# THE SALISBURY HOARD

*I.M. Stead*

TEMPUS

| SALISBURY HOARD: provisional numbers of artefacts | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Axes | flat | 4 | |
| | flanged | 6 | |
| | palstaves | 9 | |
| | socketed | 173 | 192 |
| Missile points | spearheads | 46 | |
| | arrowheads | 1 | 47 |
| Daggers, etc | rapiers | 4 | |
| | dirks | 3 | |
| | socketed dagger | 1 | |
| | unclassified | 1 | 9 |
| Chapes | | 7 | 7 |
| Knives | tanged | 12 | |
| | socketed | 8 | |
| | notched butt | 7 | |
| | miscellaneous | 10 | 37 |
| Tools | chisels, tanged | 29 | |
| | lugged | 2 | |
| | socketed | 3 | |
| | flanged | 2 | |
| | gouges, socketed | 30 | |
| | socketed tools | 4 | |
| | hammers, socketed | 5 | |
| | looped ? | 1 | |
| | punches, awls, etc. | 11 | |
| | anvil | 1 | |
| | sickles | 2 | 90 |
| Toilet | razors | 17 | |
| | tweezers | 1 | 18 |
| Dress | pins | 16 | 16 |
| Miniatures | shields | 24 | |
| | cauldrons | 46 | |
| | socketed axe | 1 | |
| | ? currency bar | 1 | 72 |
| Miscellaneous | cones 4; ferrules 9: 'moustaches' 2; pendant 1; buttons 5; discs 7. | 28 | |
| | ornamental fragments | 10 | |
| | others | 17 | |
| | waste | 6 | |
| | hone-stone | 1 | 62 |
| | | TOTAL | 535 |

8 Classification of artefacts from the Salisbury Hoard: provisional numbers.

# 8. The Archaeology

Although the Salisbury Hoard was not excavated by archaeologists a great deal of information about it has now been reconstructed. There can be no doubt that a huge collection of Bronze Age and Iron Age artefacts was discovered in a pit in a field at Netherhampton, near Salisbury. The primary evidence for the associated bronzes is provided by the photographs taken by Brian Cavill immediately after the discovery. Such artefacts are very rarely found even in small numbers, and it is inconceivable that James Garriock and Terry Rossiter could have assembled them other than by a single chance discovery. The cynic might argue that they could have found several hoards, presumably over a period of time, and put them together for the photograph and the subsequent sale. But that would imply the most incredible luck, and surely they would have sold such hoards piecemeal, as they were discovered. It seems far more reasonable to accept their story, and the evidence of the photographs. Rossiter corroborated that story by taking archaeologists to the site and indicating the place where the hoard had been found. Excavation confirmed his story, and in particular it provided fragments of two types of artefacts, 'tinned' socketed axes and miniature shields, proving one of the most curious aspects of the Salisbury Hoard, that artefacts of very different dates had been buried together **(Fig. 8)**.

There can be no question of a fake, nothing like the Piltdown forgery, for instance. All these artefacts are genuine, and they include unique, unparalleled, types that could not have been assembled by raiding all the museums in Europe. In any case, who would have benefited from such a plant? Certainly not Garriock and Rossiter, who would have got more if they had broken up the collection into lots. Nor Cummings, who did just that: he split the hoard, and scattered the evidence. Lord McAlpine of West Green made more

money out of it, but his interest was in the individual pieces and he had no notion that he had been dealing with some of the components of a very large hoard. There was no attempt to fool anyone in the academic world with tales of a fantastic hoard: quite the reverse, for it was surrounded with secrecy and it took years to piece the story together. The Salisbury Hoard is genuine, and was assembled in prehistoric times.

The provenance, the precise site of the discovery, is now known. Archaeologists have explored it and examined the pit in which the hoard was deposited. By that time, of course, all the complete bronzes had been removed, though many fragments remained. The original filling had been removed, too, and the archaeologists were left to excavate the earth replaced by Garriock and Rossiter a few years earlier. It was a very small oval pit, 0.65m (2ft) by 0.35m (1ft) and less than 0.30m (1ft) deep below the level of the chalk. Indeed, it had probably been smaller than these recorded measurements because the pit excavated by the archaeologists had been very slightly overcut by the metal detectorists. Where it was bordered by chalk there were the clear impressions of a garden fork, and it may be that the entire circuit was overcut in the same way.

For the arrangement of the artefacts in the pit we have the evidence of conversations with Garriock about eight years after the event. No notes were taken at the time of the excavation, and there are no photographs of the artefacts in the pit. Garriock said that the socketed axes were on top, though the first artefact that he found, dragged out by the plough, was the tip of a knife or rapier. Below the socketed axes there were daggers, then chisels and gouges, and then palstaves, with a socketed dagger (the one that he had retained) at the bottom. The miniature shields had been somewhere in the middle. Garriock said that the socketed axes had been neatly arranged, end to end, and spread fan-wise. Rossiter, in the police interview, said that all the artefacts were 'stacked very neatly', and in conversation he mentioned that there was no earth in the pit, it was full of bronzes. Considering the number of bronzes and the small size of the pit, there would have been very little room for earth.

The brief archaeological excavation has begun to put the hoard into a context. It had not been buried in a remote, isolated spot, but in the midst of a settlement. That settlement had been occupied within the century or so before the hoard was deposited. Perhaps at the time of deposition it had been abandoned, but it might well have been active: the evidence for chronology is not precise. The main feature of the settlement is a large number of pits cut into the natural

chalk, a classic element of Iron Age farmsteads and hillforts in the south of England. Indeed, the hoard-pit had actually been cut into the filling of one of these pits. Its precise position relative to that pit may be a matter of chance: any excavation in the vicinity would stand a good chance of disturbing one of the close-packed earlier pits. The one that the hoard-pit had cut was in size and shape typical of other contemporary pits on Iron Age settlements: 2m ($6\frac{1}{2}$ ft) in diameter, and cut 1.4m ($4\frac{1}{2}$ ft) into the chalk. But at least one element of its filling was remarkable. Potsherds are commonly found in Iron Age pits, but this one produced very substantial pieces, including six virtually complete pots, a better collection than from any other Iron Age pit in England (and many such pits have been excavated). Just above the pots there was much of the skeleton of a calf, which is not especially unusual in such a context, but its presence may be significant. It remains to be seen whether or not this pit is typical of the site.

As for the rest of the site, our limited excavation noted two unusual features. The one was the arc of a fairly substantial ditch: if it had been a complete circle its diameter would have been about 30m (100ft). This is not something normally found on an Iron Age settlement, but as yet there is no evidence of its date, so it could belong to an earlier, or later, period. For instance, it could be the remains of a ditch that had encircled a Bronze Age barrow. The other unusual feature was a second and much smaller hoard of bronzes (Hoard B), archaeologically excavated and fully recorded. Metal artefacts are not commonly found on Iron Age settlements, and five of the pieces in Hoard B seem to be the fittings of a horn, perhaps a trumpet, a find without parallel. Several of the other artefacts in Hoard B seem to relate closely to objects in Hoard A (the Salisbury Hoard).

The large pit excavated at Netherhampton, like the other pits detected in its vicinity, is typical of settlements in southern England occupied in the early and middle stages of the Iron Age, say, 700–100 BC. So typical were these Iron Age pits that until about 50 years ago archaeologists regarded them as the remains of houses — pit-dwellings. But in 1938 and 1939 excavations by Gerhard Bersu at Little Woodbury, a site only 4km ($2\frac{1}{2}$ miles) away from Netherhampton, gave a better understanding of Iron Age farms. The living quarters had been in circular wooden huts entirely above ground, and two of them, 14m and 11m diameter, were fully excavated by Bersu. The pits that occurred in profusion, about 190 were excavated out of an estimated total of 500, were now interpreted as granaries.

