

# Later Prehistoric Finds Group



Issue 3

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## Contents

Special announcement: LPFG second AGM and conference day 2

The Boughton Malherbe hoard goes on display 3

Two Late Iron Age – Early Roman looped ring fittings from Northern England 5

Investigating the control and manoeuvrability of Iron Age chariots: examining bridle bits 9

Review: *The Early and Middle Bronze Age Spearheads of Britain* by Richard Davis 13

A strange and unusual Early Bronze Age axe from Norfolk 16

Prehistory in the National Curriculum 19

Announcements 20

The Later Prehistoric Finds Group has now been in existence for over a year – thank you to all of those who have supported the group so far.

This issue of the newsletter contains a report on the intriguing Boughton Malherbe hoard, which was highlighted as a significant treasure case in Issue 2, and which is now on display at Maidstone Museum and Bentlif Art Gallery. The issue also includes a review of Richard Davis's major recent publication, *The Early and Middle Bronze Age Spearheads of Britain* – welcomed as “a very useful addition to the study of the British Bronze Age” – and presents new research into the control and manoeuvrability of Iron Age chariots.

Plus news, announcements and unusual finds... read on!



Bronze decorative plaque from the Boughton Malherbe hoard — more on page 3. Photograph by S. Adams © Maidstone Museum and Bentlif Art Gallery

## **Special announcement: the LPFG second annual general meeting and conference day**

The Later Prehistoric Finds Group is pleased to announce its second annual general meeting and conference day, to be held on **Friday 24th October 2014** at WISE, the **University of Hull**'s Wilberforce Institute for the study of Slavery and Emancipation. The Institute is based in Oriel Chambers, a renovated historic house in the excellent Hull Museums Quarter, close to the Hull and East Riding Museum.

More details about the day's events will follow, so please keep checking our website for updates. In the meantime: save the date!

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The Later Prehistoric Finds Group was established in 2013, and welcomes anyone with an interest in prehistoric artefacts, especially finds from the Bronze and Iron Ages. We hold an annual conference and produce two newsletters a year. Membership is currently free; if you would like to join the group, please e-mail [LaterPrehistoricFindsGroup@gmail.com](mailto:LaterPrehistoricFindsGroup@gmail.com).

We are a new group, and we are hoping that more researchers interested in prehistoric artefacts will want to join us. The group has opted for a loose committee structure that is not binding, and a list of those on the steering committee, along with contact details, can be found on our website: <https://sites.google.com/site/laterprehistoricfindsgroup/home>. Julia Farley is the Chair for 2014/2015, and Anna Booth is Deputy. Elizabeth Foulds is Treasurer.

If you would be interested in helping to run the group, we would love to have you on the steering committee. It is open to anyone who would like to be involved. If you are interested, please e-mail us at the address given above.

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The LPFG newsletter is published twice a year. To submit articles, notes or announcements for inclusion, please e-mail Anna Lewis at [asg11@le.ac.uk](mailto:asg11@le.ac.uk).

## The Boughton Malherbe hoard goes on display

Sophia Adams

Maidstone Museum and Bentlif Art Gallery announce the acquisition and display of a massive Late Bronze Age hoard discovered by metal detectorists at Boughton Malherbe in Kent in 2011. The 352 complete and fragmentary bronze objects were found squeezed into one small pit. Bun ingots were placed in the top of the pit over complete socketed and winged axes, fragments of Carps Tongue swords, bronze moulds for axes, decorative plaques, dress items, hog-backed knives, gouges, a bucket fragment and many other objects.

The museum acquired the hoard with the aid of grants from the Art Fund, the V&A Purchase Grant Fund, the Headley Trust and Maidstone Museum. Key pieces can be seen on display and a grant is being sought to undertake vital conservation work on the assemblage. The importance of the hoard has already been noted and discussed by researchers. It is exceptional for being the largest Carps Tongue hoard and third largest Bronze Age hoard to be found in Britain. The object types present tie the hoard closely to examples found in France and distinguish it from other British assemblages (Matthews 2013).

Aside from the specialist interest the hoard is exciting for the evocative objects contained therein, which include:

- ◆ A folded and broken decorative plaque – what was this once attached to?
- ◆ A beautiful complete bronze mould decorated on the outside – which came first, the bronze axe or its bronze mould?
- ◆ An axe still containing casting debris – why was it not finished? Why was it made?
- ◆ Within the sockets of some of the spearheads are the possible remains of the wooden shafts broken before deposition – why were they broken? Could these provide absolute dates for the hoard?



Figure 1: Decorative plaque (side view)



Figure 2: Decorative plaque (front)



Figure 3: Bronze spearhead



Figure 4: Bronze spearhead showing possible remains of the wooden shaft

Alas we do not know the exact order in which the objects were placed in the pit, but we can certainly learn a great deal from future study of these intriguing finds.

PAS ID: KENT-15A293

Thank you to Amy Adams, Interpretation Manager at Maidstone Museum and Bentlif Art Gallery, for the opportunity to photograph and examine the hoard. Thanks also to Jennifer Jackson, Jessica Leedham, Steve Matthews, Brendan O'Connor, Mafalda Raposo, Ben Roberts and Neil Wilkin for vital information on this assemblage (sadly not all of which could not be included here).

## Reference

Matthews, S. 2013. The Boughton Malherbe hoard, Kent: un dépôt du groupe de l'épée en langue de carpe français en Angleterre... ? *Association pour la Promotion des Researches sur l'Age du Bronze Bulletin* 11, 56-60

**Sophia Adams** is an Iron Age brooch specialist with broader later prehistoric, early and later medieval interests. She is currently working for the University of Leicester Archaeological Service on the ULAS/University research project and student training excavation at Burrough Hill Iron Age hillfort.



