistakenly provenanced.

To the north F64, F66 and F67 were thought to be of Iron Age date by the excavator, but no pottery other than a few Romano-British sherds in F67 can be attributed to them securely. F67 resembles the ring gullies located in Cutting V and may represent a further circular hut site.

Period 3 (Figs. 5, 7 and 9)

Two gullies in the north part of the cutting (F61 and F62), a post-hole (F60) cutting F61, and two features recorded only in section (F63 and F65) represent the surviving Romano-British features. F60, F61 and F62 contained Romano-British pottery, although the large assemblage from F61 may possibly be a mistaken attribution and the pottery have been found in the subsidence over F81 and F73.

Period 4

A ploughsoil and its sinkage horizon (180 and 181) overlay the earlier features. The disturbed clay to the south probably resulted from ploughing of this area of the hillfort immediately prior to the excavation, resulting in the spreading of the hillfort rampart.

CUTTING VII (1971): Figs. 5 and 7

The record comprises a section drawing and a written account.

Periods 3 and 4

Above the natural clay a thin merging layer of dirty clay (273) lay beneath a compacted surface of stone and gravel (272). Above this, an undifferentiated deposit of ploughsoil (271) over 2m deep was recorded beneath the contemporary ploughsoil. Romano-British pottery was found throughout the sequence and post-medieval pottery in 270 and 271. It may be that 272 and 273 are Period 3 deposits.

CUTTING VIII (1968): Figs. 2, 4 and 5

An area was cleared by machine but only partially excavated by hand. Three sub areas (Areas 1-3) were cleared to the natural surface. Plans and a written account represent the surviving record. There is no correlation of the finds with the stratigraphy, and it is not possible to assign the Romano-British pottery assemblage securely to its contexts.

Period 2 (Fig. 4)

A curving gully was recorded in Area 1. The gully F91 was 0.9m deep and 1.75m wide. There was a group of possible post-holes in its base. No finds were recorded from this feature, although the excavator noted a few small Iron Age sherds during excavation, and interpreted the feature as the drainage ditch for a hut site. F91 could well be a further house foundation to parallel those found in Cuttings V and VI. Two Middle Iron Age Glastonbury-ware sherds were found in upper layers in this area. A later feature in Area 2 (F97) contained a Late Iron Age assemblage in its backfills, indicating some otherwise unidentified contemporary activity.

Period 3 (Fig. 5)

A ditch F97 was recorded to the east. F97 was V-sectioned and its line had been partly recut as a narrower and similarly V-sectioned ditch. To the west a segment of possible ditch F96 was recorded on a different alignment to F97. A 2.4m long $\times$ 0.6m wide $\times$ 0.3m deep trench F95 was recorded. With the exception of a sloping south side, its sides were vertical, and in places were lined with fire-reddened stones including a quern fragment (Fig. 12.1). The pit sides too were reddened by fire. The fill was of fine charcoal-rich soil and in it stone slabs appeared to have been deliberately positioned and were interpreted as hearths. The sloping end would certainly suggest the below-ground remains of a kiln, but hearths within it are not likely. There was no evidence of any associated features with the exception of a pit or post-hole F94 to the north. F95 and F97 contained Romano-British pottery. A large assemblage was collected from Area 2 but cannot be securely provenanced. As noted above, Late Iron Age pottery was found in F97 (FSN 128-131).

Period 4

The Period 3 features were sealed beneath a ploughsoil, and there was evidence that the Period 3 levels had been truncated by Period 4 ploughing.

CUTTING IX (1971): Fig. 2

Only a written record of the archaeology exists for this area.

Period 4

A thin soil (310) was recorded overlying the natural surface. The interface was a spread of white material interpreted as a natural solution deposit. A few sherds of Romano-British pottery were found in layer 310, together with post-medieval pottery and tile fragments.

THE FINDS

THE FLINT AND CHERT ARTEFACTS by Alan Saville

A total of 177 pieces of humanly modified flint and chert from the Langmaids' excavations was submitted to the writer for examination. The composition of this collection in terms of raw materials and typology is recorded in Table 1.

TABLE 1: THE FLINT AND CHERT ARTEFACTS (all weights given in grams)

	<i>flint</i>		<i>chert</i>		<i>combined totals</i>			
	no.	wt.	no.	wt.	no.	%	wt.	%
unretouched flakes	48	183.8	54	590.9	102	57.6	774.7	44.5
cores	2	27.2	4	185.3	6	3.4	212.5	12.2
core fragments	3	52.6	-	-	3	1.7	52.6	3.0
flaked lumps	1	16.7	2	152.9	3	1.7	169.6	9.8
scrapers	8	123.9	1	12.6	9	5.1	136.5	7.8
piercers	3	17.3	1	13.6	4	2.3	30.9	1.8
knife/piercer	1	7.2	-	-	1	0.6	7.2	0.4
edge-trimmed flakes	11	82.4	2	17.1	13	7.3	99.5	5.7
worn-edge piece	1	13.4	-	-	1	0.6	13.4	0.8
flake with edge gloss	1	1.7	-	-	1	0.6	1.7	0.1
misc. retouched pieces	23	118.0	10	117.2	33	18.6	235.2	13.5
unclass. burnt frag	1	6.2	-	-	1	0.6	6.2	0.4
Totals	103	650.4	74	1089.6	177		1740.0	

Raw material

The flints are all in an uncorticated, undiscoloured condition, with a colour range from dark to light/medium grey. This colour range, together with differences in the smoothness of the cortex surviving on some pieces, suggests the parent nodules originated from more than one source. One piece is of specific interest in this regard (Fig. 11.14), since it comprises a very large flake (length 91 × breadth 52 × thickness 13mm), struck from near the exterior of a large flint nodule. The cortex is thin and unabraded, and a pointed projection on the dorsal surface could only have survived intact on a nodule either directly from the chalk or possibly from a clay-with-flints deposit. Either way this piece certainly, and the other flints probably, derive from nodules imported by or for prehistoric knappers from the chalk country beyond Somerset, probably from Wiltshire to the east (*cf.* Grinsell 1985).

A couple of pieces of flint in the collection are stained a yellowish-brown colour and may derive from a gravel-flint source.

The chert pieces exhibit a great variety of colours: yellow, orange, red, grey, and brown. The cortex, where it remains, varies in degree of smoothness and abrasion, on some pieces being so smooth that the exploitation of water-worn cobbles is almost certainly indicated.

The material is all Greensand chert and has presumably been obtained from more than one source in the south Somerset region.

Context

Thirty-five of the pieces could not be assigned any provenance within the site, while the remaining 142 derived from seven of the cuttings as shown in Table 2.

TABLE 2: PROVENANCE OF FLINT AND CHERT ARTEFACTS FROM EXCAVATION AREAS

<i>Area</i>	<i>Flint</i>	<i>Chert</i>	<i>Total Nos.</i>
Cutting I	4	3	7
Cutting II	9	15	24
Cutting IV	19	9	28
Cutting V	17	13	30
Cutting VI	17	18	35
Cutting VIII	9	1	10
Cutting IX	1	7	8
Totals	76	66	142

No sieving was undertaken and large pieces and worked items were specially selected (N. Langmaid, pers. comm.). This is reflected in the collection. The statistical profile of a prehistoric lithic assemblage excavated in an unbiased way would conventionally show unretouched flakes forming over 90 per cent of the assemblage by number, not 58 per cent as is the case in this collection (Table 1).

Within the group of 142 pieces assignable to cuttings, the phasing of the layers from which they derived is presented in Table 3. Since the potential date based upon the typological character of all the pieces in the collection is Bronze Age or earlier, the flint and chert artefacts must all be residual except for those in Period 1 contexts.

TABLE 3: PHASING OF THE FLINT AND CHERT ARTEFACTS

<i>Period</i>	<i>No.</i>
1	22
2	42
3	11
4	55
?	12
Total	142

The twenty-two Period 1 artefacts came mainly from the large Bronze Age ditch, with three from the smaller ditch F17 in Cutting II. Only two of these pieces were of sufficient interest to warrant illustration, a scraper (Fig. 10.7) and the large flake with possible edge-trimming already mentioned (Fig. 11.14). There are no particular typological grounds for suggesting that either of these two items, or the other twenty pieces, or indeed any of the items within the whole collection are necessarily of Bronze Age date, so all the lithic material can be regarded as probably residual in the contexts in which it was found.

The implication from this assessment is that the pieces in Period 1 contexts, and possibly all the rest of the collection, derived from disturbance of artefacts present on and in the existing soil when the Bronze Age ditches were cut. This is supported by the fact that the small size of the lithic collection, even taking biased recovery into account, is by itself a strong argument against it relating to the main phase of Bronze Age occupation on the site, since one would expect at the very least a numerical equivalence between numbers of lithic items and numbers of potsherds.

Typology

The collection includes only a limited number of chronologically diagnostic pieces, suggestive of both Mesolithic and Neolithic activity, and these are all illustrated.

The most distinctively Mesolithic pieces are the bipolar bladelet core (Fig. 10.4) and the unretouched flake from the face of a bladelet core (Fig. 10.1), both in chert. Also probably Mesolithic are two further cores, one a simple single-platform core of chert (Fig. 10.3), the other a pyramidal microcore of flint (Fig. 10.2). Possibly Mesolithic are two of the piercers (Fig. 11.10 and 9), of chert and flint respectively.

Definitely post-Mesolithic is the worn-edge implement (Fig. 11.12) on a flake from a polished flint axehead. This flake, from the bevelled edge of an axehead, has been retouched, possibly to form a scraping or piercing edge at the distal tip, which has broken prior to reuse for some purpose which in turn has led to extensive edge-wear at the transverse distal break and down the right-hand side edge.

Also post-Mesolithic are the scrapers (Fig. 10.5–8), the piercer/knife (Fig. 11.11), the edge-trimmed flake with edge-gloss (Fig. 11.13), and the large flake with possible retouch/trimming on the lower lateral edges (Fig. 11.14).

One of the scrapers (Fig. 10.5) is of particular interest in view of the extensive wear on the bulbar surface, which has created a large area of polish. This is an unusual end-and-side scraper type with proximal retouch removing the platform. No precise parallels can be cited for this implement, but scrapers with polished ventral surfaces are more often noted within Late Neolithic/Early Bronze Age assemblages than those of earlier date (Smith 1965, fig. 82, F228).

The post-Mesolithic pieces, all in flint, could be either Neolithic or Early Bronze Age, though it is thought that at least three of the scrapers (Fig. 10.6–8) are more likely to be Neolithic, as is the edge-trimmed flake with edge gloss (Fig. 11.13) and the large flake (Fig. 11.14). Looked at as a whole, the collection does include a number of blade and bladelike pieces, both in flint and chert, which give a general impression of Mesolithic/Neolithic rather than Late Neolithic/Early Bronze Age debris, but this must remain a fairly superficial judgement in view of the small size and obviously mixed nature of the collection.

In view of recent propositions about Iron Age flintworking in Somerset (Smith 1981), and since Norton Fitzwarren was occupied during this period, it is worth stressing that there is nothing in the composition of the lithic assemblage to even hint at an Iron Age date (*cf.* Saville 1981).

Conclusion

The diagnostic pieces within this small collection indicate the presence of human activity on the Norton Fitzwarren hilltop at some time during the Mesolithic period, although these pieces are not distinctive enough to suggest an earlier or later phase within the Mesolithic. The collection shows a possible tendency for there to be a greater use of Greensand chert rather than flint for the Mesolithic items, which might suggest easier or preferential access to that raw material at this period. Indeed, it could be the case that all the chert pieces relate to Mesolithic activity, in which event the higher proportional presence of this raw material when the collection is assessed by weight (Table 1) may suggest that the Mesolithic contribution to this lithic assemblage is more important than any other.

The post-Mesolithic pieces are equally difficult to assign to a definite phase or phases, and are almost certainly an arbitrary mixture of chronologically disparate residual items. There are some signs to suggest, however, that Early/Middle Neolithic rather than Late Neolithic/Early Bronze Age activity was likely to be a more important element in the formation of the collection.

This analysis suggests, therefore, that at least two phases of human activity – Mesolithic and Neolithic – can be documented at Norton Fitzwarren prior to the first period represented by the excavated archaeological features with their Bronze Age ceramic contents.

*Catalogue of the illustrated lithic artefacts**Fig. 10*

1. Chert. Unretouched flake from the face of a bladelet core. No. 57. Cutting V, Period 2.

2. Flint. Pyramidal, single platform (A1) microblade core. Maximum dimension 29mm; weight 13.7 grams. No. 137. Unstratified.
3. Chert. Single platform (A2) core. Maximum dimension 44mm; weight 22.3 grams. No. 114. Cutting VI, Period 3.
4. Chert. Bipolar, two platform (B2) core. Maximum dimension 55mm, weight 27.0 grams. No. 37. Cutting IV, unstratified.
5. Flint. Atypical, convex end-and-side scraper. Retouch at the base has removed the striking platform and the inverse retouch at the distal edge is of blunting character. The line added to the dorsal view shows the extent of the continuous retouch on the dorsal face. The black areas on the ventral view are worn smooth, and appear as highly polished. No. 23. Cutting V, Period 4.
6. Flint. Distal segment of an end-of-blade scraper, snapped at the base. No. 46. Cutting V, Period 2.
7. Flint. Thick, short extended-end scraper. No. 34. Cutting IV, Period 1.
8. Flint. End-scraper. No. 135. Cutting II, Period 2.

Fig. 11

9. Flint. Piercer formed at the distal tip of the flake by both dorsal and inverse retouch. No. 166. Cutting VIII, Period 4.
10. Chert. Piercer, formed at the junction of the retouched transverse distal edge and the unretouched left lateral edge. The line on the dorsal view shows the extent of the distal retouch. No. 121. Cutting II, unstratified.
11. Flint. Piercer/knife. Extensively retouched flake with shallow retouch on the left side creating a probable cutting edge, while a slightly damaged sharp point is formed by bilateral retouch at the distal tip. The line on the dorsal view shows the presence of continuous retouch where the edge is overhung. No. 1. Cutting V, Period 2.
12. Flint. Worn-edge implement. Distal end of a flake from a polished flint axehead. Retouched and subsequently reused after breakage at the tip for some purpose which has led to extensive edge wear at positions shown by the ray-lines on the ventral view. No. 134. Cutting II, unstratified.
13. Flint. Edge-trimmed flake with a small area of edge-gloss on the ventral face of the right lateral edge in the position indicated by the dots placed alongside the ventral view. No. 73, unstratified.
14. Flint. Large flake with some inverse retouch on the lower right lateral edge and some dorsal trimming on the lower right lateral edge. No. 50. Cutting V, Period 1.

THE OBJECTS OF STONE by Peter Ellis,
with stone identification by Christopher Gerrard

Quernstones (Fig. 12)

1. Fragment of lower stone c. 400mm diameter, side reused as a hone. Local micaceous sandstone. Cutting VIII, layer 283 (F85), Period 3.
2. Fragment of lower stone. Coarse-grained local felspathic sandstone. Unstratified.
3. Fragment of upper stone c. 420mm diameter. Coarse-grained local sandstone. Cutting V, layer 140, Period 4.

Hones and Whetstones (Fig. 13)

1. Perforated whetstone worked from a close-grained micaceous local sandstone. 74mm long, hole diameter 7mm. The suspension hole widens toward both surfaces and has been worked at a slight angle to the object. Early Bronze Age (*cf.* Longworth 1984, 70). Cutting VI, ditch F73, layer 233, Period 1.
2. Hone fragment, slightly waisted with a rhomboidal section and rounded head. 82mm long. Micaceous local sandstone. Cutting V, unstratified.
3. Hone, slightly waisted with rounded heads and sides. 135mm long. Micaceous local sandstone. Cutting VII, layer 271, Period 4.

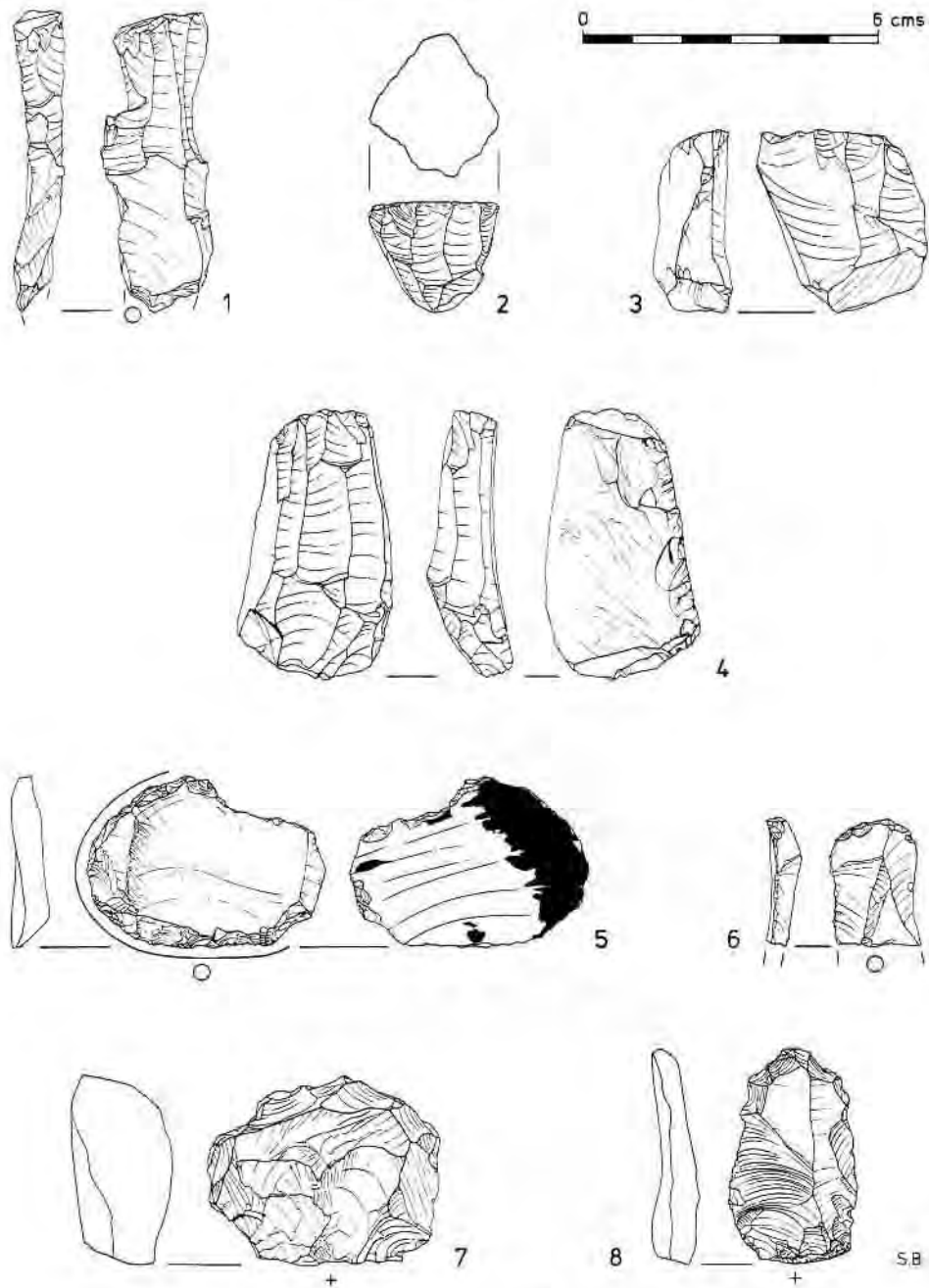


Fig. 10 Flint implements 1-8; scale 2:3; drawn by S. Banks.

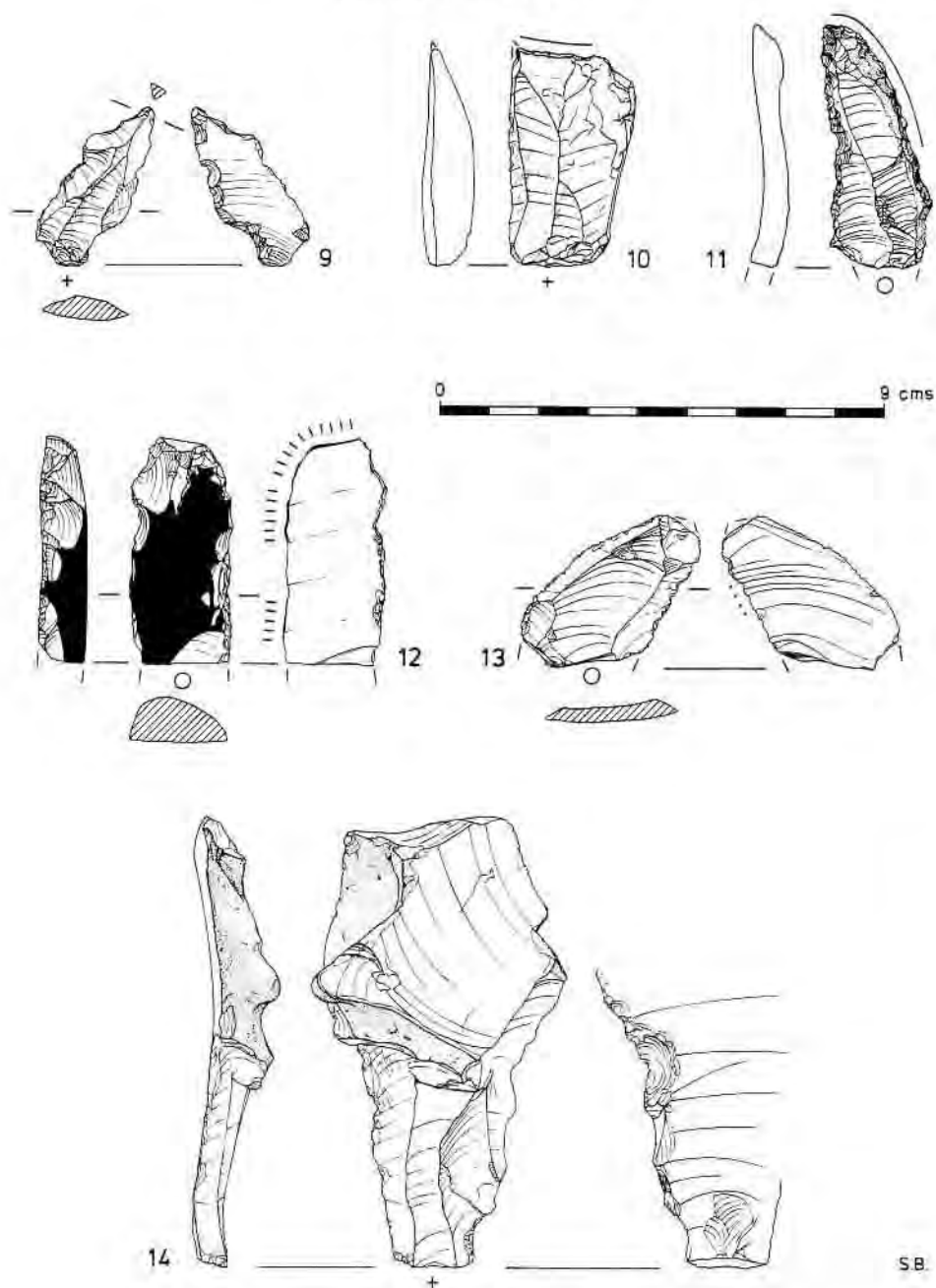


Fig. 11 Flint implements 9-14; scale 2:3; drawn by S. Banks.

