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## **Iron Age Pit, Guiting Power**

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## AN IRON AGE PIT AT WOOD HOUSE, GUITING POWER

In the spring of 1971 a mains water trench was cut across Critchford Lane, in the parish of Guiting Power, then through permanent pasture to the north-west, to connect with the property known as Wood House in the parish of Temple Guiting. Whilst the trench was being excavated through the pasture, an area of very dark earth was noticed by Mr A. Harding, the farm manager to Mr E. R. Cochrane of Wood House, known now as 'The Manor House'.

Interest prompted Mr Harding to dig into the side of the trench where he recovered a number of bones and pottery sherds. Some days later I was asked for my opinion of the 'find'. As the trench by then was considerably eroded no clear profile was discernible, but on cleaning down it became apparent that this was the only feature evident along the line of the trench at 5.8 metres north-west of Critchford Lane, O.S. map ref. SP 083258. It was decided to excavate this feature fully and my wife and I did this during June of that year. The excavation was carried out with trowel and brush, cleaning out the areas of dark earth on both sides of the trench, after first horizontally stripping a small area above the feature. This produced a roughly circular, barrel-shaped pit with a concave base of the following dimensions:—

Mid-diameter	—	1.5 metres
Diameter at base	—	1.2    ,,
Depth including humus	—	1.1    ,,
Overlying humus layer	—	0.2    ,,

The natural material in which the pit had been excavated is a free-draining, yellowish-brown limestone brash. The water supply trench had cut through the pit at a depth of 0.8 metres; this, together with subsequent disturbance and erosion, made the observation of any possible stratification impractical.

From immediately below the humus layer, the pit was filled with a dark deposit containing throughout quite a large number of pottery sherds,<sup>1</sup> bones, loose stones, some of which showed burning, traces of charcoal, two lumps of iron slag<sup>2</sup> and a few small flints. It is hoped that the finds will be deposited on loan to the City of Gloucester Museum.

<sup>1</sup> Mr Bruce Eagles comments 'to date so little hand-made pottery has been recovered from the Gloucestershire Cotswolds that this group is of particular importance'.

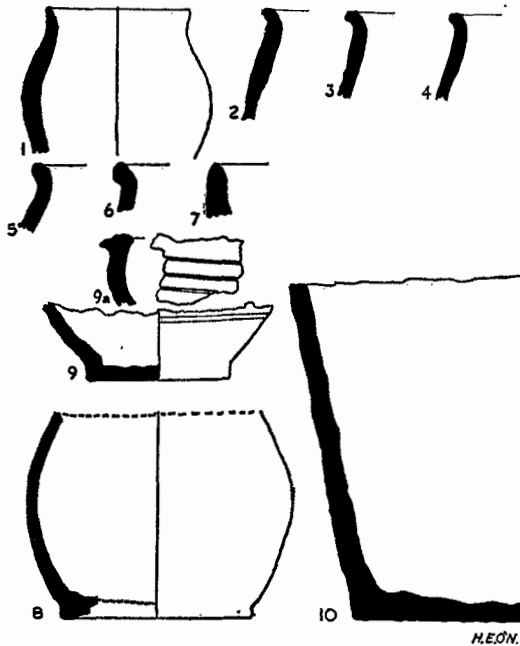
<sup>2</sup> Mr Collin Bowen noted that on one of the pieces of iron slag 'one of the surfaces was levelled off, perhaps after contact with the base of a crucible'.

## NOTES

Grateful thanks are due to Mr E. R. Cochrane for drawing my attention to the site and for permitting a section of the water-supply trench to remain open so that a full excavation could be carried out.

Thanks are also due to Mrs H. E. O'Neil for drawing the pottery and for her comments, to Mr Bruce Eagles and Mr Collin Bowen of the Royal Commission on Historical Monuments and to Mr John Houlton for identifying the bones.

P. E. GASCOIGNE



Iron Age pit in water trench at Wood House, Guiting Power, Glos., 1971.

### POTTERY by Mrs H. E. O'Neil

At the invitation of the owner, Mr E. R. Cochrane, I was able to visit the site. No other evidence of early disturbance in the pipe-line came to light. All the pottery recovered from the pit was prehistoric and homogeneous in make and character, and was of Iron Age date. The recent find appears to be that of a rubbish pit, but it is curious that no occupation site of this period, so far, is known in the immediate vicinity.

*Pottery illustrated*

Sherds of 10 vessels are here illustrated. All are hand-made, the paste generally black and containing crushed stone which has turned a light colour, whilst some shell grit is also used. The forms of the vessels present with rims, appear to be of simple small black bowls but there are sherds of a large fawn-coloured jar, and only one vessel shows any decoration, this being two wide cordons on the shoulder.

1. Small black cooking pot, rim diameter 3 inches, slight upright thin bead rim, thick wall to body, base missing, smoothed black surface exterior, dark grey interior, black paste showing white grit of ground-up stone.
2. Black to dark grey cooking pot, rim diameter 6 inches, slightly everted rim, hard paste with very fine white grit.
3. Black cooking pot, rim diameter 4½ inches, similar to No. 2, but thinner paste.
4. Black cooking pot, rim diameter 4 inches, very slightly everted rim, hard paste with white grit showing on exterior and interior surfaces.
5. Slight everted rim with polished red-brown surface, possibly haematite slip, rim diameter 4 inches, hard paste with fine white grit.
6. Black cooking pot, slight beaded rim, rim diameter 5 inches, black paste with white grit.
7. Rim of bowl of pink-fawn colour, rim diameter 5 inches, hard paste with white grit.
8. Black bowl, only lower part remaining with slight indication of base. Base diameter 4 inches. Intense polish remaining on exterior and finger marks. Very small white grit in a brown paste, this grit appears to have been removed by polishing the outer face of the pot leaving a pitted appearance.
9. Base of dark-grey cooking pot, base diameter 3 inches, thick black paste with large white grit, remains of one line of a cordon 1½ inches from base.
- 9a. One sherd of a decorated shoulder of pot of similar paste as No. 9 with two wide raised cordons, appears as the same vessel.
10. Base and lower portion of large thick storage jar, light brown and grey in colour, base diameter 7 inches, black paste with fine white grit. A thin layer of red burning on base of interior of jar.

## BONES by John Houlton

- Ox* Rib  
Pelvic bone (mainly ilium)  
Tooth  
1st phalanx  
Metacarpal bone.
- Horse* 2 teeth  
Part of ulna
- Sheep* Various teeth  
Pieces of mandible
- Human* Incomplete skeleton of baby (probably seven months foetus).

In addition there was a piece of rib with a smooth end as if it had been used for some purpose.