GOLD CUPS

1. Ringlemere, Woodnesborough, Kent, England
British Museum 2003 5-1 1.
Figs 22 & 40, Pls. 3–12, Colour Pls 1–3
Described fully in Chapter 3

Dimensions

Body
Estimated original height 123mm
Estimated height of lower body to shoulder 78mm
Estimated diameter of rim 109mm

Table: Dimensions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Dimension</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Estimated diameter of top rib (no 19)</td>
<td>84.5mm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Estimated diameter of shoulder (rib 11)</td>
<td>96mm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Estimated diameter of crest of bottom rib</td>
<td>64.5mm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diameter at base of bottom rib</td>
<td>58.5–62.5mm (→60.5)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diameter omphalos</td>
<td>12mm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Linear surface distance from rim to carination</td>
<td>58mm (excluding rib/cusp detail)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Horizontal breadth of shoulder</td>
<td>10mm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Depth omphalos</td>
<td>2.0mm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thickness at rim</td>
<td>0.8–0.9mm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Weight</td>
<td>183.7g</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 40 Ideal reconstruction of the Ringlemere gold cup. Scale 67%. [cat. no. 1]
**Handle**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Specification</th>
<th>Measurement</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Surface length (excluding tabs)</td>
<td>52mm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minimum width</td>
<td>21.8mm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maximum width (upper tab)</td>
<td>37.5mm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thickness of handle edge</td>
<td>c. 0.3mm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Breadth of groove/rib bands</td>
<td>8–8.5mm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Length of top rivets</td>
<td>c. 3.3mm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diameter of rivet heads</td>
<td>3.0–3.5mm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Length internal washers</td>
<td>9.5–10mm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Width internal washers</td>
<td>7–8mm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Length external washers</td>
<td>8–9.5mm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Width external washers</td>
<td>7mm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Distance between internal washers and rim</td>
<td>1.3–2.9mm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gaps between internal washers</td>
<td>1.0–2.0mm</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Punched dot decoration**

- 62 dots
- Negative imprint diameter: c. 0.7mm
- Positive boss diameter: 1.0–1.2mm
- Distance from rim: c. 1.5mm

---

**2. Rillaton, Cornwall, England**

British Museum (on loan from the Crown).

Fig. 41, Colour Pls 5–7

**Context and circumstances**

The Rillaton gold cup was found in 1837 during stone-robbery by workmen of a cairn on Bodmin Moor, Liskeard, Cornwall. A cist at the edge of the mound and above the old ground surface contained decayed human bones (taken by Gerloff to be cremated), the cup, a bronze dagger, a pot, a ‘rivet’, pieces of ‘ivory’, and a few ‘glass beads’. The last are usually presumed to be faience beads. All but the cup and broken dagger (Type Camerton; Gerloff 1975, 107) are lost. The primary published account is Smirke’s (1867), 30 years after the event; in it he notes the probability that the cup was inside a larger pottery vessel with a covering stone; the pot was broken when being disengaged from the stone. All this information derives from the workmen’s accounts.

Recently a letter has come to light in the West Devon Records Office in Plymouth from Phipps Hornby to Henry Woollacombe, a Plymouth antiquarian (papers 710/772 – Jane Marchand pers. comm.; Colour Pl. 7). It was written a few days after the discovery, noting that the cup had been found within a ceramic vessel, and lying with it ‘a skeleton a sword and a spearhead’. An accompanying sketch of the cup clearly shows a rounded base (Colour Pl. 6). The cairn was on Duchy land and the contents were thus the property of William IV, who died in that year. Hawkes published an account of the subsequent history of the cup insofar as it can be reconstructed (Hawkes 1983). In summary, Queen Victoria and Prince Albert had the cup and dagger in their Swiss Cottage private museum in the grounds of Osborne House; after Victoria’s death it was transferred to Marlborough House. George V had it taken to Buckingham Palace where it was kept in his private apartments. The dagger remained at Osborne, wrongly labelled, and was identified by ‘the Matron’ soon after the death of George V. Hawkes trawled the Swiss Cottage for the missing items in 1936 to no avail. The cup and dagger remain on permanent loan to the British Museum.