The storage of grain in underground silos might at first sight seem a curious practice, but many African and North American Indian tribes stored their grain in this way. And experiments have shown that it will work in our climate, too. In particular, Peter Reynolds has replicated Iron Age pits and stored grain in them at the Butser Ancient Farm in Hampshire. There the grain was poured directly into a chalk-cut pit and tightly sealed with a plug of clay covered by earth to keep it moist. When stored in this way it was shown to have a high germination quality, so the practice would have been ideal for seed-grain, and the chalk-cut pits could be used again and again. Reynolds suggested that other products, such as beans, could be stored in pits, and they could also be used for salting meat or making silage. He wondered if in certain circumstances an abandoned pit might have had a secondary ritual use.

Much more information about the filling of Iron Age pits has come from the 20-year campaign of excavations (1969-88) directed by Barry Cunliffe at the hillfort at Danebury, Hampshire, 25km ($15\frac{1}{2}$ miles) from Netherhampton. A huge number of pits, 1700 excavated out of an estimated 5000 on the site, enabled Cunliffe to distinguish repeated patterns of deposits in their fillings. He thinks that they were intended solely for seed-grain, and were used only the once: then many of them were not simply abandoned but subjected to various rituals. Human and animal skeletons, complete or in part, he interprets as sacrifices; complete pots and charred grain are regarded in the same way, and there could have been other deposits that would have left no trace in the archaeological record. When buried in the pit the seed-corn was under the protection of the gods, he suggests, and after its removal sacrifices would be needed to placate the gods and ensure a successful season for the crops. This may seem fanciful on the available evidence, but one thing is certain: the natives of Iron Age Britain, like all relatively primitive peoples, would have indulged in complex rituals and magic. Sadly most of those activities and beliefs are way beyond the reach of archaeologists.

The filling of the large pit at Netherhampton includes some hints of ritual activity but for far more impressive evidence of this kind we must look to the smaller pit, and the constituents of the Salisbury Hoard. The precise number of artefacts deposited in the hoard will never be known because the evidence is now scattered, but it seems that the 1500 objects mentioned in early rumours, like the wheelbarrow used to remove them, was an exaggeration. Starting with those artefacts shown on Cavill's photographs, and adding a few others of similar types known to have been circulating with them,

gives a total of 535 artefacts. More than a third of them, 160, were axes and the vast majority of those were socketed axes.

The evolution of the Bronze Age axe provides one of the classic typologies of European prehistory, and the main stages are represented in the Salisbury Hoard **(Colour plate 17)**. Earliest are the four flat axes, that would have been cast by pouring molten bronze into an open mould made by hollowing the shape of the axe in a flat surface, often a stone. One of the four is likely to have been made of copper, before it was appreciated that a more durable tool or weapon could be made of bronze by alloying the copper with about 10% tin. One of the earliest metal axes from Britain, it is certainly the earliest artefact from the Salisbury Hoard and dates from about 2400 BC. The next stage in the axe typology, also represented here by four examples, is the flanged axe, whose sides were raised to help to secure the haft. Flanged axes were in use from about 1700 BC for 600 years or so and were gradually replaced by the more elaborate palstaves. The palstave — there were nine in the Salisbury Hoard — has the flanges linked by a prominent ridge across the middle to provide a stop for the haft, and ultimately a loop at the side to help to secure the thong that would have lashed the axe-head to its haft. Flanged axes and palstaves would have required more complex bivalve moulds whose two halves themselves were sometimes cast in bronze. The final 'stage' in the development, the socketed axe, was introduced as early as 1400 BC and became the dominant axe type from about 1100 BC. It remained in use until the eighth century BC, by which time iron had replaced bronze as the principal metal for tools and weapons.

The majority of the 173 socketed axes in the Salisbury Hoard were not, however, functional tools. When new the 141 'tinned' axes would have shone brightly, like silver. They have sockets that are oval in plan and fairly straight sides that expand slightly to the blade. Most of them are decorated on both faces with arrangements of vertical ribs and dots. But they are unfinished: they still have a rough edge down both sides of the socket, where the molten metal penetrated between the two halves of the mould. On a normal axe this rough edge would be removed in the finishing process, when the casting was cleaned and the blade sharpened. But the failure to finish the 'tinned' axes was not a matter of chance, it was part of the original design. The alloy was such that the axes could never have been used: they were so brittle that they would have shattered at the first blow. Such unfinished 'tinned' axes are not unique to the Salisbury Hoard, and associations show that they belong to the very end of the

sequence of Bronze Age axes.

They are contemporary with the Armorican socketed axe, which has straight sides without any expansion at the blade, is always unfinished, has an alloy with more lead and less tin than the Salisbury Hoard axes, and is found by the thousand in hoards in Brittany and Normandy. One Armorican hoard is thought to have had about 4000 of these axes, and several had more than 500. The axes in the Armorican hoards were usually stacked neatly, recalling the description of the Salisbury Hoard, though of course the most efficient way of burying a large number of artefacts in a small hole would be to pack them carefully. Some had the axes in a circular arrangement with the sockets on the outside and the blades on edge, meeting in the centre. Armorican axes were distributed elsewhere in north-west Europe, reaching England and even Ireland: a hoard of six was found at Nether Wallop, Hampshire, 22km (13½ miles) from Netherhampton. If it was impossible to use them, if it had never been intended that they should be functional axes, what purpose did they serve? Some have suggested that they were ingots, a convenient way of trading and storing metal, but others reject any economic function and regard them as dedications to a god.

Other Bronze Age artefacts include 46 spearheads; 9 daggers, rapiers or dirks; 7 chapes; 37 knives; 90 tools - especially chisels and gouges; 17 razors; and 16 pins **(Fig 8)**.

The most distinctive Iron Age artefacts in the hoard are the miniature shields **(Figs 1 and 2, and Colour plate 1)**. Before the discovery of the Salisbury Hoard only 15 miniature shields were known from Iron Age Britain, and all of them were oval or rectangular in shape. Of the 24 found in the Salisbury Hoard, only two were oval and the rest were 'hide-shaped', with convex sides and concave ends, a form of shield hitherto unknown. But once the miniatures had been seen it was possible to identify fragments of the bronze bindings of full-sized shields of the same type. These shields would have been made of wood and leather, which would have perished long ago, but they had bindings of bronze whose distinctive corners are known from 13 sites in southern England.

