

Later Prehistoric Finds Group



Issue 11

Summer 2018

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Welcome to the latest edition of the LPFG Newsletter. In this issue, we present research on Iron Age hoarding practices from Rachel Wilkinson, winner of our prize at IARSS 2017, while Brendan O'Connor offers his thoughts on a useful new volume on Early Bronze Age axeheads. Matt Knight shares details of an important international conference on Bronze Age and Iron Age depositions across Europe and Graeme Cavers shares details of the incredible Iron Age wooden bowl from Black Loch.

We are also excited to announce a new datasheet by Anna Lewis on Iron Age terrets, as well as details for our forthcoming conference, *The Matter In Hand*, to be held at the British Museum on 29th October 2018.



The Iron Age hoard from Henley-on-Thames, Oxfordshire (© Trustees of the British Museum) Read more on page 4.

Welcome

The Later Prehistoric Finds Group was established in 2013, and welcomes anyone with an interest in prehistoric artefacts, especially small 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.

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://laterprehistoricfinds.com/>. Matt Knight is the current Chair and Helen Chittock is Deputy.

The LPFG newsletter is published twice a year. To submit articles, notes or announcements for inclusion, please e-mail Jo Mortimer at lpfgnews@outlook.com. Guidelines are available on the website, but please feel free to e-mail with any questions.

Welcoming the Newsletter's new editors

Anna Lewis

After five years of editing the LPFG Newsletter, I have decided it is time to stand down. I would like to express my thanks to all those who have contributed to the newsletter over the years: I'm proud that it has been an outlet for so much excellent research and discussion. I am now very pleased to hand over to our new editorial team: Jo Mortimer and Andy Lamb.

Jo, our new chief editor, has a literary background and a developing interest in archaeology. She is a proof-reader and editor, as well as a published author of short fiction and non-fiction. Jo will be volunteering on her first digs this summer, as well as undertaking an introductory course on Archaeological Excavation with the Sussex School of Archaeology.

Andy brings his expertise in later prehistoric archaeology to the role of supporting editor. He is completing a PhD at the University of Leicester in Iron Age mortuary practices, and co-chaired the organisational committee of the 19th Iron Age Research Student Symposium (IARSS) conference in 2015-16. Andy also volunteers as an archaeological adviser for the computer game modification series *Europa Barbarorum*.

Jo and Andy will be supported by the LPFG's new deputy chair, Helen Chittock, who is introduced elsewhere in this issue.

Welcome and good luck!

Letter from the Chair and Introduction to new committee positions

Matt Knight



I am very pleased to introduce myself as the new Chair of the Later Prehistoric Finds Group. Over the last couple of years, I have been the Social Media Officer for the group and I am excited to take on this new role, continuing the brilliant work of our previous Chair, Anna Booth. Anna has been with the LPFG since its inception in 2013 and has been instrumental in creating a thriving community interested in Bronze Age and Iron Age finds. We are very thankful for all her hard work and commitment.

On 2nd February, we hosted our AGM at the British Museum and several other changes were made to committee positions as we welcomed new faces. Our new line-up is listed below and I am delighted to welcome Helen Chittock as our new Deputy Chair, and Tess Mächling and Stephanie Smith as our Meetings Coordinators, alongside our former Deputy Chair Sophia Adams. We are thrilled to have members of the committee dedicated to developing our meetings programme and they are currently working hard with Julia Farley to pull together our upcoming conference at the British Museum.

As readers will have seen on the previous page, Anna Lewis has also stepped down from her long-standing role as Newsletter Editor. Anna's piece introduced our new editors (Jo Mortimer and Andy Lamb), but here I wish to express our immense thanks to Anna for creating and editing this newsletter since 2013.

