

Fig. 6. Ebbsfleet, Thanet. Early-Mid Iron Age pottery.

use of bold colour contrasts: dark untreated self-coloured body surfaces and areas of applied red-finish. Main design elements are then further emphasised by white (? chalk) slip, painted on as linear borders, or as main design elements over-painted within (mostly) dark self-coloured zones (Fig. 6, 7-9). Two-colour combinations, white painted on an untreated or red-finished ground, are relatively rare (Fig. 6, inset A); it is the more complex polychrome technique that is the dominant style.

Designs, in both instances are mostly simple, effective and geometric (e.g., Fig. 6, 9 and inset). The design represented by sherd no. 7 is technically the most complex recorded to date. The two suggested, idealised, reconstructions (7a-b) are based on general contemporary design trends and logical deductions from the sherd itself. Reconstruction 7a is personally favoured as the most likely original design, principally because crossing diagonals, within a square, are one of the commonest design-elements recorded to date (Fig. 6, inset A and B). The overall design is nicely linked to a bi-chrome painted jar from Barham Downs (inset, A)<sup>4</sup>, and the internal diagonal element to a polychrome painted bowl from Highstead's Period 3B (inset, B)<sup>5</sup>, and to another example from Sarre, a large Early-Mid Iron Age settlement producing rusticated coarse wares, red-finished and polychrome-painted fine wares.<sup>6</sup> The present example is so far unique in having the normal design further sub-divided into four small squares within the overall square frame, the alternately-coloured plain and red-finished zones, between the lines, creating a sub-swastika pattern. The relative

<sup>4</sup> N. Macpherson Grant (1980) Fig. 4, 8; see n. 3.

<sup>5</sup> P. Couldrey (Forthcoming) Fig. 81, 368; see n. 30.

<sup>6</sup> A Trust for Thanet Archaeology Site (SFS/91); D. Perkins (Forthcoming).

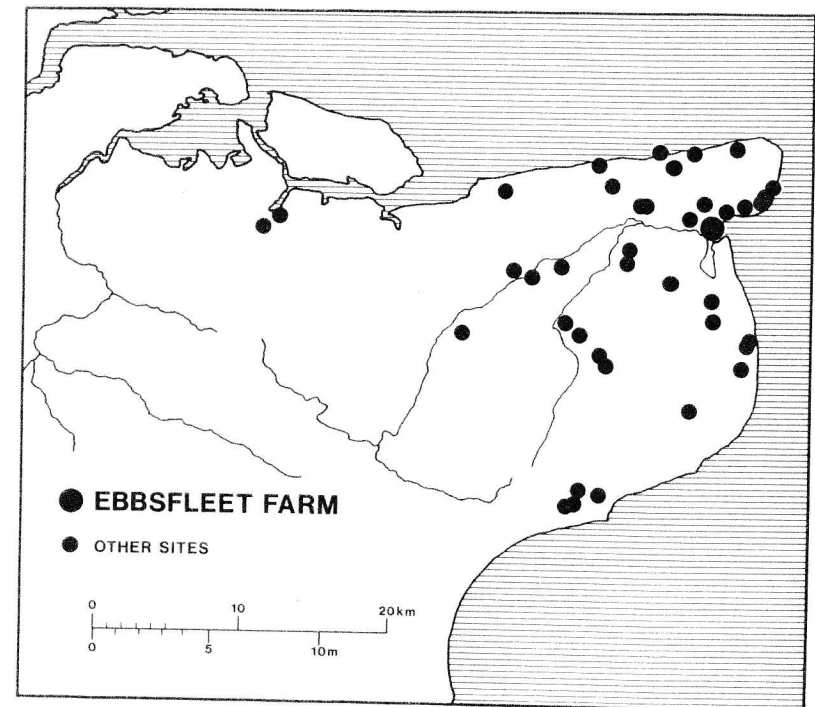


Fig. 7. Ebbsfleet, Thanet. Distribution of sites in Kent producing Early-Mid Iron Age rusticated pottery.

application-skill and complexity is only regionally matched to date, by a surface find from Barham Downs.<sup>7</sup>

It is the presence of rusticated pottery that allowed Highstead's Period 3B to be placed between c. 550/500-400 B.C., principally dated on the basis of Continental parallels. Though rustication appears to have gradually arrived (occurring in small quantities in Highstead Period 3A), it is only in the earlier Iron Age that the combination of rustication, red-and/or polychrome-finished vessels provides such a distinctive cultural package. A further internal regional cross-link is represented by Fig. 6, 6, a globular 'onion'-jar, formally related to the bi-chrome painted Barham Downs jar, itself initially placed between c. 500-350 B.C.<sup>8</sup> The presence of nos. 6 and 7, together with a large rusticated sherd, all from the same context, is a useful contribution to dating the use-span of rustication, not yet firmly fixed. The present inter-site linkage adds weight to its estimated currency lasting until c. 350 B.C., though perhaps not in regular use as late as c. 300 B.C. Globular-bodied fine ware jars with

<sup>7</sup> An unexpectedly well-preserved field-walking find (Mrs. J. Roberts) Royal Museum, Canterbury, Accession No. RM8780.

<sup>8</sup> B. Cunliffe 'Overall Discussion of the Iron Age Pottery' in N. Macpherson-Grant (1980), 179; see n. 3.