Figure 5: Bronze mould for an axe

## Two Late Iron Age – Early Roman looped ring fittings from Northern England

Michael Marshall and Dot Boughton

### Introduction and background

Recently two finds of Late Iron Age – Early Roman looped ring fittings, sometimes called ‘ovoid mounts’ or ‘suspension rings’ (MacGregor 1976; Stead 2006), have come to light. The common elements of these fittings are: 1) a ring, flat or hollow backed and ovoid or circular in plan; 2) a projecting panel or knob at one edge with openwork decoration in the adjacent section of the interior and 3) a rectangular loop projecting from the reverse to hold a strap. These fittings have a distinctive Humber - Forth distribution which, along with the style of their decoration, suggests that they are products of the central British native metalworking tradition of the 1st – 2nd century AD (see Hunter 2007; Hunter 2008 for recent discussions). This opportunity is taken to publish these two recent finds and, ahead of a re-evaluation of the type as a whole, to make an appeal for any additional examples known to members of the LPFG (see Table 1).

Previous examples have been interpreted as either harness fittings, due to their similarities to derivative three-link bridles and their association with the harness sets in the Stanwick / Melsonby, North Yorkshire hoard (MacGregor 1962; MacGregor 1976, 31-2), or as sword belt fittings, based upon a pair found with a mini-terret fastener, sword and scabbard at Asby Scar, Cumbria (Stead 2006, no. 203). They vary significantly in size and potentially in function, an issue which will be addressed more fully elsewhere, but the present examples compare closely in size and general form to pairs from Asby Scar and Stanhope, Borders, perhaps supporting their interpretation as scabbard suspension rings.

#	Site	County	Reference
1	Stanhope	Borders	MacGregor 1976, no. 16
2	Stanhope	Borders	Ibid., no. 17
3	South Shields	Tyne and Wear	Allason-Jones 1983, 118, fig 76.154
4	Corbridge	Northumberland	MacGregor 1976, no. 15; Acc. No.CO1368
5	Stanwick / Melsonby	North Yorkshire	MacGregor 1962, no. 11
6	Stanwick / Melsonby	North Yorkshire	Ibid., no. 12
7	Stanwick / Melsonby	North Yorkshire	Ibid., no. 13
8	Stanwick / Melsonby	North Yorkshire	Ibid., no. 14
9	Stanwick / Melsonby	North Yorkshire	Ibid., no. 15
10	Riseborough Hagg	North Yorkshire	Hayes 1988, 45, pl. 7
11	Leyburn	North Yorkshire	this paper, fig. 1
12	Asby Scar	Cumbria	Stead 2006, no. 203b
13	Asby Scar	Cumbria	ibid, no. 203c
14	Kents Bank Cavern	Cumbria	this paper, fig. 2

Table 1: List of Late Iron Age – Early Roman looped ring fittings

## Discovery of the finds

The looped ring fitting from Leyburn, North Yorkshire was found by a metal detectorist, Mr Clint Jones, in February 2005 and reported to the local Finds Liaison Officer at the next meeting of the Lune Valley Metal Detecting Club. Mr Jones had been detecting in the Leyburn area of North Yorkshire for some time and other finds of his from the same area include a dragonesque brooch and a bridle fitting (horse bit) recorded as LANCUM-AFF133 and LANCUM-535083 respectively.

The fitting from Kents Bank Cavern, Cumbria, was discovered during fieldwork at the site between 1996 and 2001. However Mr Chris Salisbury, the archaeologist in charge of the project, sadly passed away before any of his findings could be published. His collection of excavated finds from the site was donated to the Dock Museum in Barrow-in-Furness (Cumbria) in 2009, and in the museum register it is described as an 'assemblage of human remains, animal bones and carbon fragments' (BAWMS.09647). Most of these finds relate to the early prehistoric occupation of the cave (Smith et al 2013) but along with these finds came a notebook and a 'brass fitting' which was shown to the local Finds Liaison Officer at a Finds Day in 2012. The FLO recognised the fitting as dating from the Late Iron Age/Early Roman period and a more specific identification was obtained from Adam Gwilt (National Museum Wales) and Michael Marshall (MOLA).

## Catalogue

### Leyburn Parish, North Yorkshire (PAS record: LANCUM-B03EC0)

Description: Length 53mm, diameter of ring c. 44mm, internal width of ring c. 11mm. Complete cast copper-alloy fitting comprising a flat backed ring with openwork decoration filling one half of the interior, a rectangular panel projecting from the adjacent edge and a rectangular strap loop projecting from the reverse where the two intersect. The boss style decoration (Leeds 1933, 110; MacGregor 1976, 184; Bishop 1998, 63-4; Hunter 2008) comprises a boss on the panel and a pair of bossed roundels within the ring that are hollow on the reverse and partially encircled by double ended slender trumpets. These sit either side of a back-to-back trumpet pair joining the centre and the edge panel. The roundels are somewhat unusual but are clearly related to the more commonplace petal bosses on fittings from Stanhope, South Shields, Asby Scar and Corbridge.



Figure 1: Looped ring fitting from Leyburn, North Yorkshire  
© Portable Antiquities Scheme / Trustees of the British Museum

### Kents Bank Cavern, Cumbria (PAS record: LANCUM-30FA31)

Description: Length 56.5mm, diameter of ring c. 51.5mm, internal width of loop c. 10mm. Complete cast copper-alloy fitting comprising a flat backed ring with openwork decoration filling one half of the interior, a knob projecting from the adjacent edge and a rectangular strap loop projecting from the reverse where the two intersect. The openwork comprises two conjoined dumbbell-shaped units with ribbed cordons and there is 'swag and drop' decoration on the ring between the openwork and the projecting knob. The dumbbell decoration is related to a well-known Iron Age – Roman toggle type (MacGregor 1976, 134 – 136) and the motif is used more widely in central British metalwork, e.g. harness fittings in the boss style hoard from the Middlebie, Dumfries and Galloway hoard (MacGregor 1976, nos. 33 – 5), the loop plate of the Warton, Lancashire scabbard (Stead 2006, no. 208) and a buttoned ring, possibly a strap or sword belt fastener, from Ackworth, West Yorkshire (PAS: SWYOR-621C51). For related knobbed ends with ribbed cordons cf. a hooked fitting in the 1st century AD Stanwick / Melsonby, North Yorkshire hoard (MacGregor 1962, 38 – 41, fig. 6, no. 18) and terminals on a torc or spiral armlet from the Flavian fort at Newstead, Borders (MacGregor 1976, no. 221). Swag and drop decoration also appears on the Corbridge and Asby Scar fittings.