It remains only for me to present our current committee in full:

Chair: Matt Knight

Deputy Chair: Helen Chittock

Treasurer: Elizabeth Foulds

Membership Secretary: Yvonne Inall

Meetings Coordinators: Tess Mächling, Sophia Adams and Stephanie Smith

Newsletter Editor: Jo Mortimer

Newsletter Sub-Editor: Andrew Lamb

Datasheet Editor: Sophia Adams

Social Media Editors: Dot Boughton and Matt Knight

Website Editor: Michael Marshall

Thinking around the box

Rachel Wilkinson

My current PhD research as the holder of a Collaborative Doctoral Award with the University of Leicester and British Museum examines the Iron Age metalwork object hoard patterns in Britain from 800 BC – AD 100. One aspect of this is to examine what containers can add to our understanding of hoarding in the Iron Age.

Unfortunately a large proportion of Iron Age hoards, particularly coin hoards, were often unexcavated or antiquarian finds. The containers were poorly recorded or abandoned, leaving a relatively small sample surviving. Furthermore, previous studies have focused on the hoard contents, creating typologies and biographies of these groups of objects, with often only a few short sentences on what contained them, which has exacerbated this problem.

Hoard of objects were buried in a diverse manner: in pottery vessels and in containers made from a variety of organic materials. Some of the patterns related to containers appear to have been chronological - pottery containers were used with relative frequency during the Bronze Age and this is a pattern that continued in Early Iron Age hoarding. Early Iron Age pottery forms storing the copper alloy ingots at Porthcothan, Cornwall and Brockham, Surrey, enabled these objects, usually ascribed to the Bronze Age, to be dated to the Early Iron Age. Yet after this there appears to be a break, pottery was often still buried with the hoards, but as fragments or as partial profiles and often as part of a structured deposit.



The hoard of copper ingots found in an Iron Age pot at Brockham, Surrey (© Portable Antiquities Scheme / Trustees of the British Museum)

Whilst containers were not used for the majority of Iron Age hoards, there was still an element of structuring and grouping to many of the deposits. This is particularly clear with currency bars, which were often grouped and bound with organic twine, iron wire or leather to preserve these bundles.

With the advent of coinage, pottery containers reappear. Despite their convenient nature for transporting a number of small, light objects, they were only found in association with 20 of 350 coin hoards, distributed throughout the country. The majority of these containers were found by antiquarians leaving us with little more than a 'pottery vessel'. A small concentration of coin hoards in the Norfolk and Suffolk area do suggest active selection of pottery types, demonstrating a strong focus on imported drinking vessels - butt beakers and globular beakers

- and local copies of these types. The coin hoards have a closing issue of c.AD 50 and this similarity in date may explain the similarities in pottery containers if all were being taken from the same pool. It is unclear whether these forms were selected for convenient size or whether they were particularly valued within the communities.

The sizes and shapes of coins appear to have inspired a variety of 'storage solutions' not possible with previous Iron Age objects. At Sedgeford, coins were stuffed into a cow bone. Throughout southern England, gold issues were contained within flint nodules, such as at Henley-on-Thames, Oxfordshire. It remains to be seen what will be discovered next.

Rachel Wilkinson won the LPFG prize for best finds-related paper for this research at the Iron Age Research Student Symposium in 2017.



The Iron Age hoard from Henley-on-Thames, Oxfordshire, found in a hollowed-out flint nodule (© Portable Antiquities Scheme / Trustees of the British Museum)

Conference Review

Connecting Worlds. Bronze- and Iron Age Depositions in Europe

19th-21st April 2018; Deutsches Archäologisches Institut, Berlin

Matt Knight

In April 2018, 35 scholars from 19 different countries congregated in Berlin to speak about cutting edge research into metalwork depositional practices in the Bronze and Iron Ages. The scope of this conference, organised by Professor Svend Hanson, encompassed a chronological expanse of several thousand years, as well as a geographical area stretching from Ireland to Siberia and south to the Transurals. It stands to reason that one cannot adequately summarise this conference in a single review so instead this review will pull together some of the dominant themes.

What's striking about a conference of this scale is the immense variability in the archaeological record that occurs throughout Western Eurasia, but also the underlying similarities – a point highlighted by Professor Marie-Louise Stig-Sørensen. Nothing emphasised this better than the numerous papers concerning hoards.

