

# Later Prehistoric Finds Group



Issue 14

Winter 2019/2020

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*The Orbliston lunula © National Museums Scotland. Read more on page 11.*

## 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](mailto:laterprehistoricfindsgroup@gmail.com).

We are a relatively 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: [laterprehistoricfinds.com](http://laterprehistoricfinds.com). Matt Knight is the current Chair and Helen Chittock is Deputy.

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 Andrew Lamb at [lpfgnews@outlook.com](mailto:lpfgnews@outlook.com). Guidelines are available on the website, but please feel free to e-mail with any questions.

**ERRATUM:** The editors would like to apologise for an error made in the typesetting of Brendan O'Connor's review in Issue 13. Paragraph three should have read:

*By the end of the 19th century at least fifteen Late Bronze Age hoards had been recorded from Norfolk but only three or four were reported in the first half of the 20th century, and without fully reliable details. These finds, one from Cranwich and two from Snettisham, are discussed in Chapter 5 which goes on to plot the increase in recovery since 1950 and the publication of Norwich Museum's catalogue in 1966. The first new find made with a metal detector was reported in 1977 but a period of mistrust between detectorists and archaeologists probably caused a reduction in reports during the 1970s. However, this did not last long and almost fifty finds were reported between 1980 and 2010.*

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## A Cosmetic Mortar Reanalysed: implications for the classification of artefacts within the study of early Celtic art in England and Wales

Rebecca L. Ellis, University of Hull

During the data collation for my PhD research, which focuses on how animals and humans are recognised, assessed and analysed in La Tène art in England and Wales (c. 400BC onwards), a cosmetic mortar on the Portable Antiquities Scheme website emerged which had previously been identified as a vessel handle (Portable Antiquities Scheme 2014). BH-FC0145 (Fig. 1) highlights two particular issues: the relationship between late La Tène art and the cosmetic mortar artefact class and the identification of intentionally figurative forms in a famously abstract art style.



Figure 1: PAS ID: BH-FC0145 © St Albans District Council  
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Cosmetic mortars are crescent shaped metal vessels, often made from copper alloy but also known to be made from gold (Jackson 2010, 3; IOW-8D46C8). They are one half of cosmetic grinder sets, the other part being the pestle, though complete sets are rarely recovered. Successfully arranged into a typology by Jackson (1985; 2010), these artefacts date from the first century BC to the fourth century AD and are a British Late Iron Age innovation (Jackson 2010, 67; Carr 2005, 273). At least five known examples have been found in France (Jackson 2010, 67). The use of cosmetic mortars is very much debated. Suggestions regarding their functions range from make-up preparation (Jackson 2010, 69), to tattooing (Carr 2005) to possible use in treating eye infections (Morrison 2013). Residue analysis has been inconclusive in attempting to define function (Jackson 2010, 20).

Cosmetic sets are decorated in a variety of ways, from the coloured enamel-filled cells of Jackson's Type J (e.g. Jackson 2010, no. 302) to moulded animal heads and forms. The most common are cattle and birds but humans (*ibid*, no. 522), a stag (*ibid*, no. 301) and even a fish (*ibid*, no. 255) are portrayed. Pestles are also decorated, most famously with small bird (Jackson 2010 no. 366). However, caution must be applied, as some mortars identified as being decorated with bird heads are potentially ambiguous, lacking realistic moulding of the bill or any attempt at portraying eyes (e.g. Jackson 2010 no. 6).



Figure 2 - Unknown purpose fitting decorated with early bird style; British Museum No. 1993, 0201.2 © Trustees of the British Museum. Reproduced under Creative Commons License CC BY-N-SA 4.0

Despite some obvious figural ambiguity, which is so characteristic of its style, the decoration of cosmetic mortars has not been assessed in relation to La Tène art. For example, they were not considered in the *Technology of Enchantment* database study (for full object type list see Garrow and Gosden 2012, 64), and Jackson (2010) in his discussion of decoration never associates any of the animal forms with La Tène style. It should also be noted that figural forms of La Tène art have often lacked study, other than the recognition of the more exotic such as 'dragon swords' (e.g. Fitzpatrick 2007). This is despite the fact that since Jacobsthal's initial lecture (1941) and subsequent classification (1944), stylised animal-human forms have been an established element of the art style as illustrated by the fantastical 'Early Style' neck rings from Erstfeld, Switzerland (Megaw and Megaw 2001, Plate IX).

BH-FC0145 conforms to the classic crescent shape of a cosmetic mortar, but instead of a single loop on the underside of the bowl, it has a double. This is formed by two opposing stylised bird heads. The beaks of the birds are moulded back to meet the crescent bowl of the mortar, thereby forming the loop. The overall head is finished by a simple round eye. Lines are used to extenuate the curving forms of the heads. This design is one of three known, the other two being from Bibracte and Arras in France, the latter being dated contextually to 27BC-14AD (Guillamet and Eugène 2009, 243).



Figure 3: Unknown fragment from unknown object type PAS ID SWYOR-2E81F2. © West Yorkshire Archaeology Advisory Service. Reproduced under Creative Commons License CC BY-SA 4.0

Using the data already gathered for the wider PhD research, it has been possible to ascertain that the style of bird head decoration used on BH-FC0145 is associated with an 'Early Bird Style' of La Tène art. This style of bird is characterised by the overall flowing form similar to that of a teardrop, the return attachment of the beak to the surface of the object and the basic round eye, whether dot, incision or flat disc. It has never before been categorised or rec-

ognised as a consistent figural form of decoration within La Tène art studies.. Although the cosmetic mortar in question is dated to the late first century BC, the earliest potential example of the 'Early Bird Style' in Britain is on the spine of the Ratcliffe-on-Soar shield dated to c. 300BC, but other examples also include two fittings of unknown purpose from Bunting's Pasture in Norfolk (British Museum no. 1993,0201.1 (Fig. 2) and 1993,0201.2), a pomel from Wiltshire (Jope 2000 199n-o) and SWYOR-2E81F2 (Fig. 3). The style is also seen outside of



Figure 4: Cosmetic Pestle – Jacksons (2010) no. 366; BM1999,0802.52 © Trustees of the British Museum. Reproduced under Creative Commons License CC BY-NC-ND 4.0.