Figure 2: Looped ring fitting from Kents Bank Cavern, Cumbria

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### Acknowledgements

We are grateful to Clint Jones and to Sabine Skae (Dock Museum) who made the finds available for study and provided details of their provenance. Our thanks are also due to Adam Gwilt (National Museum Wales), Fraser Hunter (National Museums of Scotland) and Frances McIntosh (English Heritage) for discussion of these fittings, for kindly drawing our attention to related finds and for providing access to information, unpublished work or objects.

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## Investigating the control and manoeuvrability of Iron Age chariots: examining bridle bits

Aisling Nash

### Introduction

The question of control and manoeuvrability of Iron Age chariots is a subject that has not received the research interest it deserves during recent years. Caesar writes in admiration of the control the native Britons could exert over their chariots but current reconstructions do not seem to support this premise. In order to question this, Iron Age bits were investigated together with the current method of yoking. This paper is concerned with examining Iron Age bits in terms of their functionality rather than their decorative styles.

When determining control and manoeuvrability, it is necessary to examine the harnessing that is associated with chariots as well as the chariot itself. The main archaeological evidence for the harness components comprises metalwork such as the terret rings, strap unions and bridle bits. In terms of control, the bridle bit is the most important part of the harness as it is the principal aid in steering and stopping the horse. It is also the main method of communication between the horse and the rider or driver. Bits vary in terms of their action and whether they are mild or severe in their impact on the horse. This is a broad spectrum and in basic terms severity can be defined as the degree of pressure applied to the horse's mouth in order to gain the desired effect.

The question might be asked, '*If the amount of pressure applied directly correlates to the obedience of the horse, then why not use the most severe bit available?*' The answer to this lies in the trainability of the horse: it is more desirable to achieve a responsive and biddable horse through sympathetic means rather than purely through pain and fear. Also, prolonged use of a severe bit using harsh training methods will eventually result in desensitisation and potential injury of the horse and the need to increase the severity of the bit.

A range of bits have been dated to the Iron Age and have been found throughout Britain. They have been found in the context of chariot burials (usually in pairs in this instance) and also in hoards and as single finds. Previous researchers have classified these bits in terms of their form rather than their function (e.g. Palk 1984). However, when the three main forms of bit are examined, they are found to vary in the severity of their action on the horse. These different types of bit range in date from the 4<sup>th</sup> century BC to the 2<sup>nd</sup> century AD. There is some overlap between some 3-link and 2-link bits and between 2-link and 3-link derivative bits. These have been found to occur across Britain and, therefore, the differences cannot be said to be regional (Macdonald 2007). There is also some overlap between different types of bit.

There are seven parts of the horse's head on which pressure can be applied through the use of the bit (Hartley-Edwards 2004). These are:

- ◆ The corners of the lips
- ◆ The bars of the mouth (the part of the gum between the front teeth and the molars)
- ◆ The tongue
- ◆ The curb groove (this is the groove directly behind the chin)
- ◆ Poll (this is the part of the head directly between the ears)
- ◆ Roof of the mouth
- ◆ Nose (when a particular nose band is used or a bitless bridle).

The current classification of Iron Age bits identifies three main forms: the 2-link, 3-link and the 3-link derivative (Macdonald 2007). Examples of these forms have been drawn from Llyn Cerrig Bach (Macdonald 2007) and from Rise, Holderness (MacGregor 1976).

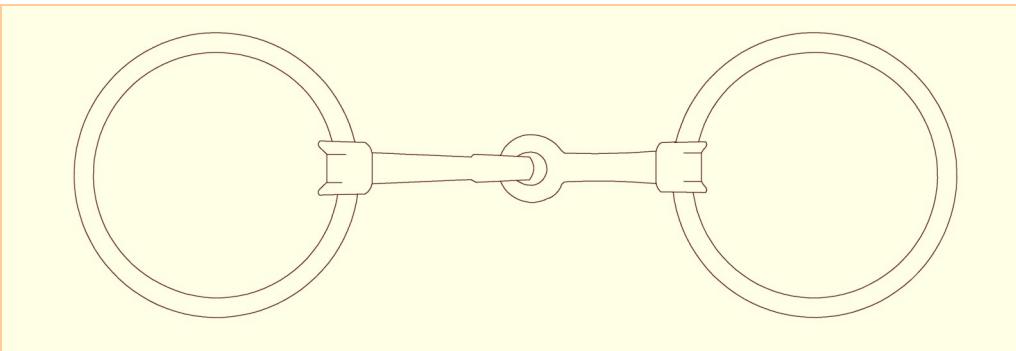


Figure 1: 2-link bit from Llyn Cerrig Bach (redrawn from Macdonald 2007)

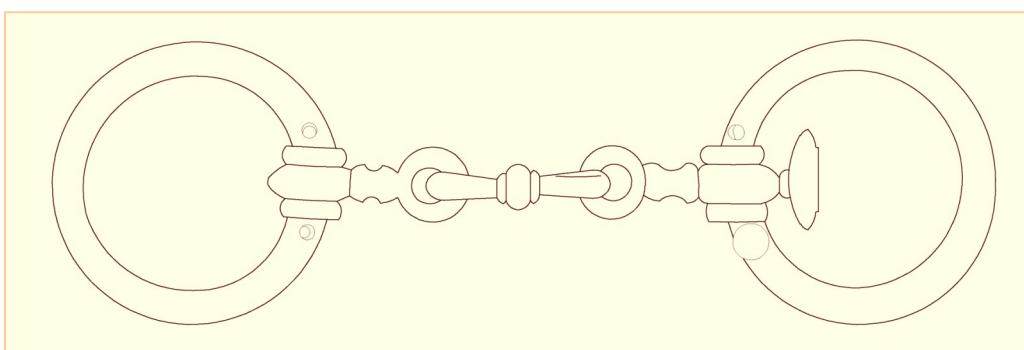


Figure 2: 3-link bit from Llyn Cerrig Bach (redrawn from Macdonald 2007)