Overviews of different regions and countries including the Carpathian Basin (Oliver Dietrich; Botond Rezi), north-western France (Muriel Fily and José Gomez de Soto), the Eastern Baltic region (Agnė Čivilytė) and northern Eurasia (Sergej Kuzminych) all highlighted the overall increase in hoarding and fragmentation practices associated with metalwork during the Bronze Age. Such an observation is basic in premise, but the parallels become starkly apparent when presented one after the other. The condition of French hoards (Sylvie Boulud-Gazo et al.) broadly mirrors hoards in Romania (Botond Rezi); parallels for hoarding practices in the Transurals could be found in western Europe (Ol'ga Koročková); and the timeframe for which mass hoarding was uptaken and subsequently abandoned in Britain correlates with the situation in Bohemia in the Early Iron Age (Ondřej Chvojka).

By contrast, some areas show limited signs of fragmenting objects in the Late Bronze Age, such as Ireland (Katharina Becker), suggesting localised approaches to depositions, perhaps influenced by value attributed to the material in these areas. Similarly, during the early first millennium BC the destruction and sacrifice of weapon-dominant hoards was a common practice in Britain, but only occurred intermittently in other areas of Atlantic Europe (Tobias Mörtz). Meanwhile, trends of hoards representing long-distance networks (Harald Meller) can be observed stretching through parts of Central Europe in eponymous assemblages such as the



Early Bronze Age hoard from Nebra (Harald Meller) or the Late Bronze Age Hajdúböszörmény hoard (János Gábor Tarbay). However, elsewhere, Early Bronze Age hoarding is absent from the archaeological record completely, with metalwork depositions occurring instead only as grave goods, such as in the Transcarpathian Region of Ukraine (Josyp Kobal'). Interestingly, the question of whether we should be relaxing our distinctive categories and viewing the deposition of bodies and grave goods as an alternative form of the hoarding culture was raised (Christian Jeunesse; Kristian Kristiansen; Richard Bradley).

Many speakers highlighted the *longue durée* of depositions and practices (Ondřej Chvojka). For instance, some landscapes seem to have been revisited multiple times for multiple deposits, including waterways in France (Muriel Mélin and Stefan Wirth) and Serbia (Dragan Jovanović). Sanctuaries in Iron Age Greece demonstrate how places had ritual aspects that necessitated specific deposits, including animal and human figurines and deliberately manipulated objects, over long stretches of time (Susanne Bocher). Likewise, Gerhard Tomedi was able to show that the sites in Bronze Age and Iron Age Italy appeared to have been revisited over two hundred year periods. Something that particularly sparked my interest was the number of situations where earlier material was being found alongside chronologically later material, such as at the Swiss Lake Dwellings of the Late Bronze Age (Viktoria Fischer) or Late Bronze Age fragmentary hoards (Oliver Dietrich; Sylvie Boulud-Gazo et al.), indicating that such objects may have been reappropriated objects or relics of a recognised past. As Professor Svend Hansen pointed out, despite our awareness of such features, these various aspects simply would not have been the focus twenty years ago; this awareness means we are having to change how we think about deposits and the people who deposited them. Places, objects and depositions seem to have been linked to a communal social memory that may have stretched over decades or indeed centuries.

This line of thinking was further highlighted by studies focusing on the landscapes in which depositions were made. David Fontijn, Ana Bettencourt and Beatriz Comendador Rey all presented papers examining the interactions between Bronze Age populations and the landscape and emphasising the need to consider depositions as part of wider systems, rather than in isolation. This was furthered during the closing discussions by Richard Bradley, who suggested that we should no longer be distinguishing between 'dryland' and 'wetland' sites but also a variety of other features that define landscapes, such as the nature of the water (e.g. still or running) or the shape of the horizon.

