MARCHAM PREHISTORIC POTTERY

Lisa Brown

Introduction

Prehistoric pottery was recorded from the following trenches: MF2; MF3; MF12; MF14; MF36; MFNA1; MFNA2; MFNA3; MFNA7; MFP1; MFP2; MFP3; MFP4; MFP6. The recorded material represents prehistoric pottery from key contexts selected to inform the most significant elements of the stratigraphic narrative and is not a complete record of all the available material.

Methodology

Context assemblages were selected by the post-excavation team for rapid assessment and summary recording. Prior to this process volunteers had assembled an Excel spreadsheet of results of basic classification of the prehistoric pottery by the following categories: box number; trench number; context number; fabric; red finish, decoration; sherd total. Weights of individual or sherd groups and forms were not recorded during this process. The volunteer work was preceded by two information sessions led by this author to assist in classifying pottery dates, fabrics and other details.

Precise quantification was undertaken by this specialist only on pottery from MF3, MF12, MF14, and MF36, as time and budgetary constraints precluded full quantification of the entire site assemblage. During rapid assessment of the remainder of the material, in the absence of full quantification, exceptionally small and large quantities were noted for some contexts. The assessment involved scanning the selected assemblages, noting the fabric range, with some comment of broad proportions; noting forms; finish (including red-finishing); decoration; presence, if any of Roman sherds; and best-fit date for each context group. Sherds meriting illustration were also identified. This information was recorded as context group summaries in a Word document.

Condition

Except in the case of the material cited above the weight of sherds was not recorded. It was not possible, therefore, to establish an average sherd weight (ASW), which is generally a good indicator of levels of fragmentation. In those few cases where it was possible to record ASW, the figure lay between 6g from pits in MF36, to a maximum of 13g for pits in MF14, the latter high figure biased by the presence of the basal element of a very large jar from Pit 14120. The ASW of the assemblage from the circular enclosure in MF3 is 8g, this low figure being common for Iron Age pit assemblages. Otherwise, during rapid assessment of context groups, general condition was noted as eroded/weathered in the obvious (majority) of cases. Where no comment was recorded condition is assumed to be moderately abraded. In a few cases, fresh sherds or levels of vessel completeness were cited.

Fabrics

The prehistoric pottery fabrics are divided into two broad categories – PCW (prehistoric coarse wares) and PFW (prehistoric fine wares). It is important to note that the assessment level pottery report did not allow for petrographic or any other scientific ceramic analysis. A basic classification of fabrics by principle inclusion type and grade were carried out using a 10x and 20x hand lens.

The bedrock geology of the site is Corallian Limestone including bands of sand and clay overlain in part by alluvial clays, silt and gravel. Kingston Formation sandstones and Downland chalks outcrop nearby. Therefore, all the raw materials represented in the PCW fabrics (fossil shell, coarse sands, flint), or in fact in the fired vessels themselves, could have been obtained locally (i.e. within 10 km or so from the site). Equally, some of the Middle and Late Iron Age fabrics could have been obtained relatively close to the site. However, an element of the PFW ceramic range is exceptionally fine, sometimes inclusion-free fabrics, which may have originated further away, probably in the Wiltshire area.

The majority of coarsewares (PCW), especially of Bronze Age and Early Iron Age date, contain inclusions of fossil shell in varying abundance. A Middle Bronze Age cordoned jar from MF3 enclosure ditch 3082 is in coarse shelly fabric, as is a Middle Bronze Age Globular 'Urn' from MF12 Pit 12015. Rarer examples of clays incorporating coarse quartz sand, some accompanied by red or black ferrous material are also typically associated with earlier Iron Age assemblages. Even more rare are coarse flint-tempered sherds of Early Iron Age date.

Most finewares (PFW) are sandy clays or very smooth non-sanded or lightly sanded clays. These very fine, smooth clays with minimal additional inclusions were typically utilized in the production of Early Iron Age fineware bowls and the few jars of All Cannings Cross tradition (ref xxx). In the absence of petrological analysis, it is not possible to determine the source of the raw materials, but such vessels were produced in significant numbers in the Wiltshire region near Devizes (ref xxx) and may have been imported from there. Similar fine, smooth clays may have also been obtainable closer to the site, but again, this can be determined only through petrographic inspection. Uncommon examples of these fine sandy wares contain rare finely crushed fossil shell and/or fine calcined flint, the flint component obtainable from the chalk downs to the south of Marcham. The majority of the Middle Iron Age finewares (PFW) are glauconitic sandy fabrics, reflecting the Gault and Greensand formations that outcrop a few kilometres to the south of the site.