**Condition**

Because of its protection within a stone-lined cist, and apparently also within a pottery vessel, the Rillaton cup has not suffered the gross crushing or distortion seen in some others. Nevertheless, it has had a long history out of the ground and there is a fair amount of damage which could be a combination of both ancient and modern. Post-discovery polishing has left all the high zones of the corrugated topography very bright, while the recesses between retain reddish patina to a variable extent. Inside the mouth and neck polishing is similarly thorough and this has severely rounded the in situ rivet and its washer, but it diminishes downwards, as shown by increasing traces of the patina. Some zones, such as close to the rim, are associated with relatively coarse striations (under magnification) and look heavily worn by this polishing; the rim is rounded with tiny scrapes. If earlier use-wear contributed to the wear, which is possible, unfortunately this cannot now be demonstrated. Surface reduction would account for the sudden changes in dot diameter in the pointillé row at the top of the uppermost rib, if these have been truncated and were originally struck to varying depths.

There is a long tear descending from the rim almost to the carination and several shorter ones trapped within the body, all on an approximately vertical axis. Minor buckles and many fine stress cracks frequently border these splits. Elsewhere there are linear zones with similar stress fractures which have not split open. The body generally bears many small dents and buckles. The handle is in similar condition with transverse instead of vertical cracks; one at least (at its base) ran all the way across. It has also been altered at the top and soldered at both upper and lower fixings as part of a 19th-century (pre-1867) restoration. It now appears, on the evidence of both the watercolour sketch contemporary with the discovery and renewed inspection of the cup, that the handle has been restored wrongly. The watercolour shows the upper handle approaching the vessel at the level of the uppermost rib, not at the rim as currently restored; the tab was then bent upwards to be riveted to the plain band between rim and rib. The upper handle had at some point, probably after discovery, been ripped away from the body; this had left one rivet still clasping a small fragment of the tab in situ. That fragment shows an extremely thin edge along the top which would have been the original position of the tab’s terminal, running virtually level with the rim. The lower, broken edge of the in situ tab fragment takes a diagonal line which would in fact be joined by the line of the break on the major part of the tab remaining attached to the handle if this were to be turned back upwards, as originally orientated.

The major tab portion likewise has a fine end (now pointing downwards). Because of a tear, it is probably now barely joined to the handle, but the tear has been filled with solder. The two rivets and washers that grip this portion are indeed modern brass (XRF analyses), as implied by the incorrect orientation of the tab. We cannot now know how damaged the original fixings were, but whatever may have remained in situ was obviously removed in order to re-attach the upper handle. The bending of the tab through about 180° may have involved some working; this probably accounts for the slightly puckered nature of a 3–4mm band of the handle alongside the rim. Re-attachment also gave rise to several distinctive scratches and gougings on the body surface around the upper rivet line.
The handle had evidently at some stage torn totally away from its lower tab – the latter remains *in situ* with all three original rivets and their washers. Detachment could easily account for small distortions in the body close by and a tear alongside the right-hand end of the tab. A small corner is also missing from the handle side of the break. In order to re-attach it, the handle has been slightly overlapped with the upturned stump from the tab and the gap filled with solder. There are coarse grinding marks running alongside this join and cutting through reddish patina, probably preparing the surface for keying the solder.

The sides of the handle have mini-crimping, denting and burring at intervals and there is too much interference to assess ancient wear. There are, however, two tiny perforations pierced more or less symmetrically through the lower part of the handle which appear to be ancient, for there is no bright metal around them. As often with ancient piercings through sheet metal, the metal around has simply been allowed to split radially where it will, the intervening flaps being pushed inwards. Later the flaps were partially pressed back to close up the holes. They would have been up to 1mm in diameter when open. The handle furrows have been reamed out to varying degrees; on the right side the tool used tends to have left angular edges which interrupt a previously sinuous profile.