It should be clear by now that the breadth and ambition of the conference cannot be faulted. The approaches to depositional practices at our disposal are incredibly varied and offer many research opportunities, as well as challenging the way we currently approach the subject. It is thus particularly good to note that publication plans are in motion for the conference proceedings. In the meantime, a full conference programme can be found here:

https://www.academia.edu/36278381/2018_Conference_CONNECTING_WORLDS_BRONZE-AND_IRON_AGE_DEPOSITIONS_IN_EUROPE_BERLIN_19_TH_-21_ST_APRIL

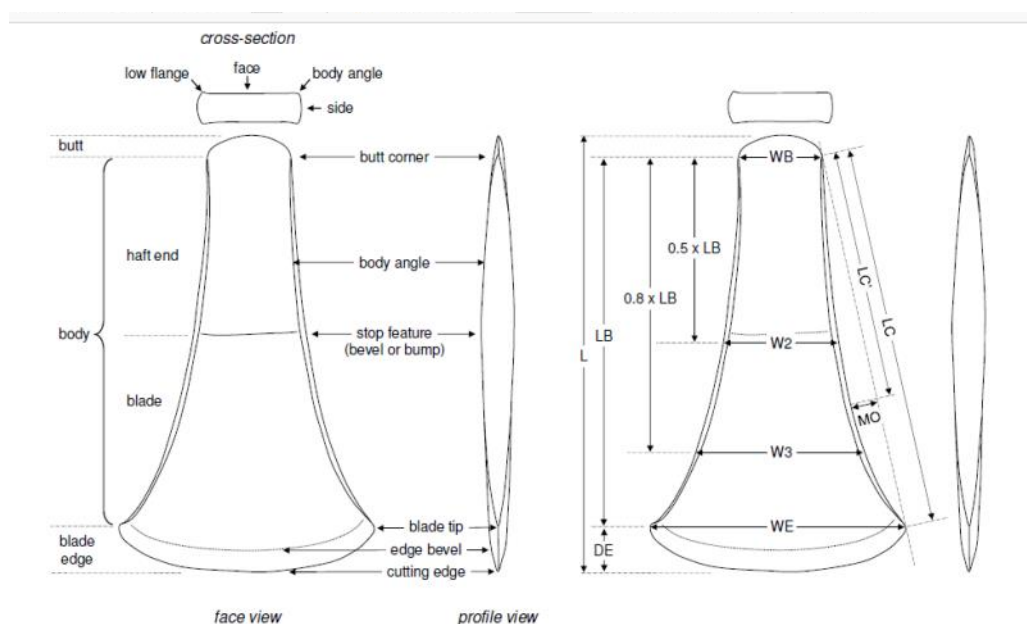
Book Review

The Classification of Chalcolithic and Early Bronze Age Copper and Bronze Axe-heads from Southern Britain, Stuart Needham, Archaeopress Publishing, Oxford, 74pp, £22. Printed ISBN 9781784917401. Epublication ISBN 9781784917418.

Brendan O'Connor

This slim but densely-packed volume will be essential for all our members who deal with Early Bronze Age axes. An electronic version of the book can be downloaded from the publisher's website: <http://www.archaeopress.com/public/displayProductDetail.asp?id={7ADE470C-A94F-43E4-9B42-8454BFFBC170}>.

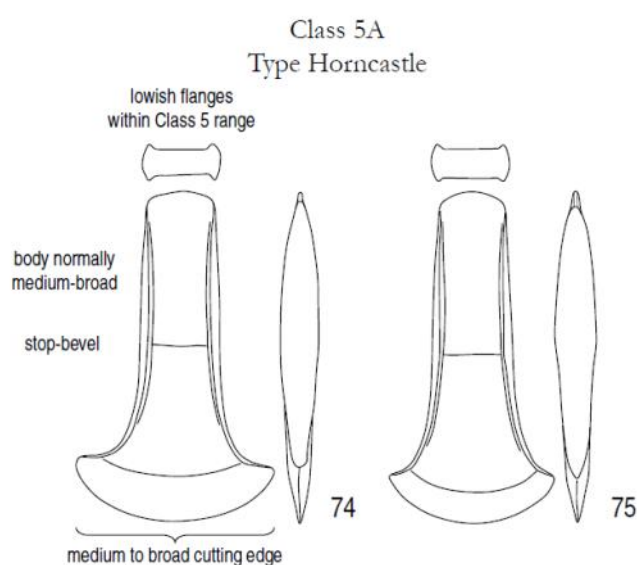
The classification is based on Stuart Needham's 35-year-old Cardiff thesis, which was never published though it is available online (<http://ethos.bl.uk/OrderDetails.do?did=1&uin=uk.bl.ethos.354490>). The corpus for his thesis covered central and southern England but the current work also includes Wales, where the assemblage is similar. Full account is taken of material from northern England and Scotland, which differs from southern Britain; indeed the illustrated type series includes one axe from Scotland and three from Yorkshire (nos. 28, 46, 59 & 65 in the type series). Irish axes are also considered – though this highlights the need to revisit Peter Harbison's typology which is now 50 years old – and two flanged axes from England are illustrated as Irish imports or heavily Irish-influenced (nos. 96-7, see page 31). Finds of insular axes in hoards on the continent are identified (e.g. Wageningen, Netherlands; Dieskau 2, Germany; and Pile, Sweden) but no specific examples of continental imports in Britain are mentioned and Needham does not comment on the find containing an imported axe from Deopham in Norfolk, published in our Newsletter (No. 3, June 2014, 16-18), although this reference does appear in his bibliography (in addition, several text references are omitted from the bibliography).