There is a direct correlation between ovoid and sinuous Middle Iron Age forms and glauconitic sandy fabrics. Vessels are commonly burnished or smoothed. The trend to adopt glauconitic clays from Greensand outcrops in pottery production has been observed in many regions of southern Britain. Clearly this glauconitic potting clay possessed properties appropriate for producing the apparently desired results of grey/black (reduced) colour and smooth surfaces suitable for closing/waterproofing the vessels and applying decoration.

Forms

Although detailed statistical analysis of vessel form quantification was not carried out, a general impression of the scanned context assemblages indicates that sherds diagnostic of vessel form and, especially of decoration, were relatively uncommon. The forms observed and noted are described below. Proportions of vessel types could not be established by means of the rapid scan.

Forms:
B- Bowls
BA – Small bowl with defined shoulder and upright rim
BA1 – shouldered bowl with pronounced or carinated shoulder and upright rim
BA2 – shouldered bowl of tripartite form with rounded or carinated shoulder
BB – bowl with flaring rim, some with faceted shoulder, some red-finished
BC – Hemispherical bowl
BC1 – Simple hemispherical bowl with thickened rim top
BC2 – Simple hemispherical bowl with undifferentiated rim
BC3 – Hemispherical bowl with pronounced high rounded shoulder. Smoothed or burnished.

J – Jars
JA – Large bipartite jar with expanded flattened rim top (‘cauldron pot’)
JB – High-shouldered jar with upstanding or flaring rim
JB1 – High-shouldered jar with upstanding or flaring rim with FN or FT decoration on rim
JB2 – Shouldered jar with upstanding or flaring, flattened rim
JC – Large jar with barrel-shaped or rounded profiles
JC1 – Large barrel-shaped jar with flattened rim top
JC2 – Closed jars of varying size with rounded profile and thickened or proto-bead rim
JC3 – High-shouldered ovoid jar with rounded profile and beaded rim
JE – Globular necked jar, may be wheel-made or wheel-finished
JF – Jar with elongated flaring rim and rounded or carinated shoulder, some decorated with incised lines, some infilled with white paste (‘All Cannings Cross’ type)

P – Pots
PA – Straight-sided pots with incurving rim
PB – Straight-sided pots, sometimes smoothed or burnished

Decoration/treatment
FN – fingernail impressed
FT – fingertip impressed
Haem – haematite coated

The Pottery in Context

The following summary information based on pottery evidence is presented by Trench and significant feature/deposit.

MFNA TRENCHES

MFNA1

The Enclosure ditch assemblages:
The assemblage from enclosure ditch [1014] is relatively poorly dated, but overall suggests an MIA pottery date, perhaps in the earlier MIA, with burnished glauconitic sherds and a JB4 jar of transitional EIA/MIA date. A few Roman sherds are likely to be intrusive.
Enclosure ditch [1052] was also filled in the MIA, on the balance of ceramic evidence, a group dominated with glauconitic sandy wares. A few outliers include a possibly residual JA type jar and an intrusive grog-tempered Roman sherd.

Enclosure ditch recut [1182] was probably cut and filled in the MIA, based on the presence of a burnished glauconitic ovoid jar JC2.2 in the primary fill (1219). The upper fills produced a mixed assemblage of EIA-MIA and Roman date, with a probable residual Bronze Age grog-tempered basal fragment.

Pit assemblages:
Five pits excavated in trench MFNA1 were of Iron Age date. The ceramic evidence indicates that three were cut and filled during the Early Iron Age: Pits [1026], [1074], and [1092]. These pits yielded pottery of only Early Iron Age type, including a preponderance of shelly fabrics, BA fineware bowls and/or early jar forms (JB2).

Pits [1139] and [1142] produced a notable presence of glauconitic sandy ware fragments representing sinuous or ovoid jar forms. Smaller numbers of Early Iron Age jar and bowl forms may be residual, or in the case of Pit [1142], a transitional EIA/MIA date, with earlier forms suggesting enduring ceramic styles.