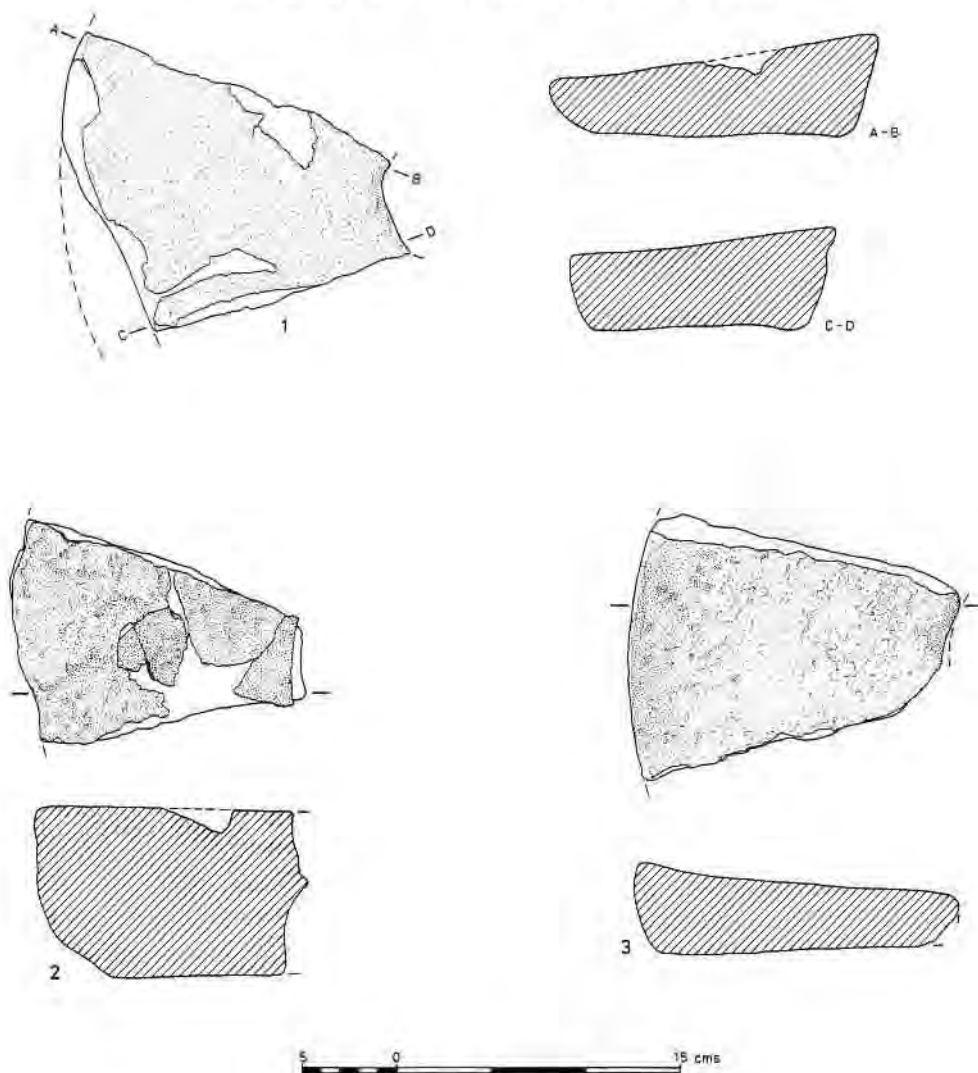


Fig. 12 Quernstones 1-3; scale 1:4; drawn by S. Banks.

THE CLAY MOULD ASSEMBLAGE by Stuart Needham (Fig. 14)

A group of 70 pieces of clay moulds came from a single pit (F16). This context appears to have protected them from undue weathering and, although not recognised on site, many of the moulds retain good surface feature definition.

Contact face characteristics are described as defined in the Dainton report (Needham 1980). The descriptions cover their extant form, which in some cases will have been modified by slight abrasion. The profiles of matrix surfaces are described in terms of those that would be produced on the bronze casting; thus a negative feature on the casting (eg. a groove) is described as a positive feature (rib); convex/concave profiles are similarly treated.

The fabric of the moulds is very sandy and devoid of any grits. The fabric has not been studied by a petrologist, but a few provisional comments might be made based on

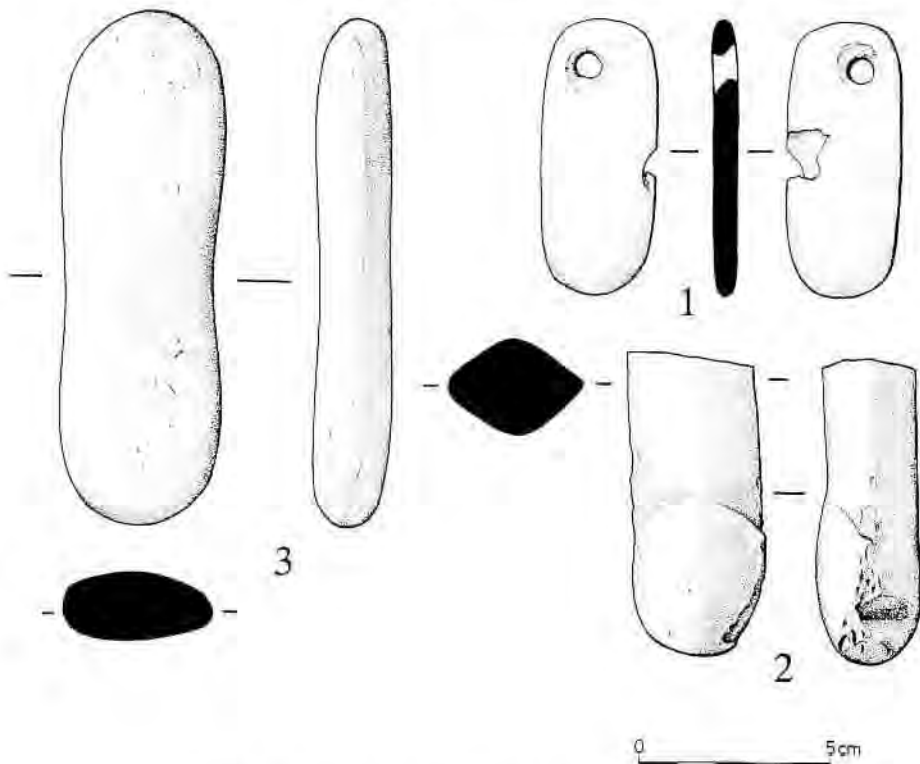


Fig. 13 Objects of stone; scale 1:2; drawn by L. Induni.

observation under a magnification of $\times 30$. The inner mould generally shows numerous tiny dark grey pellets and a moderate scatter of probable mica plates. It also contains some extremely fine voids. The outer wrap has a much more crumbly structure, less well prepared, with more and larger voids, but appears to have similar inclusions to the material used for the inner valves.

Catalogue (Fig. 14) (NB fragment dimensions are tabulated separately in archive)

1-8. Sword Hilt

Eight fragments may be reconstructed as belonging to one inner valve for a sword hilt; four (1-4) join together and (5) probably joins these to give one shoulder; (6) and (7) join together and are likely to represent the hilt finial opposite (1); (8) matches as the opposite ricasso to (5). *Dimensions* of reconstructed portion: overall length 143mm of which 135mm comprises the matrix; width at shoulders c. 53mm; max. width of grip 27mm; max. depth of side flanges 2.2mm; max. thickness of valve 17.5mm. *Matrix morphology*: finial expands in 'fish-tail' form (fragments 6-7) with top delineated by slight step in profile; possible edge of centrally placed gate which would have broken this step. Rivet holes are represented by remains of dowel holes running back through valve perpendicularly or skew - two along centre of grip, two in either shoulder. Hilt section shown to be flanged but with central ridge (groove in matrix) between the two rivet holes at least. Clear asymmetric ricasso on fragment (8) and blade section with clear change of angle bordering round midrib. *Mould morphology*: mostly pale to dark grey with a pink to orange outer 'skin', but all inner valve, including lobes partially surviving along one edge; a small lump of outer wrap may survive on the back; contact faces are flat to gently concave alongside the hilt, and convex (?after abrasion) beside the ricassos.

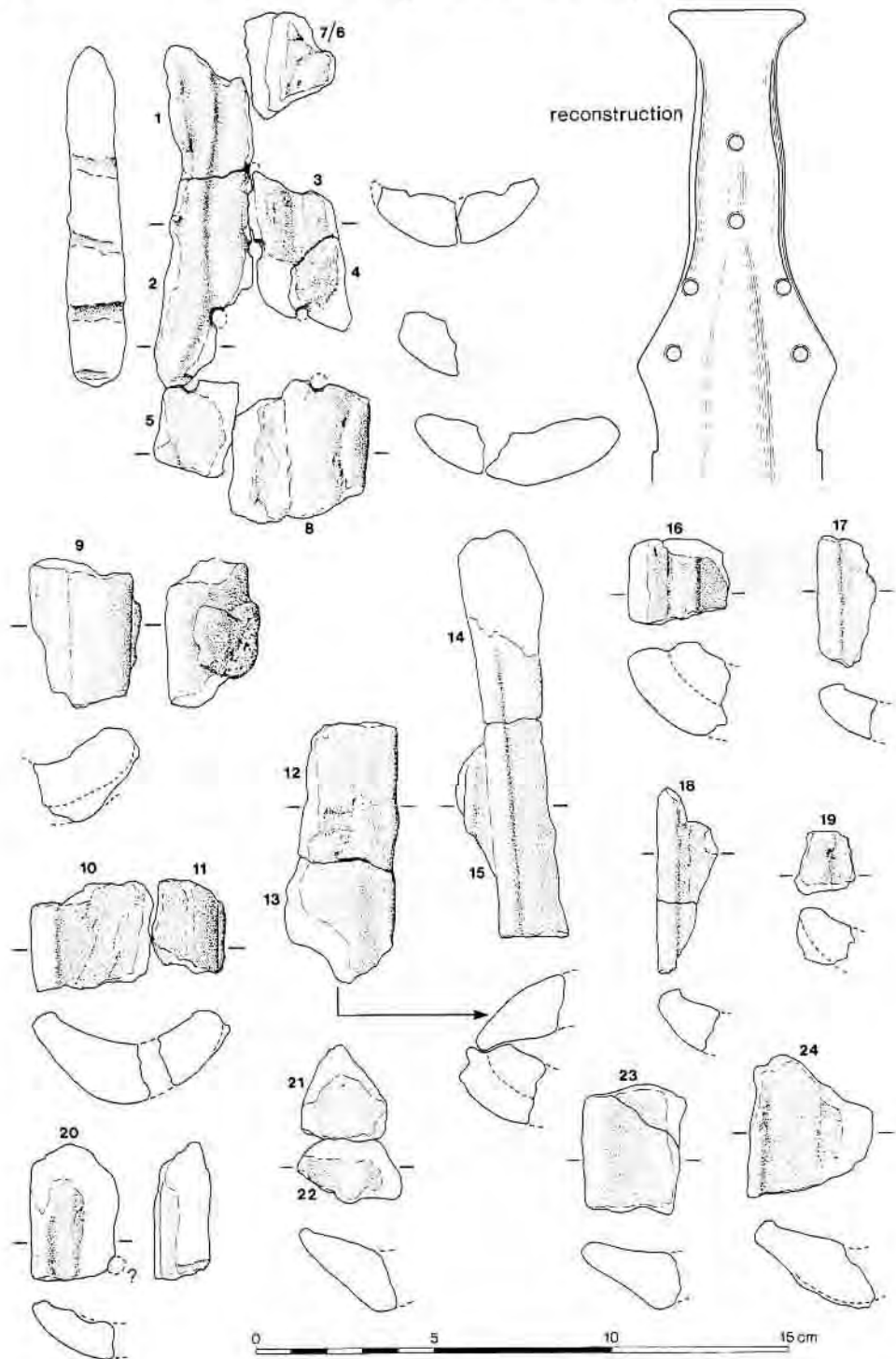


Fig. 14 The clay mould fragments and reconstruction drawing of the sword hilt cast by fragments 1-8: scale 1:2; drawn by S. Crummy.

9. Sword blade
Matrix morphology: blade form with good change in angle between convex midrib and concave wing, although slightly enhanced by minor fissure; sloped step up to contact face; centre of blade almost certainly present – estimated blade width c. 34mm. *Mould morphology*: pale to mid grey inner valve with convex, out-sloped contact face and thick rounded edge. Varied grey, orange and buff outer wrap attached to back.
- 10–11. Sword blade
Matrix morphology: two fragments, probably belonging close together on one valve. Well preserved matrix with minor fissures has fairly even convex curvature, only slightly flattened towards edges. Steep step up to contact faces. Likely original blade width c. 38mm. *Mould morphology*: pale grey inner valve with convex, out-sloped contact faces and thick rounded edges. A thin slip of probable outer wrap on the edge of No.11 is also grey.
- 12–13. Sword blade
Matrix morphology: two joining fragments; somewhat eroded matrix represents edge of blade probably with gentle convex–concave section; matrix/contact face boundary probably a diffuse bevel. *Mould morphology*: mostly pink with inner part pale grey; inner valve with contact face in-sloped and strongly concave to pronounced lip; sherd appears to be complementary valve to 14/15 and lip seats round that valve inside outer wrap.
- 14–15. Sword blade
Matrix morphology: two joining fragments for blade edge with concave section; one corner has very edge of convex midrib; steep step up to contact face; cast edge of blade would have gentle concave sweep, thus fragment from neck of blade. *Mould morphology*: inner valve mostly pink with pale grey inside and orangey skin at junction with thick outer wrap, which is orange with buff exterior; contact face out-sloped and slightly convex; likely complementary valve to 12–13 and one end may be close to joining fragment 9.
16. Blade edge
Matrix morphology: small edge fragment of a blade, perhaps of sword; steep step up to contact face. *Mould morphology*: grey and pink inner valve backed by thick outer wrap, pink, orange and buff; contact face probably out-sloped with convex longitudinal double facet; may come from close to fragment 10.
17. Blade edge
Matrix morphology: small fragment with straight edge, perhaps sword; steep step up to contact face. *Mould morphology*: inner valve; mid grey throughout; contact face probably out-sloped and virtually flat.
18. Blade edge
Matrix morphology: fragment with straight edge, perhaps sword; steep step up to contact face. *Mould morphology*: inner valve (modern break in two); mid grey throughout, contact face convex and probably out-sloped.
19. Blade edge
Matrix morphology: small edge fragment, a little eroded; step to contact face. *Mould morphology*: inner valve pink and light grey; attached lump of outer wrap dull orange; contact face flattish and probably horizontal or out-sloped.
20. ?Blade edge/hilt
Matrix morphology: possibly badly eroded; matrix comprising single or double concave section – inner hollow certainly eroded; possible edge of perforation in one break. *Mould morphology*: inner valve; mostly orangey-pink with traces of pale grey inside; contact face comprises flattened outer lip, possibly plus concave seating along side.
- 21–22. Blade edge
Matrix morphology: two joining fragments; probable edge of matrix is straight weak bevel to contact face; matrix section gently concave with beginning of convex midrib. *Mould morphology*: inner valve, pale grey inside, pink outside; contact face in-sloped and concave to a rounded lip.

23. Blade edge
Matrix morphology: convex section; no defined boundary survives with contact face – ?eroded. *Mould morphology*: inner valve; mostly buff-orange, inside pale grey; contact face probably in-sloped.
24. Blade edge
Matrix morphology: near flat section; matrix edge likely inside pronounced lip (analogy with 12–13), but no defined boundary survives. *Mould morphology*: inner valve; mid grey throughout; contact face probably in-sloped and near flat inside pronounced lip with external chamfer.
25. Blade edge (not illustrated)
Matrix morphology: small edge fragment with slight step to contact face. *Mould morphology*: inner valve with attached outer wrap, both pale grey; contact face abraded, ?convex out-sloped.
26. Blade edge (not illustrated)
Matrix morphology: small fragment with small step to contact face; blade edge profile flat. *Mould morphology*: inner valve, pale grey; contact face mainly damaged.
27. Blade edge (not illustrated)
 Strong lip edge; uncertain position of inner edge of contact face; pink and pale grey inner valve.
28. Blade edge (not illustrated)
 Small abraded fragment of inner valve, pink and pale grey.
- 29–40. Fragments of inner valve (not illustrated)
 With abraded or ill-understood matrix faces and no surviving contact faces; at least four have attached outer wrap.
- 41–64. Fragments of outer wrap (not illustrated)
 Various sizes; some with intact outer or inner surfaces.

Discussion

The metalworking tradition represented

All the identifiable mould fragments from the Norton Fitzwarren pit group were for the casting of bronze swords (Fig. 14). One portion (1–8) is for the hilt and shoulders and others (9–15) for the blade. Pieces with less diagnostic or less well-preserved matrices (16–17), nevertheless seem mainly to come from blades, possibly again those of swords. The assemblage is not large and the form range would not be inconsistent with an origin in a single mould unit. There is no evidence (in the absence of any detailed fabric analysis) for more than one mould being present.

The as-cast hilt (1–8) would have been flanged along the swollen grip with an expanded 'fish tail' finial. The shoulders expanded 'V' form at a modest angle and are underlined by concave ricassos. The mould made provision for two rivets in either shoulder and two more on the centre line of the hilt. Its overall shape and its rivet configuration clearly place this hilt in the Ewart Park type. The more complete blade profiles, showing slightly sinuous lenticular sections with rounded midribs and concave flanks, are in keeping with that type. Fragments 14–15 belong to the concave neck of the blade, below the shoulders. Ewart swords are datable to the Ewart phase of the Late Bronze Age, c. 900–700 BC. (Burgess 1979, 270 fig. 15).

Although Pearce shows two Ewart Park swords in the locality of Norton Fitzwarren on her distribution map (1983, 331, map 17), neither can in fact be identified as that type. The closest find of Ewart swords are probably the fragments in the Stogursey hoard to the north (Pearce 1983, no. 746).

Depositional context

The Norton Fitzwarren mould assemblage is like certain other Bronze Age assemblages, in apparently representing only a restricted duration of metallurgy, conceivably just one casting episode. This is the case for example at Dainton, Devon (Needham 1980), Fimber, Yorkshire (Sheppard 1930), and Grimes Graves, Norfolk (Needham forthcoming). At

Dainton and Fimber the metallurgical refuse was likewise encountered in a pit. It is possible that this depositional circumstance alone has allowed fragile clay mould to survive on some sites in a recognisable form. In the event of only occasional deposition in a pit or other protective context, it is entirely possible that just one or few of many casting episodes would be represented. Thus pit-protected *débris* could potentially leave invisible a longer sequence of metalworking.

A further point might be made about the context of these refractories. The material would appear to derive from a limited casting operation and have been deposited in the large pit, along with two pottery jars, relatively soon after casting. This may have been a deliberate act, rather than the casual disposal of *débris* or the incorporation of residual rubbish during backfilling. In this context the possible interpretation of F16 as a terminal of the Bronze Age ditch or a post pit, in either case flanking an entranceway, is of interest since the totally excavated Late Bronze Age ring fort at Springfield, Essex, has yielded two discrete dumps of clay refractories in ditch terminals beside opposing entranceways (Needham 1987). Early indications are that the Springfield clay moulds also represent Ewart Park metalworking.

Technology

The technology employed for clay mould casting at Norton Fitzwarren appears to be standard. The method of creating the contact face between the two inner valves appears to have been similar to that encountered at Dainton and other sites. This method (Needham 1980, 182–3, fig. 3) gives rise to different cross-sectional features on a complementary pair of valves. The inner valves are of a fine gritless fabric, probably well prepared, whilst the outer wraps have a visual appearance suggestive of less careful preparation.

The method of forming the rivet holes in the sword hilt is of interest. The perforations through the inner valve are so placed as to certainly mark the positions of rivet holes. The rivet holes were thus evidently cast by means of dowels running through the matrix cavity from one valve to the other. Long thin dowels made separately from the mould valves are perhaps unlikely to have been of clay and it seems more likely that some other material was used. These dowels would have been placed in the pattern prior to inner valve formation around it. They would then also serve to help register the two valves on reassembly for casting.

THE BRONZE HOARD by Stuart Needham (Figs. 15–17)

Catalogue of bronzes

The Norton Fitzwarren bronzes are in an unusually corroded and fragile condition, having presumably lain in an unfavourable local environment. Consequently the measurements given may differ from those of the original object. Given the condition, it was also felt to be inadvisable to sample the objects for metal analysis. There is no evidence that the bronzes were faulty castings prior to the distorting effects of corrosion (*pace* Pearce 1983, 520 No. 693; Langmaid 1971, 120). The extended views of bracelets are scaled according to internal rather than external band diameters. This has the effect of slightly compressing much of the detail because it lies on a diameter greater than the internal measurement.

1. Ribbed bracelet (Fig. 15)

Form: three non-joining portions; other unillustrated pieces may also belong, but given reconstructed circuit, little more can be added. Suggested belonging of these three together cannot be certain, corrosion having distorted fine sectional detail. Cross-section shows five prominent external ribs, probably with angular crests and likely of equal heights; back varies from convex to flattish to convoluted – original form therefore not ascertainable. Terminals simple wedge-like squared ends with central perforation. *Decoration*: short stretches of grooves between ribs show signs of close-set short transverse strokes. *Dimensions*: reconstructed external diameter *c.* 95mm. Portion (a) comprising five joining fragments; one end retains parts of original thinned and squared off end – one half entirely missing, but extant part retains semi-circular notch, part of perforation as present on (c). Perforation towards

broken end due to later damage. Extended length 151mm; intact width close to terminal 19.5mm; max. width (without corrosion lumps) 23mm; max. thickness 6.5mm; weight 52.8g. Portion (b) single fragment, broken both ends. Length (chord) 61mm; max. width (without corrosion lumps) 20.5mm; max. thickness 5.5mm; weight 22.5g. Portion (c) single fragment with partially intact square-ended terminal, which is thinned in profile to sharpish edge. Notch in middle of end leads into small circular perforation; notch may not be original. Length 26.5mm; intact width close to terminal 19.5mm; max. width (with corrosion lumps) 21mm; max. thickness 6mm; diameter perforation 2mm; weight 7.4g.

2. Ribbed bracelet

Form: two joining fragments of five-ribbed bracelet in generally better condition than 1; substantial areas have an intact patina; little distorted parts show thin section with near-flat back and five strong ribs of equal spacing; the outer ones are possibly higher than the inner three; crests are angular. *Decoration*: closely set transverse punchmarks fill all the intervening gulleys, where not corrosion covered. *Organic traces*: besides the strongly lamina structure apparent in some corrosion excesses, there are also transverse linear features across the intact back. These comprise very fine upstanding ridges, perhaps preserved fibres. There are two main multiple fibre bands plus some diagonal strands. They could represent an organic binding. *Dimensions*: extended length 67mm; max. width (without corrosion lumps) 21mm; max. thickness 3.8mm; weight 18.5g.

3. Ribbed and bossed bracelet

Form: extremely fragmented bracelet comprising 14 fragments of central embossed sheet and 26 fragments of the flanking ribbing; three fragments have a piece of rolled terminal. Surfaces are badly disfigured by corrosion. Few demonstrably join, (cf. Langmaid 1971, 120, fig. 5) but fortunately one terminal is nearly restored. This shows the full width to comprise a complex section with a central bossed strip bordered on either side by a prominent double rib with angular crests. The ribs stop abruptly at the terminal, which is tightly coiled outwards to abut them. A maximum of two full coils was achieved. The outer ribs have an asymmetric cross-section so that the outer edge is more-or-less perpendicular to the back. The back may have had a very slightly concave profile overall, and this was obviously interrupted at intervals by the bosses. The domed bosses occupy almost the full width of the central strip; they are closely set with gaps in between of up to 4mm. The bosses were possibly punched from behind. *Decoration*: circles of small dots around the foot of each boss (though often corroded) were punched from the front. The positive features thus created on the rear can, when corroded, appear linked as a small concentric rib around the recess of the boss. In places, a bevel is just perceptible along the borders of the central strip fragments and this presumably defined a light groove running just inside the ribs. Hatched triangles of fine grooves infill the interstices between pairs of bosses along either side. One boss with a patch of intact surface has five thin parallel longitudinal lines differently patinated in a lighter green colour – their origin is unknown. *Dimensions*: combined (minimum) length of central strip fragments: 233mm; combined (minimum) length of internal rib fragments: 402mm; combined (minimum) length of external rib fragment: 404mm; width of terminal 31mm; max. intact width (near terminal) 34.5mm; diameter of terminal rolls 3.7–4.7mm; max. thickness of central strip c. 2mm; total weight 97.5g.