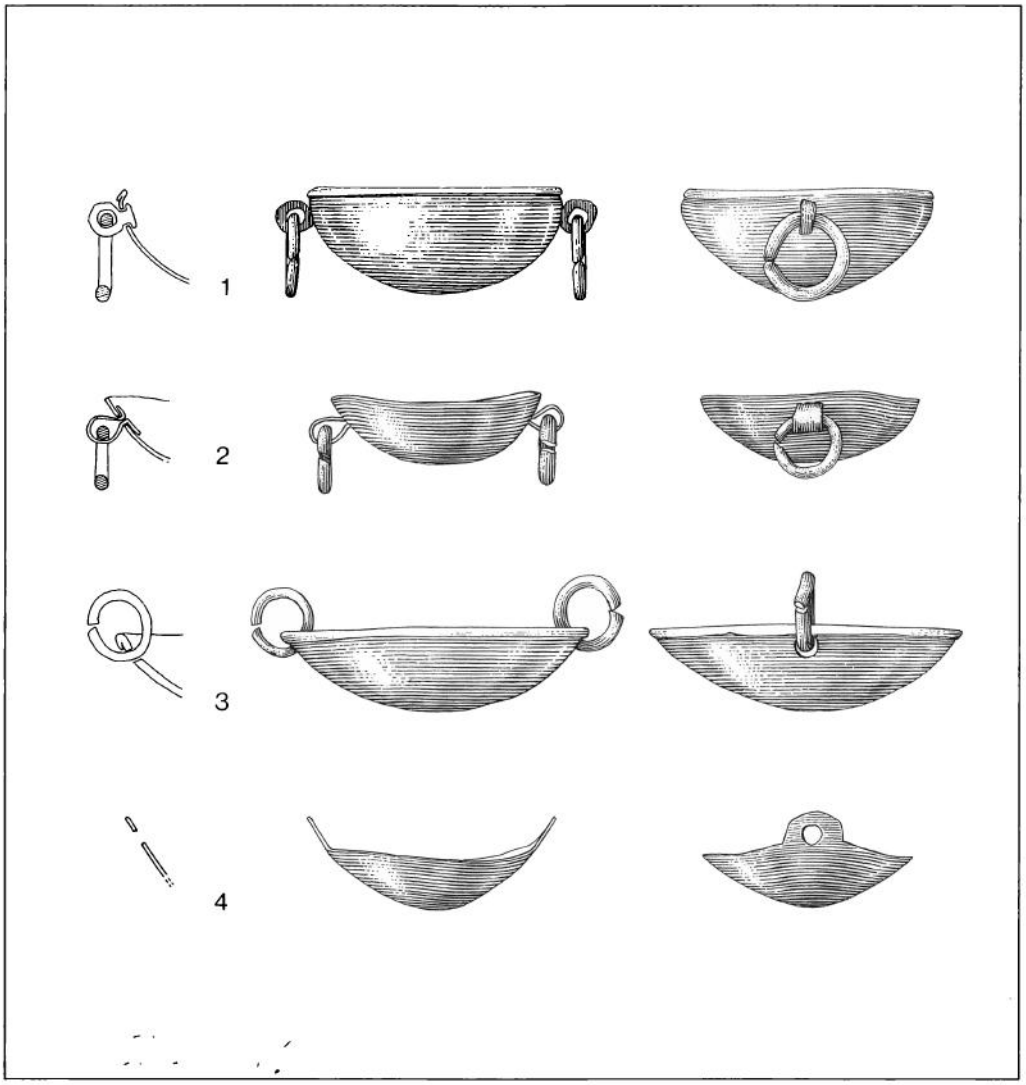
It is typical of the chance element in archaeology that only six months after the miniature shields surfaced the remains of a complete hide-shaped shield were found in a grave at Deal in Kent. The Deal grave dates from about 200 BC, and other fragments of these shields belong to the first century BC. Judging from the bindings, hide-shaped shields were relatively common in Iron Age Britain, and it seems that they were quite effective, too. One of the

groups interested in battle re-enactment and 'living history', the Vectis Iron Age Society, has experimented with the form and enthuses about it. It is relatively light, gives improved visibility, can be used also as a weapon and to pin opponents to the ground, and can even serve as a seat (like a shooting stick).

The models are from 44mm (1¾in) to 103mm (4in) high, which compares with 1.19m (almost 4ft) for the full length of the Deal shield. They are accurate copies of the functional shield, to the extent that all have tiny handles riveted to the back and one has a separate binding. The life-sized versions are likely to have been made of wood or leather, with the binding and perhaps the handle being the only metal components and the only pieces that in normal circumstances would survive burial in the ground. Five of the Salisbury miniatures had been decorated, which implies that some of the full-sized shields were also decorated. On the miniatures the decoration is engraved or chased in metal, but the working shields were doubtless painted on wood and any trace of the paint, indeed any trace of the wood, has long since disappeared.

There are at least 46 miniature cauldrons in the Salisbury Hoard, small vessels made of sheet bronze and provided with two ring-handles **(Fig 9)**. On average they are 42mm (just over 1½in) in diameter and 13mm (½in) deep, but they range from 18mm (¾in) to 70mm (2¾in) with depths from a half to a fifth of the diameter. The deeper examples are obviously modelled on cauldrons and some have upright or slightly inturned rims defined by grooves, but others have more open, flared, rims and the shallower pieces seem more remote from cauldrons. However, some of the shallower pieces are very well made, and there is no obvious break between the two extremes of the range. The handles are simple rings, usually butted pieces of wire, attached by small riveted mounts, split-pin mounts (some with ring-handles cut from sheet bronze) or simply threaded directly through perforations in the sides of the vessels. Four of the cauldrons have handle mounts in the form of perforated projections rising above the rim. The outsides of the vessels have been polished, but several have tool-marks on the inside, where they have been raised from the sheet bronze. Most rims have been simply cut, but some have been folded over to strengthen them. Two cauldrons have been repaired in antiquity, with riveted patches like those on one of the miniature shields.

It seems likely that the bronze vessels are miniatures of full-size functional pieces, but their precise prototype is not as obvious as the shields'. They are simple rounded vessels with few distinctive




9 Miniature bronze cauldrons, showing the four types of handle (full size). Drawn by Karen Hughes.

features other than the pair of handles. Bronze vessels first appear north of the Alps in the later Bronze Age, and several cauldrons of that date are known from the British Isles. But they are distinctive vessels with everted rims and bodies made of several sheets joined by lines of large dome-headed rivets, and they do not resemble the Salisbury Hoard miniatures. The latest of these vessels are found in hoards dating from the very beginning of the Iron Age in the seventh century BC. No complete British cauldron can be dated accurately in the following centuries, not until the first century BC. Even on the continent there are few complete cauldrons from the sixth to the second century, but those few are simpler than the Late Bronze Age types. In particular the two cauldrons from the second-century

deposit at La Tène, in Switzerland, bear some resemblance to the Salisbury Hoard vessels: one has an open profile with sloping sides, and the other is almost hemispherical with slightly inturned rim. Cauldrons in the first century BC are similar but more globular, and subsequent Roman cauldrons often have quite vertical necks. Although the evidence is slight, it is not inconsistent with dating the miniature cauldrons to about the same time as the miniature shields.

Miniature cauldrons are extremely rare. There are two simple pieces in the 'Batheaston' hoard (p. 120), each with a pair of perforations but no surviving handle; perhaps they are cauldrons, though they would never have been accepted as such but for some of the examples in the Salisbury Hoard. Otherwise there are only two undoubted miniature cauldrons from Britain, one from Lincolnshire and the other from Grampian, both modelled on Roman cauldrons.

There may be other Iron Age miniatures in the Salisbury Hoard. A very small and crude socketed axe is the best contender, and there is a suggestion that miniatures of Late Bronze Age axes were used in the Iron Age. Another piece might be a miniature currency bar, though if so it is without parallel. And the ferrules acquired from Peter Day bear a resemblance to miniatures, though quite what they represent is a mystery. As for other Iron Age objects in the Salisbury Hoard, there are no distinctive types, but several oddities might belong here rather than in the Bronze Age. In particular, there is the curious 'moustache' object that appeared in McAlpine's 'Gloucestershire' hoard, and what seems like half of a similar object. Their date and purpose remain unknown, but two precisely similar pieces have been found by metal detectorists in recent years.

The miniature shields and cauldrons are small-scale models of the shields and cauldrons used by Iron Age Britons. They may be compared with other metal models of weapons, tools and other objects found in Iron Age and Roman contexts in Britain and in Europe. Such models could have been toys, but many of them have been found at temple sites and it seems likely that they were votive. In Greek Orthodox churches small metal models are still used today: frequently they represent parts of the human body such as a leg, arm, eye or ear, and they indicate that the worshipper either requires help to cure the ailing part, or gives thanks for a successful cure. Some of the models found at ancient temples might be viewed in this light, or they might be more specific attributes of a particular god.

Shields and cauldrons could be taken to reflect two major concerns of primitive peoples, concerns that might warrant the intercession of the gods. The shield could be seen as an attribute of warfare, or

perhaps protection from warfare, whilst the cauldron could represent food. There are hints that bronze cauldrons were highly prized in European Iron Age communities, as when the Cimbri tribe sent 'the most sacred cauldron in their country' as a diplomatic gift to the Emperor Augustus. And in early Irish literature, regarded as 'a window on the Iron Age' though committed to writing several centuries later, bronze cauldrons held a prominent place and sometimes had magical properties.