MFNA2
The ceramic signature of features in trench MFNA2 is essentially MIA. The fills, including basal fills, of curvilinear ditch [2002] and Enclosure Ditch [2004] produced predominantly sherds in glauconitic sandy wares and ditch [2004] yielded conjoining sherds of a JC2 ovoid jar. This feature also produced sherds in uncommon calcite and fine flint-tempered fabrics. Ring ditches [2007] and [2009] also produced predominantly sandy glauconitic sherds belonging to ovoid jar forms JC2, one of them handled and some burnished. These characteristics are typical of MIA ceramic traditions in this region. The recut of ditch [2070] yielded no sherds diagnostic of form, but the body sherds are glauconitic sandy fabrics.

Inner Palisade ditch [2009] produced all together 75 sherds, most sandy glauconitic fabrics, and MIA forms BC bowl, JC2 jars – distinctive MIA types. Palisade ditch [2042] is also typically MIA, with much of a JC2.3 fragmented in sandy glauconitic sherds, some burnished.

MFNA3
The features explored in this trench appear to represent activity largely of MIA and MIA/LIA date. Barrel-shaped enclosure ditch terminus [3008] was cut and filled in the MIA, but there were LIA and Roman sherds in top fill (3009). Most of the pottery is sandy glauconitic, with sinuous body shapes. The basal fill (3066) contained a PA1/PB rim.

Linear ditch [3088] produced only pottery of indeterminate date, but inner palisade ditch [3014] appears to have been cut and filled in the MIA, based on four glauconitic sandy sherds and an absence of coursewares.

Ring ditch [3021] appears to have been filled in the LIA, based on a distinctive BC3 bowl. However, a residual JA rim suggests EIA/MIA activity in the vicinity.

Ring ditch [3074] yielded a distinctive EIA type JB1 jar fragment with a slashed rim from its upper fill (3075), but this may be residual. The pottery from the lower fill is of indeterminate date.

Pits:
Four of the five pits excavated in Trench MFNA3 are dated to the MIA or MIA/LIA transition of the basis of the pottery recovered from their fills, whilst Pit [3018] produced a small collection of sherds of indeterminate date.

Pits [3004]. [3027], and [3036] produced sufficient ceramic evidence of a MIA date. This material includes burnished sherds in glauconitic sandy wares, hemispherical bowls (BC3/3), ovoid jar (JC2/3) and a proto-saucepan type PA1. A coarse calcite-tempered sherd from pit [3027] suggests that the use of this inclusion emerged in the MIA. A high-shouldered JC2/3 jar from Pit [3040] may be slightly later, MIA/LIA.

MFNA7
Deposits investigated in this trench were cut through by the *cella* walls (7073) and (7077) of the Roman temple. The abundant pottery assemblages from these layers are essentially MIA and includes JC2 ovoid jars and BC hemispherical bowls in glauconitic sandy wares. Layer (7077) also produced a PB1.1 saucepan pot decorated with diagonal lines – a classic MIA form at Danebury Hillfort. Additionally, both deposits contained Roman pottery, which was probably intrusive.

MF TRENCHES

MF2
The pottery signature from trench MF2 indicates a level of EIA activity in the form of Pit [2126] and postholes [2100] and [2073], which yielded red-finished bowl sherds and fingertip decorated sherds. An Iron Age surface layer (2068) also produced EIA material, including a shelly fingertipped sherd.

The single fill (2093) of pit [2126] produced a large assemblage of over 470 highly fragmented sherds of both shelly and sandy vessels. The appearance of this collection suggests that it may be redeposited material from an above-ground midden.

The two postholes were unusually prolific, yielding approximately 50 sherds each. These groups are sufficiently distinctive to suggest an EIA date.

A finds rich subsoil (2156) in this trench yielded over 395 abraded prehistoric sherds, including EIA material that may be linked to the fill of Pit [2126]. However, there is Roman pottery also present in this assemblage.

The accumulation of layers (2171) (2267) (inside the Roman building) date to the Roman period, on the basis of much Roman pottery. The group is highly fragmented and incorporates a great deal of Iron Age pottery in shelly and sandy fabrics. An EIA BA2/3 bowl is decorated with slashed lines above the carination.