4. Plain bar bracelet

Form: much of interior and small part of exterior are corrosion free with fine silvery green patina, but no sign of decoration. Two-thirds of band present, the 'broken' ends having excessive lamina corrosion. The section appears to have been pentagonal: three facets on the underside have rounded angles between, and the side ones are very slightly hollowed. Fairly sharp side angles separate these from the exterior, probably comprising two flat facets. Patinated areas show some rippling, possibly from original hammering. *Dimensions*: internal diameter 53.5mm; external diameter (including corrosion) 82.5mm; width of band 17.5mm; thickness of band (including corrosion) 14mm; weight 157.3g.

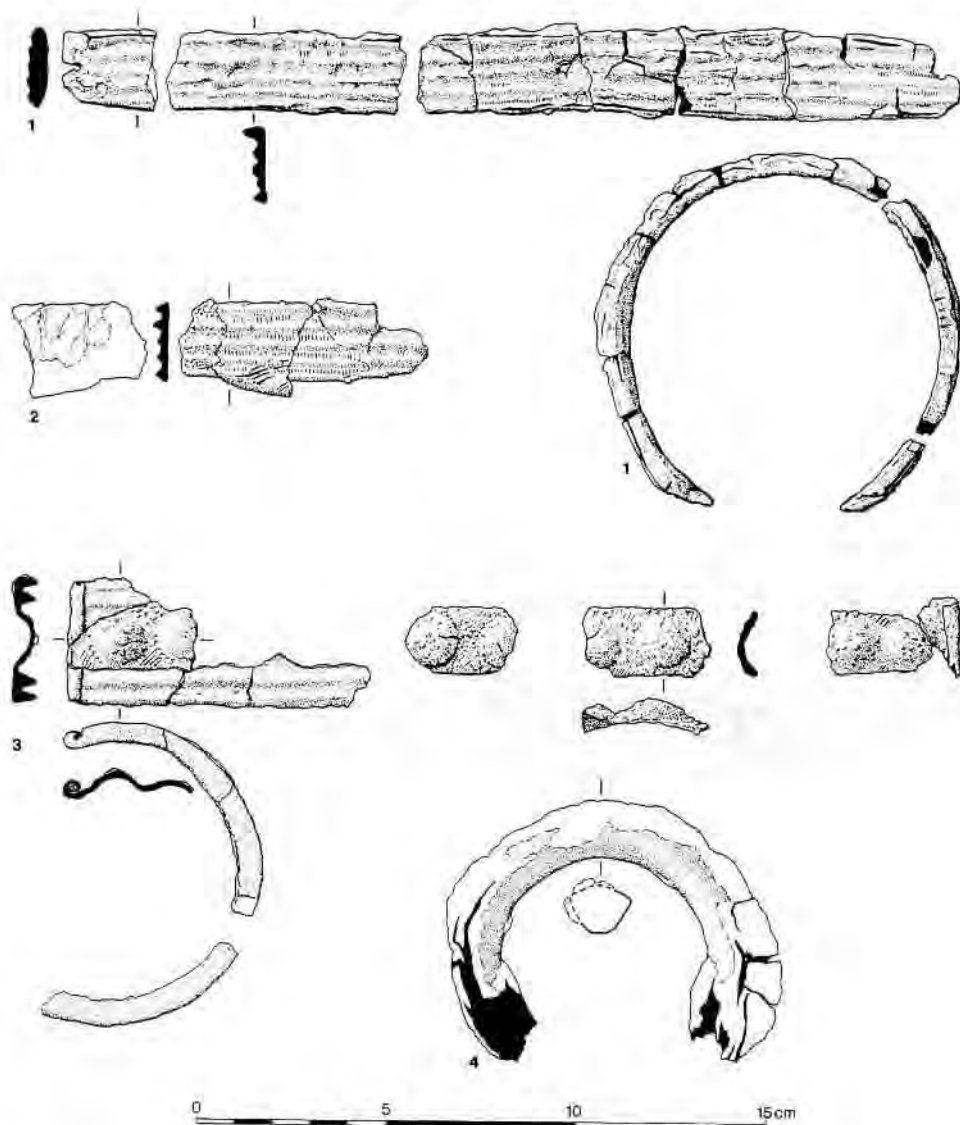


Fig. 15 The hoard: bronze bracelets, Ramsgate type (1-2), Norton Fitzwarren type (3), plain bar (4); scale 1:2; drawn by S. Crummy.

5. Decorated bar bracelet (Fig. 16)

Form: penannular bracelet in two joining halves. Less corrosion towards terminals. Band of sub-triangular section with rounded apex outwards and sharp side angles. Band broadest at centre and tapers gently to the terminals which have near flat ends with sporadic slight lipping around their edges. Flat or slightly hollowed back has slight undulations and occasional ridges from casting and forging. *Decoration:* divided into seven zones by multiple-groove bands, probably symmetric around the central one. All but the terminal zones appear to be based on longitudinal tripartite sub-division by 'cord' motif, each sub-zone containing alternating multiple diagonals, sometimes totally infilled to become alternating hatched triangles. Terminal zones comprise interdigitated opposing hatched triangles separated by zigzag band containing double dot row. Some hatching of terminal

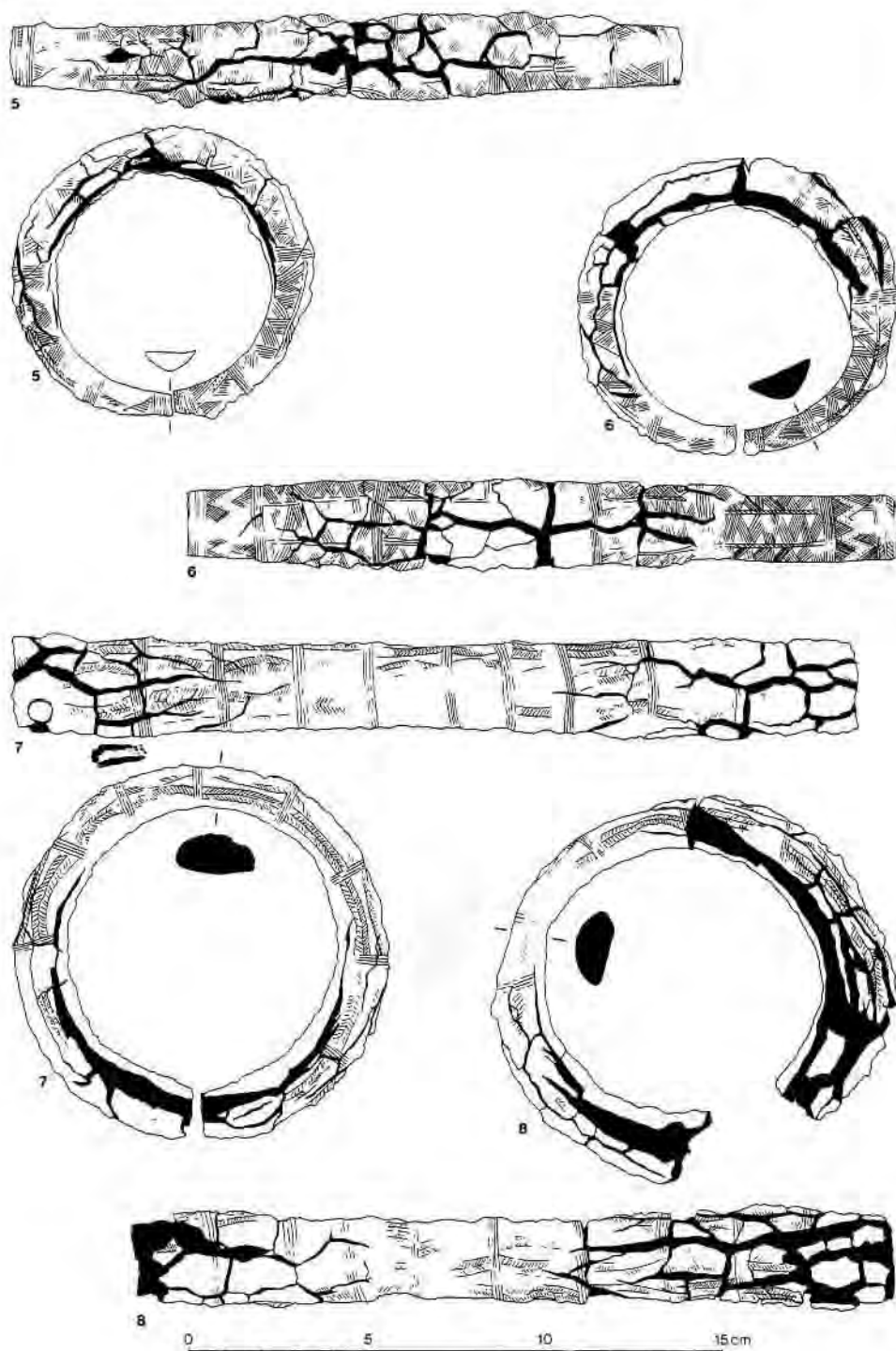


Fig. 16 The hoard: bronze bracelets, Liss type (5-8); scale 1:2; drawn by S. Crummy.

bands. *Dimensions*: diameter (including corrosion) 85 × 80mm; max. width of band (corroded) 25mm; width terminals 16.3 × 15.5mm; max. thickness of band (corroded) 14.5mm; thickness of terminals 5.8 and 5.3mm; weight 186.3g.

6. Decorated bar bracelet

Form: penannular bracelet in three joining fragments. Less corrosion towards the terminals where patches of fine olive patina survive. Band of sub-triangular section with rounded apex outwards and sharp side angles. Band broadest at centre and tapers gently to the terminals which have near flat ends, slightly rough with sporadic lipping around their edges. Back tends to be slightly hollowed with undulating surface the product of casting and forging. A small cavity in the outer face close to one terminal may be a casting defect. *Decoration*: as for 5 although the zigzag band is broader. The terminal bands incorporate two 'cord' motifs formed by hatching. *Dimensions*: diameter (including corrosion) c. 93 × 84mm; max. width of band (corroded) 27mm; width terminals 17.8 × 18.3mm; max. thickness of band (corroded) 15.5mm; thickness of terminals 6.5 and 6.3mm; weight 227.6g.

7. Decorated bar bracelet

Form: probably annular since the gap is flanked by breaks and may in fact have split and opened as a consequence of corrosion distortion. Small part of opposite side is patinated without corrosion lumps. Band possibly of constant dimensions, allowing for corrosion. The section is D-shaped with a gently convex inner face, strongly convex outer face and slightly rounded side angles. Some hammer-rippling on inner face and tendency for slight lip along one edge, presumably from hammering the side. *Decoration*: ten zones survive, divided by multiple-groove bands. Zone infill seems to follow a common pattern. A central lenticular zone running longitudinally is enclosed by curved herringbone bands, each probably defined by one central and two outer lines. A similar motif curves in the opposite fashion on either side, thus trapping a bi-concave reserved zone between each pair of outer and inner bands. *Dimensions*: diameter (including corrosion) 105.5mm; width band (no corrosion) 22.5mm; max. width band (corroded) 28mm; thickness of band (no corrosion) 11.0 - 11.5mm; max. thickness band (corroded) 16.5mm; weight 424.5g.

8. Decorated bar bracelet

Form: bracelet in two joining fragments leaving about a tenth of the full circuit missing, the flanking ends both being breaks with excessive corrosion. Limited parts of far side with intact olive patina. Band probably of constant dimensions prior to corrosion. The section is D-shaped with a gently convex inner face, strongly convex outer face and fairly angular sides. A slight furrow in the inner face is probably from manufacture. *Decoration*: as for 7. *Dimensions*: diameter (including corrosion) c. 106mm; width band (no corrosion) 21mm; max. width band (corroded) 30mm; thickness of band (no corrosion) 10.0 - 10.2mm; max. thickness of band (corroded) 21.5mm; weight 342.4g.

9. Large palstave (Fig. 17)

Form and embellishments: badly corroded especially at the haft end. Parts of blade surface intact showing crisp body angles with neat milling on the face alongside, the milling comprising tiny indentations. Hammer rippling also on sides. Loop side has broad low stump of casting flash. Indications of a long central rib in the corrosion, probably quite slight. H-section haft end; flanges probably of half-leaf form; stop gently curved, small swallow holes at base. Loop exploded and of uncertain section. Blade shape was crinoline, possibly without edge expansion, although the cutting edge is lost. *Dimensions*: extant length 163.5mm; max. width blade (including corrosion) 58.5mm; max. breadth of flanges 40.5mm; weight 507.4g.

10. Small palstave

Form: this is perhaps the most corroded object; the whole of the haft end has exploded resulting in considerable loss of butt and flange crests; the cutting edge has also gone and the loop, although surviving, is detached. Surprisingly, the majority of the blade and a little of the septum on one face have intact surfaces. The blade has a reasonably stout round-topped

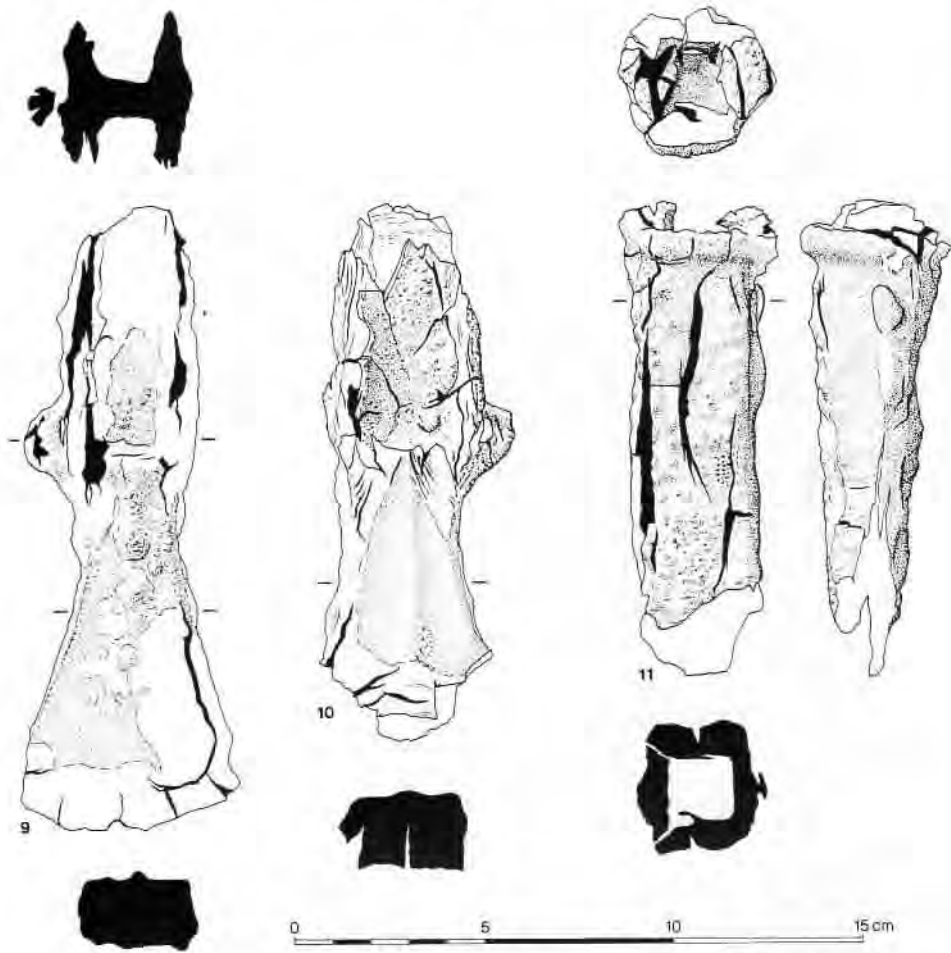


Fig. 17 The hoard: bronze palstaves (9-10) and socketed axe (11); scale 1:2; drawn by S. Crummy.

midrib flanked by hollows and slightly raised body angles; the latter are not true 'side-flanges'. The stop was probably slightly curved, the septum flat-bottomed and the flange section H-shaped. The shape of the flange was probably of the half-leaf form. The loop appears to have a sub-triangular section with the apex inwards and a gentle convex outer face. Towards the base of the extant blade surface a well-curved edge bevel survives; this meets the sides at a significant angle in keeping with the sudden out-turn of a hammer expanded cutting edge. *Dimensions*: extant length 141mm; max. width haft end (including corrosion) 42.5mm; max. breadth flange (including corrosion) 43mm; weight 358.7g.

11. Socketed axe

Form: very little intact surface, lower blade completely lost and mouth grossly deformed. Nevertheless, certain major morphological aspects may be discerned. The body seems to have had a very square section with strong corner angles. This extended to the mouth, which carries a very prominent single collar (those parts not accentuated by corrosion) with a thin flattened outer face. A small side loop is neatly preserved with a patinated surface: it is an oval, thin-edged plate lying close to the body so that any original perforation underneath has become blocked. In the corrosion below the loop there is the suggestion of a casting flash stump running down the side. Loop and flash may be off-centre, but the reverse face has

been very severely attacked by corrosion. The socket appears to taper steadily to a small squarish end. *Dimensions*: extant length 125mm; extant width mouth moulding 43mm; extant breadth mouth moulding 39.5mm; max. breadth loop 7mm; depth of socket 68mm; weight 267.6g.

12. Ribbed bracelet fragments (not illustrated)

Sixteen corroded fragments with low ribs probably belong to bracelets 1 or 2. Combined length about 200mm; total weight 90.7g.

Discussion

Bracelets

The bracelets at Norton Fitzwarren fall into four clear types:

- i) Ribbed bracelets, represented by one pair (nos. 1–2); Ramsgate type
- ii) Ribbed and bossed bracelet, represented by a single example (no. 3); Norton Fitzwarren type,
- iii) Plain bar bracelet, represented by a single example (no. 4).
- iv) Decorated bar bracelets of Bignan affinities, represented by two pairs (nos. 5–8); Liss type.

i) Ribbed bracelets (Ramsgate type)

Penannular bracelets with multiple longitudinal ribs have been listed and discussed by Piggott (1949), Rowlands (1976, 91–2) and O'Connor (1980, 85–6). Butler termed them the Ramsgate type (1963, 155). Bronze multi-ribbed examples similar to the Norton pieces are known from six other southern English contexts datable to the Middle Bronze Age, including hoards, settlement sites and a grave group. One fragmentary example occurs in an early Late Bronze Age hoard at Isleham (O'Connor 1980, 465), but otherwise the type appears to be absent from Late Bronze Age assemblages. There is a similar bracelet from an Irish hoard at Clooneenbaun, Co. Roscommon, associated with a plain rod bracelet (Eogan 1983, 43 no. 26).

Roughly similar bracelets occur in the much earlier Migdale hoard, Sutherland (Piggott and Stewart 1958, GB 26) and show that the basic idea of such simple forms, perhaps simulating a set of bangles, can recur through time. The popularity of these ribbed bracelets in the Middle Bronze Age in southern England is matched by that in broadly contemporary cultures of southern Scandinavia, whilst related French and Low Countries finds are more occasional. A mould find from Knighton, Devon, with matrices for a Middle Bronze Age rapier and a blank apparently for one of these ribbed bracelets points to indigenous production.

Two special features on the Norton Fitzwarren bracelets deserve comment. Both examples have neat rows of punched strokes between ribs in the manner also found on the bracelets from Thorny Down, Wiltshire, Clooneenbaun and (in gold) Dysart, Co. Westmeath (Eogan 1983, 45 no. 29). This technique also occurs on the possibly related sheet gold fragment from the Mountfield hoard, Sussex, as well as many in Nordic Europe (Rowlands 1976, 92). The terminals present on this bracelet show the usual thinned square form for British examples, but a small perforation just inside one end may have been an original feature.

ii) Ribbed and embossed bracelet (Norton Fitzwarren type)

The fragments catalogued under entry 3 need not belong to more than one bracelet. It is of an unusual form for which only one parallel is known, a lost piece from the West Buckland, Somerset, hoard (Taylor 1982). Although the border ribbing may owe something to the previous type, these bracelets represent a totally different conceptualisation and they should perhaps be classified separately. Langmaid (1971, 120), followed by O'Connor (1980, 186), has viewed this as a local special type. In the absence of further finds it may well be best viewed as a regional innovation of the kind which is well known amongst Middle Bronze Age ornaments.

Although obviously very similar in appearance, the West Buckland and Norton Fitzwar-

ren bracelets may differ in detail and possibly in technique of production. The former specimen was originally described as flat backed and not repoussé (Sanford 1880; Evans 1881, 386). On the other hand, the Norton Fitzwarren bracelet has hollow bosses which might suggest their formation by embossing from the rear rather than casting. It is technically feasible that this could have been achieved on the thin metal between the rigid cast ribs without distorting the whole (I. McIntyre, pers. comm.).

The finer decoration has been added using punches and tracers; rings of pointillé around each boss were punched from the front and small hatched triangles were chased into the flat denticulate zones between bosses. Similar finer incised motifs can in fact be made out in the published woodcut of the West Buckland specimen (Sanford 1880). It probably also carried the between-rib punch strokes, seen on the Ramsgate type bracelets noted above.

The straight terminals of the Norton Fitzwarren ribbed and bossed bracelet are outwardly coiled, an unusual technique in Britain at this date, but paralleled on the contemporary Durnford bracelet of Ramsgate type (Annable and Simpson 1964, 131, fig. 626) where one terminal is curled outwards, the other inwards. Certain gold bracelets of the Late Bronze Age are characterised by coiled ends (Hook & Needham 1989, class B2).

iii) Plain bar bracelet

It is not known whether this incomplete bracelet was originally penannular or annular. It is certainly not one of Rowlands' types C1 or C2, which taper towards the terminals (1976, 91) and it is perhaps more likely that it was annular. Thick undecorated bar bracelets, both annular and penannular, occur in a number of southern British Middle Bronze Age hoards. They exhibit a variety of cross-sections including oval, D-shaped and lozenge (eg Rowlands 1976, pl. 11 (3 and 32), pl. 12 (30), pl. 13 (74), pl. 15, pl. 56, pl. 59, pl. 61 fig. 2; Smith 1959a, 153 fig. 3). However, the unusual pentagonal section of this Norton Fitzwarren example may distinguish it from the extant series.

iv) Incised decorated bracelets (Liss type)

Rowlands was the first to point out the Bignan affinities of a small series of decorated bracelets found in the southern counties of Britain (1971). Since then further examples have come to light, from Thurston, Suffolk and Hunstanton, Norfolk (Lawson 1979), South Wonston, Hampshire (Hughes and Champion 1982), and from Harting, West Sussex (Needham forthcoming) as well as Norton Fitzwarren. The four incised decorated bracelets in the Norton Fitzwarren hoard (Nos. 5–8) match the form and organization of decorative motifs found in this Bignan-related group. The British examples are sometimes referred to as of Bignan type following Briard's terminology for the similar bracelets in north-western France (1965, 123–35). Rowlands (1971, 190) believed that most British examples would have been imports from northern France, but this is questioned by O'Connor (1980, 81–3). They can instead be regarded as belonging to a broad North European tradition which nevertheless embraced many regional schools of production. In this light it may be useful to identify separately those found in Britain as the Liss type.