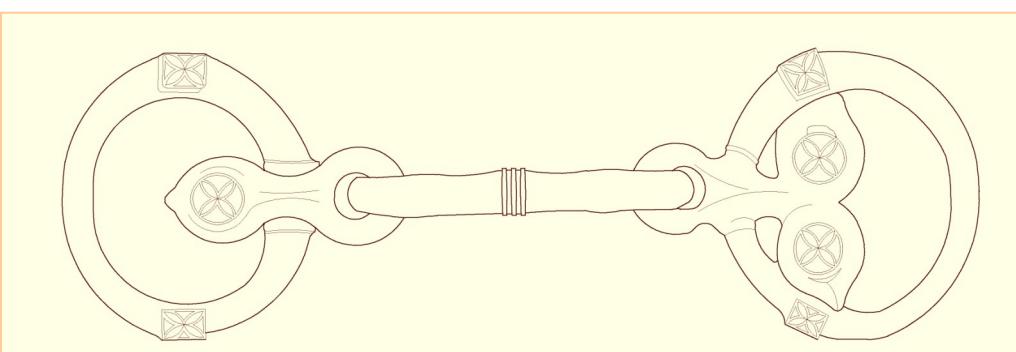


Figure 3: 3-link derivative from Rise, Holderness (redrawn from MacGregor 1976)

When they are examined, it is found that they act on four of the seven pressure points listed above.

The 2-link bit puts pressure on the bars of the mouth with the central link pushing downwards on the tongue. This effectively 'breaks' the bit across the tongue which applies pressure to the lower jaw. This encourages the horse to drop its head and give in to the pressure.

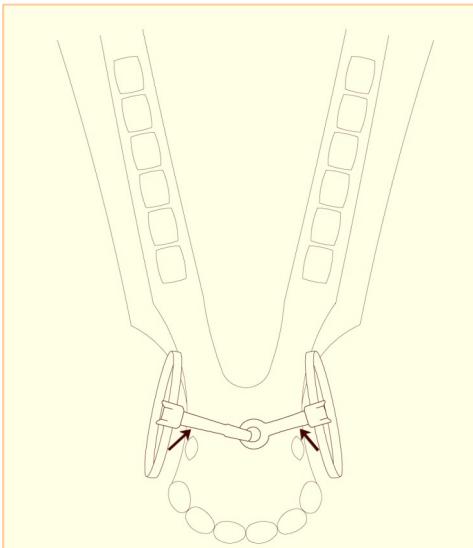


Figure 4: Pressure points applied by the 2-link bit

The 3-link bit applies pressure in a slightly different way. The middle link puts pressure on the tongue, and the example from Llyn Cerrig Bach shows that this particular example would have been severed due to the protrusion of the middle link (Macdonald 2007). The side links then apply pressure to the corners of the mouth, therefore encouraging the horse to give into the pressure.

It can be argued that the 3-link derivative is the most severe of the three types of Iron Age bit that have been identified. It effectively acts in a similar way to a modern straight bar bit. It puts downward pressure on the bars of the mouth and thus the lower jaw. It is more severe than the 2-link bit as it does not break thereby applying the maximum amount of pressure to the lower jaw (Hartley-Edwards 2004). The example shown here has ridges in the middle of the bar that will impact on the tongue thereby applying two forms of pressure to the mouth.

Another factor which must be taken into account when looking at bits is whether the rein ring is loose or fixed. When the bridle bits from the Iron Age are examined, there appears to be a mixture of fixed rings, rings with restricted movement and free moving rings (Macdonald 2007; MacGregor 1976). It may appear that the rein rings only serve one purpose and that is to attach the bit to the rest of the bridle. However, they can play an important part in the action of the bit on the horse. Free moving rings that are large serve to provide a greater element of steering due to putting pressure on the outside of the cheeks when pressure on the rein is applied. Fixed rings or rings with restricted movement serve to put pressure on the corners of the lips as can be seen in the 3-link and 3-link derivative bit from Llyn Cerrig Bach (Macdonald 2007).

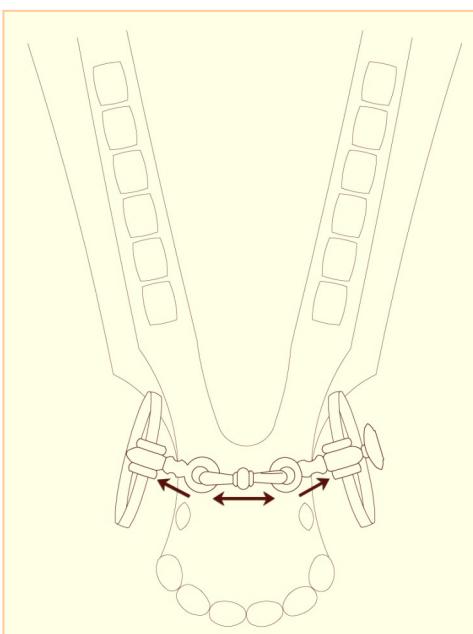


Figure 5: Pressure points applied by the 3-link bit

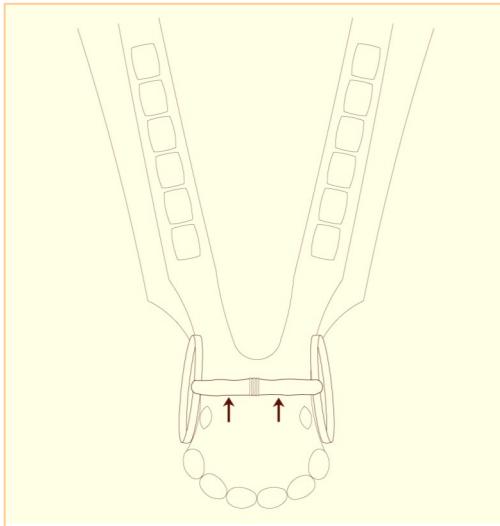


Figure 6: Pressure points applied by the 3-link derivative bit

It has been clearly demonstrated that the bits dating from the Iron Age vary not just in their form but also in their functionality, i.e. the action that they apply to the horse's mouth. As the bits are broadly contemporary, this shows that Iron Age peoples were horse literate: they had an understanding of how different bits perform within the mouth. These bits would have been interchanged depending on the needs of the horse and indeed, the needs of the driver. Greater or lesser control would have been applied through the use of

these different types of bits, leading to the conclusion that the use of bits together with sufficient training would have provided the control needed to meet the rigours of warfare.