The Salisbury Hoard is important because of its very size. Almost 600 bronze artefacts buried together in a pit. It was deposited in the Iron Age, and it included more artefacts than any other Iron Age hoard found in Britain. But most of those artefacts were made in the Bronze Age, and numerically they are surpassed by only one other British Bronze Age hoard — a hoard actually deposited in the Bronze Age — found at Isleham, Cambridgeshire, in 1959. Before the days of metal detectorists, the Isleham Hoard was unearthed in the way that antiquities have been disovered for centuries, by a farmer ploughing his field. Archaeologists were alerted, and the following year, after harvest, an excavation was organised and the rest of the deposit was recovered. The hoard had been buried in a pot, which had been deposited in a pit about 12in (30cm) across at the bottom and cut 14in (35cm) into the chalk. Within the pot there had been about 6500 pieces of bronze weighing some 200lb (90kg): about 10 times the number of pieces and perhaps twice the weight of the Salisbury Hoard. But a simple numerical comparison is misleading, because much of the Isleham hoard was scrap bronze. Of the 6500 pieces, 2600 were broken fragments of raw metal plate, and the rest were complete or fragmentary weapons, tools and ornaments, some deliberately broken before depositon. The excavators interpreted this find as scrap assembled by a metal-worker and buried for safe-keeping until he was ready to put it in the melting pot for re-cycling. It had been buried about 1000 BC.

In terms of size the Salisbury Hoard is very impressive, but more important is the chronology of its artefacts. The earliest piece was made about 2400 BC and the latest piece no earlier than 200 BC. Between those two dates there is scarcely a century that is not represented by a Salisbury Hoard artefact. An extensive hoard with a date range of 2200 years is quite without parallel. Isleham is much more typical, covering no more than a hundred years. Indeed the chronology of prehistory is based on the assumption that associated artefacts are more or less contemporary in date, and only rarely does a metalwork hoard include an occasional much earlier piece.

But there are hints of the same phenomenon elsewhere in Iron Age Britain, including a group of bronzes excavated recently at the hillfort at Danebury in Hampshire. The term 'hoard' needs some qualification here, because the artefacts were scattered. The first piece was found in 1974 in the roots of a tree that had blown down; 11 more were in an area subsequently excavated, but they were in soil that had been disturbed by tree roots and burrowing animals; seven others found nearby seemed to have been eroded from the original deposit in antiquity; and one was subsequently found in re-deposited top-soil. The excavator argued convincingly that these 20 artefacts had originally been deposited as a single hoard. There were 7 axes, 2 spearheads (one a fragment), 2 rapiers (one a fragment), part of a sword and part of a knife, 4 chisels, 2 razors and a pin. The dates of the artefacts ranged between 1800 and 600 BC, with two in the first half and six in the second half of the second millennium and the rest in the first millennium BC.

There may have been a similar deposit at Hounslow, London, but the accounts of the discovery are obscure. In 1864 labourers working in a field discovered a collection of Bronze Age and Iron Age antiquities. They were taken to the British Museum where the Keeper of the Department of British and Medieval Antiquities, A. W. Franks, was told that all the antiquities had been found together. But on further enquiry it transpired that two groups of artefacts (one Bronze Age and the other Iron Age) had come from different parts of the same field. The Museum acquired the artefacts in two lots, with Bronze Age and Iron Age pieces in each lot, and in the 1930s a subsequent curator, Christopher Hawkes, annotated the Register to distinguish two hoards, one Bronze Age and the other Iron Age, on typological grounds. The Iron Age element, comprising five animal figurines, a wheel ornament and the remains of a crown, is usually regarded as a religious deposit **(Colour plate 18)**. One wonders if the archaeologists simplified and rationalised the evidence, persuading the labourers that the Iron Age and Bronze Age artefacts could never have been found together. If so, the rationalisation is not too successful, because the Bronze Age element alone has an amazing chronological range, including Early, Middle and Late Bronze Age pieces spanning more than a thousand years. Viewed in the context of the Salisbury Hoard, Hounslow seems very similar indeed, and like Salisbury the sequence ends with religious artefacts in the Iron Age.

At Hagbourn Hill, in Berkshire, a similar mixed group of artefacts was found in 1803. The account of the discovery is not as clear as we

would now like, but there is no doubt that Bronze Age and Iron Age artefacts had been buried together. Of the surviving pieces there are three spearheads, two pins and a palstave from the Bronze Age, and a socketed axe was illustrated in the original account. Iron Age pieces still preserved comprise parts of two horse-bits, three terrets (rein-rings) and a ring-headed pin. There are said to have been some coins, as well, including a large flat gold coin that might be correlated with a surviving gold stater recorded as found in that parish in 1803.

But the closest parallel for the Salisbury Hoard in terms of its size and chronological range is the 'Batheaston' hoard, a remarkable collection of antiquities purchased at a Sotheby's sale by the British Museum. Lot 220 in the antiquities sale on 22 May 1989 was 'a collection of Bronze Age artifacts, mostly circa 2000-1800 BC, including Stop-Ridge and Socketed Celts, Spearheads, Dagger Blades, Chisels and Other Items. (a lot)', and the estimate was £3000 to £4000. One of my colleagues saw them, or some of them, and was particularly interested in a rare group of Early Bronze Age bronzes. The Museum bid successfully and was pleased to get them for a hammer price of £2000. But it was only when we went to collect them that we realised the extent of our purchase: there was indeed a lot, a lot more than we had seen.

At first sight it seemed to be a miscellaneous collection of metal detectorist finds, but as we looked closer we could see that it had been sorted. There was nothing medieval, and nothing Roman. There were Early Bronze Age and Middle Bronze Age pieces from the second millennium BC, but many more from the first millennium, ranging from 800 or 900 BC down to about 300 BC. One very surprising feature was the large number of Late Bronze Age and Iron Age pins: more than had hitherto been recorded from the entire country. Yet the collection was surely British. Indeed, some of the brooches were of a type current only in the Wessex area. These artefacts could never have been assembled by an antiquities collector: the lower chronological limit was too precise (even if a collector had been interested only in Bronze Age and Iron Age antiquities he would surely have included some later Iron Age pieces) and pins are very rarely available on the market. It was not a site collection: no prehistoric site would produce such a range and richness of bronze artefacts. Could it be a hoard, or several hoards? That seemed the most likely explanation, though pins and brooches very rarely occur in hoards.

Sotheby's declined to reveal the name of the vendor, though they did say that they believed that the antiquities had been found near

| 'BATHEASTON' HOARD | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Axes | palstaves | | 5 | |
| | socketed | | 2 | 7 |
| Missile points | spearheads: | tanged | 1 | |
| | | socketed | 1 | |
| | arrowhead | | 1 | 3 |
| Daggers | | | 2 | 2 |
| Chape | | | 1 | 1 |
| Knives | | | 4 | 4 |
| Tools | chisels, tanged | | 8 | |
| | gouges, socketed | | 2 | |
| | awls, etc. | | 16 | 26 |
| Toilet | tweezers | | 3 | 3 |
| Dress | Pins: | straight shanks | 94 | |
| | | swans-neck | 44 | 138 |
| | Brooches: | La Tène I | 11 | |
| | | pennanular | 30 | |
| | | others | 3* | 44 |
| Miniatures | cauldrons ? | | 2 | 2 |
| Looped buttons | | | 6 | |
| Small rings | | | 35 | 41 |
| Miscellaneous | triskeles 2; wheel pendant 1; pendant disc 1; binding 1; discs attached to wires 2; riveted boss 1; looped disc 1; studs 2; unclassified 19 | | 30 | 30 |
| | | | TOTAL | 301 |
| | * one brooch lost | | | |

10 Classification of artefacts from the 'Batheaston' Hoard.

Batheaston, Bath. They offered to forward a letter to the vendor, but that brought no response. Three years later, in 1992, we identified a second batch of antiquities from the same 'hoard', in the possession of a London collector, and a year after that a metal detectorist gave me more information including photographs of some of the pieces. Two dealers were also able to help. But the story of the discovery is still incomplete. Found by two metal detectorists, the antiquities had been in a pit about 18in (45cm) deep: there was a confusing references to a second pit, so perhaps two separate hoards were found. It seems that the site was in south Wiltshire, probably in the

vicinity of Wylye, about 15km (9½ miles) from where the Salisbury Hoard was found. And it is likely that the hoard(s) was removed without the landowners' knowledge, perhaps from a scheduled ancient monument.