Liss type bracelets have a variety of cross-sectional forms generally based on D shapes with the flatter surface inwards. The convex outer surface carried the distinctive panelled, geometric decoration. Rowlands observes that the penannular examples taper to a slight constriction just before either terminal (1971, 186). There is certainly a suggestion of taper on the two penannulars at Norton Fitzwarren (Nos. 5 and 6). Annular forms, on the other hand, tend to be of constant width as appears to be the case for Norton bracelets 7 and 8, although their damaged condition precludes certainty about their annularity. The internal diameters of bracelets 5 and 6 conform to the norm cited by Rowlands (1971, 185), but the other two, with diameters around 7.5cm, are larger.

Perhaps the most important aspect of the Liss type bracelets is their decoration. In general concept, Norton Fitzwarren specimens follow the pattern outlined by other writers with a series of panels created by transverse dividing motifs. Again, the penannular examples show the usual differentiation of the terminal designs from the other panels. Owing to excessive corrosion, however, it is not clear whether another distinct design lay diametrically opposite the butted terminals, as can sometimes be found (Rowlands 1971, 188). The Norton Fitzwarren bracelets, like the Thurston specimens (Lawson 1979, appendix I), have more

panels than is usual: seven (including the elaborate terminals) on bracelets 5 and 6, ten on bracelets 7 and 8.

As seems generally to be the case with new examples of Bignan/Liss bracelets, the Norton Fitzwarren find adds considerably to the repertoire of decorative motifs employed. Five new or variant motifs are added to existing schemes (Rowlands 1971, 197 fig. 5; O'Connor 1980, 82 table 9) and a further seven are to be added by the new find of two Liss bracelets at Harting. This adds further weight to Rowlands' observation that a large number of separate motifs were represented, yet few are on any one arming (1971, 189-90). He interpreted this as indicating a 'flexible decorative tradition'.

The panel design found on bracelets 7 and 8, with doubled cable motifs paired in opposing arcs, are effectively doubled versions of previous motifs M and N linked together. Type C motifs divide the panels.

Bracelets 5 and 6 also carry C dividers plus, near the terminals, hatched triangles similar to motif U. The remaining motifs are, however, new. At the terminals there is a variant of motifs E and F with two cables within multiple lines. The terminal panels each have an open zig-zag similar to motif T, but with two rows of dots lining the inside edges. The hatched triangles (motif U) mentioned above interdigitate with this zig-zag. The main panels comprise a totally new multiple zig-zag design. The main element is basically a band of alternating triangles which are only partially filled by hatching. Three such bands are separated by single longitudinal cables. It is possible, but uncertain due to surface condition, that on some of the panels the triangles have been fully hatched.

The uniqueness of the Norton Fitzwarren decorative designs was recognised by O'Connor (1980, 83), who also remarked that the terminal designs of bracelets 5 and 6 were most similar to those on the River Thames piece (Rowlands 1971, 191 fig. 3 No 6).

Palstaves

The two palstaves from Norton Fitzwarren would seem to have been of similar forms. Both are looped and have low midribs running down their broad blades. The blade angles, where preserved, are emphasised in cross-section, but are not raised into true ribs. There are some differences in the blades: palstave 9 has a standard length blade with signs that it was the crinoline shape close to the form in which they were generally cast. On the other hand, palstave 10 has an unusually short blade: a fragment of the edge bevel shows that this is not due to corrosion loss, but instead was probably due to resharpening, to judge from the expansion of the side towards the (now lost) blade tip.

Given the uncertainty about the exact form of their flanges it is not possible to classify these palstaves in detail. Despite not having true side flanges along their blades, it is possible that they belong in the side-flanged series, Rowlands' class 2 (1976, 30-2) following Butler (1963, 57), since this is defined as including many axes with comparable blade sections. Alternatively, palstave 9 in particular might have matched the midribbed sub-group of palstaves placed in class 5 by Rowlands (1976, 34), which are always looped. The overall length of palstave 9, over 163mm, would conform to the reasonably large size of Rowlands' class 5. The extant flange widths (which are subject to corrosion distortion) of the Norton Fitzwarren palstaves might allow them to fall within the south-western 'high-flanged' type (Smith 1959a), a classification that cuts across Rowlands' main classes.

Despite uncertainties as to their exact form, there is no doubt that the Norton Fitzwarren palstaves represent mature examples within the broad-bladed series characterised by nuance of shape and proportions as well as the presence of a loop. Such palstaves are a frequent component of the Taunton-Barton Bendish phase, MBA 2 (Burgess 1979, 270 fig. 15), and a number of general and specific parallels occur in the contemporary 'Ornament Horizon' hoards of Somerset (Smith 1959b, especially GB.44.13).

Socketed axe

Although badly disfigured by corrosion, sufficient typological information survives on this piece to classify it as an early form of socketed axe. Middle Bronze Age socketed axes are in fact fairly heterogeneous but they are united, with rare exceptions, by slender, near parallel bodies and square sections at the mouth and throughout the length of the socket (Burgess 1962). Mouth mouldings most frequently take the form of single collars with a flat exterior,

as discerned on the Norton Fitzwarren piece, and again, sockets tend to taper steadily in pyramidal fashion. Some of these implements are unlooped and described as chisels, but the majority have a single, sometimes rather weak loop on the side below the collar. The loop 'plate' on the Norton Fitzwarren axe is unusual and rather resembles the protecting plates typical of contemporary spearhead loops.

Butler called these early square-section socketed axes from Britain (and closely comparable forms in northern Europe) the Taunton-Hademarschen type (1963, 75–80). Rowlands adds further examples and discussion of the type (1976, 41–3). O'Connor was able to list only a few in MBA 2 associations (1980, 60) to which should be added the Orsett hoard, which need no longer be regarded as dating to the succeeding phase (Burgess and Gerloff 1981, 60–1). The Norton Fitzwarren example is, therefore, an important addition by virtue of its MBA 2 association.

The early square-section Taunton-Hademarschen axe series continued during the Penard phase, MBA 3 (equivalent to O'Connor's LBA 1; 1980, 61), although one suspects with increasing diversification around the basic theme. The south-west of Britain may be better endowed with these early axes than generally believed. Several of the axes catalogued by Pearce should belong here (1983, eg. Nos. 17, 48c, 74, 191, 791, 849) as well as more recent finds from Rolleston Camp, Wiltshire, and Piddletrenthide, Dorset (NBI).

The Norton Fitzwarren axe is a little unusual in its pronounced collar, perhaps best matched at Orsett, in Essex (Rowlands 1976, pl. 23.8), and Soham, Cambridgeshire (BM 63, 4–18, 7) whilst its flattened loop plate is not dissimilar to that on the Lulsgate axe, Somerset (Grinsell 1968, 40 No. 65c (i)).

Interpretation and the nature of the ornament hoards of Somerset

The types present in the Norton Fitzwarren hoard are all attributable to the Taunton-Barton Bendish assemblage, to which also belong the classic 'Ornament Horizon' hoards of Somerset (Smith 1959a). Taunton-Barton Bendish material (MBA 2) is currently dated to the 14th and 13th centuries BC (Burgess 1980, 149–155; O'Connor 1980, 269–272).

Norton therefore joins a known concentration of hoard deposits of similar character with a special emphasis on the inclusion of ornaments (Fig. 24). Rowlands has shown how the region centred on Somerset has yielded a distinctive assemblage of metalwork of his stages 2–3, when compared to other regions in southern England (1976, 125–8, 138 fig. 21). He interprets this as the outcome of a particular industrial organisation, having first set out a range of criteria for assessing this facet of the material (1976, 117). These criteria work on the assumption that recovered distributions are representative of material originally in circulation, and take no account of the possible contribution of selection practices at the stage of deposition. Rowlands is therefore implicitly arguing that the regional assemblage in general, and its hoards in particular, are representative of the metalwork circulating during the specified phase. It now appears increasingly likely that this straightforward equation never obtained, and that some combination of both conscious and unconscious means of selection will have distorted the assemblages left in the archaeological record. This means that while it is still possible to argue that a variety of ornaments were an important aspect of bronze in use and, by inference, under local production, their apparent frequency relative to other bronze types may be inflated by, for example, a preference for depositing ornaments in special contexts (such as hoards). We are dealing with deliberate deposits in which contents were paramount in expressing certain sentiments or satisfying certain perceived demands.

Under this interpretation, the regional patterns of hoard composition seen in the Taunton-Barton Bendish phase would reflect the votive customs of social groups more than the balance of their manufacturing output. Ornaments clearly were important in the Somerset region, but their importance may have lain in their social value rather than an especially great frequency in the systemic record. It is difficult to know what significance to attach to the pairing of bracelets evident in six of the eight Norton Fitzwarren examples. Pairing is known from other hoards.

Beyond the evidence of broad distribution patterns there is a need for more detailed contextual evidence for individual hoards to help assess the reasons for deposition. Despite its recovery during an excavation, an almost unprecedented event, the Norton Fitzwarren hoard is sadly lacking in this respect. The precise context in Cutting 1 is effectively unknown,

whilst the nature of activity on the hilltop during the Middle Bronze Age is not well understood. The bracelets were arranged as if 'deposited in a bundle tied together with string' (Langmaid 1971, 120). The accompanying reconstruction drawing there shows the bossed bracelet separating two groups of bracelets to which it is perpendicularly oriented. This drawing was as accurate a representation of the objects and their relationships as was possible. It was made in Somerset County Museum as the pieces were gradually separated from their surrounding clay matrix, the hoard having been removed from the site as a block (N. Langmaid, pers. comm.). Further indications of the circumstances of hoard deposition come from some earlier finds. The Edington Burtle and Quantocks Hills hoards both came from boggy ground. The former was 8 feet deep in peat, the bronzes contained within a small square box (Smith 1959b, GB 44). The latter hoard was found about 6 feet deep in marshy ground; two bronze torcs were described as situated one on top of the other and a palstave was placed within each (Harford 1803, 94). The similar hoard from Wedmore probably also came from peat (Ellacombe 1849). Another hoard, from West Buckland, described as having been found four feet deep with a small quantity of charcoal and burnt bone, has recently been discussed by Taylor, who points out that this material may be domestic refuse rather than a cremation deposit (1982, 15). In the British Bronze Age there is little to suggest that hoards were actually placed with interments, but the possibility that some were deposited to mark respect for the ancestors, or even as part of the funerary rites, has been raised by metalwork including hoards in non-grave contexts in and around burial mounds (Needham 1988, 241-3). Indeed the contemporary ornament hoard from Durnford, Wiltshire, is said to have come from a barrow (Moore and Rowlands 1972, 61-3). In contrast the Ebbesbourne Wake hoard from the same county was unearthed within a field of an ancient field system which had clearly not been cultivated since the hoard was deposited (Shortt 1949-50). The hoards so far discussed from the region all contain ornaments of Taunton-Barton Bendish traditions; a contemporary palstave hoard from Plumley, Bovey Tracey, Devon, is also worthy of note. Early accounts of the discovery c. 1830 are not all consistent, but four palstaves are reported to have lain under a boulder and another four were either scattered or under a second boulder (Tucker 1867, 119; Way 1869, 346; Croker 1852, 186). These palstaves were described as having been 'placed on their ends', recalling the described positions of, for example, the Willerby Wold flat axes (Needham *et al* 1985, 17).

This review of the contexts of MBA hoards in the Somerset region has necessarily been selective, and in most cases details are still ambiguous regarding the intended permanency or otherwise of deposition. However, some of the circumstances point to careful arrangement and in some cases at least it would seem unlikely that recovery was intended.

The Norton Fitzwarren hoard contributes to a concentration of Middle Bronze Age metalwork, particularly MBA 1-2, in that part of Somerset (eg. Colquhoun 1978, 84 fig. 1; Pearce 1983, 161 fig. 4.19, 320-2 Maps 6-8). Most noteworthy amongst the local finds, for current purposes, is a dirk provenanced to Norton Fitzwarren (Colquhoun 1978, 97 No. 127; Pearce 1983, 520 No. 694; Burgess and Gerloff 1981, 10, No. 37); unfortunately the circumstances of its discovery appear to be unknown and it may not be from the hill itself. The piece belongs to Burgess and Gerloff's group 1 and should date to an earlier Middle Bronze Age horizon than the Norton Fitzwarren hoard.

THE PREHISTORIC POTTERY by Ann Woodward

Introduction

The excavations at Norton Camp carried out by the Langmaids have produced a small, but highly significant, collection of Bronze Age and Iron Age pottery which both confirms and further elucidates the tantalising chronological clues provided by the finds from the original investigations of 1908 (Gray 1908). A probably continuous sequence of ceramics date from the Early Bronze Age (food urns), Middle Bronze Age (Trevisker-related wares), Late Bronze Age (plain wares), Final Bronze Age/Early Iron Age (early decorated styles), Middle Iron Age ('Glastonbury ware') and the Latest Pre-Roman Iron Age. Much of the pottery derives from secure contexts and its dating has facilitated greatly the chronological and stratigraphic analysis of the site.

The importance of the Bronze Age assemblages is further highlighted by the finding of contemporary metal artefacts: the Middle Bronze Age hoard of bronzes (Needham, this report) which was not directly associated with any pottery but probably was deposited during the currency of the Trevisker-related pottery. Also of note is the find of fragments of clay metal-working moulds (Needham, this report) associated with the Late Bronze Age vessels. Most of the pottery can be compared with other assemblages within the county and, in particular, the Trevisker-related wares may be contrasted usefully with the large assemblages of similar pottery recently excavated from domestic contexts at Brean Down, Somerset (Woodward in Bell forthcoming). Indeed, these two assemblages taken together provide very important insights into the innovative style of ceramics that developed between the south-west peninsula, South Wales and Wessex towards the end of the Early Bronze Age.

The total stratified assemblage comprised 815 sherds weighing 15.638 kilos (see Table 4). The pottery was counted and weighed by context and all feature sherds were recorded by *pro forma*. Where possible, joining sherds were located and vessel profiles reconstructed. The detailed contextual occurrence of datable sherds is indicated within the catalogue of illustrated items (below) and in the excavation descriptions (above). The Early to Middle Bronze Age assemblage came mainly from lower ditch deposits in Cuttings II (F17), IV (F37), V (F50) and VI (F73), with the Late Bronze Age vessels found, in association with the clay mould fragments, in the filling of pit F16 in Cutting II. Sherds belonging to the Late Bronze Age/Early Iron Age decorated assemblage came from two early stages of the hillfort ditch in Cutting I, from the soil above Late Bronze Age pit F16 in Cutting II and from the ploughsoil overlying the turf-line in the Bronze Age ditch (Cutting IV). Further sherds were found in the later filling of pit F72 in Cutting VI. Middle Iron Age 'Glastonbury ware' was found in a secondary stage of hillfort ditch filling in Cutting I and from the circular gullies F48 and F49 in Cutting V. There were no contexts containing *in situ* Late Iron Age ceramics, although there were significant groups in the Period 3 activity layer 148 in Cutting V and gully F97 in Cutting VIII (the interior). The degree of residuality within the ditch stratigraphies is demonstrated in Table 4, where it can be seen that a fair amount of Early/Middle Bronze Age pottery became incorporated into contexts of Iron Age date, but very few prehistoric sherds made their way into the Roman occupation layers.

TABLE 4 PREHISTORIC POTTERY: OCCURRENCE BY CUTTING AND PERIOD (wt. in gms)

	E/MBA				LBA/EIA		LIA	MIA	IA		
FABRIC	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	Totals
CUTTING											
Period 1:											
I no, sherds			7	1	7						
wt. in gms			50	30	90						
II	16	9		4	7		1				
	248	45		65	105		20				
IV	6	5			1						
	460	140			65						
V	21	7	8	6	1						
	580	140	90	170	40						
VI	43	11	2								
	1050	170	45								
II (LBA)	16		11		2		one vessel	16			
	175		170		40		800	190			
Total sherds	102	32	28	11	18	1+	vessel	16			209
Total weights	2513	495	355	265	340		820	190			4978

	<i>E/MBA</i>				<i>LBA/EIA</i>		<i>LIA</i>	<i>MIA</i>	<i>IA</i>		
FABRIC	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	Totals
Period 2: I	1/2			3	2	3	10	2	5		
				30	30	70	70	50	80		
II	14		6	15	1	22	7	12			
	155		55	235	20	375	95	95			
V	15		8	9	24	3	70	2	46	4	
	80		90	155	365	105	1895	15	840	20	
VI	14		9			110	134	1			
	135		135			2645	1900	10			
VIII	1						3	7			
	20						50	100			
Total sherds	44		23	27	27	138	224	24	51	4	562
Total weights	390		280	420	415	3195	4010	270	920	20	9920
Period 3: I					1		3	9	1	5	
					45		60	115	20	130	
IV	1						4				
	40						50				
V							6		2		
							100		40		
VI							6	3		3	
							110	20		10	
Total sherds	1				1		19	12	3	8	44
Total weights	40				45		320	135	60	140	740
Grand totals											
Sherds	147	32	51	38	46	138	245	52	54	12	815
Weights	2943	495	635	685	800	3195	5150	595	980	160	15638

Fabrics

Ten fabric types were defined macroscopically by the author and these categories were used during analysis and quantification of the material. Thirteen samples, representative of the complete series, were submitted to David Williams who, through petrological analysis, was able to confirm the macroscopic identifications and to clarify them into six major fabrics groups (see Appendix). Full macroscopic fabric descriptions are available in the archive.

Fabric 1: densely distributed large fragments of grog. Williams group (1). E/MBA.

Fabric 2: densely distributed medium-sized grog inclusions. Williams group (1). E/MBA.

Fabric 3: sparse medium and large grog inclusions, plus sparse fine sand. Williams group (1). E/MBA.

Fabric 4: sparse ill-sorted angular grits of varying size. Williams group (6): quartzite. E/MBA.

Fabric 5: sparse fine grits and dense medium to coarse sand. Williams group (4): felspathic tuff. E/MBA.

Fabric 6: sparse ill-sorted angular grits of varying size and medium density fine sand. Williams group (6): quartzite. LBA/EIA.

Fabric 7: medium density fine and medium grits. Williams group (4): felspathic tuff. LBA/EIA.

Fabric 8: sparse fine sand. Williams group (3): quartz/mudstone. LIA.

Fabric 9: sparse fine sand and sparse medium to large sub-rounded grits. Two samples: Williams group (5): shale. One sample: Williams group (4): felspathic tuff. MIA 'Glastonbury ware'.

Fabric 10: dense fine and medium-sized vesicles. Williams group (2): vesicular, probably originally tempered with Jurassic limestone, or Palaeozoic (Malvernian) limestone. IA.

Petrological descriptions and discussion of probable origins for each fabric are supplied in the Appendix. It is probable that Fabrics 1 to 4, 6, 8 and 9 (the shale-tempered examples) were of local origin, with the limestone-filled sherds of fabric 10 deriving from pots made from clay coming from local Jurassic deposits or the Malverns, and the felspathic tuff groups (fabrics 5, 7 and 9) using deposits from Beacon Hill, Shepton Mallet.

The distribution of fabric occurrences by trench and period is given in Table 4. This shows the strong separation between the Early/Middle Bronze Age groups, dominated by the grogged fabric types (1 to 3), and the Iron Age assemblages with higher proportions of sandy (quartzite) and other gritted fabric types (types 6 to 10). The occurrence of sherds with volcanic temper (felspathic tuff: fabrics 5, 7 and 9) throughout the sequence should be noted, although the Early/Middle Bronze Age fabric 5 with fine, ill-sorted angular grits is quite distinct from the well-sorted rounded and rather larger-gritted fabric 7 examples, which become current from the Late Bronze Age onwards.

Catalogue of illustrated sherds

Period 1: Early to Middle Bronze Age. (Note: FSN denotes Feature Sherd number)

Fig. 18

1. Flat, slightly bevelled rim and incurved neck from a jar, decorated with irregular rows of finger-tip impressions. FSN 108, fabric 1, ?Cutting II. Beaker domestic ware.
2. Complete miniature vessel with conical profile and an internally bevelled rim. 1968, unstratified P1 (Langmaid 1971).
3. Wall sherd bearing cord-impressed chevrons and two near-perforations bored one from the outside and one from the inside, but not quite aligned. 1968, unstratified, P10.
4. Rim sherd from small bowl or cup decorated with diagonal finger-tip rilling on the top of the rim. FSN 8, fabric 5, Cutting II, layer 73, Period 1.
5. Plain flat-topped rim and incurved neck from a small urn. FSN 9, fabric 1, Cutting II, layer 73, Period 1.
6. Wall sherd, slightly incurved, with cord-impressed horizontal zones of lines. FSN 7, fabric 1, Cutting II, layer 73, Period 1.
7. Wall sherd bearing cord-impressed horizontal lines. FSN 10, fabric 1, Cutting II, layer 73, Period 1.
8. Four rim sherds, three of which join. Flat expanded rim, decorated below with rough chevrons below a single horizontal line, all executed in twisted cord technique. FSN 106, 109 and 24, fabric 1, Cutting II, layer 60, Period 2. Rim diameter: c. 30cm (Langmaid 1971: FSN 106 and 109 only).
9. Flat-topped rim and straight-walled upper body sherds, decorated with rough rows of finger-tip impressions below the rim and a short distance below, the two linked by irregular lightly-incised hatched and cross-hatched lines. FSN 28, fabric 2, Cutting II, layer 52, Period 2. (Langmaid 1971: included in the Iron Age section).
10. Flat-rimmed sherd and slightly concave neck, decorated with rows of opposed diagonal incised lines. FSN 110, fabric 2, ?Cutting II.
11. Wall sherd decorated with horizontal and diagonal cord-impressed lines. FSN 107, fabric 1, ?Cutting II.
12. Simple rim sherd decorated with a row of vertical chevrons in simple deeply-incised technique. FSN 12, fabric 5, Cutting IV, layer 134, Period 1 (Langmaid 1971).
13. Flat rim, decorated a short distance below by a row of finger impressions. FSN 13, fabric 2, Cutting IV, layer 134, Period 1 (Langmaid 1971).
14. Base angle with external expansion. FSN 33, fabric 3, Cutting IV, layer 124, Period 3.