MF3
Trench 3 revealed evidence of Bronze Age activity. Rectangular enclosure [3115/3113] was cut and filled in the Middle Bronze Age. The base of a small indeterminate flint-tempered vessel lay in the basal fill (3116), and in the upper fill (3082) was a substantial portion of a coarse shell-tempered MBA cordoned jar, with adherent carbonised residue on the inner surface.

The small circular enclosure ditch [3088/3044/3002/3095] was filled in the MIA pottery, including a JC2 jar, which was recovered from the upper fill (3025). The middle fill (3026) contains MIA sherds along with residual BA/EIA flint-tempered pottery, but also MIA JC2 jars and a BA1/2 bowl. Lower fill (3041) contained PCW shelly wares and PFW glauconitic sandy wares. The lower fill (3061) yielded a mix of shelly and sandy wares of MIA, EIA and BA/EIA sherds. The ditch may have been cut prior to the Iron Age, possibly during the Bronze Age, but the ceramic evidence does not clearly demonstrate this. However, the presence of BA pottery in most of the fills indicates that there was Bronze Age activity in the vicinity.

MF12
Posthole/cut [12014] held an individual shell-tempered Biconical jar of MBA date.

Three pits [12003], [12021] and [12048] were filled in the EIA and MIA, but contained MBA coarse flinted sherds, apparently displaced from BA features.

Pit [12003] contained both PFC (coarse flint) and PCW shelly wares, along with PFW sandy flat bases, MIA JC2 jar, JB necked jar and BC2 hemispherical bowl. In the middle fill (12024) were residual MBA sherds of PFC and PFW (fine and coarse flint).

Pit [12021] produced a small group of PFW sandy sherds, some belonging to an EIA JB2 jar. Residual MBA coarse flinted sherds lay in the basal fill (12044).

Pit [12048] was filled in the late MIA but contained residual MBA and EIA pottery. Fill (12009) produced PFW fine flint and fine sandy sherds, and a JB necked jar (Watkins Farm, Fig. 22, 6), a BC2 bowl, and a late MIA BC3 high-shouldered bowl.

MF14
Six pits excavated in Trench 14 were cut and filled in the EIA/MIA or MIA.

Pit [14004] was cut and filled in the EIA/MIA. It produced PCW shelly wares, but also PFW glauconitic sandy ware jar fragments of MIA appearance.

Pit [14006**]** was also cut and filled in the EIA/MIA. It contained PCW shelly wares, PFW glauconitic sandy wares, including a JA cauldron jar, indeterminate jars, a BA bowl, and a BC2 hemispherical bowl.

Pit [14090] was cut and filled in the EIA/MIA. Fabrics included PCW mostly shell and PFW glauconitic sandy wares. Forms include four JA cauldron jars, one JD S-profile jar, handled jar, five BA bowls. Some EIA forms, jars trending to MIA style.

Pit [14079] was cut and filled at an undetermined time in the IA. The small assemblage includes PCW shelly and PFW glauconitic sandy wares, three indeterminate jars and a shelly JA cauldron rim.

Pit [14120] was cut and filled in the MIA. The tiny assemblage includes PCW shelly and PFW glauconitic sandy wares, including a substantial basal part of a fragmented vessel.

Pit [14142**]** was also cut and filled in the MIA. This large assemblage produced PCW shelly, PFW glauconitic sand, and rare quartz-tempered sherds. There are three JA cauldron forms, JC2 and JC3 ovoid jars, along with a PA proto-saucepan.

MF36
Four pits [36023], 36025], [36061] and [36082] were cut and filled in the EIA or possibly early MIA, based on moderate to substantial sized pottery assemblages, which incorporated sherds/forms of mixed date range. A few intrusive Roman sherds were present in all but pit [36025].

All of the pits contained a mix of PCW and PFW fabrics, with forms trending towards the earlier Iron Age or early MIA: JA cauldron jars, BA1/2 EIA fineware bowls (some red-finished), JB1 jars with FT or stabbed decoration, PA jars from Pit [36025]. No distinctive MIA forms were identified, but glauconitic sandy sherds, some burnished, suggests a progression from shelly wares to sandy fabrics.

Posthole [36026] also produced EIA pottery, which may be residual. An EIA type shelly JB jar is associated in the single fill with burnished glauconitic sandy sherds suggestive of MIA ovoid, sinuous forms.