The chronological range of the 'Batheaston' hoard is impressive, but it is about 1000 years shorter than the Salisbury Hoard. Its earliest artefacts were made about 1600 BC and the latest, La Tène I brooches, about 300 BC. The total, 301, is about half the number of artefacts found in the Salisbury Hoard. And there are significant differences in the concentrations of artefact types. The 'Batheaston' hoard has far fewer axes, spearheads, and blades; and fewer chisels and gouges, although there are rather more awls and similar small tools. Instead the 'Batheaston' hoard is dominated by personal ornaments: almost 10 times as many pins, and 44 brooches — a type not recorded in the Salisbury Hoard **(Fig 10, cf Fig 8)**. The counterpart to the votive miniatures that terminate the Salisbury hoard is a minor element at 'Batheaston': two possible miniature cauldrons and a wheel pendant. The two miniature cauldrons are hemispherical in shape, made of sheet bronze, and they have a couple of perforations near the edge on opposing sides. But for the Salisbury Hoard they would have been classified as unidentified bronzes, but similar pieces at Salisbury are undoubtedly cauldrons. Another link between the two hoards is provided by a socketed spearhead whose tip has been worn down to such an extent that the hollow interior has been exposed. Stuart Needham tells me that he knows of only two similar pieces: one was found in the Salisbury Hoard, and the other in the second hoard (Hoard B) that we excavated at Netherhampton.

Individually all the examples quoted are unsatisfactory. Only the Danebury 'hoard' was excavated by archaeologists, and it had been scattered before they found it; the accounts of Hounslow, Hagbourn Hill and 'Batheaston' are in parts obscure. But collectively they are more impressive, and they suggest that the Salisbury Hoard was not the only collection of Bronze Age and Iron Age artefacts that spanned several centuries. How can it be explained?

Today any individual's possessions are likely to date within 50 or 60 years of one another, unless he is a collector of antiques or antiquities. Could it be that the Salisbury Hoard was the collection of an antiquities dealer? One of Lord McAlpine's 'runners', who for some reason decided to bury his collection? Feasible, but far-fetched. The sequence of antiquities lasts for over two thousand years and comes to a sudden end in the second century BC, so it is more reasonable to suppose that they were buried about that time rather than later.

Perhaps it was assembled by a prehistoric collector of antiquities — the original Alpine, the Ancient Briton?

The latest artefacts in the hoard help to assess its date: certainly it was not buried before 200 BC, and probably not much later. They also provide a clue to the reason for its assemblage. The latest artefacts are the miniature shields, perhaps also the miniature cauldrons, and their function was religious. It may be that whoever collected the bronzes was motivated by religious beliefs. Perhaps Netherhampton was the centre of a religious cult that existed for a couple of millennia, and the hoard is of holy relics. The miniatures (circa 200 BC) had a religious function, and perhaps the 'tinned' socketed axes (circa 700 BC), too, but other pieces are ordinary utilitarian weapons, tools, and ornaments. There is no reason to suppose that any of the Salisbury Hoard artefacts that date from the second millennium BC were manufactured purely for religious reasons.

An alternative, and much more likely, explanation is that members of the Iron Age community, around 200 BC, in the course of their daily work, chanced to find several hoards of Bronze Age artefacts. How many hoards is unknown, though when we come to study the antiquities in detail it may be possible to hazard a guess. The Iron Age farmers were continually disturbing the earth: ploughing the fields, erecting boundaries, digging drainage ditches and storage pits. A modern farmer would be most unlikely to discover several Bronze Age hoards, but in Iron Age times all operations were carried out by hand, so the workers were closer to the earth and had more time to observe; there's no knowing the extent of the territory over which the hoards were discovered, nor the number of years involved in their discovery; and, of course, there must have been more Bronze Age hoards awaiting discovery in 200 BC than in AD 1985. If an Iron Age farmer found a hoard of Bronze Age bronzes, why did he not melt it down and re-cycle it? Perhaps most of them did. But perhaps someone who discovered a Bronze Age hoard in the vicinity of Salisbury was puzzled by it. He would have realised that he was handling axes, spearheads and knives that were quite different from those used in his own community. Conceivably he might have related them to his ancestors, or perhaps more likely he or the elders of his tribe would have regarded them as a signal from the gods. Such a hoard could have been treasured, and subsequent similar discoveries kept with it. There is an intriguing reference in Suetonius' *Life of Galba*: 'lightening struck a lake of Cantabria and twelve axes were found there, an unmistakable token of supreme

power'. Perhaps that is an account of the discovery of an ancient hoard. The Bronze Age hoards found by Iron Age farmers near Salisbury could have been kept for superstitious or religious reasons, and eventually buried for reasons unknown.

shields. Subsequently he had sold the rest of his selection, apart from the one miniature cauldron, to a dealer he had contacted via an advertisement in a metal detecting magazine. He had got about £1000 for them. There was another interesting detail. Rossiter had taken his children to the British Museum and in one of the galleries he noticed a collection of miniature shields. The label said that they were unique, and yet he had found some in the 'Salisbury Hoard'. He did not realise that he was looking at the shields that he had excavated.

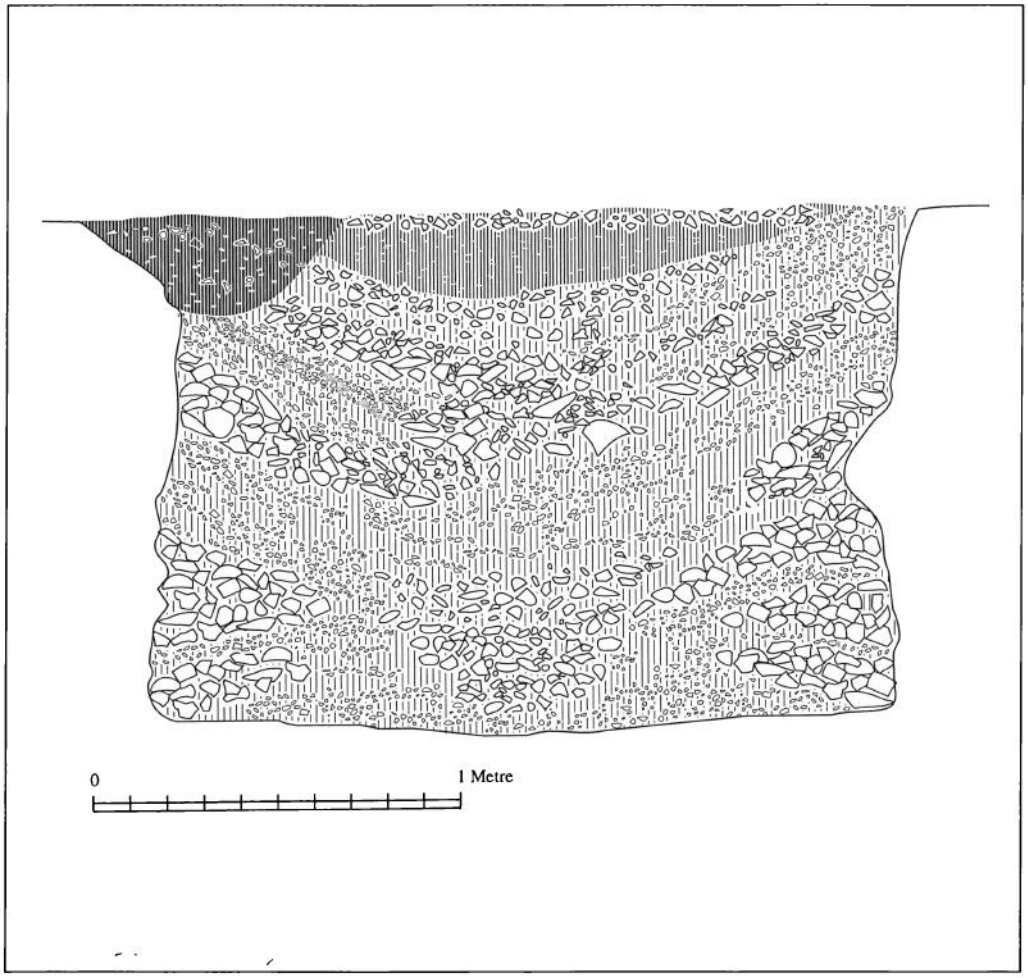
By Wednesday it was apparent that we would have to change tactics. There were so many pits, and not a hint of recent disturbance. Perhaps Rossiter had mistaken the precise site. We were well into a field with no landmarks, and the spot he had indicated could have been several yards from the true position. Indeed it would have been amazing if he could have located accurately a feature that had been found more than eight years earlier. But I recalled that 'John' had said that they had visited the field in most subsequent years, which would have reinforced the precise spot in their minds. I phoned Jack Woods and asked if we could get Rossiter back on site, but he couldn't approach him now because Rossiter did not have a solicitor. So we decided to strip an area by machine and search the plough-soil with metal detectors as we had done at Snettisham and Essendon. If that was unsuccessful we would have to clean down to the chalk and examine the pits in more detail: it was beginning to look as if we could be here for some time.