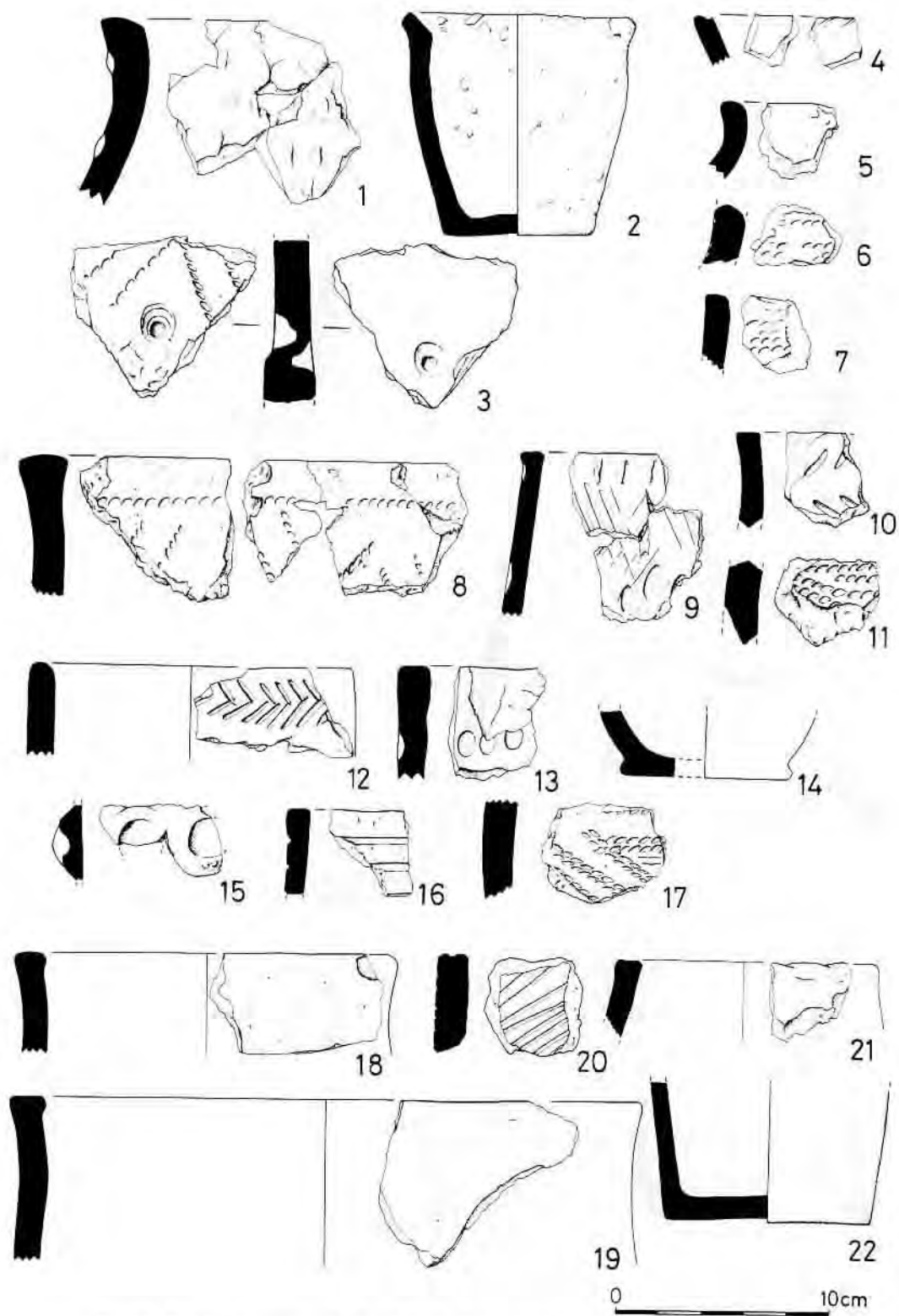


Fig. 18 Prehistoric pottery: Early to Middle Bronze Age; scale 1:3; drawn by L. Induni.

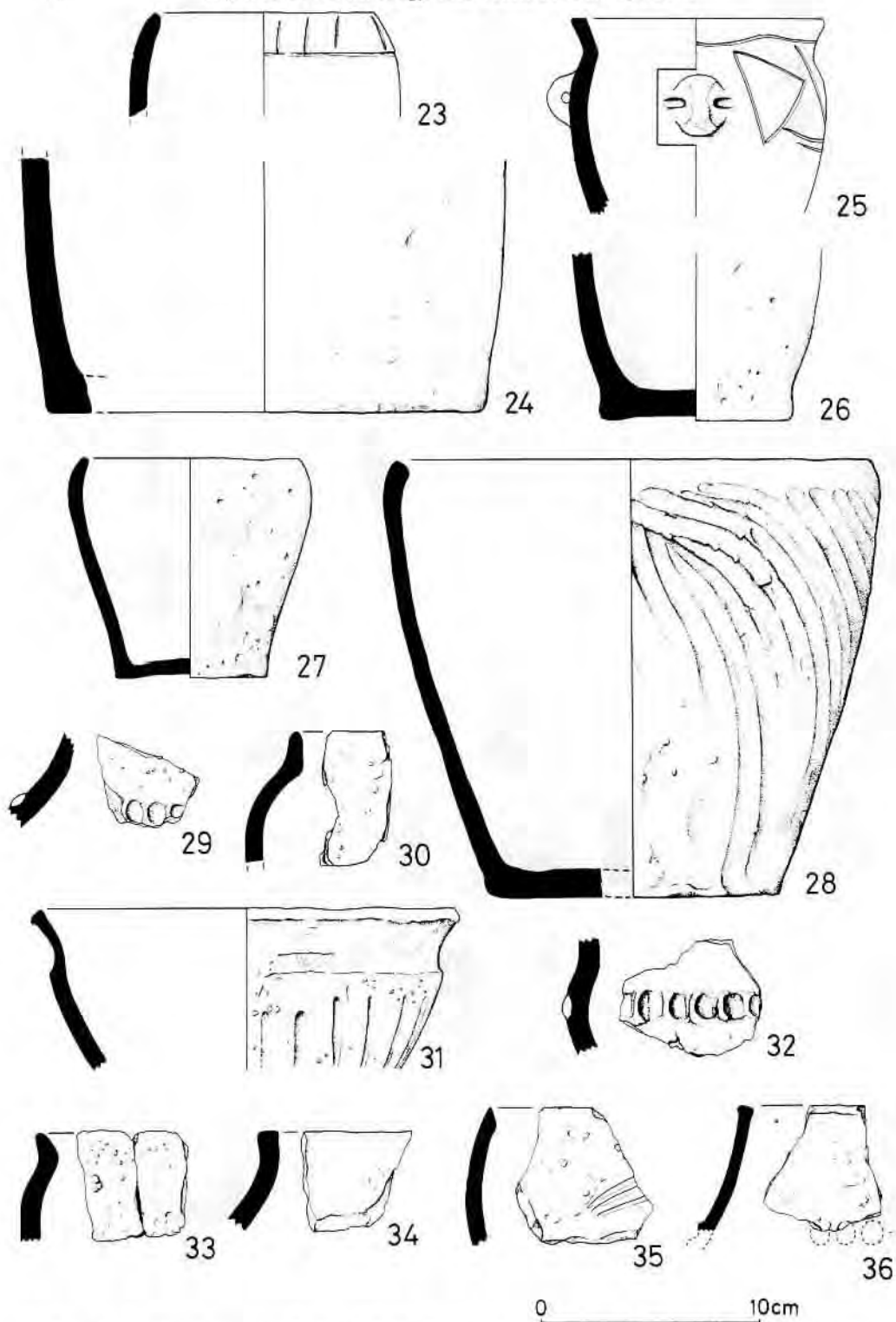


Fig. 19 Prehistoric pottery; Early to Middle Bronze Age (23-6), Late Bronze Age (27-8), and Late Bronze Age/Early Iron Age (29-36); scale 1:3; drawn by L. Induni.



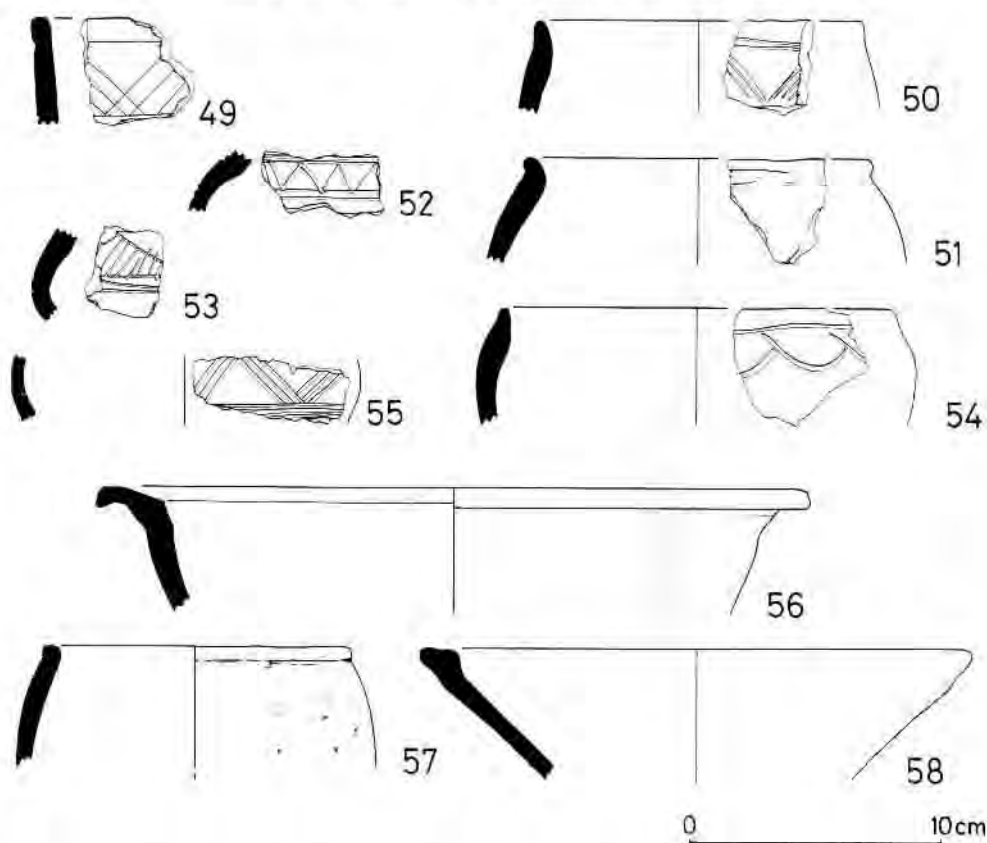


Fig. 21 Prehistoric pottery: Middle Iron Age (49–55), Late Iron Age (56–8); scale 1:3; drawn by L. Induni.

15. Detached applied cordon decorated with finger-tip impressions. FSN 31, fabric 1, Cutting IV, layer 124, Period 3.
16. Flat-topped rim decorated below with two horizontal lines. FSN 113, fabric 2, Cutting IV, unstratified.
17. Wall sherd, slightly outcurving, decorated with cord-impressed horizontal and diagonal lines. FSN 114, fabric 1, Cutting IV, unstratified (Langmaid 1971).
18. Flat rim sherd with slight internal expansion and slightly incurved neck. FSN 14, fabric 1, Cutting V, layer 166, Period 1.
19. Expanded rim and slightly incurved neck from a plain vessel. FSN 15, fabric 1, Cutting V, layer 166, Period 1.
20. Wall sherd decorated with irregularly spaced incised diagonal lines. FSN 16, fabric 1, Cutting V, layer 166, Period 1.
21. Flat-topped rim with slight finger-tip rilling on the top. FSN 11, fabric 2, Cutting IV, layer 135, Period 1.
22. Simple base and base angle from a small straight-sided vessel: P2, Cutting VI, layer 240, Period 1 (Langmaid 1971).

Fig. 19

23. Rim and upper body of a globular cup with simple rim and decorated with a series of vertical incised lines resting on a single horizontal incised line. FSN 20, fabric 2, Cutting VI, layer 239/240, Period 1.

24. Base angle and lower wall from a straight-sided vessel. FSN 21, fabric 1, Cutting VI, layer 233, Period 1.
25. Rim and upper body of a small cup with deep internally bevelled and flat-topped rim and two opposed horizontally perforated lugs. The incised linear decoration includes rough chevrons and triangle below an uneven horizontal line. 1971, P4, Cutting VI, layer ?233, Period 1 (Langmaid 1971: included in a Neolithic section).
26. Base and externally expanded base angle from a small round-bodied vessel. FSN 136, fabric 1, Cutting VI, layer ?233, Period 1 (Langmaid 1971).

Period 1: Late Bronze Age

27. Plain jar with hooked rim. FSN 23, fabric 3, Cutting II, layer 60, Period 2.
28. Plain jar with hooked and internally bevelled rim, the exterior decorated with exuberant sweeping zones of finger-smearing. FSN 25, fabric 7, Cutting II, layer 60, Period 2.

Period 2: Final Bronze Age/Early Iron Age

29. Neck fragment from a shouldered jar, bearing a row of finger-tip impressions just above the position of the shoulder. FSN 5, fabric 4, Cutting I, layer 33, Period 1.
30. Simple upright rim and rounded shoulder from a plain jar. FSN 26, fabric 7, Cutting II, layer 52, Period 2.
31. Rim and shoulder of bowl with out-flaring rim, sharp carination and spaced vertical finger-smear grooves below the carination. FSN 27, fabric 6, Cutting II, layer 52, Period 2 (Langmaid 1971).
32. Shoulder sherd, decorated with a row of finger-tip impressions. FSN 32, fabric 7, Cutting IV, layer 124, Period 3.
33. Simple out-turned rim from a round-shouldered jar. FSN 35, fabric 5, Cutting IV, layer 124, Period 3.
34. Flat rim and incurved neck from a plain jar. FSN 46, fabric 7, Cutting V, layer 150, Period 2.
35. Simple bevelled rim from a round-bodied jar; diagonal organic impressions on the exterior are probably accidental. FSN 47, fabric 7, Cutting V, layer 150, Period 2.
36. Expanded rim and shoulder from a jar with a trace of a row of finger-tip impressions at the position of the shoulder. FSN 48, fabric 7, Cutting V, layer 150, Period 2.

Fig. 20

37. Rim to shoulder from a jar with out-flaring rim and a row of finger-tip impressions at the shoulder. FSN 40, fabric 7, Cutting V, layer 154, Period 2.
38. Flat rim and rounded shoulder from a plain jar. FSN 41, fabric 7, Cutting V, layer 154, Period 2.
39. Hooked and bevelled rim from a plain jar. FSN 42, fabric 7, Cutting V, layer 154, Period 2.
40. Shoulder sherd, decorated with a row of finger-tip impressions. FSN 43, fabric 7, Cutting V, layer 154, Period 2.
41. Wall sherd, slightly outcurved, with a row of finger-tip impressions. FSN 44, fabric 7, Cutting V, layer 154, Period 2.
42. Rounded shoulder sherd bearing a row of finger-tip impressions. FSN 45, fabric 7, Cutting V, layer 154, Period 2.
43. Sharp shoulder and lower wall fragment, decorated with a row of finger-nail impressions at the shoulder. FSN 67, fabric 6, Cutting VI, layer ?210, Period 2.
44. Rim, shoulder and upper wall of a shouldered jar, decorated with a row of finger-tip impressions on the top of the rim and another at the shoulder. FSN 65, 68, 69, 70 and 74, fabric 6, Cutting VI, layers ?210 and 198, Periods 2 and 3 (Langmaid 1971).
45. Plain shouldered jar (base missing) with simple upright rim. FSN 64, fabric 6, Cutting VI, layers ?210 and 207, Periods 2 and 3 (Langmaid 1971).

- 46. Plain shouldered bowl (base missing) with a flat-topped rim. FSN 73, fabric 7, Cutting VI, layer 198, Period 3.
- 47. Small plain shouldered bowl (base missing) with simple outcurved rim. FSN 75, fabric 7, Cutting VI, layer 198, Period 3 (Langmaid 1971).
- 48. Simple slightly out-turned rim; part of a perforation bored after firing below the rim. FSN 79, fabric 8, Cutting VI, layer 198, Period 3.

Fig. 21

Period 2: Middle Iron Age

- 49. Straight flat-topped rim sherd; geometric decoration below comprising overlapping hatched triangles between horizontal incised lines. FSN 50, fabric 9, Cutting V, layer 159, Period 2 (Langmaid 1971).
- 50. Out-turned simple rim from a round-bodied jar; incised horizontal lines and chevrons below the rim. FSN 51, fabric 9, Cutting V, layer 159, Period 2 (Langmaid 1971).
- 51. Out-turned rim from a round-bodied bowl or jar; no decoration. FSN 52, fabric 9, Cutting V, layer 159, Period 2.
- 52. Shoulder sherd decorated with a single horizontal chevron between zones of horizontal lines. FSN 55, fabric 9, Cutting V, layer 159 (Langmaid 1971).
- 53. Shoulder sherd bearing rough incised decoration; a filled triangle above uneven horizontal lines. FSN 56, fabric 9, Cutting V, layer 159, Period 2.
- 54. Simple rimmed round-bodied jar with incised pendant swag decoration below a horizontal line. FSN 121, fabric 9, Cutting VIII, unstratified.
- 55. Shoulder sherd decorated with triple chevron above a zone of incised horizontal lines. FSN 122, fabric 9, Cutting VIII, unstratified.

Period 2: Late Iron Age

- 56. Bowl rim with exaggerated flat expanded rim. FSN 111, fabric 6, Cutting III, unstratified (Langmaid 1971).
- 57. Bead rim from a plain round-bodied jar. FSN 112, fabric 8, Cutting III, unstratified (Langmaid 1971).
- 58. Flat-rimmed bowl, base missing. FSN 96, fabric 7, Cutting V, layer 148, Period 3.

*Discussion (Fig. 24)**Final Neolithic/Early Bronze Age (c. 2000–1400 BC; 1700–1200 bc)*

The joining rim and neck sherds from a large vessel decorated with all-over finger-tip rustication (Fig. 18.1) was found unstratified, probably in Cutting II. It resembles the coarse decorated vessels that form the domestic component of Beaker assemblages, which, in Somerset are evidenced at Brean Down, many of the Mendip caves and Gorsey Bigbury henge (Clarke 1970, 494–5 and references there cited). These are the only sherds that can be ascribed to the late Neolithic/Early Bronze Age period and Nancy Langmaid's suggestion of an initial Neolithic phase for the monument cannot be upheld on the basis of the ceramic evidence. The small lugged vessel illustrated by her (Langmaid 1971, 118, I), and described as belonging to the class of early Neolithic Hembury Ware, is now seen to be a cup which falls within the array of known Trevisker-related types of the Early to Middle Bronze Age.

In 1908, Gray was able to identify sherds of Bronze Age pottery from the lower levels of his ditch section and, with great perspicacity, appreciated the significance of the finds in affording a date for ditch construction (Gray 1908, 142). He described the cord-decorated sherds (Gray 1908, fig. 4.6 and 7) as deriving from 'Bronze Age cinerary urns' and compared them to other local examples from Whitefield, Wiveliscombe and Willett (Elworthy). In terms of modern ceramic typologies these last vessels belong to the Secondary Series of Collared Urns (Longworth 1984, 265, No. 1404) and the Trevisker series (ApSimon and Greenfield 1972, 375) respectively. These comparisons highlight the varied and possibly long-lived nature of the earlier Bronze Age assemblages found in the excavation campaigns of 1968 to 1971. Thus, it is suspected that a truly Early Bronze Age food urn element may be present in addition to the predominant late Early Bronze Age/Middle Bronze Age

Trevisker-related assemblage which will be discussed below. The large cord-decorated vessel rim found by Gray can be paralleled in the present assemblage by a large vessel decorated with horizontal lines and chevrons in twisted cord technique (Fig. 18.8 and probably 6, 7, 11 and 17) found in various contexts within Cutting II. Whilst the mode of decoration, motifs and fabric may be matched among collared food urns, the double-expanded flat profile cannot (*cf.* Longworth 1984, 5, fig. 3), and it seems most probable that these vessels belong to the Trevisker assemblage.

However, the plain ware component of the Bronze Age group as a whole is unusual for the Trevisker-related style and it may be that some of the vessels, and in particular the smaller plain ones, may derive from an Early Bronze Age food urn tradition. This ascription could apply to Nos. 4 and 21; and the complete plain vessel No. 2 with deep internal rim bevel, belongs most properly to the class of Early Bronze Age miniature vessels, as Nancy Langmaid recognised, although it is a tub-shaped accessory vessel (Type 8(b): Longworth 1984, 52) rather than a 'Food Vessel'. Finally, it might be noted that rim No. 21 could derive from a vessel of biconical form, and thus belong to the biconical series of food urns as defined by Tomalin (1983). The occurrence of rusticated rim treatment is common within that series but not on vessels of the Trevisker series.

The Middle Bronze Age Trevisker-related assemblage (c. 1400–1200 BC; 1200–1050 bc)

The main formal characteristics of the Middle Bronze Age assemblage may be summarised as follows:-

Rim forms	flattened – Fig. 18.10, 13, 16; Fig. 19.25. flattened and expanded – Fig. 18.8, 9, 18, 19. out-turned – Fig. 18.5.
Shoulders	finger-tip impressed shoulder cordon – Fig. 18.15
Base angles	simple – Fig. 18.22; Fig. 19.24. externally expanded – Fig. 18.14; Fig. 19.26.
Decoration	finger-tip or finger-nail impressions – Fig. 18.9, 13, 15. incised diagonal lines – Fig. 18.20; Fig. 19.25. incised horizontal lines – Fig. 18.16; Fig. 19.23, 25. incised horizontal chevron – Fig. 18.9. incised vertical lines – Fig. 19.23. incised vertical chevron – Fig. 18.10, 12. cord-impressed horizontal lines – Fig. 18.6, 7, 8, 11, 17. cord-impressed horizontal chevron – Fig. 18.3, 8, 11, 17.
Lugs	horizontally perforated lug – Fig. 19.25.

Almost all these traits can be matched in the classic Trevisker assemblages from the south-west peninsula. Flattened and expanded rims are typical of ApSimon's Styles 3 and 4 at the type site (ApSimon and Greenfield 1972); finger-tip or nail impressions are a common feature of Style 4 (eg. ApSimon and Greenfield 1972, fig. 17.40; fig. 18.49; fig. 19.68); and incised horizontal and vertical chevrons also occur (horizontal: ApSimon and Greenfield 1972, fig. 18.48 and 50; fig. 19.56 and 63; vertical: fig. 36.36 and 37). The cord-impressed decorative motifs found at Norton Camp can be matched well at Trevisker (*op. cit.*, fig. 14.4; fig. 16.30 and fig. 18.45) where they belong particularly to Styles I and 2, but the range of techniques is wider at Trevisker with plaited, double and single cord impressions all having been employed.

Traits at Norton which cannot be identified in the Trevisker assemblage are the applied finger-impressed cordon and incised vertical lines, both of which do occur in the large Trevisker-related group of pottery from Brean Down, Somerset (Woodward in Bell forthcoming). All the formal and incised decorative motifs found at Norton are also present in this other important Somerset assemblage. In fact, the variety of rim forms and of incised designs is rather greater at Brean than at Norton, but two aspects of the general style are represented only at Norton. These are the significant incidence of plain wares (Nos. 5, 18, 19) and the occurrence of several vessels decorated in cord-impressed technique (Nos. 3, 8 plus 6, 7, 11 and 17; Gray 1908, fig. 4.6 and 7). Within the very much larger assemblage recovered from Brean Down, only two small sherds bearing cord-impressed decoration have

been identified. Other noteworthy vessels from Somerset which belong to a Trevisker-related style are those from Bridgwater, with fluted or grooved decoration (*cf.* Brean Down) between finger-dimpled handles and simple knob lugs (in Taunton Museum), and from Willett, Elworthy which also carries finger dimples and incised chevrons (Abercromby 1912, Pl. 94.464).

The Norton assemblage seems to be more closely similar to the south-western Trevisker assemblages than the Brean group, the other Somerset vessels noted above or the Dartmoor variants. The latter groups are characterised by several essentially non-Trevisker traits such as shallow finger-grooving, incised swag and opposed filled triangle motifs, rows of perforations and impressed rim types. These features are found more commonly within the Middle Bronze Age assemblages of Wessex and East Anglia (see Woodward in Bell forthcoming). However, these characteristics do not occur in the Norton group. On the other hand, the marked incidence of cord-impressed decoration might indicate that the Norton assemblage has affinities with the earlier Styles (1 and 2) of the Trevisker series as well as the later Styles 3 and 4, which match best with the substantial assemblage from Brean. It may be, therefore, that the Norton assemblage was established earlier than those from Brean Down and Dartmoor or the vessels from Elworthy and Bridgwater. The available radiocarbon dates for Trevisker and Trevisker-related assemblages cluster in the 8th to 12th centuries bc (Trevisker hut A: 1110 bc $\pm$ 95 [NPL-134], probably dating to the end of the settlement; Gwithian layer 5: 1120 bc $\pm$ 103 [NPL-21]; Brean Down Unit 5b: 990 $\pm$ 110 bc [HAR-7019], 920 $\pm$ 100 bc [HAR-7018] and 780 $\pm$ 100 bc [HAR-7017]), but these mainly relate to later stages of the style sequence defined by ApSimon. Although the chronological significance of the four main Trevisker styles is by no means clearcut, it may be that the cord-impressed vessels belong relatively early in the series and that the Norton assemblage started within a period prior to the 11th or 12th centuries bc. In the absence of radiocarbon dates from the site this argument may be taken no further, but the general consideration of temporal variety within the Trevisker series as a whole may be advanced through study of the well-stratified and richly decorated domestic groups recently excavated at Trethellan Farm, Cornwall (Woodward in prep.).