Grave cut [36104] was cut and filled during the late EIA/early MIA. The basal fill (36103) produced an assemblage dominated by essentially EIA types – coarse shelly wares, a JB jar and a red-finished BA or BB bowl fragment. Similar pottery was recovered from higher up in the fill sequence, with EIA types predominating, with sandy burnished sherds present – a mix of EIA and MIA material, suggesting the EIA pottery was redeposited. The upper fill (36071) yielded a large assemblage of 401 sherds and included a stray Roman sherd. A large collection of mixed shelly, but mostly sandy glauconitic sherds, some large fragments, including a flat base, shelly JA cauldron rim, a coarse shelly jar with broad cordon (possibly BA) an EIA sandy carinated bowl with FN shoulder, fine sandy flaring rim bowl/jar, round bodied bowl, fine sandy red fired rounded bowl/jar, and conjoining sherds of a burnished bowl with elongated flaring rim (e.g. Chinnor-Wandlebury type dated to 5th-3rd centuries BC). The mixed nature of the assemblage suggests a complex history of redeposition of earlier IA pottery in a (probably) MIA feature.

MFP TRENCHES

MFP1
In Trench 1 ditches [1002] and [1061] were examined.

Ditch [1061] was filled in the EIA, producing a large assemblage of PCW shelly and sandy sherds. A JB1 jar with FN shoulder, a JC1 jar, a flaring red-finished fineware bowl rim, two haematite coated bowl sherds, and a BA/BB bowl rim, all common EIA forms.

Ditch [1002], conversely was a LIA/Roman feature. The fill contained Roman pottery, wheel-turned sandy vessels and wheel-finished shelly wares, along with highly abraded residuel Iron Age pottery.

A ring ditch [1048] produced a few sandy glauconitic sherds, many smoothed, and some fine shelly fragments. A sandy flat jar base, JA cauldron top, and small jar or bowl rim suggest the feature was filled in the MIA, and not contemporary with the other excavated features in this trench.

MFP2

A large number of features were excavated in Trench 2, including several ditches and pits, and some productive deposits described as 'middens'

Phase 1 ditch [2131] produced insufficient pottery to provide more than an indeterminate Iron Age date, a few shelly and sandy fragments, and a tiny grogged base of uncertain date.

Phase 1 ditch [2386] was apparently cut in the EIA/MIA, and filled in the MIA. PCW and PFW glauconitic sandy sherds suggest an MIA date, but a shelly FT jar rim was present in the upper fill.

V-shaped ditch [2055] was also filled in the MIA. This typical ditch assemblage included small, abraded sherds in both shelly and sandy fabrics, but also a large fragment of a typical MIA PFW glauconitic sandy jar fragment in the basal fill.

Ditch [2006] was also a MIA feature. The fabrics are sandy and include fine glauconitic sandy wares, a simple base, a sandy crude kick base, and a simple PA1 rim.

Gully [2042] is of indeterminate Iron Age date, producing only 57 sherds of tiny worn PCW ware, all probably redeposited.

Four pits were cut and filled in the EIA or MIA.

Phase 1 bell-shaped pit [2240] and pit [2135] were dated to the MIA on the basis of a predominance of sandy glauconitic fabrics. But there are few fragments diagnostic of form.

Pit [2135] contained large fragments of a single large vessel.

Phase 1 bell-shaped pit [2205] may have been a little earlier, cut and filled in the EIA/MIA. The assemblage includes a fine sandy glauconitic base; an ompholos base and a sherd perforated post-firing. The basal fills contained mixed shell and sandy fabrics, but a carinated bowl BA1, shelly bowl rim, and a large sandy JB jar and small jar lug suggest an EIA origin for this pit.

Pit [2124] was also cut in the EIA and filled in the EIA/MIA. The basal fill (2123) yielded 64 sherds of PCW shelly and sandy fabrics, including a JB1.1 jar and BC1 bowl – both EIA forms. The upper fills contained more mixed assemblages, with sandy glauconitic sherds and shelly wares present. Forms include a sandy crude kick base, a PA1 rim, BA/BB bowl rims, a

JA cauldron frag, a large fragmented shelly jar with kick base. These upper fill groups suggest that the pit was still being filed into the early MIA period.

Eight deposits making up a midden were excavated in trench MFP2:

Group [2378], and layers (2009), (2010), (2354). The ceramic content of these deposits varied, and they were clearly not contemporary.

