ASSEMBLAGE

Unique ID: HAMP-B37694

Object type certainty: Certain Workflow status: Published

Description:

The find comprises five finds: two stave-built tankards with copper alloy fittings, a pair of shears, a circular iron knife and a ceramic vessel. The objects have not yet been closely examined, as they are extremely fragile, and considerable conservation work would be needed to make a more complete investigation possible.

White powdery material apparent in the soil recovered during the excavation may represent powdered bone, or may be chalk. No fragments of bone of any size or recognizable shape has survived.

Tankard 1 - This object is in a fragile state and retains its soil infill. It is slightly squashed with an 'oval' diameter of c.120 x 130mm. It currently stands c.90mm in height.

The body of the tankard comprises three copper alloy bands, which would originally have surrounded a stave-built wooden vessel. The top band is 18mm wide, the middle band 21mm wide and the lower is currently unmeasurable due to the delicate nature of the object. The sheet metal bands are less than 1mm in thickness and the upper and lower edges are curved forwards to form a beaded rim. The bands are apparently undecorated. The middle band has slipped downwards on top of the bottom band. Adjacent to the inside edge of the top band is a piece of wooden stave, and there are further fragments of wood in the soil infill.

The tankard handle is a C-shaped loop, affixed on one side between the top and bottom of the middle band. It is relatively plain, with a pair of parallel incised lines running down the length of the outside. Both long edges have a thickened rim. The handle measures 6.9mm wide and 2.8mm thick. Julia Farley comments that this handle is a Horn Type 1 (Horn 2015). Similar examples from dated contexts generally fall around 75-10 BC.

Tankard 2 - This object is particularly fragile as it is missing its soil infill (which was removed by the finder upon discovery). A bag of fragments believed to be from the upper part of the object have not been examined in detail.

The object measures $c.155\ x\ 160mm$ in diameter and currently stands 70mm in height.

It comprises a single surviving copper alloy band, 70mm wide and less than 1mm thick. There is no decoration, although dried soil adheres much of the surface. There is at least one more upper band of similar dimensions missing.

Like no. 1, this would originally have been a stave-built wooden vessel with copper alloy bands and a single handle. The handle is C-shaped in profile and formed of a central moulded ring with a tear-drop shape curving away above and below. These terminate in a c.30mm long cross-bar at either end, semi-circular in cross-section (being flat to the reverse). Fixed to the reverse of the upper cross-bar is a rectangular strip 11mm wide, 2mm thick, and c.90mm in length. It widens at the opposite end, just above the handle's lower cross-bar. At the narrower end, above the upper cross-bar of the handle, is an off-centre c.10mm long copper alloy nail. Behind the strip and running for the length of the handle, are substantial remains of a wooden stave. Behind each cross-bar of the handle are two large circular-headed rivets.

The handle is probably a Horn Type 3 (Horn 2015), dating to AD c.40-75, although the fixing mechanism is more similar to those of Horn's Type 2, dating to 25 BC to AD 50.

Shears - The pair of iron shears is now in four pieces, damaged on removal from the ground by the finder. The tips have been broken and are in three pieces.

At the top of the shears is a loop 46mm in diameter, 27mm wide and 7.5mm thick. At the shoulders this narrows to 9mm wide. Below, the arms angle outwards over c.60mm before expanding at the blades, inwards from the outside edge. At this point they are 25mm wide. The outside edge is 5.5mm thick, narrowing to c.2mm thick at the cutting edge. The blades gradually narrow over 66mm and 72mm to the recent breaks. They are both c.20mm wide at this point. With the fragments replaced it is apparent that the outside edge of the blade curves convexly whilst the inside edge retains a straight line, each terminating in a point.

Cf. 1976,0501.1028 in the BM Online Collections, from King Harry Lane cemetery. These are from a context dated AD c.1-60 (Stead and Rigby 1989).

Knife/ disc - This object is comprised of a flat, circular iron disc with central perforation and several raised circular bosses (or rivet heads) on either side. It measures $77 \times 70 \text{mm}$ in 'diameter' (much of the original edges are missing) and is max. 14mm thick at the bosses; excluding these the object is 5mm thick. The central perforation measures $8 \times 7 \text{mm}$.

On one face are four domed bosses, irregularly spaced but placed around the central perforation. Two of these apparently have remains of a rivet on the reverse.

Cf. 1976,0501.874 in the BM Online Collections, from King Harry Lane cemetery. These are from a context dated AD c.1-60 (Stead and Rigby 1989).

[Images 4a, 4b and 4c]

Vessel - The ceramic vessel retains its soil infill but is in a very fragile state. It measures max. c.160mm in height and has a diameter c.210mm. The fabric is friable and a dark grey/ black in colour.

Conclusion:

These objects most likely represent the grave goods from a Late Iron Age burial, dating to the midfirst century AD. Four of the objects are base metal.

Consequently, as the find includes a prehistoric base metal assemblage, the entire group qualifies as Treasure under the 2003 amendment to the Treasure Act 1996.

References:

Horn, J.A. 2015. Tankards of the British Iron Age. Proceedings of the Prehistoric Society 81, 1-31. Stead, I.M. and Rigby, V. 1989. Verulamium: The King Harry Lane site. English Heritage in association with British Museum Publications.

Subsequent actions

Subsequent action after recording: Acquired by museum after being declared Treasure

Treasure details

Treasure case tracking number: 2017T125

Chronology

Broad period: IRON AGE Subperiod from: Late Period from: IRON AGE Subperiod to: Late Period to: IRON AGE Date from: Circa 75 BC Date to: Circa AD 60

Dimensions and weight

Quantity: 5

Discovery dates

Date(s) of discovery: Tuesday 24th January 2017 - Wednesday 25th January 2017

Personal details

This information is restricted for your access level.

Other reference numbers

Other reference: Hampshire Cultural Trust Object Entry Form WINCM 413

Treasure case number: 2017T125

Museum accession number: HMCMS:A2019.40

Materials and construction

Primary material: Copper alloy Secondary material: Iron Completeness: Complete

Spatial metadata

Region: South East (European Region)

County or Unitary authority: Hampshire (County)

District: Basingstoke and Deane (District)

To be known as: Basingstoke

Spatial coordinates

Grid reference source: GPS (From FLO)

Unmasked grid reference accurate to a 0.01 metre square.

Discovery metadata

Method of discovery: Metal detector

Discovery circumstances: Initial find by metal detetector; subsequently excavated by Basingstoke

Archaeological Society

General landuse: Cultivated land

Stead, I.M. and Rigby, V., 1989 *Verulamium: the King Harry Lane Site* English Heritage

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