Britain, such as the bird of the fitting from Mâcon, Saône-et-Loire (British Museum no. 1872,0329.18 ; Megaw 1962) and the Kescarrigan Bowl, Co. Leitrim (Cunliffe and de Jersey 1997, 40), both of which are also dated to the 3<sup>rd</sup> century BC.

This bird style, however, does not match birds which appear later with greater realism c. 100BC, as seen on swords (British Museum no. 1858,1113.1 and 1893,1219.3), or in the tufted bird of the Holcombe mirror (1971,0401.1). Chronologically, therefore, it appears as though the early style of bird was introduced into England and Wales during the 3<sup>rd</sup> century BC and continued through to the 1<sup>st</sup> century BC at least, despite the development of a more realistic bird design from 100BC onwards. Both styles can be seen reflected in cosmetic mortars – the early style on BH-FC0145 and the later on, for example, the pestle of Jackson's (2010) no. 366 (Fig. 4).

It is clear to see that this 'Early Bird Style' is La Tène in origin, and was used to decorate cosmetic mortars towards the end of the 1<sup>st</sup> millennium BC, in conjunction with a later, more realistic style which appears c.100BC. This has three clear implications. Firstly, La Tène art was used to decorate cosmetic mortars and they potentially represent the latest creations of the La

Tène art style in Europe and continuing in the Roman period. They should therefore not be ignored in studies of La Tène art in Britain. Secondly, it shows that despite the abstract nature of La Tène art, there are consistent figurative forms worthy of research and study. Thirdly, it shows the monumentally important work of the Portable Antiquities Scheme in making sure pieces like this are recorded for future posterity.

**Rebecca L. Ellis:** *I am a PhD student at the University of Hull and funded by the Heritage Consortium, who began by digging trenches with community archaeology groups as a teenager. I completed my undergraduate degree in Archaeology and Heritage Studies at the University of Worcester and completed my Masters at Bradford, where I first became enchanted by animals in La Tène art.*

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Accessed 09-12-19

## Making it fit: Considering long-handled ‘weaving’ combs in the textile production *chaîne opératoire* of Iron Age Britain

Jennifer Beamer, University of Leicester

### Introduction

Research on textile production in the British Iron Age has often associated long-handled ‘weaving’ combs with the textile tool assemblage. They are one of the few non-metal, decorated objects which survive and are cited in discussions separated from their utilitarian functions (eg., Joy 2011; Chittcock 2014). As a subject of research, interest in their description, typology, and function has varied. John W. Hedges (1973) and Tina Tuohy (1995) largely built on the seminal work of antiquarian researchers (eg., Coughtrey 1871; Bulleid & Gray 1911; Henshall 1950). More recent studies (eg., Hodder & Hedges 1977; Sellwood 1984) have spotlighted combs within new archaeological paradigms. The primary evidence cited by these scholars is largely the association of long-handled combs with spindle whorls and loomweights. Though some antiquarians looked towards ethnography for answers, most seemed to rely on ancient Greek and Roman textual sources. Such associations were confirmed by authorities on textiles, such as Henshall (1950) and Crowfoot (1945). Thus, long-handled combs were made to fit the *chaîne opératoire* of textile production based on preconceived notions of their function as weft beaters.

This association resonates today despite the existence of critics (eg., Roth 1918) and niche readership (Ryder 1997; Bailey 1999). The differing views have necessitated the creation of a new set of criteria for recording long-handled combs, which is sensitive to a range of possible utilitarian functions. Aside from general metrics, attributes that address the question of function must also be recorded.

### Devising the Rubric

Long-handled combs are created as single, seamless objects. Iron Age combs tend to divide into two or three sections for archaeological analysis, the dentate, handle, and terminal. While it may be impossible to detect whether Iron Age people used long-handled combs for combing, weaving, or both, these are the prevailing theories set out by previous researchers. A new set of criteria was required to address the notion of many potential functions of long-handled combs. The new criteria resulted in a rubric that would address the utilitarian function of long-handled combs, and highlight manufacturing trends and use-wear analysis, and their inter-relationship. Importantly, the rubric is designed to be flexible and accommodate changes as new evidence and technologies afford new perspectives. The additional attributes that could reveal function include: length of tine (prong), distance and shape of space between tines, including specific wear patterns, and polish from use on the handle. The length of tine dictates how far the comb can be pushed through a material before reaching the inter-dentate space. If used for warp-weighted weaving, this could reveal the angle of the active shed.



Figure 1: DA74 P556 L2 SF658: Long-handled comb from Danebury Hillfort, Hampshire, UK. Photo credit: Jennifer Beamer.

If used for combing wool or hackling flax, fibre processing estimates can be produced. The distance between tines might indicate the thickness of warp threads, assuming that one warp thread passes the inter-dentate space. Multiple threads could pass between tines and this must be considered. This measurement might also reveal possible techniques for combing fibre. The shape between tines is characterized as being U- or V-shaped. Sellwood (1984) and Tuohy (1995) suggested that this might relate to the method of manufacture and modification through use. Therefore, recording this element will be of interest.