Layer (2354) produced 118 sherds of EIA pottery – PCW shelly and sandy fragments, a FT shell-tempered carinated shoulder vessel, and a fineware BA burnished bowl.

Layer (2010) produced over 144 Iron Age sherds, most of MIA date, including glauconitic sandy sherds and a hemispherical bowl. A few intrusive Roman sherds were also present.

Layer (2009) yielded an abundant group of 664+ Iron Age sherds and 479+ Roman sherds. The majority of sherds are LIA/early Roman native coarsewares, including RB forms (plates/bowls). Some very abraded shell and sandy/glauconitic prehistoric was also present.

Group [2378] five midden deposits of Roman date with MIA/LIA residual pottery.

Layer (2263) - Roman present, with PCW shelly, some glauconitic sandy, JA cauldron.

Layer (2253) - mostly Roman, PCW small abraded shelly and sandy, indeterminate date.

Layer (2327) - much Roman. Also PCW few shelly, few indeterminate sandy. Date indeterminate.

Layer (2328) - much Roman. PCW much Roman coarseware, some prehistoric residual shelly and sandy abraded. Layer (2329) much Roman, PCW abraded mostly sandy, some glauconitic, few shelly.
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MFP3

The South terminal end of enclosure ditch [3119] was ***c***ut and filled in the MIA. Fill (3150) – 84 sherds was a fragmented group, mostly sandy, some smoothed/burnished, of MIA character, with small bowl rims, sinuous jar forms, a PA rim.

Mid fill (3167) – 100 sherds - PCW glauconitic sandy, some burnished, few shell, ovoid shapes.

Top fill (3084) – 211 sherds - some Roman. PCW most glauconitic sand, ovoid shapes, JC2, JC3.

Rectangular beehive pit [3017] was cut and filled in the late EIA or early MIA.

Mid fill (3225) - 237 sherds, PFW shell and sand, PFW glauconitic sandy. Large jar bases (shell), large, cabled rim shell and sandy JA cauldrons, huge jars with FT dec, flaring rim JB jars. Many storage vessels.

MFP4

Twelve pits were examined in this trench, along with a small EIA ditch and four grave cuts. All features were dated to the EIA based on ceramic evidence.

Pit [4113] yielded distinctive EIA pottery, including a FN jar JB1, carinated bowl BA1-2 and other small fine bowl forms.

Pit [4067] basal fill (4068) produced 299 sherds, much abraded shelly and sandy, some larger sherds, a red-finished sherd, a large FT shell jar, fine carinated bowls BA1/2.

Pit [4157] mid fill (4231) yielded 260 sherds. PCW shell and sandy abraded, PFW sandy, JA cauldron (shelly); JB jars; FN and FT rims and shoulders; carinated BA1/2.

Pit [4018] basal fill (4019) – 165 sherds, fragmentary PCW mix of shelly and sandy, roughly equal. PFW. Flat base, FT jars, large shelly JF jar with sharp carination, small, red-finished sherd (fired black-red as Longbridge Dev, ACC); sharp carinated bowls BA1/2.

Pit [4024] basal fill (4025) - 200 sherds PCW shelly and sandy equal. PFW. FT and FN bodies and rims, piecrust rim, red-fired bowls; black fired sherds, acute carinated BA bowls, dec bowl with roulette.

Pit [4026], top fill (4027) - 197x sherds PCW most coarse shelly, some sandy. PFW sandy. JB2 long-neck jar, FN and slashed carinated shoulders. Unusual incised linear dec. Perf base. Fine BA1/2 carinated bowls (black), one with long flaring neck. 2 haem coated bowls.

Pit [4032], basal fill (4033) - 363 sh PCW fragmented shelly and sandy sherds; PFW sandy. FN and FT jars and bowl, JB1, JA1 with slashed rim; red-fired and black bowls, several sharp carinated BA.

Pit [4157] Upper fill (4158) -193x sherds, PCW weathered, shell and sand equal. PFW sandy. Sandy handle. FN JA rim FT jar carinated and incised horizontal and diagonal lines above. BA1/2 bowl and fine burn frags. Fineware handled jar. Middle fill (4231) -260 sherds. PCW shell and sandy abraded sherds; PFW sandy. JA shelly cauldron jar, JB jars; FN and FT dec rims and shoulders; carinated BA1/2 bowls. Basal fill (4249) -14x sherds. PCW a few small sandy sh. PFW small burn BA/BB bowl frags. Basal fill (4250) -13x sherds. PCW small sandy and shelly, PFW sandy, carinated bowl BA, dec incised triangle pinprick infill, two red-finished.