Fabric analysis has shown that the known major assemblages were manufactured locally, with the movement of clays or vessels over larger distances occurring only sporadically. Thus, as at Brean Down (Williams and Woodward in Bell forthcoming), the Norton group is dominated by grog-tempered wares or vessels containing local quartzite (Norton) or limestone inclusions (Brean). These contrast with the Cornish assemblages where the main tempering agent is gabbro, derived from the weathering clays of the Lizard peninsula (eg ApSimon and Greenfield, 1972, 333). Of the Trevisker-related pottery in Wessex and France listed by ApSimon (*op. cit.*, 374-5), only two vessels are known to be 'gabbroic' exports from Cornwall: that from Sturminster Marshall, Dorset (Calkin 1962, fig. 14.1) and the urn from Hardselot (Mariette 1971, fig. 2). Within Somerset, evidence of possible medium distance distribution is afforded by the occurrence of sherds tempered with felspathic tuff, probably deriving from Beacon Hill at Shepton Mallet, in significant quantities at Norton and occasionally, in the ApSimon assemblage only, at Brean Down.

The Late Bronze Age assemblage (c. 1200-900 BC; 1050-700 bc)

A Late Bronze Age plain ware assemblage is well exemplified at Norton by the occurrence of two jars from pit F16 in Cutting II (Fig. 19.27 and 28). Both jars display simple, markedly hooked rims and finger-smearing treatment. The curving rilled effect of this smearing on the larger vessel is particularly striking. This ceramic group belongs to the plain wares defined by Barrett for an early stage of the Late Bronze Age, and termed by him 'post Deverel-Rimbury' (Barrett 1980). The closest sites which have produced such assemblages are South Cadbury, where such vessels belong to Alcock's 'Cadbury 4' Style (Alcock 1980, fig. 12), Brean Down Unit 4 (Woodward in Bell forthcoming) and Combe Hay, Bath (Price and Watts 1980, fig. 24).

The fabrics indicate largely local production: calcite (from the local limestones) at Brean and South Cadbury, shelly and oolitic limestone at Combe Hay and the sandy grogged fabric (3) at Norton. However, the volcanic temper of vessel 28 (fabric 7) should be noted; it may indicate the beginnings of a medium distance production pattern which continues through

into the Early and Middle Iron Ages. Radiocarbon dates from the Thames Valley (eg Aldermaston Wharf, Berkshire: Bradley *et al* 1980, 248; and Combe Hay: Price and Watts 1980, 25 and 32) indicate a long lifespan for such pottery, from the 10th or 11th centuries bc through to the 8th.

The Late Bronze Age/Early Iron Age assemblage (c. 900–400 BC; 700–300 bc)

The Late Bronze Age/Early Iron Age assemblage at Norton, illustrated by Nos. 29 to 48, is characterised by the following formal and decorative traits:

Rim forms	flat topped – Fig. 19.34, 36; Fig. 20.38, 46. out-turned – Fig. 19.31, 33; Fig. 20.37, 44, 47. hook-rim – Fig. 19.35; Fig. 20.39.
Shoulders	sharply angled – Fig. 19.31; Fig. 20.43, 44, 45, 46, 47. rounded – Fig. 19.30, 32, 33; Fig. 20.37, 38, 40, 42.
Base angles	simple – Fig. 20.46.
Decoration	row of finger-tip impressions at shoulder – Fig. 19.29, 32, 36; Fig. 20.37, 40, 41, 42, 44. row of finger-nail impressions at shoulder – Fig. 20.43. row of finger-tip impressions on top of rim – Fig. 20.44. finger-smeared vertical grooves – Fig. 19.31.

The main form types are hook-rim jars, round-bodied necked jars, situlate jars and carinated bowls. All these are matched in the 'Cadbury 5' and 'Cadbury 6' styles defined at South Cadbury by Alcock (1980). The 'Cadbury 5' assemblage (*op. cit.*, fig. 5 and 14, upper) is characterised by a wider range of fabrics than 'Cadbury 4' with sand, flint and fine shell fillers in addition to the calcite and platy shell which continues the 'Cadbury 4' tradition. Similar forms last into the 'Cadbury 6' stage (*op. cit.*, fig. 14, lower), but the predominant filler type is now fine shell. Another assemblage similar to 'Cadbury 5' is known from Ilchester, Somerset (Ellison in Leach 1982, 124–6) and related elements are present also at Ham Hill. At Norton the main fabrics represented in this phase are quartz and sand-tempered (fabrics 6 and 8) and the group which incorporates volcanic inclusions (fabrics 5 and, especially, 7). It is worth noting that no such sherds were identified at South Cadbury or Ilchester, even though these sites are considerably nearer to the postulated clay source at Shepton Mallet than is Norton Camp. Radiocarbon dates from South Cadbury would place these assemblages in the 8th/9th to 5th centuries BC.

The Middle Iron Age assemblage (c. 200–100 BC; 150–50 bc)

Somerset 'Glastonbury wares' have been discussed most recently in relation to the analysis of assemblages from the Meare Village East settlement (Rouillard in Coles 1987, 185–217). The forms represented at Norton are jars or bowls of Meare Type C, comparable to Rouillard 1987, fig. 5.3: JC2.1 or fig. 5.5: BC2.1 and BC3. The decorative motifs are geometric (Fig. 21.50, 52 and 55, *cf.* Rouillard 1987 fig. 5.21: P49 and P255; Fig. 21.53, *cf.* P272 and P263) or curvilinear (Fig. 21.54, *cf.* Rouillard 1987, fig. 5.22: P252 and P235). Of the three main Glastonbury ware fabrics commonly found in Somerset, Peacock's (1969) group 4 (Meare fabric 8) is matched at Norton probably by Fabric 10. Fabric 9, the volcanic variant, derives from Shepton Mallet, which is the source for Peacock's group 2 (Meare fabric 1), but the group 3 calcite-tempered fabrics (Meare fabric 2c) do not occur at Norton. The main fabric at Norton in this period is a local shale-tempered variety. At South Cadbury, the equivalent style is 'Cadbury 8', tempered most commonly with shell and presumably belonging to Peacock's group 4 (Alcock 1980, 696).

Conclusion

The few Late Iron Age sherds, mainly from unstratified contexts, provide a ceramic link to advance the succession through to the Roman assemblage discussed below by Jane Timby. Thus the ceramics at Norton Camp span the whole of the later prehistoric period from the final Neolithic phase onward, with the omission only of a 'Cadbury 7' style stage in the 3rd century BC. The sequence of defensive modifications and the associated cultural material certainly illuminates the prehistoric gloom which pervades the Dumnonian *terra incognita* of

west Somerset. For the Middle Iron Age, Cunliffe has concluded that 'Somerset seems to have been on the interface of a South Western and a Wessex Zone, by virtue of which it adopted developments from both' (Cunliffe 1982, 57). This observation can be seen to apply equally to the later Bronze Age and, at least in the Middle Bronze Age and Middle Iron Age, this interface location appears to have stimulated ceramic styles of a lively and innovative nature.

Appendix Petrological examination of the Bronze Age and Iron Age Pottery by David Williams

Introduction

A small number of sherds ranging in date from Early Bronze Age through to Late Iron Age were submitted for a detailed fabric examination in thin section under the petrological microscope. Samples of the local clay and three 'local' sherds of Roman pottery were provided for comparative purposes. The full report (Ancient Monuments Report 46/87) is housed with the archive.

Petrology

On the basis of the range of non-plastic inclusions present in the Norton Fitzwarren pottery, a number of fabric divisions have been made.

(1) Grog tempered. Woodward fabrics 1, 2 and 3

All three sherds contain scattered angular inclusions of grog (ie. crushed up pottery). On the whole, the pottery seems to have been made from poorly prepared clay, with evidence of many air pockets and linear cracking of the clay matrix clearly visible in thin section. There are some textual differences between the three sherds. All of them also contain quartz grains, but fabrics 2 and 3 are fairly fine-textured compared with fabric 1 which contains more frequent and larger-sized quartz grains than the other two. Due to the nature and widespread use of grog tempering in Late Neolithic and Bronze Age pottery, it is difficult to suggest an origin for these sherds, other than a fairly local one on that basis alone (Clarke 1970; Peacock 1970; Darvill 1982).

(2) Vesicular fabric. Woodward fabric 10

In thin section the most noticeable feature of this sherd is the considerable number of angular-shaped voids, commensurate with the vesicular nature of the pottery in the hand-specimen. Although no actual fragments of limestone can be seen either in fresh fracture of the sherd or in thin section, in view of the angular shape of many of the vesicles it seems likely that these represent inclusions of limestone which have been lost, perhaps because of the particular soil conditions at the find-site or during the original firing of the pot. It is difficult to suggest a likely origin for this sherd, although Peacock (1969) noted a similar vesicular fabric in occasional Glastonbury ware sherds from Somerset, to which he tentatively ascribed a Jurassic limestone origin. Alternatively, a vesicular fabric is common in Peacock's (1968) group B1 of Iron Age pottery tempered with possible Palaeozoic limestone and thought to originate in the area of the Malvern Hills. A more local origin also cannot be ruled out on only one sample analysed.

(3) Quartz/Mudstone. Woodward fabric 8

A fairly clean clay matrix containing a scatter of well-sorted subangular quartz grains, average size 0.30mm-0.80mm, reasonably rounded grains of mudstone and a little quartzite. Possibly a locally made vessel.

(4) Felspathic tuff. Woodward fabrics 5, 7 and 9 (one sample)

Thin sectioning shows frequent discrete grains of plagioclase feldspar (oligoclase-andesine composition), some of which has partly altered to sericite, and fragments of rock made up almost entirely of grains of feldspar. All four sherds also contain quartz grains, a little mica and quartzite. The 'Glastonbury ware' sherd has in addition subangular sandstone fragments. A very similar fabric to the latter sherd has previously been noted by Peacock (1969)

in a few sherds of Glastonbury ware from Somerset, and attention was drawn to the Silurian volcanic rocks of Beacon Hill near Shepton Mallet, which are largely composed of andesitic lavas and felspathic tuffs (Green and Welch 1965). Peacock also suggested that the Old Red Sandstone of the Mendip Hills, particularly that which outcrops on Beacon Hill near Shepton Mallet, could be the source for his Group 2 (sandstone) classification. The Norton Fitzwarren sherd appears to have elements of both groups in its fabric. The three Bronze Age sherds from Norton Fitzwarren may come from the same source, although the texture of the non-felspathic inclusions is different to the later Iron Age sherd. However, the writer has already noted this felspathic fabric in certain Bronze Age pottery from Brean Down, supporting an earlier date for this fabric.

(5) Shale. Woodward fabric 9 (two samples)

Both sherds contain frequent pieces of shale, together with some quartz grains, flecks of mica, a little quartzite and sandstone. Since Norton Fitzwarren is situated on the Keuper Marls which contain much shaly material, a fairly local source is a strong possibility.

(6) Quartzite. Woodward fabrics 4 and 6

Both sherds contain frequent large grains of quartzite. In addition, quartz grains, flecks of mica and a little sandstone are also present. Fabric 6 contains many more grains of quartz in the clay matrix than fabric 4, making it a much sandier texture. Quartzite pebbles do occur in the Keuper Marl but are more commonly found in the Bunter, deposits of which are situated at no great distance to the west of Norton Fitzwarren.

Comparative material

Two samples of clay were obtained from near Norton Fitzwarren for comparison with the prehistoric pottery; also samples from three late Roman vessels from the site considered to have been locally made (all samples kindly supplied by Dr Jane Timby). Thin sections of the two clay samples showed a groundmass of subangular quartz grains, average size ranging up to 0.20mm, together with a scatter of slightly larger grains, flecks of mica, fragments of sandstone and a little quartzite and iron ore. The three sherds of late Roman pottery proved to be much coarser in texture than the clay, all three containing inclusions of sandstone, quartz and shale, with a little quartzite, mudstone and flecks of mica, recalling elements of the prehistoric fabric groupings (3) and (5). There was no clear match between the clay sampled and any of the fabric groupings, although in view of the geology of the region around Norton Fitzwarren and the petrology of the late Roman material, a fairly local origin for fabric groups (3), (5) and (6) seems quite likely; possibly also for group (1).

THE ROMAN POTTERY by Jane Timby

The Roman pottery recovered from the 1968–71 excavations amounted to c. 48 kg in weight, c. 3600 sherds. The bulk of the material, irrespective of contexts appeared to derive from a single period of occupation dating to the third and fourth centuries AD. A small number of sherds, in particular ten pieces of very abraded samian, suggest the possibility of an earlier phase of activity/occupation in the vicinity. The Roman features on the site all occur as Period 3 in the stratigraphic report. Roman pottery was recovered from Periods 2–4; the former must be regarded as intrusive, the latter as residual. The assemblage was sorted into fabrics on the basis of a macroscopic examination. The fabrics were then quantified by sherd count, weight (gms) and by percentage of rim diameter present, from which an estimation of vessel equivalents (EVE) was made. The archive containing this data, along with the material is stored with the Somerset County Museum Service, Taunton. The following report presents a description of the fabrics identified, together with their associated forms. A summary of the ceramic data is provided in tabular form.

Description of fabrics

Fabric 1: the hardness of the fabric ranges from moderately hard to soft. The colour varies through shades of grey and orange but generally with a black core and interior surface. The

matrix contains a moderate scatter of inclusions essentially composed of sparse angular white quartzite up to 3mm across, a scatter of rounded quartz grains, sparse flat fragments of a purple-grey fine-grained argillaceous rock (?shale), fine white mica and occasional grains of a fine-grained sandstone. *Forms*: thick-walled, handmade storage jars. The rims frequently display thumb pressed decoration and the inner rim surfaces are occasionally knicked (*cf.* Fig. 22.1-5). The only other vessel types recognisable in this fabric were lid fragments and a single countersunk handle (Fig. 22.6-7). *Comments*: the storage jar is a very well known type in the south-west region in the 4th century. It seems to occur in a variety of different fabrics but usually bears the same thumb-pressed finish on the rims. Similar examples have been recognised at Brean Down, Somerset (ApSimon 1965, fig. 52.36), at Ilchester in a grog tempered fabric (Leach 1982, fig. 73.271-290; fig. 74.291-93) and Bradley Hill, Somerset (Leach 1981, fig. 25.177). The petrology of the Norton Fitzwarren examples indicate a local source of manufacture. Sherds in this fabric form 44% by weight of the total assemblage (21% by sherd count) (*cf.* Table 5).

TABLE 5 ROMAN POTTERY: INCIDENCE OF FABRICS BY NUMBER, WEIGHT (IN GRAMS) AND VESSEL EQUIVALENT

<i>Fabrics</i>	<i>No</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>Weight</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>VE</i>	<i>%</i>
Local wares						
1	785	22	21272	45	258	8
2	1924	51	16569	34	2084	65
3	77	5	640	2	90	3
4	78	2	1225	3	123	4
5	356	9	3283	6	243	8
?Local						
6	31	1	852	2	64	2
7	39	1	335	>1	6	>1
8	40	1	395	>1	22	>1
9	8	>1	243	>1	-	-
10	7	>1	591	1	6	>1
11	8	>1	101	>1	6	>1
12	1	>1	3	>1	-	-
13	3	>1	13	>1	-	-
M1	2	>1	54	>1	-	-
Non-local						
14	288	7	2345	5	287	9
15	3	>1	>1	>1	5	>1
16	10	>1	>1	>1	3	>1
Totals	3660	100	47946	100	3197	100

Fabric 2: a moderately soft, generally reduced pale grey ware. The core is either grey or shows a sandwich effect of red-brown and dark grey. The matrix contains sparse rounded to sub-angular quartz grains, with angular quartzite, occasional ?shale and mica. In essence the fabric is a finer version of fabric 1 and is associated with a different repertoire of forms. *Forms*: vessels are generally wheelthrown although some apparently handmade examples exist and include a range of jar and bowl forms. The jars are mainly everted rim types, along with examples with bifid rims, cavetto rims and short upright rims (Fig. 22.8,9; Fig. 23.22). The bowls include straight sided, flanged, flat rim and beaded rim varieties (Fig. 22.10-12; Fig. 23.13-15). Many of the jar and bowl forms imitate BB1 types. Other vessel types represented include lids and bifid rim flagons. Decoration, where it occurs, is restricted to lattice or diagonal line burnishing. *Comments*: 48% of the assemblage by sherd count (32% by weight) consisted of vessels in this fabric. Like fabric 1 its source of manufacture probably lies close to the site.

Fabric 3: a very hard, well-fired dark grey ware occasionally with a reddish inner core. This fabric may be an overfired version of fabric 2 but seems to occur in sufficient quantity to merit separate classification. The matrix contains sparse, fine, rounded quartz and quartzite. *Form:* simple everted rim jars.

Fabric 4: a moderately hard, pale to mid grey or reddish-brown fabric related to fabric 2 but identified by a greater number of inclusions present. These include rounded to sub-angular quartz, sub-angular quartzite, ?shale (up to 4mm in size), iron and fine white mica. *Forms:* Both handmade and wheelmade vessels occur in this fabric. Types include everted rim jars, lids and bowls with triangular rims.

Fabric 5: a moderately hard, dark grey to black ware with a dark grey or grey-brown core. The matrix contains a sparse density of fine rounded to sub-angular quartz, occasional fragments of ?shale, clay pellets and very sparse fine white mica. *Forms:* simple everted rim jars, some imitating BB1 types (Fig. 23.16), bowls with flat rims (Fig. 23.17–19, 21), a straight sided dish with an internal step (Fig. 23.20). Vessels are mainly wheelthrown although a few examples appear to be handmade.

Fabric 6: a hard, pale grey or brownish-orange ware. The matrix is tempered with abundant grains of fine rounded to sub-angular quartz grains (up to 0.5mm in size) which create a granular texture to the fabric. Also present are sparse fine, rounded, soft, black inclusions. *Forms:* everted rounded rim jars. One sherd shows a burnished lattice decoration and some sherds appear to be slipped. *Comments:* a distinctive fabric, but not a common one at Norton Fitzwarren, contributing only 2% by weight (less than 1% by sherd count) to the overall assemblage.

Fabric 7: hard, mid to light grey dense sandy ware. The matrix contains a common density of fine sub-angular to angular quartz with sparse rounded grey clay pellets and fine mica. The surfaces show a slightly sparkling appearance due to the presence of the mica and the faceted nature of the quartz grains. The quartz is less dense and of a different character to that found in fabric 6. *Forms:* wheelmade, everted rim jars, a straight sided dish and a simple lid.

Fabric 8: a moderately hard, grey or red-brown ware characterised by a moderate frequency of well-sorted, highly polished rounded quartz grains (averaging 0.5mm in size). In addition the matrix contains white sub-angular to rounded quartzite (up to 3mm in size) and sparse fine mica. *Forms:* the only two featured sherds present are from a flat rim bowl (Fig. 23.23) and an everted rim jar (Fig. 23.24).

Fabric 9: a hard, pale orange-brown to grey-black fabric with a sparse frequency of sub-angular grog fragments. In addition the matrix contains sparse angular quartz grains. *Forms:* thick-walled handmade vessels. *Comments:* only eight unfeatured sherds were recorded in this fabric, all associated with other Roman sherds. It is possible that the fabric is residual from the prehistoric levels and not Roman, or if Roman must be regarded as another storage jar fabric analogous typologically to fabric 1.

Fabric 10: a hard, light grey ware with a common density of fine rounded to sub-angular quartz grains. The fabric contains a light scatter of rounded to sub-angular plain dark grey or striated light and dark grey, moderately soft inclusions up to 3mm in size. The argillaceous nature of these suggests that they are a mudstone or shale. Fine white mica is also present. *Forms:* thick-walled storage jars. *Comments:* a very small group of seven sherds forming 1% by weight of the total assemblage.

Fabric 11: a moderately soft, brownish orange ware with a pale blue-grey core. The matrix contains a sparse frequency of inclusions with angular white quartzite, fine rounded quartz grains, brown iron, clay pellets, fine white mica and ?shale. *Forms:* wheelmade vessels including an everted rim jar and a bowl with an upright rim.

Fabric 12: a moderately soft ware with dark orange surfaces and a grey core. The exterior surfaces are covered with a thick white slip. The matrix shows a moderate scatter of fine rounded to sub-angular quartz, brown iron and clay pellets. *Forms:* a single bodysherd was recorded from a thin walled closed form, probably a small flagon.

Fabric 13: a moderately soft, very fine orange or dark grey finely micaceous ware. Sparse fine red-brown iron grains are visible. *Forms:* wheelmade vessels, no featured sherds.

Fabric 14: Dorset Black Burnished ware (BB1).

Forms: Jars, Gillam (1976) types ?4, 8, 10, 11/12; straight sided dishes, bead rim and flanged dishes (eg. Gillam 46). *Comments:* Black Burnished wares make up a surprisingly small

amount of the assemblage, contributing only 5% by weight (7% by sherd number). The forms are predominantly types associated with the later 3rd and early 4th centuries.

Fabric 15: Oxfordshire red colour-coated ware (Young 1977).

Forms: only three sherds of Oxfordshire ware were recovered, a rim fragment and flange from bowl forms and a basesherd with a footring picked up as a surface find.

Fabric M1: mortaria fabric.

A very fine, soft, finely micaceous fabric similar to fabric 13. The matrix contains very sparse angular quartz, dark red or brown iron and very fine white mica. The fabric colour ranges from a light brownish-orange to dark orange. The trituration grits are composed of white angular quartzite fragments ranging from 1 to 5mm in size. *Forms:* two bodysherds from mortaria, no rimsherds. *Comments:* source unknown but probably local to the south-west region.

Samian: three very worn bodysherds and three basesherds, two from cups (one burnt), the other from a dish Drag. 18/31, were recovered from the topsoil. The remaining few sherds recovered from the stratified Roman levels were generally small and abraded, suggesting that they are residual from other earlier deposits in the vicinity.

Sherds of fabrics 1 and 2 were submitted to Dr Williams of Southampton University for petrographic analysis, together with samples of clay from Norton Fitzwarren hill. Dr. Williams reported that while the pottery was much coarser in texture than the clay and could not be matched, nevertheless a local source for the pottery seemed likely. (See Appendix to Prehistory Pottery report).

Forms (Table 6)

The commonest vessel type represented in the assemblage is the jar (84%). These mainly fall into two varieties, the large handmade storage jar and the smaller hand or wheelmade domestic jar. Many of the latter are based on BB1 everted rim types. The second most common vessel is the bowl/dish (13%). These mainly occur in fabrics 2 and 14. Other vessel types were less well represented and were restricted to lids (1%), flagons/jugs (1%) and beakers (less than 1%).