I explained the problem to Mr Cook, who appreciated the need to get a result; it was the only way that we could prove that he was the owner of the hoard, and the only way that the police could bring a prosecution. Nonetheless he was muttering about compensation for loss of crop if we had machinery! Cook recommended a firm of contractors, so Tony Pacitto and I went off to see them, and managed to hire one of the very few Drotts in the area. They regarded the Drott as an antique and would have preferred to provide us with a digger and dumper truck, but the Drott was far more versatile for what we had in mind, and as for antique — well, we did come from the British Museum. The other move that we made was to boost the labour-force by recruiting Peter Makey. One of the mainstays of my team in recent years Peter was an excellent archaeologist, the hardest worker I had ever employed, and a constant source of amusement. He was an authority on flint tools and managed to find a surprising number of flints on all my Iron Age hoard sites. I had not contacted Peter at the start because he was working on a short-term contract for English Heritage, but he was based near Portsmouth and office-

bound, so he jumped at the chance of having a weekend in the field.

The Drott arrived on Thursday morning, and we set it to work on a 20m square centred on the spot marked by Rossiter **(Colour plate 11)**. It started in the north-east corner of the square, stripping shallow spits of top-soil and dumping it towards the hedge. After each run we surveyed the new surface with two metal detectors, and by the middle of the morning we had found a tiny fragment from one of the 'tinned' socketed axes. Several more fragments appeared in the afternoon, all concentrated in the same area, and by mid-morning on the Friday we had identified the pit itself **(Colour plate 10)**. The Drott cleared the top-soil from an area around it and we thoroughly cleaned the chalk surface. We would never have found it with small trenches, because it was not what we had expected. We had been looking for a separate isolated pit, but our target proved to be a very small pit cut into the filling of a much larger pit **(Colour plate 12)**. The larger pit featured on the gradiometer survey, where it completely obscured the smaller one. Of the pits that we had investigated with trenches, we had consistently cleared the east half and left the plough-soil over the west half. Inevitably the key pit had been cut into the west half of the much larger pit.

We excavated the larger pit by cutting a section line through the centre — a line that also bisected the smaller pit — and then we removed the filling from one half. First we cleaned half of the later feature, the smaller pit, roughly rectangular in plan and only 65cm by 35cm (2ft 1½in by 1ft 2in) — amazingly small to have contained such a vast hoard. But there was no doubt that we had found the right spot because many more small fragments of bronze were recovered. The filling, as we had expected, was of relatively dark earth, mainly plough-soil put back by Garriock and Rossiter after they had removed the artefacts in February 1985. None of the original, Iron Age, filling survived. The bottom was less than 30cm (1ft) below the chalk surface: it would have been 50cm (1ft 8in) deep below the surface of the field. Having removed half of the filling of the smaller pit we then set about half of the larger pit, which was 2m diameter at the level of the chalk. It had not been disturbed by the metal detectorists and it might hold clues to the date when the hoard had been deposited. Either the hoard had been buried in the top of this large pit, as it had been filled, or perhaps more likely it had been buried later in a small pit cut into the larger one. If we had been able to excavate the original deposits we might have been able to resolve this point, but the metal detectorists had destroyed the evidence. However, as the larger pit was undisturbed, everything in its filling




5 Section through the pit, showing its filling of chalk lumps and earth; the Salisbury Hoard was found in the small dark pit at the top left. Drawn by Karen Hughes.

was either contemporary with or earlier than the deposition of the hoard. The latest artefact from the hoard had been made no earlier than about 200 BC, we reckoned, and under normal circumstances one would have been happy to accept a date of about 200 BC for the deposition of the hoard. But this hoard covered an amazing length of time, with artefacts from almost every century from the 24th to the 2nd BC. It was quite conceivable that it had been buried in even later centuries. The dating of the larger pit could be crucial.

After work on the Friday I called round at Bemerton Farm to tell Mr Cook that we had identified the pit, and the following morning he and his daughter came out to look at it. Stuart was with us all that day, and Jack Woods visited, combining his visit with a couple of interviews in the area. We could get no more than two workers in the pit at any one time, usually only one, so we could not progress quickly **(Colour plate 13)**. Pete Makey worked as fast as any

archaeologist could, but about 80cm (2ft 6in) down he discovered some articulated calf bones, which rather put the brakes on. They had to be cleaned, plotted and photographed. Dave Webb is a perfectionist, every bit of earth had to be removed from the bones before he would photograph them; then I plotted and moved them and Pete resumed work. The next delay was the discovery of pottery, first some large but very degraded sherds in the middle of the pit, and then a virtually complete pot at the bottom. It was Sunday afternoon before I could start drawing the section of the pit **(Fig 5)**.

Once we had located the hoard pit we had achieved our main aim, and had begun to look to the end of the dig. Everyone had interrupted normal life for the dig, and needed to know when it could be resumed. Our landlady wanted to know how long we were staying, and the warders would have to be relieved if we went on for a further week, but not if we stopped within a couple of days. Beyond that, there was a certain pressure from the weather, which was beginning to deteriorate: the long-term forecast was not good. When we had started on the large pit we had expected to finish work on the Monday and depart on the Tuesday, but by Sunday this plan was obviously too optimistic.

While the pit was being excavated and recorded, Tony Spence continued to survey the field and Tony Pacitto used the detecting devices. First he completed the magnetometer survey, and then he started with a deep-seeking metal detecting survey. Although we were trying to keep as quiet as possible about this project the precise site was known to several people and future publicity might well encourage the metal detecting night-hawks. There might well be another hoard in the vicinity, and it would be foolish to leave it and lose it. The machine we used was a relatively new acquisition which had yet prove its worth, doubtless because we had never used it over the site of a hoard. In theory it would ignore surface metal and small pieces in the plough-soil but detect more substantial deposits at a greater depth. Tony could work quickly with it, but because it had never located antiquities we had had no control, and I for one did not have too much confidence in it. However, this changed towards the end of Monday afternoon when Tony located a second hoard, about 17m away from the first. We investigated and discovered the rim of a circular bronze artefact, possibly a mirror. It was too late in the day to do any serious work so we covered it over and left the warders to guard it. I went round to Bemerton Farm to inform Mr Cook, and en route stopped at the telphone box to phone Ian Longworth.