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**Review: *The Early and Middle Bronze Age Spearheads of Britain*  
by Richard Davis, with a contribution by J.P. Northover**

Prähistorische Bronzefunde: Abteilung V, Band 5. 2012. Franz Steiner Verlag, Stuttgart. 223pp, 114 illustrative plates. Hardback: ISBN 978-3-515-10350-3. Cover Price: €98

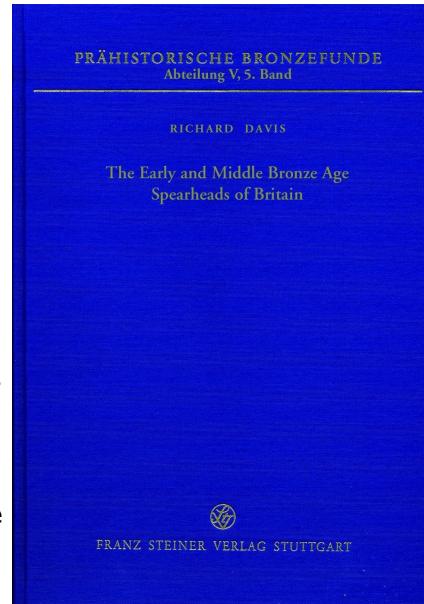
Peter Reavill

The spearhead is one of the most commonly found weapons of the British Bronze Age, being more ubiquitous than the sword, and after the axe spearheads are the most common metal find of the period. However, until the publication of this new national corpus for the Early and Middle periods, spearheads have been relatively overlooked in archaeological literature. Therefore, this volume is most welcome and eagerly expected.

Davis draws together 1074 individual spearheads from England, Wales and Scotland, many of which are published here for the first time. Importantly Davis also illustrates all the provenanced examples with clear, detailed and systematically arranged line drawings. In addition to the spearheads he gathers together all the known moulds of the period. To create such an impressive corpus Davis visited over 70 museums in person and corresponded with a further 50. He also consulted the Portable Antiquities Scheme's (PAS) database which makes up 7% of his corpus, underlining the importance of this data resource for current research. A further 3% of Davis's material is collated from museum and HER identifications of pre-PAS date. Such a rigorous approach should be applauded and will ease the load for future researchers. However, this book is more than just a physical collection of spearheads: it is a review of the object type with a new typology which adopts many aspects of what has been written before, and develops a more systematic approach that in places is backed up with specific metallurgical analysis by Peter Northover.

The first section of the book looks at the history of research from the later Victorian period through to the initial typologies of Greenwell and Brewis (1909), which have been broadly adopted by many subsequent writers on the subject. Davis then moves to look at chronology. He admits this is prone to some difficulty, with many regional variations which prevent a simplified national picture; at times he paints a patchwork of regional variation in both the use of specific types and their longevity. He also addresses issues around where to stop the study, sensibly opting to include all the looped spearheads as well as the basal looped ones whilst excluding the later pegged sequence. This causes some dating anomalies, but as long as this study isn't used as the sole point of reference this shouldn't cause too many future problems.

In the next section Davis outlines (briefly) how his typology was created, and most importantly for those less familiar with the material provides useful and informative line drawings showing the key attributes and shapes of each group as well as detailed written explanations. From here Davis moves on to discuss his own methodology and how he has divided the material into Groups, Types and Variants creating a new framework of analysis; at this point the voice of the author can clearly be heard and is more conversational in style. It is in this area where Davis discusses the status of those who owned spears and the craftsmen's choice in production. He then looks at their function as fighting weapons, material wealth and objects of display. Importantly there is a strong experimental archaeological theme with replicas being tested by the Royal Armouries Live Interpretations Team to enable hafting methods and fighting styles to be explored. The results of this are embedded within Davis's work. Whilst some will not agree with this



approach, which examines the functional practicality over the 'cultural, regional and environment' values of the object type, it does widen and enliven the debate - reminding the reader that these were once lethal weapons rather than static artefacts in a museum display case. For many Davis's discussion on votive deposition and landscape context might be a little light on theoretical interpretations and it is here that some of the themes such as regional variation could have been investigated in more depth.

Following this broad and informative introduction, the glory of the catalogue is presented. This is well-written, and is laid out in the standard PBF format in which Davis presents his Group overview, Types and Variants, with detailed but brief inventory descriptions. This is followed by discussions on the Origins, Context, Distribution, and Dating of each individual group or type. It is here that some physical agility is needed by the reader as they will need to be able to refer backwards and forwards in the text, cross-referencing the written catalogue with the illustrative plates and the distribution maps – all positioned at the back – whilst also referring to the discussions that have gone before. This is not an impossible task; however, with modern printing methods might not have been entirely necessary as maps and possibly a stylised line drawing could have been integrated within the catalogue text. Despite this the information within the catalogue is well addressed although at times reliant on evolution as the main reason for advancement.

The illustrative plates within the catalogue whilst good could have been improved by the addition of profile views and sections of the sockets for key Types and Variants. Likewise the distribution maps could be better used as they are mostly at the national scale; it would have been useful to have an element of overview, regionality and landscape position expressed visually rather than just addressed in the text. The appendices are similarly detailed and useful, especially that of the metallurgical analysis. Likewise, the rather unfashionable pull-out association charts are important additions that anchor the corpus where possible to other assemblages and hoards. Dating is a tricky issue for the volume as many of the spearheads are without context or direct association. The indices are also well constructed and thoroughly edited – although it would have been useful if there could have been an additional index of spearheads by county. Finally, the pull-out visual chronological table is an important overview and good aide-mémoire.