Needham's terminology for axeheads and dimensions for the classification systems (Needham 2018, Figure 1; reproduced with kind permission of Stuart Needham)

The axes are classified according to objective criteria, a series of critical relative dimensions for the relative width of the butt, the proportions of the cutting edge, the proportions of the body and the curvature of the sides, which are set out in Table 1, Figure 1 and pages 6-7. Class 1 axes have parallel faces which do not converge at the butt, though Needham eschews the description 'thick-butted'. Class 2 axes have lenticular profiles, converging towards the butt (thus 'thin-butted'), and tend to have broader butts. Classes 1 and 2 are contemporary and almost always made of copper: Class 2 is much more numerous. Earlier axes of Class 3 are normally flat but later examples have low flanges; butts are medium-broad, becoming narrower. These axes are now made of bronze. Class 4 axes have a lozengic profile marked by a bevel, usually with low flanges. There was substantial chronological overlap between Classes 3 and 4, while Class 5 succeeded Class 4. Axes of Class 5 have moderate to well-developed cast flanges along most of the body and lower blades are often strongly expanded. Such long-flanged axes continued into the Middle Bronze Age, though with stop-ridges rather than bevels.

Ninety-seven axes are used to illustrate the type series which comprises five principal classes. These classes are further divided by their outline shape into sub-classes, which (with one exception) are identified as types and named after an individual axe. In some cases, the shape of a sub-class contains significant variations and these are accounted for by designating more than one type within the sub-class. The illustrated axes have been redrawn to a standard format with any decoration omitted (pages 46-61). Details of provenance, collection and the source of the illustration are in a separate Appendix 1, which should help to enable comparison of new finds with existing, classified examples. A flow-chart of the questions to be asked in classifying an axe is in Appendix 2, while Table 4 indicates how to deal with objects depending on their varying surface condition, from pristine to amorphous. The chronological sequence of axes, with their specific typological connections indicated, is set out following Needham's metal assemblages and periods in Figure 16. The relative chronology is of course to a great extent implicit in the classification but Figure 3 shows associated finds from England and Wales in chronological order.



An example of Needham's Class 5A category (Needham 2018, Figure 28; reproduced with kind permission of Stuart Needham)

In addition to the axes, small implements less than 10cm long, proportionally much narrower than axes but consistent in form with their typology (nos. 98-110), are classified as axe-chisels. Chisels or stakes whose form is unlike axes are included for completeness (nos. 111-18) and also some of the amorphous objects that have been described as ingots or blanks (nos. 119-120), though Needham considers these are too small for standard axes.

The final section of text begins with some perceptive reflections on developments in the author's subject over forty years.

Star Find! The Black Loch Bowl

We are pleased to bring you news of an exceptional new find, recently excavated by AOC Archaeology Group from a waterlogged Early Iron Age settlement at Black Loch of Myrton in Dumfries and Galloway, Scotland. This incredibly rare fragmentary wooden bowl is decorated with unusual geometric patterns and may be one of the earliest turned vessels from Europe. It was excavated from a probable midden pit currently thought to date to around 435BC.