What constitutes wear is not well understood. Two major types of wear patterns are noted between tines: the surfaces are either polished or striated. Completely smooth tines could indicate they were never used or were worn smooth by passing material through them. The opposite would then be true of the striations. The surface polish on combs can be the result of either the manufacturing process or use. Examining whether these details can be recorded will convey how the comb might have been held in the hand. Ergonomic factors have typically only been considered in passing.

### Results of the Rubric

An initial study of seventeen combs from Danebury hillfort was used to test this rubric and three metrics were selected for analysis. Combs were selected based on whether tines were intact. Digital photos and measurements were taken. For interpretation, each attribute category of this rubric was designed to be understood collectively. In my analysis, there was considerable consistency of the shape of inter-dentate spaces. The U-shape occurred 71 times, and the V-shape occurred fifteen times. Six combs had at least one V-shape between tines. The evidence points towards the U-shape being the predominant style of production, and that knowledge of the material, manufacturing process, and the end-product were probably prerequisites.

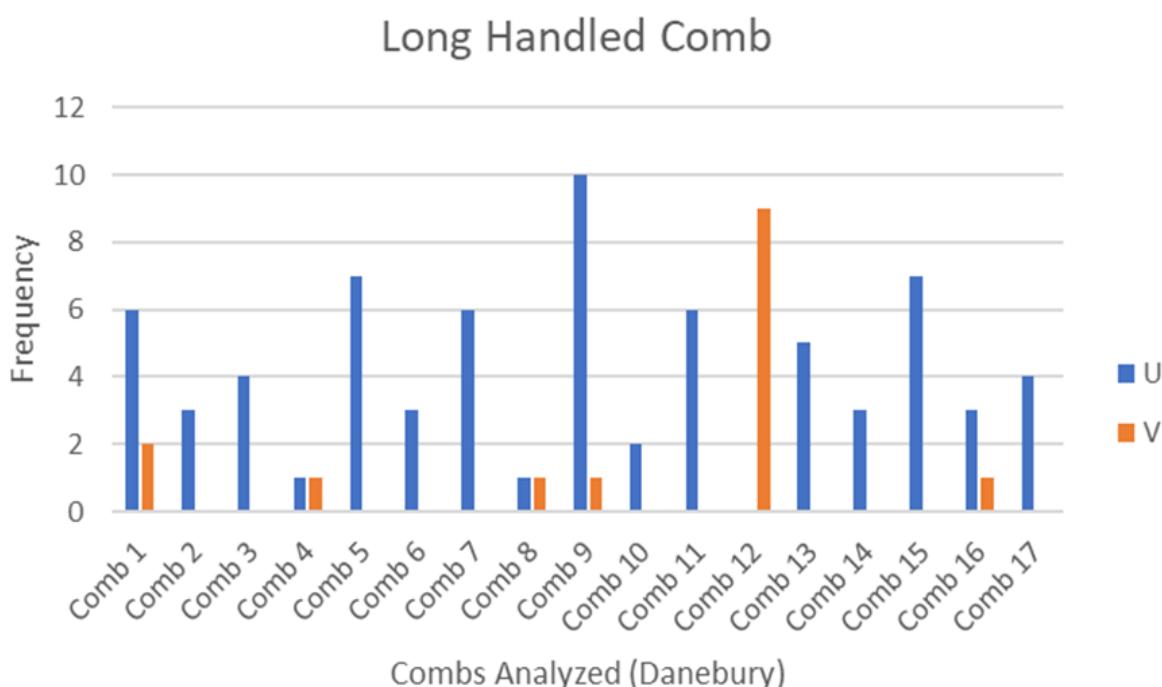


Figure 2: Plot of the 17 combs from Danebury selected for analysis.

The distance between tines measurement revealed two distinct categories: those with narrow spaces and those with wide spaces. These distances were consistent for fourteen of the combs. Eight combs exhibited a range of distances between 0.6 mm to 0.8 mm, whereas the other five combs exhibited a range of distances between 1.0 mm to 1.4 mm. One interesting outlier had measurements between 2.1 mm and 3.4 mm. Wear pattern is a tricky parameter to analyze. The descriptors chosen were 'smooth' and 'striated'. Fourteen combs produced useful data. Nine combs had smooth surfaces between tines, possibly from finishing or from use on a loom or processing wool. Five combs illustrated striations angled towards the front of the handle, suggesting manufacture evidence from saws, or perhaps from rubbing against warp threads or processing flax. These results are inconclusive.

DA71 P73 L2 SF161:

Tine 1-2	0.7 mm
Tine 2-3	0.8 mm
Tine 3-4	0.6 mm
Tine 4-5	indeterminate
Tine 5-6	indeterminate
Tine 6-7	0.7 mm

DA74 P582 L1 SF677:

Tine 1-2	N/A
Tine 2-3	1.3 mm
Tine 3-4	1.2 mm
Tine 4-5	1.3 mm
Tine 5-6	1.3 mm
Tine 6-7	1.3 mm**
Tine 7-8	1.2 mm
Tine 8-9	1.2 mm

Figure 3: An example of the distance between tines from selected combs.

This rubric has demonstrated the potential to reveal new information about the use of these combs. There are some attributes of the rubric that are easier to measure than others, but the combination of quantitative and qualitative data allows for flexibility. Additional attributes can be added as needed. This rubric has begun establishing relationships between

measurements and functionality. Though it has not been possible to show the extent of the capabilities of this rubric, some important factors about manufacturing and use have been revealed. The evidence from seventeen combs indicated that creating U-shaped spaces was a deliberate act in the manufacture of combs. Additionally, the consistency of distances between tines suggests that the spacing mattered for their function.