TABLE 6 ROMAN POTTERY: INCIDENCE OF VESSEL TYPES BY FABRIC (EVE'S)

<i>Form:</i>	<i>Jar</i>	<i>Bowl/Dish</i>	<i>Lid</i>	<i>Beaker</i>	<i>Flagon/Jug</i>
<i>Fabric</i>					
1	242	-	16	-	-
2	1816	183	8	21	56
3	90	-	-	-	-
4	102	15	6	-	-
5	155	88	-	-	-
6	64	-	-	-	-
7	2	4	-	-	-
8	12	10	-	-	-
10	6	-	-	-	-
11	4	2	-	-	-
14	177	110	-	-	-
15	-	5	-	-	-
16	-	3	-	-	-
Totals	2670	420	30	21	56
%	83	13	1	>1	2

Discussion

The small Roman assemblage recovered from Norton Fitzwarren appears on the whole to belong to the later Roman period. The two contradictions to this conclusion are the few samian sherds which are unlikely to be later than the late 2nd century, unless the vessels were curated in some way, and the single bowl in fabric 2 (Fig. 23.15) which appears typologically earlier than the rest of the assemblage. Other pottery occurring in the same

context is of later Roman date so it must be presumed that this particular vessel is residual or of some unrecognised type.

At least 89% of the fabrics present were made in the immediate vicinity of the site. A contemporary collection of material was recovered in 1862 by W.A. Jones from a railway ballast pit south of the railway bridge on the Norton Fitzwarren to Milverton road (ST 188258) (pers. comm. S. Minnitt). This collection, now at Somerset County Museum, includes a small number of wasters in fabric 2 and 3, all everted rim jars. Also present in this collection are storage jars, lids and countersunk handles in fabric 1, and bifid rim and other jars, bowls and a mortarium in fabric 2 similar to those examples from the excavation. The same fabrics (ie. TF1, 2 and 3) feature on other unpublished 3rd- to 4th-century sites in the area, for example Wick Farm (ST 432262); St Mary's cemetery at Bishops Hull; Stoke Hill Quarry, near Taunton; Dowsland Farm, Holway (ST 24272310); Wellington Road, Taunton (ST 21002433), and Creech Barrow Estate, Taunton (ST 253255). This last mentioned site also produced a basesherd from a vessel in fabric 6. All the above mentioned sites produced sherds of late BB1 alongside the local wares.

Non-local wares, although present, are not as prevalent as might be expected for a site of this date. BB1 wares contribute only 7% by weight of the total assemblage and only three sherds of Oxfordshire ware were present. This contrasts with sites to the east, for example Ilchester, where BB1 forms 50–60% of the assemblage for each period (Leach 1982, 142); and Oxfordshire wares and other colour-coats, although appreciably less common, are much more in evidence than at Norton Fitzwarren. It is also noteworthy that there were no Oxfordshire mortaria present, the only two sherds recorded belonging to more local south-west types. The wares defined as 'local' here do not occur at Ilchester. It must be assumed, therefore, that this region to the west of Taunton was more or less self-sufficient in pottery and had little contact with outside markets. It is difficult, in the absence of other published sites in the immediate area, to determine whether the assemblage here is typical for this area or is peculiar to this site.

Catalogue of illustrated pottery

Fig. 22

- 1–5. Handmade storage jars with finger pressed decoration, fabric 1.
 1. Cutting IV, layer 120, Period 4;
 2. Cutting VI, layer 183, Period 3;
 3. Cutting I, layer 16, Period 3;
 - 4 and 5. Cutting VIII, layer 285, Period 3.
6. Countersunk handle, fabric 1, Cutting VIII, layer 285, Period 3.
7. Handmade lid, fabric 1, Cutting VIII, layer 283, Period 3.
8. Wheelmade necked jar, fabric 2, Cutting I, layer 16, Period 3.
9. Wheelmade jar, fabric 2, Cutting VIII, layer 285, Period 3.
10. Handmade bowl, fabric 2, Cutting IV, layer 140, Period 4.
11. Wheelmade flanged bowl, internally burnished, fabric 2, Cutting VIII, layer 285, Period 3.
12. Wheelmade flanged bowl, fabric 2, Cutting VIII, layer 285, Period 3.

Fig. 23

13. Wheelmade bowl with burnished line lattice decoration, fabric 2, Cutting VIII, layer 285, Period 3.
14. Wheelmade bowl with incised line lattice decoration, fabric 2, Cutting VIII, layer 285, Period 3.
15. Wheelmade globular bodied bowl, fabric 2, Cutting VI, layer 182, Period 3.
16. Wheelmade jar decorated with a zone of vertical burnished lines, fabric 5, Cutting VI, layer 180, Period 4.
17. Handmade, wheel finished bowl, fabric 5, Cutting VIII, layer 285, Period 3.
18. Handmade bowl, fabric 5, Cutting VIII, layer 285, Period 3.
19. Handmade bowl, fabric 5, Cutting VIII, layer 285, Period 3.
20. Wheelmade dish, fabric 5, Cutting VIII, layer 285, Period 3.

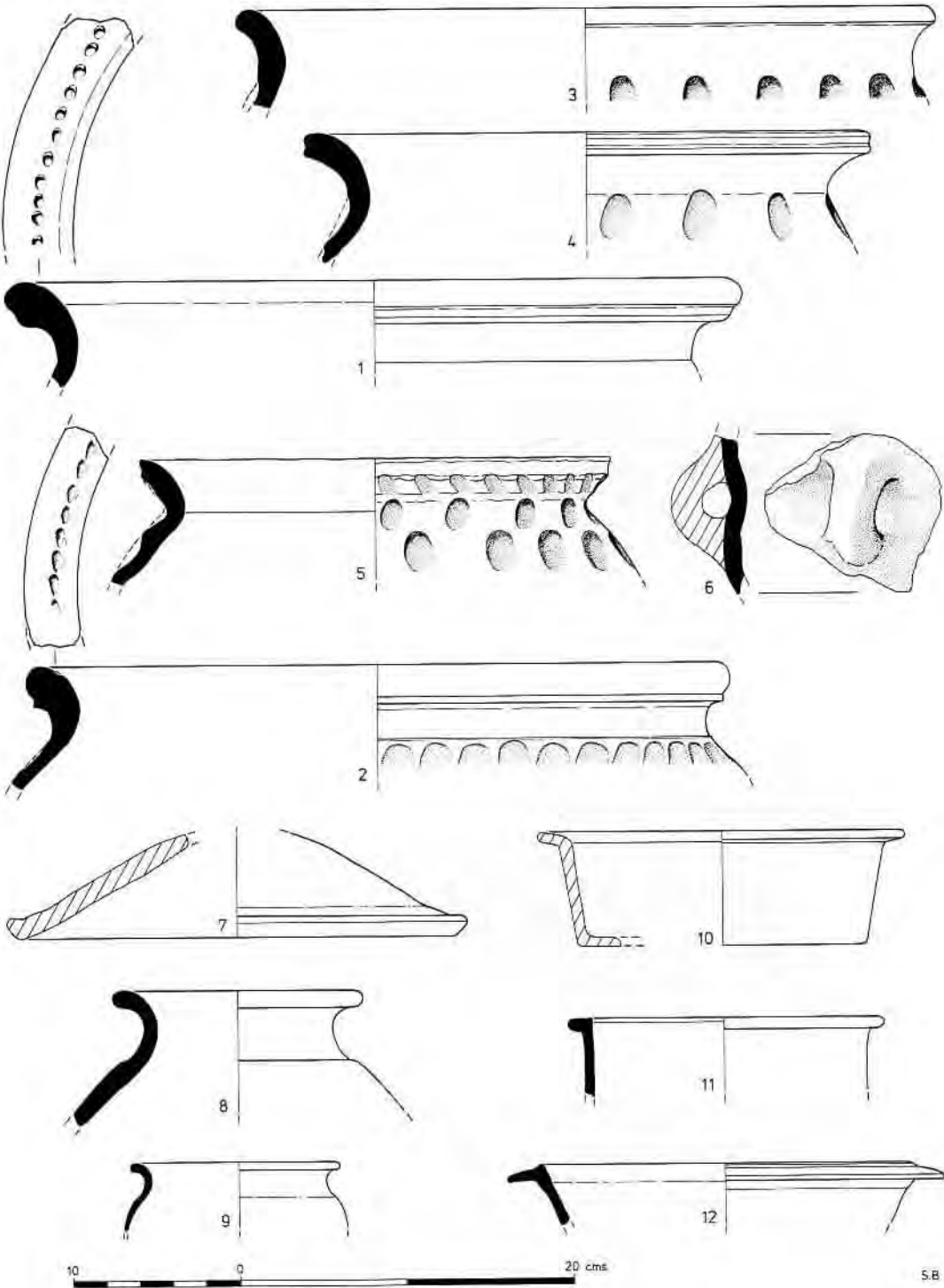


Fig. 22 Romano-British pottery 1-12; scale 1:4; drawn by S. Banks

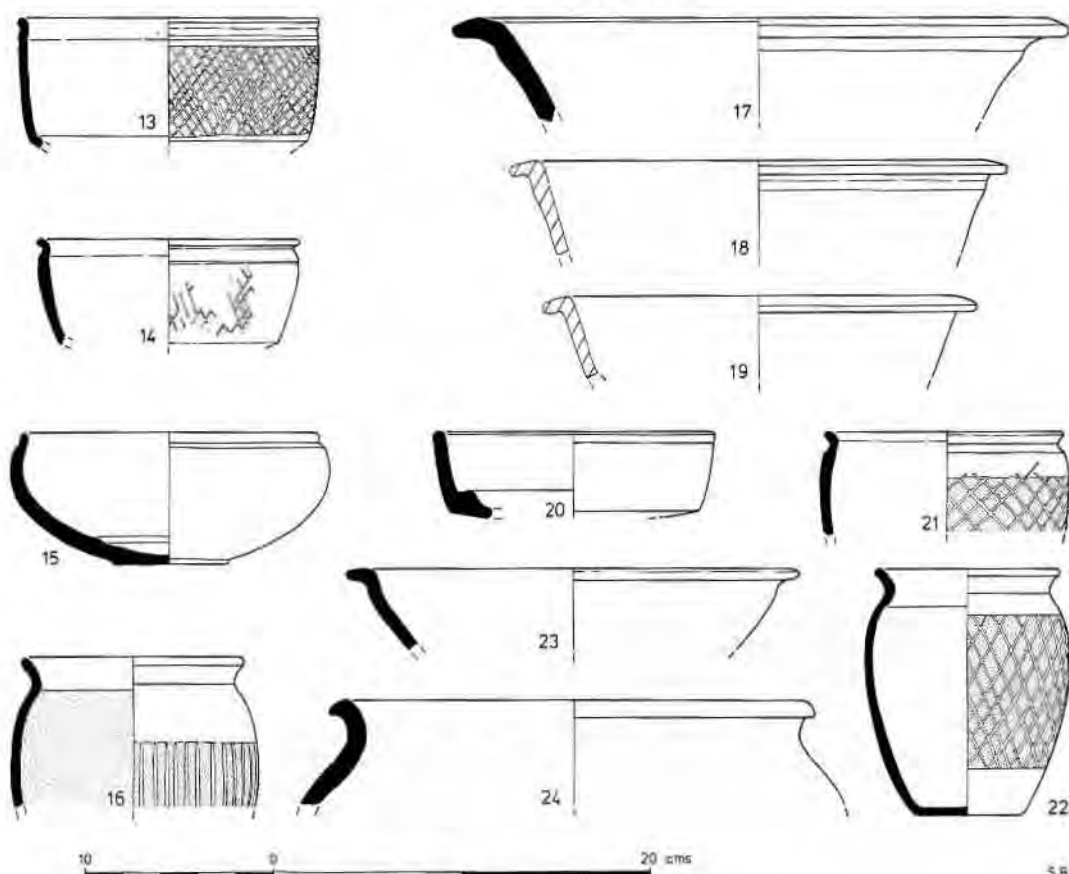


Fig. 23 Romano-British pottery 13-22; scale 1:4; drawn by S. Banks.

21. Wheelmade bowl with burnished line lattice decoration, fabric 5, Cutting VIII, layer 285, Period 3.
22. Wheelmade jar with a zone of burnished line lattice decoration, fabric 2, Cutting VIII, layer 285, Period 3.
23. Wheelmade dish, fabric 8, Cutting VIII, layer 285, Period 3.
24. Wheelmade jar, fabric 8, Cutting I, layer 16, Period 3.

OTHER FINDS by Peter Ellis

The post-Roman pottery

A small assemblage (less than half a kilogram) was collected from the topsoil. The material was heavily abraded. Eighteenth and 19th-century South Somerset, and Bristol and Staffordshire industrial wares were represented, as well as two medieval sherds.

Brick and tile

Just under two kilograms of earthenware brick and tile fragments were collected. The material was 18th century or later, with the exception of a fragment of plain, glazed, medieval floor tile, and a fragment of 17th-century South Somerset roof tile.

Clay pipe

Four fragments of clay pipe stem were found in Period 4 layers.

Coins

Four coins were found in topsoil layers. A badly corroded *sestertius* of the 1st–3rd century, two pennies of 1876 and 1935 and a halfpenny dated 1942.

Glass

Thirty fragments of glass were recovered. Three fragments of greenish translucent molten glass were found in Cutting I, layer 15, a Romano-British context. The remainder was found in Period 4 contexts and was no earlier than the 17th century, the majority being 19th century.

Copper Alloy Objects

Three small fragments of copper alloy were found in Romano-British contexts. None was identifiable.

Iron Objects

Thirty four iron objects and corroded fragments were collected. Three (two nail fragments and an unidentifiable object) were found in Romano-British layers, the remainder in topsoil layers.

THE TECHNOLOGICAL EVIDENCE by Paul Budd (Table 7)

All the material labelled daub and slag collected by the excavators was examined at the Ancient Monuments Laboratory of English Heritage. The full report on this material is available in the archive (AML Report Number 64/87). The following is a brief summary of the findings.

There was no conclusive evidence, such as wattle impressions, that the fired clay was in fact daub. A variety of fabrics was noted, the great majority oxidised. This would make unlikely an association with metal working where reducing conditions normally predominate. The material was present in contexts of all periods but chiefly in Period 3, and is evidence of no more than clay fired by proximity to heat.

A total of 3.37kg of slag was examined. Three main categories of slag were noted: fuel ash slag, hearth lining and fayalitic slag (Bayley 1985). The first two categories are evidence of sustained high temperatures, but need not be associated with metal working. The fayalitic slags offer positive evidence of technological activity. The indications are of iron smithing with two samples of hearth bottom recognised, one stratified in Cutting V, layer 143. Fuel ash slags and hearth linings were present in contexts of all periods, albeit in small quantities, while fayalitic slags were evident from Period 2 contexts and later. All three types were predominately found in Iron Age and Romano-British contexts, and such evidence of iron smithing is commonly found at occupation sites of these periods.

TABLE 7 TECHNOLOGICAL RESIDUES: OCCURRENCE OF FIRED CLAY AND SLAG, PERIODS 1–3

<i>Period</i>	<i>Cutting</i>	<i>Layer</i>	<i>Fired clay</i>	<i>Hearth lining</i>	<i>Fuel ash slag</i>	<i>Fayalitic slag</i>
1	II	61	X			
	IV	133		X	X	
	V	166	X			
2	I	21				X
		27		X		
	V	147				X
	VI	195	X	X	X	
3		207		X		X
	V	143			X	X
	VI	183	X			
		184	X			
		219		X		

THE ANIMAL BONE by Bruce Levitan

A small assemblage, comprising 329 fragments from provenanced layers, was examined. Only 29 fragments were identifiable to species, the remaining bones being 'cattle-size' (297) and 'sheep-size' (3) fragments. The condition of the bones was very poor, with only Period 4 (post-Roman) bones being well preserved. The majority of the unidentifiable fragments were small pieces of tooth – presumably the fact that teeth and teeth fragments predominate is a reflection of the poor preservation. Most fragments were very small, and many were eroded in appearance or embedded in heavy concretions of brown, clayey sediment.

Most of the identifiable bones were of cattle, *Bos taurus* (22, 81.5%), all being from adult individuals (eight permanent teeth, fused distal tibia). Three bones were of sheep (*Ovis aries*) or goat (*Capra hircus*); again all were from adults (two permanent teeth, fused proximal humerus). Additionally three fibula shaft fragments from Period 2, not positively identifiable, may be of sheep/goat. Pig (*Sus domesticus*) and horse (*Equus caballus*) were represented by one bone each. The species present are summarised, by period, in Table 8.

TABLE 8 ANIMAL BONE: SUMMARY OF VERTEBRATE REMAINS (nos. of fragments)

	Period				Total
	1	2	3	4	
Cattle	4	7	6	5	22
Sheep/Goat	3	1	-	1	5
Pig	-	-	-	1	1
Horse	-	1	-	-	1
Cattle-sized	97	25	47	128	297
Sheep-sized	-	3	-	-	3
Total	104	37	53	135	329

DISCUSSION AND SYNTHESIS OF THE EXCAVATION EVIDENCE

Any assessment of archaeological work on the hillfort must take into account the difficulties posed by the underlying geology, and the problems of defining its relationship with the archaeological strata. Above the Mercia Mudstone (Keuper Marl) were complicated interleaving layers of sand and gravel, and the excavation record makes clear the problems of defining features cut into this capping, as too did Gray's description (1908). Modern exposures of the geology at Norton show that this Pleistocene capping seems to be confined to the plateau. These geological strata were recorded in Cuttings II (0.3m of gravel), III (0.4m of sand and gravel), and VI (0.2m of sand and gravel and a 0.8m deep hollow at the north end of the cutting) (Figs. 6 and 7). In Cutting V, the clay/gravel interface was recorded in the sides of F50 showing a depth of gravel between 0.2 and 0.4m. Fissure cracks were noted in both the clay and the sands in Cutting II and VI. Identifications of archaeological deposits at their lower levels is not clear, and it must be further borne in mind that the trenches may not have fully recovered the profiles of ditches and banks, and that features were not always recognised or definable in plan.

In addition, the superimposition of occupation phases on the hill has created difficulties in allotting features and layers to specific phases, and later activity has often obliterated earlier evidence. However, analysis of the excavation evidence suggests that, although there are contradictions and ambiguities, a logical sequence can be outlined.

Although there is little pottery predating the Bronze Age, the Mesolithic and Neolithic flint assemblage suggests a presence on Norton Fitzwarren Hill prior to the Bronze Age. If the aerial photograph evidence indicative of a Late Neolithic

henge to the north is accepted, it may be that the Bronze Age occupation revealed by excavation followed important earlier use of the area (Fig. 1). If the cropmark evidence is confirmed by further work it would appear that the area was already of more than local status in the Neolithic. The extent of modern development may of course mask the pattern, but it is possible that the spur of land above 30m with water courses to the east, south and west, and with the later hillfort at its southern end, forms the focal area.

Period 1: The Bronze Age Enclosure

The V-sectioned ditch in Cuttings I and VI represents the first identifiable event in the archaeological sequence (Figs. 6 and 7). The cuttings are separated by 40m, and it is possible that the other ditch segments between represent the same primary phase ditch cut to a lesser depth and with differing profiles. This might suggest that the ditch was broken into short segments or, as at Rams Hill, that there were two distinct ditch depths. However, the similarities between the excavated sections in Cuttings I and VI with their carefully cut profiles, the proximity of the different transects, and the difficulties of the terrain described above, must suggest that the full ditch profile was not achieved by excavation in Cuttings II, III, IV and V. In Cutting VI, though not in Cutting I, the base fills of the ditch were of clay. If this represents the norm for the lower fills, it may be that, encountering apparently natural clay at the base of the ditch, as was recorded in Cuttings II, III, IV and V, the excavators assumed the full definition of the feature.

The ditch sides in Cuttings I and VI were exceptionally cleanly cut. There were no indications of weathering in Cutting VI. Such steep profiles left exposed even for one winter are likely to show some signs of collapse, and it must therefore be a possibility that the ditch faces were protected. Finds of Trevisker-related pottery near the base of the ditch in Cutting VI may represent the only surviving elements of material deliberately placed in the base of the ditch. Unfortunately animal bone has not survived but the teeth collected indicate the former presence of faunal remains. It is clear that the lower part of the ditch was deliberately backfilled.

In Cutting VI, both sections show clear evidence of a recutting of the ditch at the base of layers 253 and 232, and a recutting is possible too in Cutting I. It is argued here that this secondary phase of use of the ditch is represented by the full excavated ditch profiles in Cuttings II, III, IV and possibly in V, though the latter is a little shallow. Depths below the natural ground surface vary between 1.1m and 1.4m, and the ditch profiles through from Cutting II to VI are broadly similar. An indication of this suggested recutting could be the finding of Trevisker-related pottery at the presumed base of the ditch in Cuttings II, IV and V, at the base of F10 in Cutting I, and at this level in Cutting VI.

There is evidence in Cutting VI of a stone-packed post pit at the base of the recut ditch (F82), although this is only hypothesised from the section drawing and was not remarked on during excavation. In Cutting I, there is a distinct difference between the recorded fills of F10 and the uniform clay noted just to the north (Gray 1908). It may be that F10 is a large post pit rather than the profile of a recut ditch. The profile of the ditch in Cuttings II and V could also suggest post pits or a trench at the foot of the ditch. The ditch fills in Cuttings III and V and the secondary fills in Cutting VI may be interpreted as representing backfilling around and between posts.

The ditch evidence at Norton Fitzwarren therefore indicates an initial ditch of exceptionally careful design which may have been faced. There followed a backfilling in the base of which pottery was deposited. A secondary recutting was much less clearly designed, but again pottery lay at the base of the backfills. There

is some evidence of post pits with stone packing. The pottery evidence indicates an Early/Middle Bronze Age date for both the ditch and its recutting.

These phases of use and reuse of the ditch are likely to have been accompanied by a bank or banks (Fig. 3). It may be expected that the initial bank would have been formed, partly at least, of clay from the ditch spoil, although its lowest levels may have been of redeposited natural gravel and sand. The clearest evidence of a bank was in Cutting I where F4, on the outside of the ditch, survives as an earthwork. The composition of the bank was wholly of gravel, suggesting that it may not represent an initial bank associated with the primary ditch. On the other hand, no pottery or other indications of spoil from a recutting were found either in these excavations or in 1908. The stratigraphic relationship between bank and ditch had been obliterated by later features. In Cutting III the clay bank outside the ditch line is apparently Iron Age, and if any elements of a Period 1 bank survive (perhaps layers 91, 92 and 93) they are deposits which appear to have followed the filling of the ditch. In Cutting V excavation did not continue until secure natural layers were reached, but a bank (F51) is clear, possibly with an earlier phase (layer 171). In Cutting VI a layer of gravel (246) may represent the remains of a bank (F78) dipping to the east into the open ditch and spreading for some distance to the west. The position of the ditch in Cuttings I and III, some 6m from the natural break of slope westward, may well indicate the location of an outer bank sited on the plateau edge.

Inside the ditch line no bank is possible in Cutting II, at any rate in a second phase, since a ditch crosses its presumed path. In Cutting III layers suggested to be natural in this report could be argued to represent a bank. Cutting IV demonstrated a clear clay bank, albeit of small proportions, which appears to predate the secondary ditch filling. However, this bank seems to have survived to form part of the Roman levels, an unlikely circumstance if a Period 1 feature. Cutting V was not securely excavated to natural and bank elements may lie below the excavation limit. Finally in Cutting VI, layer 245 may represent part of a bank (F74) although the interface between it and the fills of the natural hollow below is hypothesised.

These elements of banks and possible banks may represent upcast material from cutting and recutting of the ditch placed on both its sides, and may not amount to significant elements in the layout of the enclosure. However, the careful manner in which the ditch was cut suggests that there was a clear design, carefully executed, and that the visual aspects of the system were of paramount importance. It is unlikely that spoil from the ditch was haphazardly deposited. Due weight must therefore be given to the fact that the clearest indications of an accompanying Bronze Age bank lie on the outer side of the ditch.