Pit [4165] bottom fill (4166) (221x sherds) PCW sandy and shelly, PFW burnished. JB2/3 coarse shell jar rim, PFW fine black burn BA bowl frags. All highly abraded.

Pit [4177] Middle fill (4178) (35x sherds) PCW many small frags, few larger frags, shell and sand. PFW fine shell and sandy. JB2/3 jar rims, FT, FN, slash decoration, red-finish, fine black burnished bowls.

Pit [4195] basal fill (4196) (259x sherds) 1 tiny ?intrusive Roman crumb. PCW shell and sandy frags, PFW fine sandy. FT carinated jar, fine bowls, one carinated.

Pit [4264] basal fill (4265) 218x sherds PCW large bag of most small abraded sandy and shelly, PFW fine sandy, kick base and shelly JB rim; 1 haem coated; burnished bowls and jars, small BA/BB bowl rims, dec sherd with incised lines, dec with impressed circles.

Pit [4295] Middle fill (4296) - 92x sherds. PCW coarse shell and sand. PFW fine sand burnished. Inturned rim, indeterminate rims, 1 FT, 1 incised white infill, 1 incised linear; 2 red-finished, flat-rim JB jar, fine black burnished BA1/2 bowls.

Basal fill (4305) - 126x sherds. PCW shell and sandy; PFW sandy. kick base, FT jar body, red-finished body, carinated bowl BA1/2.

Ditch [4091] Single fill (4092) -65x sherds. PCW small abraded, shelly and sandy. PFW 4 haem or red-coated body. Bowls incl long flaring rim.

Grave cut [4240]. Basal fill (4241) -233x sherds, PCW small abraded shell and sandy, PFW sandy, burnished. JB2 coarse shell. Incised linear dec and FT, carinated and flaring rim bowls.

Grave cut [4272] Fill (4273) -68x sherds. PCW small, abraded shell and sand. PFW sandy black burnished. Kick base and indeterminate rim.

Grave cut [4078]. Upper fill (4079) PCW coarse shelly and sandy, PFW fine sand and fine shelly burnished. Small bowls. Dec highly carinated bowl with furrows above carination. ACC style incised diag lines, FN impressed small bowl rim.

MFP6

Ditches and ditched enclosures in this trench were cut and filled in the EIA.

North-South Ditch Group [6184]:

Cut [6029]. Single fill (6028) 69x sherds. PCW very abraded, mostly coarse shell, PFW sandy glauconitic.

Ditch Group [6185]:

Cut [6097] 120x sherds. Basal fill (6096) 1 Roman sherd. Some large sherds. PCW shelly and sandy, PFW fine glauconitic sandy. Rounded shoulder jar, haem-coated carinated bowl, bowl rims.

D-shaped enclosure Group [6186]:

Middle fill (6036) – 68 sherds. Many small and medium sherds: PCW mostly sandy, some burn, some shelly; PFW: sandy and fine shelly. 2 scored sandy sherds, 1 long flaring rim; 2 red-finished, small flaring bowl rim BA/BB

Ditch Group [6187]. Recut of D-shaped Enclosure [6022] 148 sherds.

Fill (6023). PCW most sandy, few shell; PFW fine sandy glauconitic burnished. JB flaring rim jar, JA cauldron frag, flaring rim bowl burn, JB4 jar.

Cut [6037]. Basal fill (6060) 85 sherds. PCW shelly and sandy, PFW fine sand, fine BA/BB bowl frags, one red finished.

Cut [6031], Basal fill (6030) 39 she, PCW sandy and fine shell. Large JB flat rim jar. Small JB2 jars. Shelly FN body. PFW burnished sandy, glauconitic bowl base red-fired

Five pits were dated to the EIA on ceramic and stratigraphic evidence:

Pit [6027] Skel 24. 87x sh. Single fill (6026) PCW: mostly sand, some shelly; PFW burnished sandy sherd. Jar base, small out-turned jar rim, 2 red-finished sherds.