The bowl will be undergoing conservation and analysis during the coming months. Please look out for an update on this fabulous object in our winter newsletter.

You can find out more about the excavations at Black Loch, which are supported by Historic Environment Scotland, here: <http://www.aocarchaeology.com/news/article/black-loch-myrtion-2016/>

Many thanks to Graeme Cavers of AOC Archaeology Group for providing us with photos of the bowl and the information above.



Photos ©AOC Archaeology Group

Call for Papers

The Roman Finds Group and Finds Research Group in collaboration with King's College London and *Instrumentum* International Meetings

Hoarding and deposition in Europe from later prehistory to the medieval period – finds in context

12–14 June 2019 King's College London, Strand, London, England

Theme: The theme of the next *Instrumentum* Meeting will be hoarding and deposition. Projects on hoards of coins, metalwork and other objects or materials currently being conducted in Britain have looked at both their composition and their locations. Recently excavated hoards also offer the chance to look at little-studied aspects of hoarding as a depositional process, such as the environmental data from pollen and seeds or from materials such as textiles and leather. The conference will also explore other aspects of deposition, including finds in wet contexts and structured deposition, as well as 'stray' or surface finds.

Papers and posters may be submitted on subjects such as the contents of hoards, analyses of single hoards, where hoards occur, changes in practice over time. While the majority of papers will be 20 minutes long, there will also be the opportunity to present work in progress or notes in 10 minute slots.

Please download the proposal form for papers and posters from <http://www.romanfindsgroup.org.uk/> and return before 31 December 2018 to:

Emma.durham@reading.ac.uk

Organisation

The meeting will be held in London, co-organised by the Roman Finds Group, Finds Research Group and King's College London. Visits will include one hosted by the Museum of London.





The Matter in Hand: New Research on Later Prehistoric Finds

29th October 2018, 10am-4:30pm
British Museum

The Later Prehistoric Finds Group and Prehistoric Society would like to invite members and non-members to join us at the British Museum this October for an exciting day of presentations and discussion. Our theme, 'The Matter in Hand', aims to facilitate dialogue on Bronze and Iron Age finds, with a focus on sensory perception of objects and how people engaged with materials.

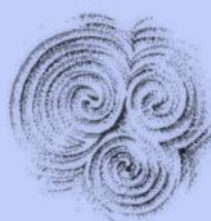
CALL FOR PAPERS

We welcome submissions for papers on new research, ideas and finds with a focus on material engagements in later prehistory. Each paper will be 20 minutes long. To submit a paper proposal, please send an abstract of up to 250 words along with your name, title and affiliation to laterprehistoricfindsgroup@gmail.com before August 31st 2018.

Two £50 travel bursaries and one £100 travel bursary will be made available for speakers. Please specify if you would like to be considered for a travel bursary.



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PREHISTORIC
FINDS GROUP



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Announcements

New Datasheet!

Along with the newsletter we are issuing the sixth in the series of LPFG Object datasheets. Datasheet 6 on Iron Age and Roman-era Vehicle Terrets has been produced by Anna Lewis from her extensive PhD research on terrets from Wales and western and central England. We are very grateful to Anna for her work on creating this informative overview and to the reviewers for their helpful and encouraging comments. We hope you will all find this a useful addition to the series.

If you would like to offer your expertise to produce a datasheet on a later prehistoric artefact type please do contact our datasheets editor, Sophia Adams, who can provide you with template, guidance notes and assistance via our email address:

laterprehistoricfindsgroup@gmail.com

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Congratulations from the LPFG!

Each year, the LPFG offer a cash prize to the author of a finds-based paper presented at the Iron Age Research Student Symposium (IARSS). This year's symposium took place at the University of Kent from May 30th - June 2nd and included a fantastic array of presentations on topics ranging from weaving tools to wetlands.

We would like to offer our warmest congratulations to the winner of the 2018 prize, Meredith Laing (University of Leicester) for her excellent paper: *Making an Impression: Using fingerprint analysis to investigate the demographics of pottery production*. Look out for details of Meredith's research, which will be published in the winter edition of the LPFG newsletter.



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