On Tuesday it was raining so we erected a shelter over the new

hoard. Peter Makey and Dave Webb continued in the large pit despite the rain, and found more articulated calf bones with the consequent delay. But we made good progress with the new hoard (Hoard B). The 'mirror' resolved itself into the broad flange of a short wide open-ended sheet bronze tube, beyond which was a narrow sheet-bronze collar and then, arranged in an arc, three cast-bronze collars. We had never seen anything like this, but their curved alignment and tapering diameters suggested that they had been fittings on a horn or something similar, whose organic components had long since disintegrated. Perhaps it had been a trumpet. Scattered in the vicinity were three other bronze artefacts, a spearhead, part of another, and a chisel **(Colour plate 14)**. Unlike the very much larger hoard found by Garriock and Rossiter, the new deposit was not compact, and we could not identify a pit: the bronzes seemed to be in the upper filling of a broad (and perhaps shallow) feature whose full investigation would have to await the next season here. Within the day we excavated, photographed, plotted and removed all but one of the bronzes: despite having warders on site it would have been unwise to leave anything *in situ*.

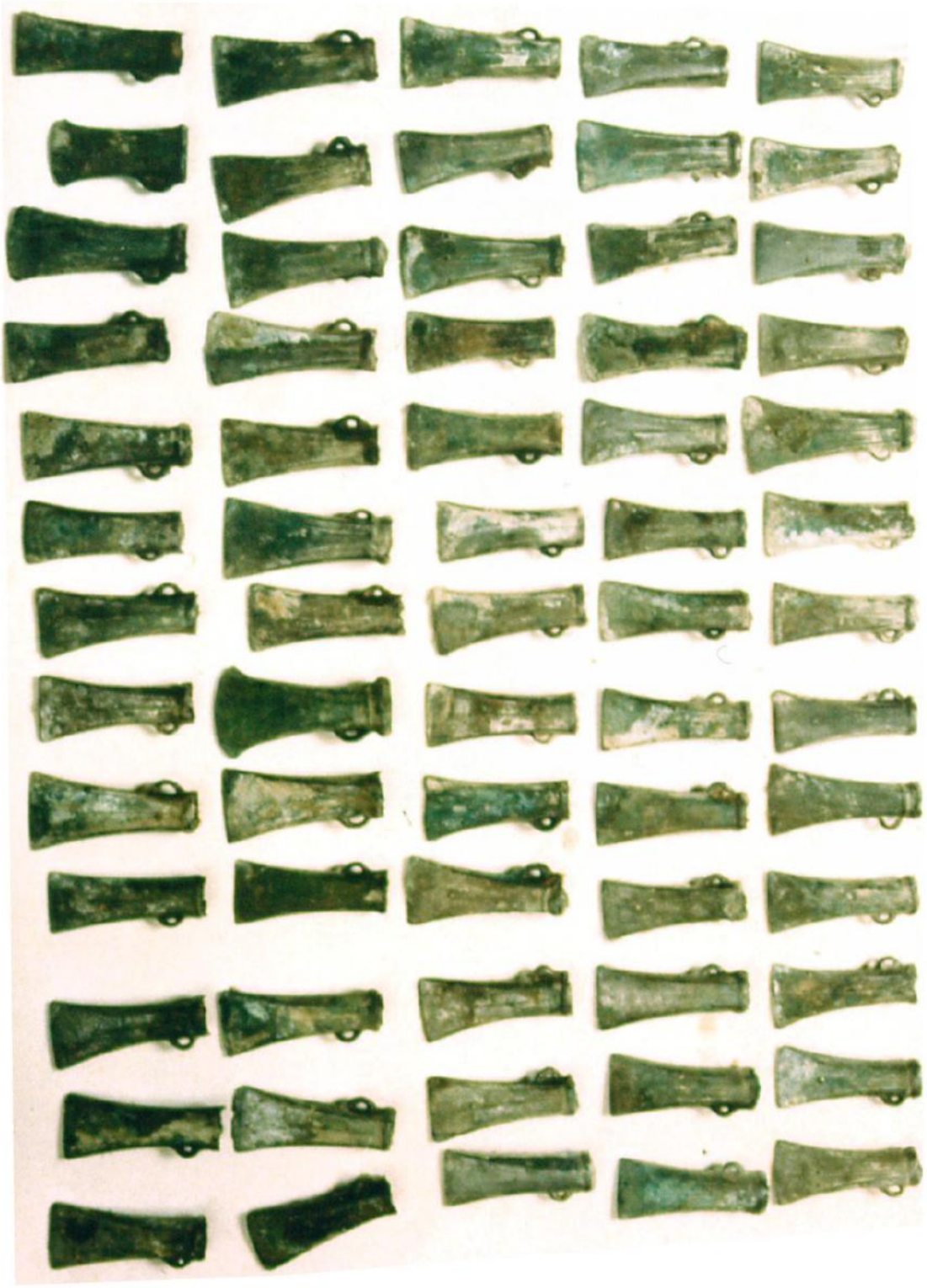
During the day Peter Saunders visited again, as did Clare and Nick Griffiths. Peter said that the local press was keen to know the precise site, but he had declined to tell them. There had been several news reports in the local papers, but no journalist had made a serious attempt to locate us. David Keys, who had announced our excavation in *The Independent* report, had said that the site was within 10 miles of Stonehenge. He wasn't trailing a red herring, rather he was trying to relate it to a well-known archaeological monument to give an approximate position to a general reader. But that diverted attention to the other side of Salisbury, and the suggestion that our hoard was religious led the press to the druids and strengthened the connection with Stonehenge. I was told that Jocelyn Stevens, Chairman of English Heritage, was worried that we might be disturbing his most famous site!

On the Wednesday we completed the recording of Hoard B, lifted the final artefact and carefully back-filled to prepare the way for re-opening next year. In the large pit the problem now was pottery: several substantial sherds from a much degraded pot that seemed to have been complete when deposited in the centre of the pit and had collapsed as it was back-filled. Then around the edge of the pit, in the sector that ended underneath Garriock's hoard of bronzes, we started to find other pots, more or less complete and certainly in better condition than the one in the middle. We spent a hard day excavating,

photographing, plotting and then lifting the pots, and in the end we were left with an empty pit.

Thursday (11 November) was the last day of the excavation. Dave spent the morning cleaning up the large empty pit for a final photograph: 2m diameter and cut 1.4m into clean chalk, it looked quite impressive. The rest of us packed finds and belongings. Over the last few days pressure had intensified in the Pottery Shed as more and more finds had to be sorted, washed, dried, labelled and eventually packed. First thing in the morning we parcelled up the last of the finds, and by mid-morning the warders were able to set off to deliver tham to the Museum in London. I went round to the Golf Club to say good-bye to the Secretary; there was no need to see Mr Cook because he had been on site the previous day. We were ready to go at lunchtime, so leaving the Drott to back-fill the site we went down to the Netherhampton pub for lunch and then set off home. I took the Friday off work. On Friday evening I was lecturing to John Weeks' society at Foxton (p. 133), so we had finished just in time; earlier in the week it had looked as though I would have to cancel it.