Over the past few months I have used the book as a functional tool for recording spearheads for the PAS: here it mostly stands up as a good model. The division of spears into the Davis's Groups is a relatively straightforward task. However, the assigning of Types and Variants can be more challenging especially when the spear is worn either through use / sharpening – something that Davis identifies would need to be done regularly – or when the spearhead is poorly preserved. This difficulty is mostly due to the division of the groups (such as the largest Group 6 – with 483 examples in the corpus), which is reliant on the

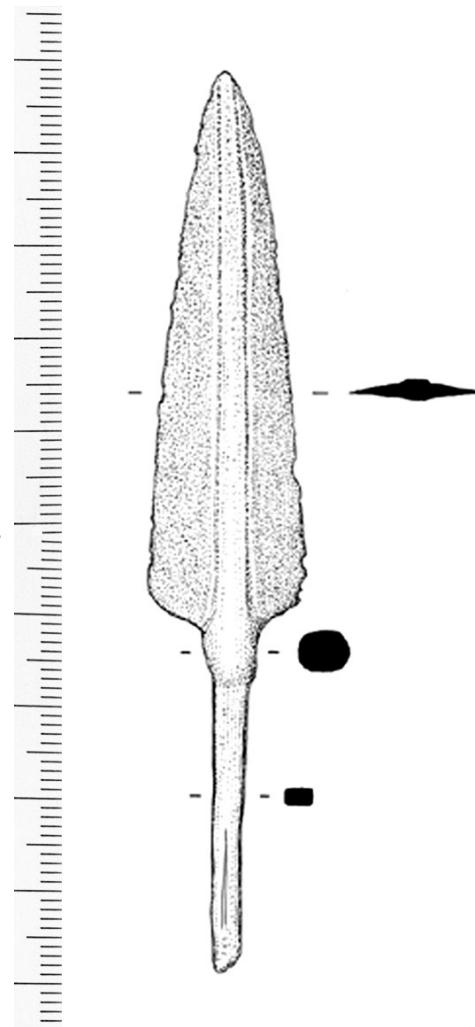


Figure 1: Early Bronze Age spearhead from Shalfleet, Isle of Wight  
 Davis Group I: Type 1A: lozenge mid-rib  
 PAS reference: IOW-221956  
 © Portable Antiquities Scheme / Trustees of the British Museum

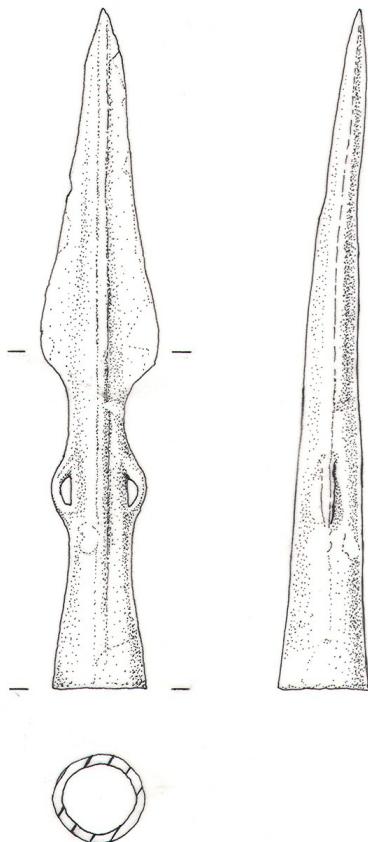


Figure 2: Middle Bronze Age Spearhead from Glascwm, Powys  
Davis Group 6: Type 6-D: ogival (cat no 545)  
PAS reference: HESH-CE6980  
© Portable Antiquities Scheme / Trustees of the British Museum

combination of blade shape and the point of the maximum width of the blade, and to a lesser extent on the shape of the mid-rib and shape of loops. When these elements are not present, or poorly preserved, the sub-classification is difficult. This issue is acknowledged in the volume, with Davis including sections on unclassified spearheads within each Group (in Group 6 there are 89 unclassified examples that represent over 18% of the total).

In summary, although at times I have been critical, I believe that this is a very useful addition to the study of the British Bronze Age and Davis should be congratulated in producing such an important work. It will join the ranks of the best PBF volumes, such as Burgess and Schmidt (1981) – *The Axes of Scotland and Northern England* – and Colquhoun and Burgess (1988) – *Swords of Britain* – as a core reference that every specialist should know and use. Hopefully it will act as a standardised typology that, if adopted for recording new discoveries, should enable a more consistent approach to analysing Early and Middle Bronze Age spearheads in Britain.

Finally – it is hoped that a follow-up companion volume on the spearheads of the later Bronze Age is soon with us.

**Peter Reavill** is the Portable Antiquities Scheme's Finds Liaison Officer for Shropshire and Herefordshire

## A strange and unusual Early Bronze Age axe from Norfolk

Alan West

In 1997 a hoard of four Early Bronze Age axes was recovered by two metal detectorists and reported to Norwich Castle Museum. Three of the axes are of standard British types, but the fourth example is quite unusual. So unusual that I am having trouble tracking down both its type and any parallels found in Britain, and I would be grateful for any ideas the readership may have.

The hoard was found in the parish of Deopham (Norfolk). Axes 1-3 lay in close association at a depth of 18 inches in sandy soil, with axe 2 found upright, and axe 4 just below the surface, separate from the others by about 10 metres.

The hoard is in the collection of Norwich Castle Museum (accession number NWHCM : 1998.101, NHER number 29875).

(All images of the Deopham Hoard are at a scale of 1:2.)