This rubric has provided standardized metrics that yields evidential backing to subsequent interpretations.

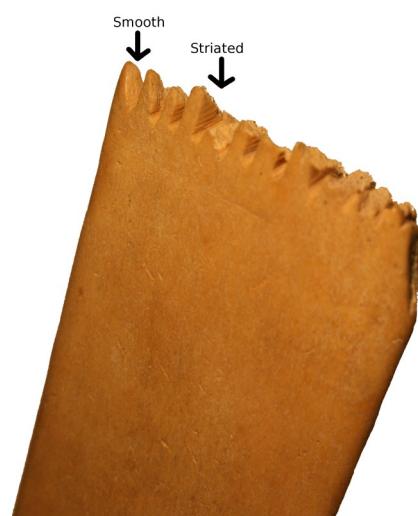


Figure 4: An example demonstrating the inconclusive nature of wear on the tines.  
Photo credit: Jenniffer Beamer.

Previously researchers have worked within a set of assumptions which relate long-handled combs with the weaving *chaîne opératoire*, forcing long-handled combs to fit into a single place. Importantly, the criteria generated as part of the rubric challenges the accepted notion that long-handled combs were strictly a tool for weaving because the archaeological evidence does not conclusively support this interpretation. Rather, the rubric illustrates the inadequacy of the assumption and why locking combs into a single node of the *chaîne opératoire* restricts considering their usage within a range of plausible functionalities. This rubric is evidence-led without assuming function. As always, context is crucial in aiding our interpretations of production, use, and aspects of discard. Research on the function of long-handled combs has produced a new analytical tool.

**Jennifer Beamer:** I am a Year 4 PhD student writing up my thesis, which examines Iron Age textile production and deposition of textile tools in Britain.

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## Golden Opportunities. An overview of *Gold in Britain's Auriferous Regions, 2450–800 BC*.

Matthew G. Knight, Alison Sheridan and Jana Horak

### Gold.

The word alone can conjure up ideas of wealth, of prestige, of glamour. It is a material like no other, with properties that have captivated people for thousands of years. In Britain and Ireland, it is first exploited during the Chalcolithic and Early Bronze Age. The earliest objects, including discs and ornaments, were produced from through simple yet skilful sheet-work. By the end of the

Bronze Age, the variety of objects included beads, rings, bracelets, and one-of-a-kind objects, as well as a complex array of techniques. We know that gold as a material, and the objects produced from it, held great value to prehistoric communities, taking many forms and deposited in a myriad of ways.

And yet there is still much to learn about this enigmatic material and how people engaged with it. Where did the gold originate? Exactly how, where and why were these objects made? How were gold-working skills developed and transmitted over time? And what



Figure 1: The Capel Isaf hoard, Carmarthenshire, dating to the Middle Bronze Age © Amgueddfa Cymru-National Museum Wales

meaning and significance did gold have for the people who worked and used it?

Between May 2018 and October 2019, an international, interdisciplinary project was undertaken to assess and tackle these questions as well as synthesising our present knowledge. The project, led by Dr Alison Sheridan (National Museums Scotland) and Dr Jana Horak (Amgueddfa Cymru-National Museums Wales), was entitled: *Gold in Britain's Auriferous Regions 2450–800BC: Towards a Coherent Research Framework and Strategy*. Funded by an AHRC Network Grant, this project sought to bring together a range of specialists across different disciplines, including geologists, archaeologists, geochemists and goldworkers, to better understand what we know and what we don't know about the earliest uses of gold in Britain and Ireland.

The regions under question were the gold-bearing areas of Britain, i.e. Scotland, north-west England, south-west England and Wales. These areas allowed us to examine the relationships between the exploitation, use and deposition of gold, whilst also investigating non-local uses of gold. These aspects are important to consider, especially in light of recent work indicating that gold from Cornwall may have been the source for producing Early Bronze Age artefacts in Scotland and Ireland (Standish et al. 2015), as well as components of the Nebra Sky Disc (Ehser et al. 2011;

Borg and Pernicka 2017), and mostly recently Wessex goldwork (<https://www.wiltshiremuseum.org.uk/2019/11/18/bush-barrow-dagger-studs-gold-analysis/>)!

Moreover, this region includes some of the most distinctive and important gold objects of the British Bronze Age, including the Rillaton gold cup, the Mold gold cape and cup-ended ornaments.

The overall aim was to create a Research Framework to help direct and develop future research, whilst also bringing together a network of students, researchers and specialists from a range of disciplines, including those not involved in academia (e.g. goldpanners and goldworkers) to share and exchange knowledge on this topic. The Framework document is in the final stages of preparation, and when complete will be fully OpenAccess and available for anyone to read and engage with. For the interest of LPFG readers, we thought it worth highlighting the diversity of object types that occur during this period and across our regions, representing a range of technological traditions. This includes sheet-working and embossed working during the Chalcolithic and Early Bronze Age (cf. Needham and Sheridan 2014), and later traditions of bracelet and torc casting and twisting and the production of small penannular rings in a diverse range of forms, which is common across Britain, Ireland and mainland Europe (see, for instance, Meeks et al. 2008). Over 350 gold objects are known from the auriferous regions in Britain, spanning the Chalcolithic and Bronze Age periods; a summary of the object types encountered is presented in the table overleaf. The production and circulation of many gold objects in our regions falls within the expected repertoire for Britain indicating the widespread



Figure 2: A hoard of Late Bronze Age gold ornaments from Heights of Brae, Ross and Cromarty, inferring Scottish-Irish connections © National Museums Scotland



Figure 3 The Early Bronze Age Orbliston lunula © National Museums Scotland

and (often) international connections. Lunulae, for instance, have been encountered in all regions, perhaps unsurprisingly given the proximity of the regions to Ireland where the finest lunulae were produced and deposited.