The evidence strongly suggests an entrance between Cuttings I and II. On the north side the outer bank comes to a clear southern terminal as a visible earthwork, while on the south side there are no indications that the main ditch continued north of the pit F16, and clear evidence of a Period 1 ditch running into the interior at right angles to the ditch line (Fig. 3). Although there is no evidence of the relationship of F17 and F26, the inner ditch, F17, may belong to a later phase. The siting of the Late Bronze Age pit F16 exactly over the junction of the main ditch and F17 may not be fortuitous, and it may be that there is evidence here of a gateway feature, demonstrating a development of the entrance.

From the extent to which it has been necessary to advance hypotheses and infer the existence of features, it will be clear that an overall account relating ditch phases, banks and the suggested entrance is necessarily speculative. The evidence suggests a carefully defined ditch and an outer bank, with an entranceway at this point from the outset. There is then some possibility of the ditch line being

redefined in the form of a line of posts, and a possible relationship with a pit marking entranceway features. Any hypothesised structure such as a palisade must take account of the probable existence of an outer bank. It is possible that the outer bank was heaped in this second phase against a palisade. Alternatively the line of posts may mark the rear of a structure fronted by the reused first phase bank. The pottery evidence suggests that the primary and secondary ditch are both to be allocated to the Early/Middle Bronze Age. Gateway features associated with pit F16 in Cutting II would then have been constructed in the Late Bronze Age.

The slight outer ditch F8 in Cutting I represents the only remaining possible Period 1 feature excavated, together with the stratigraphically ambiguous hoard. During excavation the ditch was thought to be a later feature. If it were associated with the enclosure then, although it would have been obliterated in Cutting III, it should have been apparent in Cutting VI. Whether the position of the hoard resulted from insertion from the open ditch or whether an animal burrow was made through to the soft fill around the hoard from a much later ditch is not clear. Unfortunately, therefore, the hoard is of no assistance in dating the earthwork enclosure.

Period 1 arrangements within the enclosure were not recorded in the transects, nor were there any features excavated aside from those discussed above, which might be assignable to the Bronze Age layout. There is, however, a great deal of residual Bronze Age pottery. Because of the nature of the excavations this inevitably overlies the ditch line, but there would appear to be more than would have been disturbed in the upper ditch fills. There is also residual Bronze Age pottery at the south end of Cutting VI well away from the ditch line. On the other hand, there are few early sherds in the pottery collected in Cutting VIII. Zoning of the occupation was apparent at Rams Hill and the same may be true here. These pottery spreads may represent occupation toward the edge of the enclosure. The most crucial evidence of the Period 1 occupation, albeit at the end of the period, is the metalworking indications found in the pit F16. This may or may not represent evidence of metalworking within the enclosure, since the moulds may have been a ritual deposit at an entranceway (Stuart Needham, this report). Whether metalworking took place here or not, the moulds must represent a significant function of the community controlled from the enclosure.

There is only slight evidence to enable a reconstruction of the position of the enclosure on the hilltop (Fig. 2). There is an apparent straightening of the ditch curve between Cuttings V and VI, suggesting that a northern curve to the enclosure was completed at this point (Fig. 3). A line from here to the south-east would run along the hill contour for 100m before turning east at the south end of the level area. Aerial photographs show no evidence of the enclosure, and the crop mark on a West Air photograph used to suggest a circular enclosure by the excavator is more likely to represent the Iron Age ditch located in Cutting VIII in 1968. Ground-visible crop marks indicative of an enclosure the size of Rams Hill were reported in 1974 (Bradley and Ellison 1975, 150), and there is clearly potential for further aerial reconnaissance. If the argument that the west side of the enclosure followed the contours is accepted and the curve plotted by excavation is projected to the east, a circuit may be suggested with two long parallel sides and two curved ends enclosing an area of about 200m by 120m. If the enclosure was circular the latter measurement could be projected from the plotted ditch arc as its diameter.

Turning to comparative enclosures of this period, there are few extended discussions in the literature. That on the Rams Hill enclosure (Bradley and Ellison 1975) draws comparisons between Rams Hill, Oxfordshire, Norton Fitzwarren, Highdown Hill, Sussex (Wilson 1940 and 1950), South Lodge Camp, Wiltshire, and

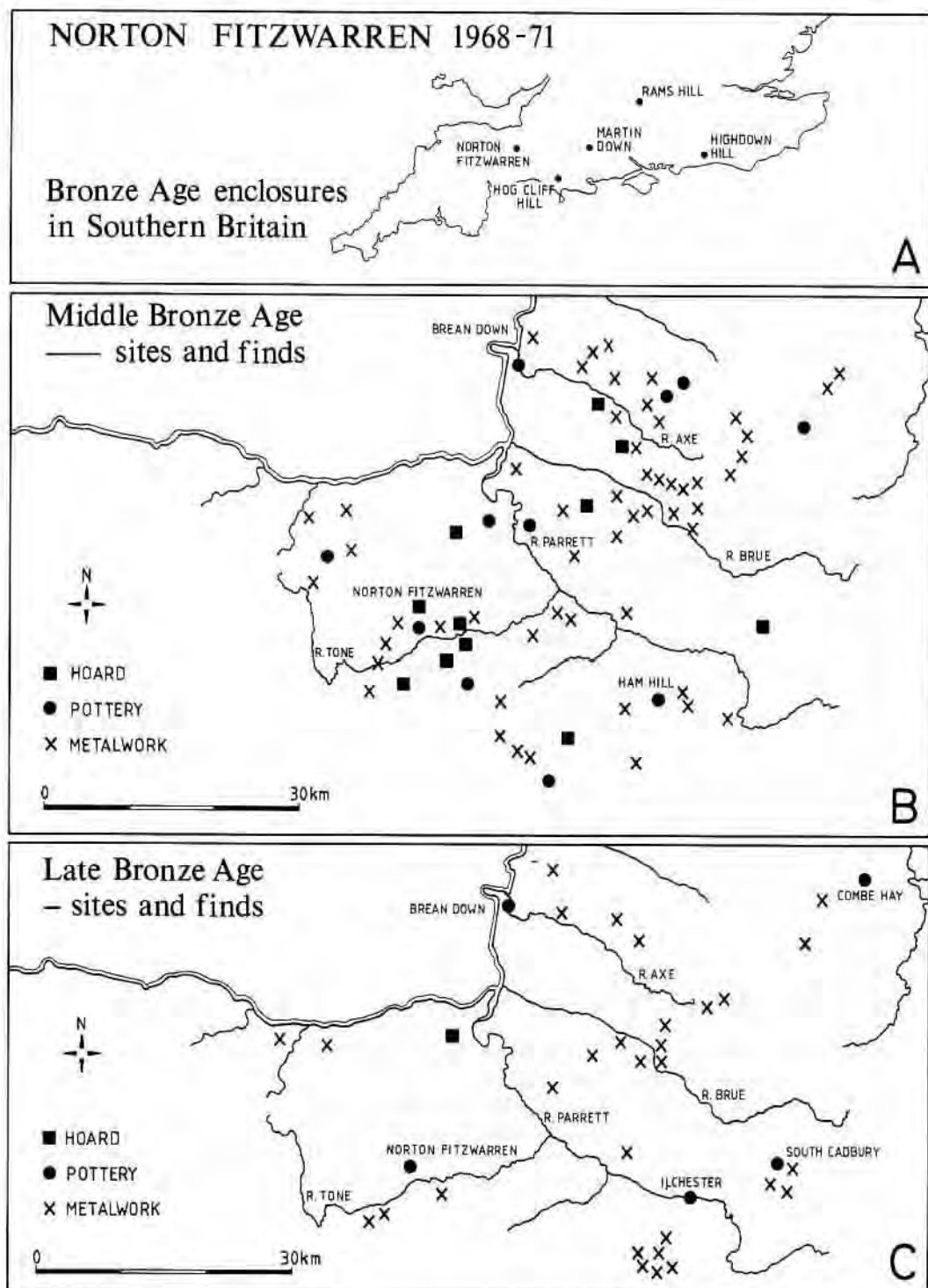


Fig. 24 A) Bronze Age enclosures in southern England, B) and C) Bronze Age sites and finds in Somerset and south Avon; B) and C) after Ellison 1982, figs 6.5 and 6.9; drawn by L. Induni.

Martin Down, Hampshire (Pitt Rivers 1898). A recent report suggests that Hog Cliff Hill, Dorset, may be added to the evidence (Ellison and Rahtz 1988). These large enclosures may well represent central places in Bronze Age southern Britain (Fig. 24), marked by concentrations of metalwork, and lying at the intersecting points marking the limits of the distribution of certain pottery types (Ellison 1980, 131, fig. 2; Bradley 1984, 107–111; Ellison 1981, 423, fig. 15.3). Morphologically these sites occupy the discontinuity between henges and causewayed camps on the one hand, and defended hillforts on the other, a space which by its nature is unlikely to contain clear type sites and standard features. Nevertheless, the careful ditch cutting is paralleled at Rams Hill and Highdown Hill; the suggested development to a definition of the enclosure in timber is clearly marked at Rams Hill; the size of the suggested entrance at Norton Fitzwarren is similar to the south-west entrance at Rams Hill; and the non-defensive nature of the first phase enclosure is common to both Norton Fitzwarren and Rams Hill. In addition the parallels between the siting of the enclosures on slight hilltops, their subsequent supersessions by Iron Age hillforts and their apparently deliberate siting to exploit different land types have all been noted (Bradley and Ellison 1975, 150; Bradley 1984). What needs pointing up is the position of the Norton Fitzwarren bank outside the ditch. This evokes the perhaps intentionally non-defensive nature of henge monuments, with the bank and numerous entrances signalling a layout to be seen from within, and one which invites entry to an open site. The Norton Fitzwarren arrangement may be closely paralleled by that at Hog Cliff Hill and at Highdown Hill, though nowhere are V-sectioned ditches noted. Cutting IV at Highdown Hill is remarkably similar to Cutting I at Norton Fitzwarren (Wilson 1950, plate IV). Here an outer ditch 1.7m wide and 0.8m deep, and an inner ditch 3m wide and 1.6m deep are separated by a bank 6m wide surviving to 1m in height. The bank here may be a Bronze Age rather than Iron Age feature. Other sites parallel to these Bronze Age enclosures are cited by Bradley and Ellison (1975). Although neither are definitely dated, the sites at Wolstonbury, Sussex (Curwen 1930a) and Rybury, Wiltshire (Curwen 1930b) both have internally sited ditches. At Wolstonbury the ditch is 3.6m wide and 1.67m deep, with the bank 6.3m wide and 1m high. A single Bronze Age sherd in the lower fills was not thought to be sufficient dating evidence by the excavator, given quantities of Iron Age pottery in the upper fills. Finally, the sizes of these enclosures are worth comparing, with Hog Cliff Hill the largest at 280m by 200m, then Wolstonbury at 207m by 183m, Rybury 190m by 152m and Highdown Hill at 122m by 91m.

The evidence from Norton Fitzwarren is not sufficiently unequivocal to add secure data to that already known for Bronze Age enclosures. There is, however, some indication that a deliberately non-defensive but ?ceremonial site, originating in the Early/Middle Bronze Age and with an associated ornament hoard, was later furnished with some kind of timber enclosure and that the production of Late Bronze Age weapon metalwork could well be linked to a changed function of the site. The crisp definition of the Middle Bronze Age ditch, the outer bank, the positioning of pottery in the ditch, the hoard, and, lastly, the placement of the fragile moulds in the later entrance pit, all suggest a conscious investment of meaning and significance in the site, which, although elusive, serves to underline its importance.

Period 2: Iron Age occupation

The hillfort rampart sequence was exposed only in the machined trench III (Fig. 6). There were three phases of defensive arrangements apparent. The first and second (F26 and F29) seemed to be associated with cultivation soils, and the third (F21)

had been much degraded both into the accompanying ditch and, apparently through ploughing, over the soils in the interior. The main defensive ditch sectioned in Cutting III and partly in Cutting I, was seen to have been recut in both trenches. Without hand excavation and the exposure of rampart features in plan, it would be difficult to distinguish front and rear timber revetments and boxed-in banks as at South Cadbury (Alcock 1980, 666), though these are possible.

There was useful dating evidence for the ditches in Cutting I. The primary ditch F6 had no pottery later than the Early Iron Age, while there was a distinctive Middle Iron Age group in the recut F5.

The initial defensive arrangements in Cutting III involved the removal of the preceding Bronze Age bank, while in Cutting I the outer Bronze Age bank was left in place. The superimposition of the Iron Age on the Bronze Age enclosure bank apparently only at this point, may not be a coincidence, or have been dictated by the topography. It is possible that the entrance argued to have been sited between Cuttings I and II throughout successive changes in the Bronze Age enclosure, was maintained for the initial hillfort layout. The reason for the survival of the bank F4 may be that it was used to form part of an initial entranceway which was subsequently abandoned and blocked. If this argument is accepted then unbroken site use between Periods 1 and 2 is implied.

In addition to layer 27 in the first hillfort ditch, pottery from the Early Iron Age was found in the group of features at the south end of Cutting VI (F70, F71, F72 and layer 207), and in layer 52 the cultivation soil overlying F16 in Cutting II. The evidence suggests that the initial hillfort layout took place in the Early Iron Age with occupation sites indicated by rubbish pits and associated cultivated soils.

A subsequent phase, marked by a refurbishment of the defences and the construction of large circular huts, is demonstrated by the finds of Glastonbury ware in the secondary ditch F5 in Cutting I and in the ring gullies F48 and F49 in Cutting V (Fig. 4). Further sherds in Cutting VIII may be associated with the ?ring gully F91. The ring gullies (including F67 in Cutting VI) are likely to represent the foundation trenches of circular huts and may be paralleled by the house sites found at South Cadbury (Alcock 1972, 84). Their associated occupation levels have been lost through ploughing. None of the excavated features can be used to suggest a clear diameter, though the structures are certainly in excess of 10m across. From the Cutting V evidence, there are at least two phases of construction, since F48 and F49 cannot be contemporary house sites. In Cutting II and IV charcoal bands were recorded over earlier ditches, suggesting the survival here of burnt material from accidental fires or from phases of reconstruction and levelling. None of the post-holes forms any meaningful pattern, although F45 and F47 in Cutting V may be contemporary with F48 and indicate interior post settings. Associated cultivation soils may be represented by layers 123 and 124 in Cutting IV. Layer 83 in Cutting III has been interpreted as a cultivated soil contemporary with the second rampart. Occupation was clearly widespread, since despite the small scale of excavation, elements of house sites have been recognised in three of the cuttings. Air photographs (NMR ref: ST1926/2/134-6) show numerous circular marks in the north and west parts of the hillfort enclosure, possibly representing house sites.

There is a large enough Late Iron Age assemblage to suggest occupation in the immediate pre-Roman period. Particular concentrations were noted in Cuttings V and VIII, though in both cases any evidence of features must have been obliterated by later Roman land use.

The survival in part of the primary hillfort ditch dated by the presence of Early Iron Age pottery (F6 in Cutting I) suggests a deeply cut defensive ditch, and by inference a similarly substantial bank. In reference to the Wessex model proposed

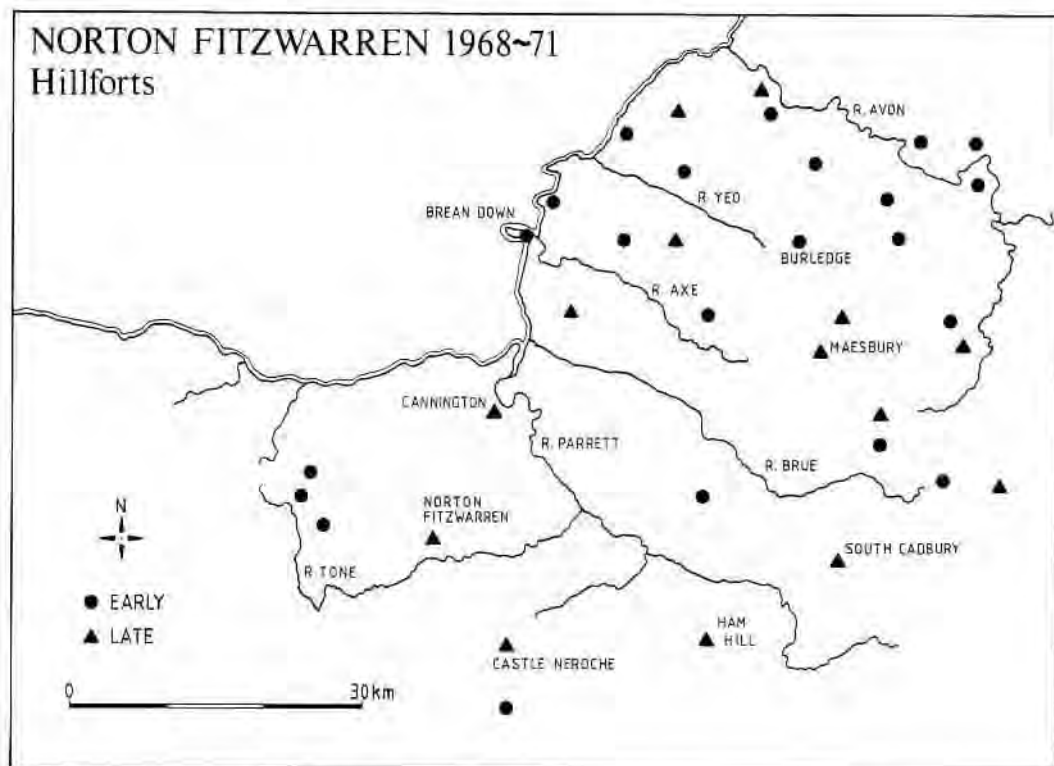


Fig. 25 Iron Age hillforts in Somerset and south Avon (after Cunliffe 1982, fig. 7.4); drawn by L. Induni.

by Professor Cunliffe (1984a), it may be suggested that the initial Iron Age occupation was that of an élite group within a heavily defended fort (Fig. 25), rather than more open occupation of a hilltop enclosure (*ibid.* 30). This inference is supported by the quantity of pottery found, and parallels at Ham Hill and South Cadbury may be cited (Cunliffe 1982, 53). A period of rapid stress-provoked change is suggested in Wessex, from which emerged the developed hillforts, each at the centre of a dependent zone where specialised working of raw materials from the dependent zone took place. The surviving earthworks at Norton Fitzwarren suggest the glacis style defences of such a developed hillfort, although apparently without the elaboration of entrances and defences noted to the east. The change over is suggested to be connected with the breakdown of wider trade links and a switch in attention by élite groups from luxury products to land and its produce (Cunliffe 1984a, 31).

The 1st century BC saw the collapse of the pattern of developed hillforts in Wessex, and the presence of Late Iron Age material at some sites is suggested to derive either from a much reduced occupation or from re-occupation immediately prior to the Roman invasion, or from a combination of both (*ibid.* 34). While the Wessex model can be successfully applied to the Early and Middle Iron Age Norton Fitzwarren evidence, it may be less useful in the Late Iron Age. It may be that different models should be sought for a possibly Dumnonian centre. The prehistoric pottery from Norton Fitzwarren reflects the site's position on the interface between ethnic groups, and it is clear that the western influences on Norton may be

as strong as those from Wessex. In the Middle Iron Age the appearance of Glastonbury ware in Somerset may represent just such a western influence (Cunliffe 1982, 57), and by the Roman period it is clear that Norton Fitzwarren lay on the Dumnonian frontier.

Period 3: Romano-British

A re-occupation of the hillfort took place in the late 3rd and early 4th centuries AD, according to the evidence of the pottery assemblage. The distribution of the pottery between the cuttings shows that the occupation was widespread, although some redistribution of the sherds by ploughing must have taken place. Pottery seems to have collected in the subsidences above earlier features. Those features recognised are not easy to place in context (Fig. 5). The excavator suggested the presence of an iron-working site, but there is little support from the analysis of the slags for any more industrial activity here than is usual on small sites. It would seem that some workshop activities are represented by the yard area in Cutting V and the possible kiln flue in Cutting VIII. In view of the loss of surface levels almost everywhere, the identification of the yard levels in Cutting V may be mistaken. Certainly its survival is not matched elsewhere. The recut ditch F97 on the hilltop is of interest, showing either that a land division was maintained over a period, or that F97 is an enclosure ditch, the concentration of pottery here indicating the proximity of a house site. The pottery in the ditch outside the rampart found in Cutting I and in 1908 may indicate that the ditch was recut in the Roman period, and by implication that the hillfort defences were strengthened and renewed. The third rampart layer in Cutting III (F21) could belong to the Roman period. However, this cannot be conclusively proved and the disposal of rubbish beyond the rampart is an equal possibility. The quern fragments found in Cuttings V and VIII indicate food-processing activities.

Other hillfort sites in Somerset with evidence of Roman period occupation (notably Ham Hill and Cannington) have been summarised by Burrow (1982). The evidence is largely drawn from the better known eastern part of the county. Despite the extent of plough damage, it would seem that the Norton Fitzwarren occupation differs from the generality of later Roman sites in Somerset. Those archaeological strata which survived at the time of excavation are barely distinguishable from the preceding Iron Age features, and there was no evidence of building in stone. The differences are marked in the pottery assemblage. It would seem from the types of pottery used that there was little trade contact with other parts of the province. It may well be justified to suggest that a self-supporting community is reflected by the largely locally-produced pottery. This evidence fits well with the study by Roger Leech contrasting the degree of romanisation east and west of the River Parrett. His model suggests that the Roman occupation led to fewer cultural changes west of the Parrett, and that the population and subsistence basis of Dumnonian Somerset remained relatively unchanged (Leech 1982). While it is possible to view the Norton Fitzwarren Roman period data as that from a curiously unromanised but unrepresentative site, (as for instance Kingsdown, Mells. Gray 1930), it may be that the site represents the type for the conservative, impoverished and less romanised area beyond the zone influenced by the Roman occupation. The re-occupation of the hillfort could then be seen as a reassertion of pre-Roman cultural traits, at a time when administrative controls were relaxing and when the province was enjoying a period of prosperity. Other local sites are shown on Fig. 1B.

There is no ceramic or stratigraphic evidence to show whether occupation continued at Norton beyond the official end of Roman control. The possibility has

been raised and discussed by Burrow (1981). If the model suggested above is correct, then the expectation would be that the occupation would continue, and this of course would be difficult to identify archaeologically. It has been suggested that settlement desertion was virtually confined to the eastern part of the county at this period (Leech 1982), and there is the example of post-Roman reuse of Cannington hillfort nearby. It is possible to argue that a strengthening of the defences could have taken place at the time of, or after, the Roman withdrawal. There is, however, not enough evidence from the excavations to elucidate the details of any such extended occupation.

Period 4

There was no archaeological evidence from the excavations to support the suggestion that the hillfort represents the early fortified site of Taunton in the 8th century (Leach 1984, 5). The post-Roman evidence is merely of agricultural usage. The evidence from Cutting VII suggests that marl quarrying penetrated deep into the hillfort interior in this area. The ?hillwash backfill layer 271 contained post-medieval pottery, suggesting an earlier date for the quarrying. If this evidence is accepted it provides an explanation for the three 'covert ways' cut through the hillfort defences. In the modern period, apart from the evidence of modern ploughing, the 1939-45 trenches are of interest, occupying as they do the lee of the Bronze Age bank. They would appear to represent a lookout point rather than a gun emplacement to directly cover the arterial routes. A prisoner-of-war camp lay on the opposite side of the hillfort and cannot be associated with the trenches. A civil defence position is clear; but it is one that is divorced from the village and the camp and must be seen as a training site and vantage point that, coincidentally, selected a commanding position already chosen three millennia or more before.

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