### 1. Flanged Axe

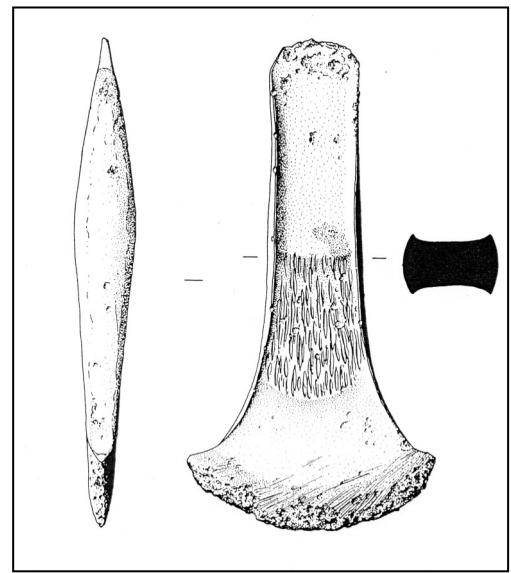
Remains of arched butt; parallel flanged sides before flaring out to curved blade with bevel, edge of blade corroded; low stop bevel with another bevel between this and the blade bevel; decorated with long punch marks across width of axe, running from stop bevel to middle bevel. Surface condition is good with areas of corrosion at blade and butt.

Length: 130 mm

Blade width: 65 mm

Flange height: 2 mm (max)

Weight: 266g



### 2. Flanged Axe

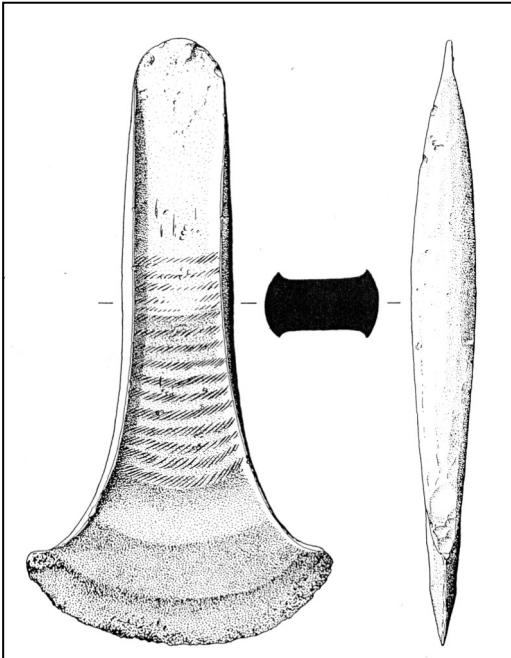
Thin arched butt, parallel flanged sides run down to flared blade with curved cutting edge with bevel, edge is mostly damaged apart from one small section, low stop bevel, two faint bevels between stop bevel and blade bevel, decorated with rows of diagonal punch decoration extending from above the stop bevel to the first of the faint bevels on the blade. Surface shows signs of corrosion at blade and butt, with green and blue patina in other areas, with bronze colour showing at a few locations.

Length: 160 mm

Blade width: 80 mm

Flange height: 2.5 mm (max)

Weight: 417g



### 3. Flanged Axe

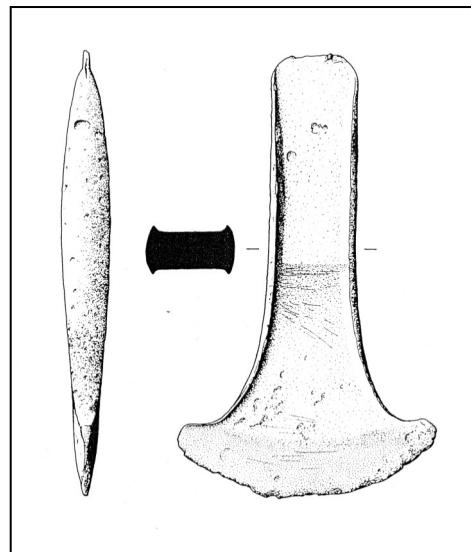
Remains of arched butt, parallel flanged sides run down to greatly flared blade with bevel, edge very damaged, low stop bevel, no decoration. Surface condition is good, with a few spots of corrosion.

Length: 118 mm

Blade width: 67 mm

Flange height: 1.5 mm (max)

Weight: 187 g



### 4. Flanged Axe

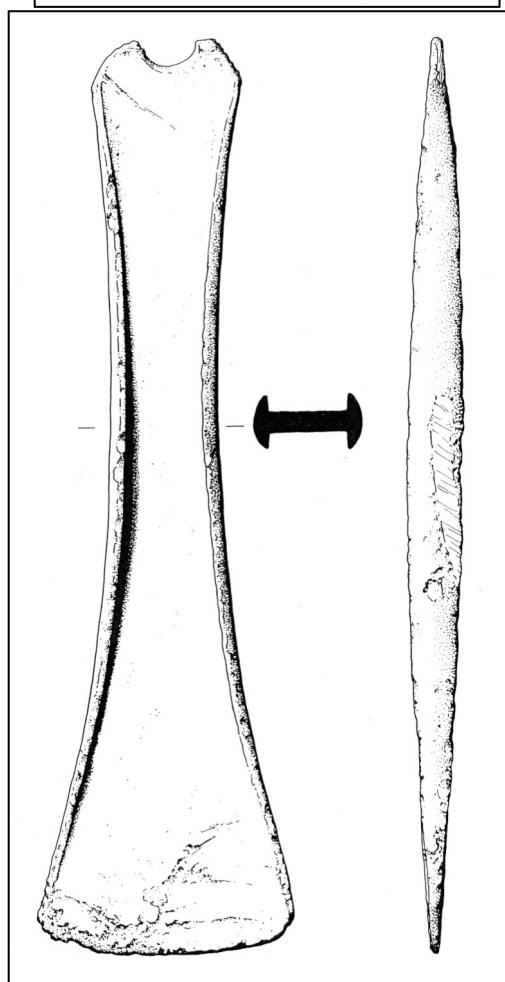
Arch shaped butt with cut away section, flanged sides narrow from butt before flaring out to blade edge which has only a slight curve, no bevel at blade, no stop ridge or bevel, no decoration. Surface condition is good although there are signs of plough damage.