	<b>Chalcolithic (2450–2200 BC)</b>	<b>Early Bronze Age (2200–1500 BC)</b>	<b>Middle Bronze Age (1500–1150 BC)</b>	<b>Late Bronze Age (1150–800 BC)</b>
<b>SW Eng- land</b>	-	Lunulae Embossed goldwork (Rillaton cup) 'Wessex' material (pommel studs)	Bar bracelets Bar-twisted torcs Perforated strip	British bar bracelets Penannular rings Lock-rings Cup-ended orna- ment Sheet and ribbon fragments
<b>NW Eng- land</b>	-	Lunulae	Flange-twisted torc	Bar bracelets Penannular rings Lock-rings
<b>Wales</b>	Disc Basket ornament	Lunulae Embossed goldwork (Mold cape)	Bar bracelets Bar-twisted torcs Ribbon-twisted torcs Flange-twisted torcs Stamped strip Pendant Bead Composite bowl (Caergwrle)	British and Irish bar bracelets Penannular rings Lock-rings Ingots Ribbon fragment
<b>Scotland</b>	Dagger hiltbands Bracer stud covers	Lunulae Sheet gold covers Basket ornaments	Bar bracelets Bar-twisted torcs	British and Irish bar bracelets Penannular rings Lock-rings Cup-ended orna- ments Bead Gold-bound spear- heads

New discoveries, such as lunulae fragments from Cruggleton, Dumfries and Galloway, and Brampton, Cumbria, are enhancing this picture, and indeed reaffirming the typological distinction between British and Irish forms put forward by the late Joan Taylor (1970), nearly forty years ago. However, with the suggestion that many of the British and Irish examples were produced from Cornish gold, we are able to reconsider this relationship between object form, depositional practices and origins of the gold. Other examples focusing on key objects from the regions can be found at our Object of the Week blog pages: <https://www.nms.ac.uk/collections-research/our-research/featured-projects/prehistoric-gold/gold-object-of-the-week/>.

Overall, this project flags how much potential this unique material still has to offer for understanding Chalcolithic and Bronze Age communities and we hope it will continue to stimulate further research.

With new discoveries, new approaches and new analyses, gold remains as captivating as ever. To read more about the project, please visit: <https://www.nms.ac.uk/collections-research/our-research/featured-projects/prehistoric-gold/>. This page also provides links to blog posts on objects from the auriferous regions and information on our network members. Most recently, Dr Chris Standish gave a podcast on the analysis of gold in Britain and Ireland, which can be listened to for free here: <https://soundcloud.com/nationalmuseumsscotland/chris-standish-on-gold-and-its-analysis>.

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**Dr Alison Sheridan** is a former Principal Curator and now a Research Associate with NMS and Principal Investigator on the Gold in Britain's Auriferous Regions, 2450-800 BC AHRC Network project.

**Dr Jana Horak** is the Co-Investigator for the project and Head of Mineralogy and Petrology at AC-NMW, Cardiff.

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## Reanalysis of Wetland Deposition in Iron Age Wales and Scotland

Tiffany Tredway, University of Cardiff

Wetland studies have advanced significantly in terms of methods of excavation and analyses in the past fifty years. However, a review of object discoveries in wetland contexts in their entirety has yet to be attempted or completed for Iron Age Britain. Therefore, this project serves to identify traditions of deposition in wetland contexts dating to the Iron Age through examination of object reports. The study zones are isolated to Wales and Scotland for comparison. England was not included in the project due to time constraints and the copious amount of archaeological material from the region.

The project has identified over 600 objects from both regions combined that are applicable to the study scope. These records were sourced from museum collections, archaeological units and trusts, and heritage databases (e.g. Canmore, Coeflein, the Portable Antiquities Scheme and Treasure Trove). The object records have been utilized to identify trends in inter- and intra- regional depositional practices, wet landscape, object type, material, and other defining characteristics. Through such analyses, the project aims to provide a refined understanding for the use and significance of wetlands for local communities within a broader regional context.

However, it should be noted that there are important biases and complexities in the data. These range from different regional periodisations for the Iron Age, significant variations in wetland coverage, soil differences, degree of urbanisation and destruction of wetlands, along with museum limitation and accessibility of collections. These variables, among others such as antiquarian material observation (ex. brass vs. bronze), spike in metal detectorist finds in the last twenty years – often lack context, and old or incomplete site reports are just a few examples of complications for analysis and interpretation. Regardless, using a holistic approach to data analysis for wetland deposition allows for trends to be more readily seen and identified.

Despite biases and limitations, patterns are beginning to emerge. For example, marked regional variation is apparent. In Scotland there are large numbers of wetland deposits in the south. However, it is noticeable that in Dumfries and Galloway these coincide with the distribution of crannogs, whereas in the Borders crannogs are absent. In Argyll, by contrast, crannogs are extremely common but wet deposits are very rare. Another emerging trend is that the concentration of object deposition in Wales appears to be in the south east with very few objects found in the south west. When comparing this with known enclosed settlements and hillforts, it is noticeable that both areas were densely populated with sites so the absence of wetland deposits in the south west requires explanation. In the south east the wetlands lie adjacent to the settlements which contrasts with the situation in some areas of Scotland where settlements (crannogs and duns) are constructed in the favoured wetlands (lochs). Other trends reviewed include primary and secondary preferred materials of manufacture, varying types of regional depositional traditions, along with gaps in the archaeological record and why.