*1* *Decorated bronze miniature shield. Height 77mm (3in).*



2 *Bronze socketed axes from the Salisbury Hoard, photographed by Brian Cavill soon after the discovery.*

*3* *Bronze socketed axes, spearheads, daggers and gouges from the Salisbury Hoard, photographed by Brian Cavill.*

4 *Bronze chisels, miniature cauldrons and other artefacts from the Salisbury Hoard, photographed by Brian Cavill*

*5* *Bronze artefacts from the Salisbury Hoard, photographed by Brian Cavill.*

*6* *Bronze artefacts from the 'Gloucestershire' Hoard.*

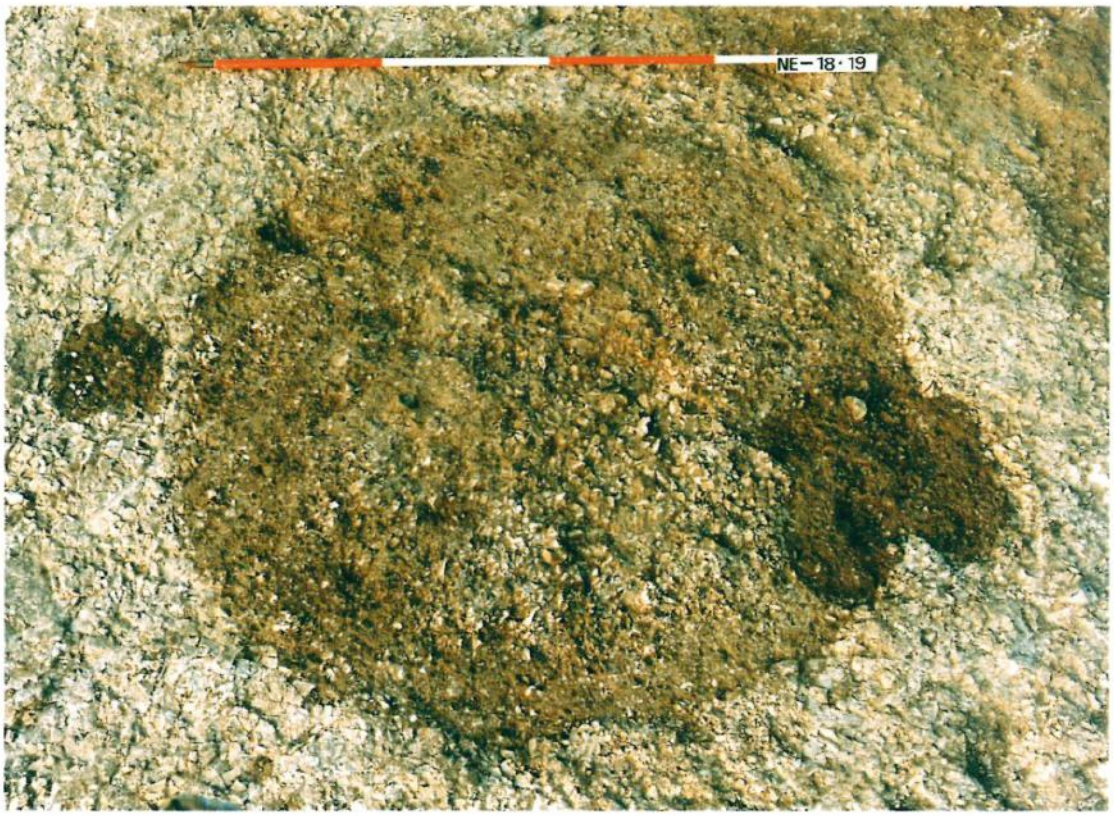
7 *Two joining fragments of a bronze miniature shield: the larger piece passed through several hands and twice crossed the Atlantic before being acquired by Devizes Museum; the smaller piece was retained by the finder. Height 71mm (2¾in).*

8 *The Red Lion, Salisbury.*

9 *Photographs, artefacts and packaging seized when Garriock was arrested.*

*10 The re-discovery of the site of the Salisbury Hoard in 1994.*


11 *The Drott stripping top-soil at Netherhampton.*




12 *The pit revealed in plan, before excavation. The dark patch on the right is where the Salisbury Hoard was found.*

*13* *The pit in course of excavation.*

14 *Hoard B: the bronze fittings of a ? trumpet, with a chisel nearby and a spearhead near the scale.*

15 *Joining fragments of bronze: top, from four socketed axes, and bottom, a ferrule. In each of the five examples a piece found in the 1994 excavation joins another found in 1985.*

16 *Razors and other bronze artefacts from the Salisbury Hoard, photographed by Brian Cavill.*

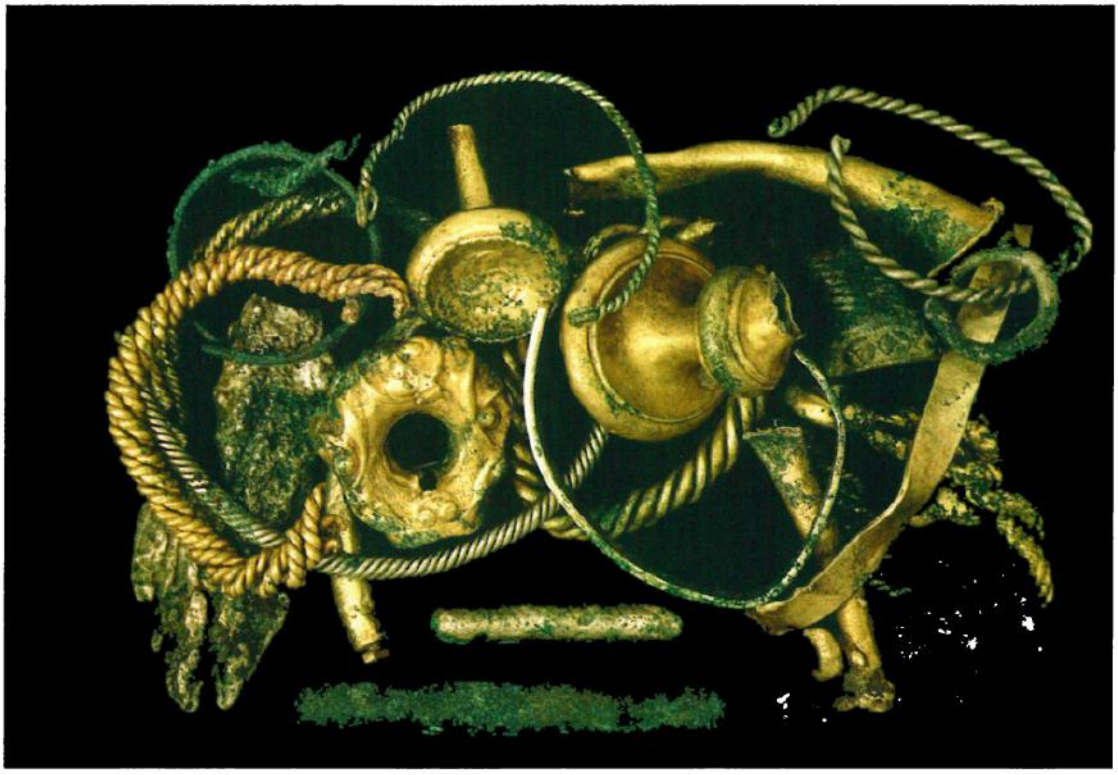
17 *Stages in the evolution of the bronze axe, illustrated by examples from the Salisbury Hoard: from the left, flat axe, flanged axe, palstave and socketed axe. The socketed axe is 90mm (3½ in) long.*

18 *Part of the Hounslow Hoard: three boar figurines and a miniature wheel. The boar on the right is 78mm (3 $\frac{3}{8}$in) long.*

19 *The two terminals of a gold torque from Bawsey, one from the front and the other from the back. 33mm (1 $\frac{1}{4}$in) diameter.*

20 *Bronze artefact with a hooked blade and decorated handle, from Daneswick. 110mm (4 ¼ in) long.*

*21* *Roman bronze box with enamel ornament, from Elsenham. 46mm (1 $\frac{3}{4}$in) high.*



22 *Snettisham: selection of artefacts from the hoard discovered by Charles Hodder in 1990.*

23 *Snettisham: hoard of gold torques, as excavated by the British Museum team in 1990.*