Length: 239 mm

Blade width: 67 mm

Flange height: 4 mm (max)

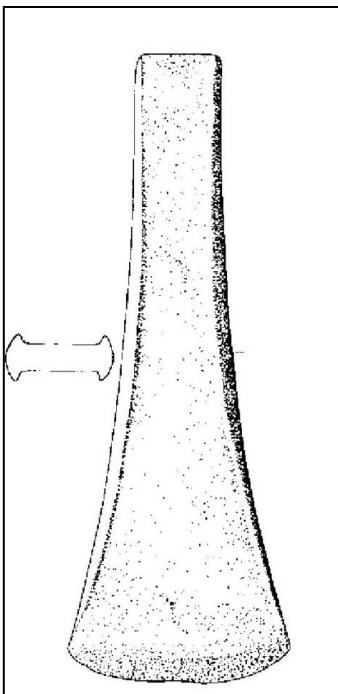
Weight: 426g



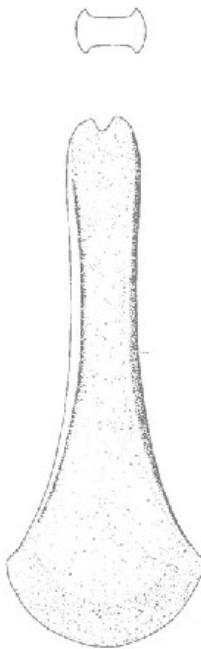
## Typology

Under Schmidt and Burgess's typological scheme (1981), the three axes show similarities to axes of Type Bandon, which is similar to Harbison's Type Derryniggin, but more strictly defined (Schmidt and Burgess 1981, 65; Harbison 1969, 55). This type has straight, parallel sides which curve outwards above the blade, which has a wide crescentic cutting edge. The butt tends to be fairly straight, and the overall length is usually under 130 mm (Schmidt and Burgess 1981, 65). Axes 1 and 3 fit extremely well into this type, but axe 2, with a length of 161 mm, fits less well. The average length of the Type Bandon axes is 119.8 mm ( $\pm 5.4$  mm at 95% confidence, and not including the smaller sub-type of Bandon, the Variant Swinton axes). Axe 2 is in excess of this figure by three standard deviations, and is 13 mm larger than the largest Bandon axe. However, the parallel sides of axe 2 do not fit with the slightly earlier Type Scrabo Hill (ibid., 63), and the flanges are not high enough to be of the slightly later Type Balbirnie (ibid., 70). Axe 2 may therefore be a very large Type Bandon, or a low flanged Type Balbirnie.

The fourth axe is non-British. It is of west-central European form and of similar date to the British axes. The basic shape of the body and blade edge might suggest something like Type Neyruz (Abels 1972), but these do not have a notched butt. This notch is found in Langquaid axes, but these have blades with greatly expanded crescentic cutting edges (Brendan O'Connor pers. comm.). Neither of these types seems a likely parallel for axe 4.



Possible parallel: Type Neyruz (Var.B), from Abels 1972  
(not to scale)



Possible parallel: Type Langquaid (Var.A), from Abels 1972  
(not to scale)

## Conclusion

Should anyone be able to shed any light on the origins of the foreign fourth axe, or know of any axes found elsewhere in the British Isles that are similar, I would be extremely interested in hearing from you. I can be contacted at [alan.west@norfolk.gov.uk](mailto:alan.west@norfolk.gov.uk) at Norwich Castle Museum.

Thanks to Brendan O'Connor, Tobias Mörtz and John Davies who have all helped me get this far.

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**Alan West** is Curator of Archaeology at Norwich Castle Museum

## Prehistory in the National Curriculum

Kim Biddulph

Rejoice! From this September, children aged 7-11 will be learning about changes in Britain from the Stone Age to the Iron Age! Although Michael Gove's changes to the curriculum and the whole school sector have had mixed reviews, one of the great things to come out of it is the inclusion of the first million years of human habitation of this patch of land we now call Britain.

Schools Prehistory (<http://schoolsprehistory.wordpress.com/>) is one of a number of organisations that have been set up to help teachers learn more about this period of history, and about the new historical sources they will need to use in the classroom: mostly objects, site plans and reconstruction drawings. One of our basic premises is to connect teachers with their local prehistoric sites, so they don't all rush to use Stonehenge and Skara Brae in their lessons, as the government suggests in the non-statutory guidance that accompanies the curriculum.

On this note, we are looking to connect teachers with experts on their doorstep who can advise them on accessible places to visit, sites where objects are available in the local museum or just important local prehistoric archaeology that they could use in their teaching. This is not a service we envisage schools paying for, but you would have the warm personal glow of helping a profession trying to do its best by the children of this country but which generally has little subject knowledge of prehistory.

Should you want to appear on our list, just fill out the form on our "Experts on your doorstep" page (<http://schoolsprehistory.wordpress.com/support-teachers/experts-on-your-doorstep/>) or email [kim@schoolsprehistory.co.uk](mailto:kim@schoolsprehistory.co.uk).

**Kim Biddulph** co-runs Schools Prehistory, a company providing resources for schools and teachers to tie in with the 2014 History curriculum for Key Stage 2

## Announcements

The **Later Prehistoric Finds Group** is pleased to announce its second annual general meeting and conference day, to be held on **Friday 24th October 2014** at the **University of Hull**. See page 2 for more information.

\*

The **LPFG website** has had a make-over – many thanks to Sophia Adams, the website editor. Our new-look site can be found at: <https://sites.google.com/site/laterprehistoricfindsgroup/>. Please keep checking back, as new content and information will be added regularly.

\*

The **Roman Finds Group** is organising a meeting at Manchester Museum on Wednesday 8th October, focussing on finds in the museum and more generally from northern Britannia. Further details will appear on the RFG website nearer the time (<http://www.romanfinds.org.uk/>). Offers of papers can be made to Bryan Sitch ([Bryan.Sitch@manchester.ac.uk](mailto:Bryan.Sitch@manchester.ac.uk)) who is hosting the meeting.

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<https://sites.google.com/site/laterprehistoricfindsgroup/>

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