**Tiffany Treadway** is from California and a University of Santa Barbara alumni. She came to Wales as a Master student and stayed to pursue a PhD. She is a final year PhD student at Cardiff University studying wetland depositional practices in Wales and Scotland for the Iron Age.

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Figure 1: Tiffany presenting at IARSS 2019, Cardiff University, where she was awarded the LPFG prize for the best artefacts-based paper.

## Review: *The carnyx in Iron Age Europe: the Deskford carnyx in its European Context*. By Fraser Hunter.

Andrew Lamb, University of Nottingham

Readers familiar with Fraser Hunter's work will already be aware of his long-standing fascination with carnyces (see Hunter 1994; 2001; 2006a; 2012 for a representative sample). Those who have been fortunate enough hear Hunter present on his work will, likewise, be aware of his uncanny ability to use the archaeological record to tell gripping stories. *The carnyx in Iron Age Europe: the Deskford carnyx in its European Context* is Hunter at his best. Only nine certain examples of carnyces are known. To these four further potential examples may be added (p.186). At 333 pages, with an equally substantial catalogue, this is clearly not a simple study of quantification and distribution.

Instead, Hunter seeks to examine as many aspects of carnyces as possible, ranging from construction techniques to the social role which these instruments played (pun intended). As with all stories there is a central character. In this case it is the National Museum of Scotland's very own example of a carnyx from Deskford. The story is told across 11 chapters. Following a wide-ranging introductory chapter, which includes an exhaustive literature review and introduction to his aims and questions, Hunter sets the standard for the rest of this work by providing the most detailed examination of the Deskford carnyx published to date (Ch. 2). This includes hitherto unrecorded details of its construction, and informative analyses of its alloy composition. The comparatively brief Chapter 3 provides a history of the Deskford example as an artefact, including the long path it has taken to arrive at its current location. Chapter 4 examines the local and regional setting of the Deskford carnyx. It includes results from Hunter's own excavations at Deskford, providing an excellent example of how careful observations of an otherwise subtle archaeological record can shed light on ritual landscapes.

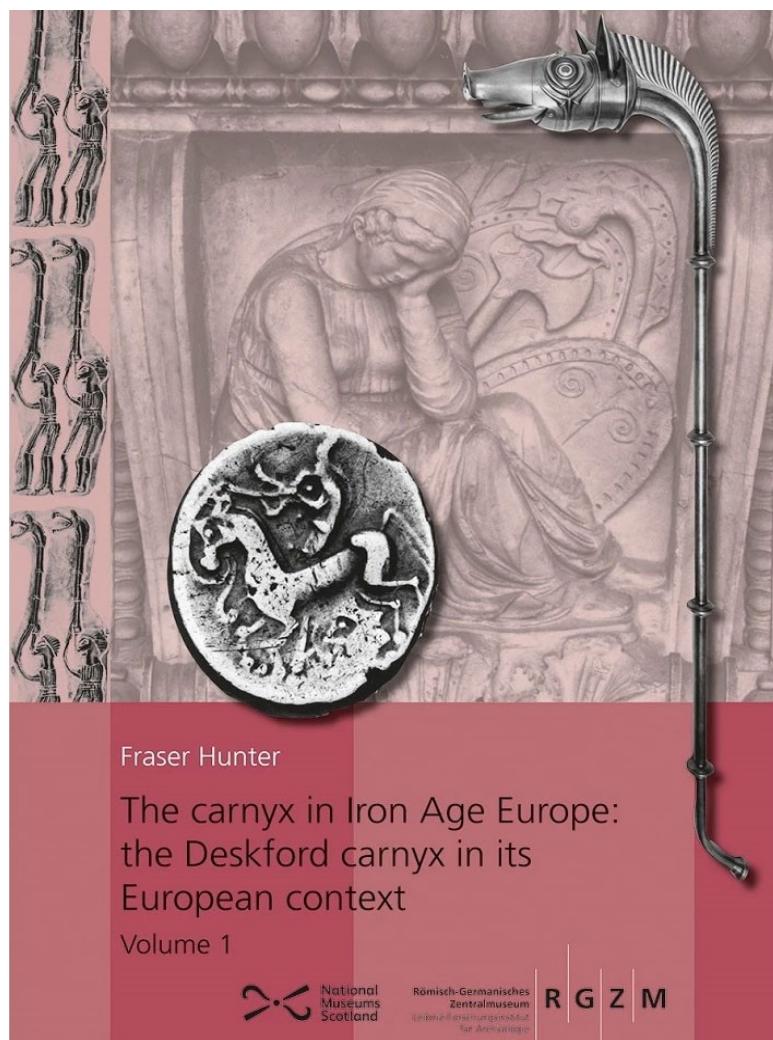


Figure 1: The front cover of *The carnyx in Iron Age Europe*.

Those who have an interest in landscape archaeology will no doubt find this an engaging read. Additionally, Chapter 4 provides a succinct overview of north-east Scotland from the period between the Early Pre-Roman Iron Age and the emergence of the Pictish realm(s) in the Later Roman Iron Age.