Pits [6005]/ [6059] 108x sherds. Basal fill (6004) PCW: coarse shelly, sandy glauconitic), PFW: Sandy. FN dec jar, FT dec sherd. 5 red-finished.

Basal fill (6058) PCW: course shelly, 1 sandy, PFW glauconitic sandy. flat-rimmed shelly JA jar.

Pit [6039] 32 sherds – cut by D-shaped Encl. Ditch [Group 6186]. Single fill (6038) weathered/fragmented. PCW mostly shell. PFW 3 red-finished, small fine bowl.

Pit [6033] 18 sherds – cut by D-shaped Encl. Ditch (Group 6186). Basal fill (6032) PCW sandy and shelly; PFW fine glauconitic sandy burnished. Large shelly flat jar base

Pit [6050], cut by Ditch Group [6185] 32 sherds. Single fill (6051) PCW shelly and sandy, some glauconitic. PFW fine sandy. BA/BB bowl rim, 2 carinated bowl frags, base of BB1 bowl.

Discussion

The prehistoric pottery assemblage from Marcham provides evidence for occupation from the Middle Bronze Age (*c* 1,500-1,000 BCE) to the transition between the Late Iron Age and Roman period (1st century BCE/early 1st century CE).

A small number of grogged sherds of Bronze Age type occurring as residual material from various features may be earlier Bronze Age, but secure ceramic and stratigraphic evidence for this is lacking. Fill (1219) of Middle Iron Age Enclosure ditch recut [1182] in Trench MFNA1 contained a residual grogged basal sherd of probable EBA date.

Features of genuine Bronze Age date lie within the MBA and are especially confined to Trench MF3. The basal fill of enclosure ditch [3115/3113] yielded the base of a small flint-tempered vessel, and the upper fill contained a large portion of a MBA cordoned jar but contained no funerary material.

Circular enclosure ditch [3088/3044/3002/3095] was filled in the MIA but residual BA/EIA flint-tempered pottery was recovered from the middle fill and the lower fill yielded a mix of MIA, EIA and BA/EIA sherds. The ditch may have been cut during the Bronze Age, but even if cut later the presence of BA pottery in most of the fills attests to BA activity in the vicinity.

In trench MF12 posthole/cut [12014] held an individual near complete shell-tempered biconical jar of MBA date. Again, no funerary remains were present, but it is a recognized feature of Bronze Age 'urn' burials that the vessel itself, without ashes, might represent the body of the deceased individual. In these cases, it is proposed that the cremated remains were kept as memorial tokens by the mourners.

The evidence for an Early Iron Age presence on the site took the form of scatters of EIA pottery, especially residual material, across most of the excavated areas as well as features cur and filled during this period. In terms of ceramic style, small fine bowl forms, some red-finished, and large coarse jars, many with fingertip and fingernail-impressed decoration, are key chronological indicators.

The evidence is especially compelling in the assemblages from pits, postholes, and ditches that were clearly cut and filled during this period. This applies particularly to trenches MF2, MF12, MF14, and MF36. Site MFP also yielded plentiful ceramic evidence of Early Iron Age occupation. MFP1 ditches [1002] and [1061] produced typical EIA pottery. In trench MFP4 twelve pits, a small EIA ditch and four grave cuts appear on ceramic evidence and stratigraphic to have been cut in the EIA. Ditches and ditched enclosures, along with numerous pits in MFP6 were cut and filled in the EIA.

The strongest ceramic signature for Middle Iron Age activity on the site came from features investigated in trenches in the MFNA, MF, and MFP areas, especially trenches MFP2 and MFP6. At Marcham, the ceramic indicators for MIA activity are the increasing dominance of glauconitic sandy fabrics and sinuous ovoid shapes, in contrast to the more angular and bipartite and tripartite forms of the earlier Iron Age. This material was recovered mostly from pits but was also captured in enclosure ditches (e.g. MFP3 [3119] and MFP2 [2055]).

Features explored in trench MFNA3 appear to represent activity largely of MIA and transitional MIA/LIA date. Four of the five pits excavated contained pottery of MIA/LIA type. Ring ditch [3074] may also have been filled during this period, albeit possibly constructed earlier.

In trench MFP1 a ditch [1002] was also a MIA/LIA feature. 'Midden layer' (2009) in MFP2 contained a high proportion of LIA and early Roman pottery, mixed with smaller quantities of Iron Age material.