One of Hunter's stated aims is to examine the way in which the Deskford carnyx overlaps with contemporary aspects of the archaeological record. Chapters 5 and 6 achieve this, considering regional variations in depositional practices in Iron Age Scotland, and the artistic links between the Deskford carnyx and the massive metalwork tradition of north-east Scotland, respectively. Though these links are undeniable, I felt that that there was a break in the otherwise engaging narrative between Chapter 6 and the succeeding chapters. This may be because Hunter is one of the foremost experts on massive metalwork and Iron Age deposition practices in northern Britain (see Hunter 2006b; 2010). As such, in his efforts to emphasise the local archaeological and artistic links of the Deskford carnyx, the artefact itself appears to be lost in the details. These details, however, are extensive, including complete lists of hoards from northern Britain, a full list of massive metalwork finds from across the British Isles and extensive metallurgical analyses of massive metalwork. The narrative is still present, but instead of focussing on the Deskford carnyx it takes interesting detours, such as discussing the role of Romano-British metalwork with La Tène decoration at the edge of empire.

Chapter 7 shifts the frame of analysis from Scotland to the broader Eurasian world. Once again carnyces return as the central subject of discussion; with Hunter considering the Iron Age evidence for these objects. He begins by considering actual and probable examples of carnyces (as well as dismissing several objects hitherto considered to be possible carnyces). The evidence is supplemented by consideration of numismatic depictions of carnyces, as well as a small number of other depictions. Where possible, Hunter has examined the data first hand. As with the description of the Deskford carnyx, the level of scholarship in this section is outstanding. With only 13 certain and probable carnyces known from Iron Age Europe it is notable how many conclusions Hunter is able to draw from such a small dataset. These include certainties such as the variability and regional specificity of carnyx design, as well as thought provoking possibilities like the production of such objects in the Geto-Dacian world of the south eastern Balkans.

Having considered the Iron Age evidence in such detail, many studies such as this would appeal for further discoveries to add to the dataset, and draw their conclusions based on what is currently available. Hunter does not. Instead, he looks to Roman, Hellenistic and even Indian sub-continental depictions of carnyces to better understand what role they had, both for Iron Age peoples and their neighbours (Chapters 8 and 9). The analysis covers a wide range of material, from triumphal arches to grave stelae. As Hunter notes, the data from Roman and Hellenic sources is unevenly distributed, and he employs a healthy number of caveats in analysing them. The patterns which are teased out from what is available is fascinating. Not only does Hunter demonstrate just how temporally and regionally specific Hellenic and Roman depictions of carnyces and other "barbarian" equipment were, he argues convincingly for their use in areas where examples have yet to be identified (specifically Roman period Germany). In examining the carnyx in such a way, Hunter shifts the frame of analysis in a way which allows for a whole range of conclusions and possible future lines of enquiry which are presently not possible based on the small number of extant examples of carnyces.

There will no doubt be some who feel that Hunter has stretched the data a bit too far in some places. However, in instances where data are lacking (for example the perceived association between hexagonal shields and Germanic peoples), Hunter makes it clear that this is the case. For this reason groups like the Illyrians or Iron Age inhabitants of Iberia receive little mention as the data are too few to justify the sorts of conclusions which Hunter can draw for Celts, Germans and Dacians. Turning from Romano and Hellenistic depictions of carnyces, Hunter moves to consider modern depictions (Ch. 10). This provides an excellent means to return to the main character of his study by examining the various attempts at reconstructing the Deskford carnyx. This leads nicely into a discussion about the musical potential of carnyces, and their relationship to other Iron Age musical devices and instruments. The evidence presented here is no less extensive than in the rest of this study; ranging from Celtiberia ceramic horns, to Hebridean antler whistles as well as a selection of horn playing figurines from the Czech Republic and Slovenia. Hunter brings the above together in Chapter 11, tying together the various strands of analysis into a succinct discussion which demonstrates the dynamic nature of carnyces.

Overall, this is an incredible piece of scholarship. It is a thought provoking study, which not only considers these artefacts in as much detail as is presently possible, but also raises a whole raft of all questions and lines of enquiry for future studies. This is not to pretend that *The carnyx in Iron Age Europe: the Deskford carnyx in its European Context* is flawless. As described above, there are times when the narrative becomes obscured by the analysis. Smaller critiques also include a lack of standardisation in maps. However, by publishing with the Römisch-Germanisches Zentralmuseum, Hunter has been able to ensure that the rest of his work is presented to the standard which it deserves. Likewise, there may be some who feel that some of Hunter's conclusions may not substantiated by, at times, meagre datasets. Nevertheless, as Hunter notes (p. 341), this is not the last word on carnyces (certainly not if he has anything to say on the matter). But this will no doubt be the text on carnyces for many years to come.

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**Andrew W. Lamb** researches the La Tène period of the Iron Age, with a particular focus on mortuary practices and protohistoric population movements.

**Conference review: Hoarding and deposition in Europe from later prehistory to the medieval period – finds in context. Held at King's College, London. 12<sup>th</sup>-14<sup>th</sup> June 2019.**

Matthew G. Knight and Helen Chittock

Deposition is a practice that spans time and space. It has been undertaken in myriad ways for innumerable reasons throughout human history and ranges from the disposal of rubbish, to the placing of grave goods with a body to the hoarding of hundreds of artefacts. As archaeologists we are in the fortunate position of being able to assess and reflect on how practices like these transformed over time and across different regions. It was this temporal and spatial diversity, more so than anything else, that stood out when attending this international conference on hoarding and deposition in Europe.

The conference was the result of an impressive collaboration between the Roman Finds Group, Later Prehistoric Finds Group and Finds Research Group with King's College London and



Figure 1: Dr John Pearce (King's College London) introduces the conference



Figure 2: A possible hoard from Callander, Perthshire, presented by M Knight © National Museums Scotland

*Instrumentum International Meetings*, and the variety of speakers and topics reflected the benefit of such collaboration. Over the course of three days we heard papers on Iron Age silver hoards in Dacia, medieval deposits in English rivers, depositional practices at Roman settlements and everything in between.

Aspects of performance related to depositional practice were similarly highlighted, such as the mass accumulation of carnelians at the Gallic sanctuary at Tintignac by Christophe Maniquet, and the hoards of south-east England by Sophia Adams. It is clear that we are shifting well beyond traditional sacred-profane dichotomies for understanding these hoards and into more nuanced territory. This was particularly evident in Duncan Garrow's paper suggesting depositions should be viewed as part of a spectrum of transformative practices

over time, with grave goods and hoards fitting within similar social concepts throughout prehistory. Rob Wiseman and Ben Roberts' talk on Bronze Age scrap hoards from England and Wales also challenged long-held ideas about hoarding by debunking the idea of these hoards as stemming from 'ritual' motivations.

One of the key benefits of attending a conference that spanned later prehistory to the medieval period was the opportunity to observe similar recurring practices. It was particularly striking, for instance, how often rivers and river valleys were the foci for depositing artefacts. It's easy to think of this as a notably Bronze Age or Iron Age phenomenon, but it can be clearly observed in the Roman and medieval periods as well. Of great interest were the varied interpretations of similar practices that emerge from different period specialisms. In prehistory we tend to think of river deposits as part of a symbolic method for managing the social world in which communities lived. By contrast, Roman and medieval interpretations tend to be more functional – objects in rivers are more commonly interpreted as the result of loss or discard. Hella Eckardt and Philippa Walton's paper was particularly illustrative in this regard and challenged how we should be thinking about these finds. This prompted interesting discussions about how applicable these varied interpretations are, and how restrictive our traditional temporal boundaries are. It's clearly increasingly inadequate to think only of riverine depositions in the Bronze Age, when similar deposits continue to be made in the same rivers far beyond the end of this period. Moreover, this led to discussions about how much of our archaeological record is affected by modern practices and methods of recovery (e.g. dredging and metal-detecting).

In this regard it seemed particularly apt that one of the two tours offered to participants was a visit to the *Secret Rivers* exhibit at the Museum of London Docklands, concerning the 'lost rivers' of London. This exhibition stimulated discussions on the sorts of ways these rivers had been utilised throughout time, often involving the deposition of objects and materials within them, supported by some captivating audio-visuals and atmospheric lighting and sounds.

Overall, this conference provided an invigorating look at hoarding and depositional practices through time and the varied contexts in which this took place. The benefits of considering the longevity of these actions are clear, not least for highlighting the diverse motivations (pre)historic communities had for burying their objects. Publication of the proceedings from this conference are eagerly awaited!

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Figure 3: Secret Rivers exhibition at the Museum of London Docklands



**The contribution proposals**, including your name, institution, presentation/poster title and one-page abstract, should be mailed to [celticgold@ceza.de](mailto:celticgold@ceza.de) by the end of March 2020. The scientific board will examine the proposals and compose the programme.

A conference fee of 40,- € will be charged (students & jobless 20,- €); persons presenting lectures or posters are exempt. Communications and posters will be published in a peer reviewed conference volume. The deadline for the articles will be 1st December 2020. For detailed information on the Celtic Gold Project, the conference venue and programme please check <https://celticgold.hypotheses.org>. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to ask. We are very much looking forward to hearing from you.

#### Organizing Committee

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**Dear colleagues,**  
the ANR-DFG project CELTIC GOLD (2017-2020), based in Toulouse and Mannheim, invites to its concluding conference at Mainz. The venue is Landesmuseum Mainz. We want to discuss aspects on archaeometry and technology of La Tène gold and its setting.

As it has been the aim of our project, we intend to bring together different perspectives and approaches on La Tène gold objects encompassing archaeometry, technology, as well as art, communication and social structures from the 5th century BC to the 1st century AD. In addition, we would also like to link up with the neighbouring regions and periods in order to better understand the connections, influences and contact networks throughout Europe.

**The meeting starts Thursday, 17 September**, in the afternoon and ends on Saturday, 19 September, at noon. Oral contributions (20 min + discussion time) will be presented in thematic sessions. Posters will be welcomed, too. The conference language is English.

**The ANR-DFG project CELTIC GOLD**, coordinated by Barbara Armbruster (Toulouse) and Roland Schwab (Mannheim), is a joint research action with the members Marilou Nordez, Pierre-Yves Milcent (Toulouse), Sebastian Fürst, Nicole Lockhoff (Mannheim), Susanne Sievers (Frankfurt), Maryse Blet-Lemarquand, Sylvia Nieto-Pelletier (Orléans), Martin Schönenfelder (Mainz), Laurent Olivier (Saint-Germain-en-Laye) and many partners.



## ANNOUNCEMENTS

### Iron Age Research Student Symposium 2020

This year's Iron Age Research Student Symposium will take place at the University of Manchester during 3rd-5th June 2020. The LPFG are pleased to announce that we will offer our annual prize of £100 for the best artefacts-based paper.

Details of the call for papers can be found here: <https://iarss2020.home.blog/call-for-papers/>



### Celtic Gold: Society, Technology, Archaeometry

An international conference on Celtic Gold will take place in Mainz during 17th-19th September 2020. See the advert overleaf for details.

### Call for papers: LPFG Newsletter Issue 15

The call for papers for Issue 15 of the LPFG newsletter, which will be published in Summer 2020, are now open. To submit articles, notes or announcements for inclusion, please e-mail Andrew Lamb at [lpfgnews@outlook.com](mailto:lpfgnews@outlook.com). Guidelines are available on the website, but please feel free to e-mail with any questions.

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