An equally important alteration can be shown in the form of the base. There has long been a suspicion that the roughly flattened base is the product of alteration for there are irregularities of various kinds (described below). This has recently found confirmation from the contemporary watercolour sketch. While not precise in every detail – in particular the overall proportions are wrong – this depiction shows the curve of the lower body continuing all the way from rib 11 at the carination to rib 1. It gives the appearance of a flat base inside rib 1, but this could be due to the slightly oblique angle of view. By the time Smirke published a woodcut in 1867 (Smirke 1867), the cup evidently had a flattish base beneath rib 4. This is more-or-less the case today, but in fact circumferential changes in the damaged profile mean that the rib currently acting as ‘footring’ varies between ribs 3 and 5; Smirke’s illustrator may have schematised the situation to make the cup look neat and undamaged. Indeed, just as the earlier watercolour showed the cup a little too fat in the body, this woodcut portrayed it a little too narrow.

In reassessing the nature of distortion in the base zone, an open mind has been kept as to whether the contemporary artist had partly worked from memory and misrepresented the lower body. He had faithfully represented the number of ribs – 16 – and, although the body is shown too fat, he does recognise that there is something of an angle in the profile at rib 11, ie a carination. He also has the handle attached at the correct points.

![Figure 41: Ideal reconstruction of the Rillaton gold cup. Scale 67%. (cat. no. 2)](image-url)
of the profile. It seems unlikely then that the draughtsman mis-represented the lower body to the point that a flattened base inside rib 4 was shown as continuing the rounded profile above. This is strongly supported by examination of the cup itself.

Today the area inside rib 4 is belled upwards – superficially as an omphalos. While a broad omphalos seems to be a feature of the Saint-Fiacre cup, at Rillaton it is associated with other features that suggest another explanation. Firstly, the average plane of the smaller ribs inside is tilted relative to the ‘footring’ formed by rib 4. Secondly, ribs 4, 5 and one side of 6 have pronounced lobate profiles which are not consistent all round and, indeed, the spatial relationship between these three ribs varies since they fluctuate from the horizontal plane. Thirdly, the character of ribs 1–3 and to some extent 4, is very different from the rest – they are sharply cuspe mouldings rather than the sinuous corrugations of the body. While this distinction could have been a deliberate design feature, this is unlikely because of the poor attention to regularity contrasting with the corrugations. Ribs 1–3 show irregularities in height and sharpness, while there are intermittent subtle angles around their otherwise circular circuits. All of these features can be explained as resulting from forces of tension created during compression of a previously cupped base into the rigid frame created by higher ribs. On this hypothesis the lowest ribs would originally also have been sinuous, but became compressed into ridges. Some of the tension created during compression was relieved by pushing the base right through to form the superficial omphalos.

### Description

Working from the conclusions drawn above and the early watercolour, the original form can be reconstructed thus. All ribs were in fact part of a continuously corrugated profile, unlike the cupping ones on the Ringlemere vessel. Their amplitude decreased towards the base, as would be natural and easiest for the craftsman to achieve as the body diameter became progressively smaller. The small zone of 9mm diameter within rib 1 is not securely reconstructed; the current small boss (about 5mm diameter) is rather irregular in shape, but may be distorted by the forces exerted during compression. It is not impossible, however, that this boss is entirely secondary.

Despite the uninterrupted corrugations, the craftsman has been able to give the cup a gently carinated profile in aggregate very similar to many of the parallels; the median line of the profile has the break of angle falling at rib 11. The lower body exhibits a steady convex curve, the upper one a gentle concave curve narrowest at ribs 13 an 14 and expanding upwards to the rim more than downwards to the carination. Only the top 6mm of the wall beneath the rim is free of corrugations. The rim is currently rather rounded, but may once have been more flattopped.

Aside from the corrugations, the only body decoration is a short stretch of faint and enigmatic pointhill in two rows just below the rim to the right of the handle (Kinnes 1994, A26; Needham 2000a, fig 13). A longer row of 31 dots extends for 25mm, sited at the crease between uppermost rib and rim band. Immediately below at the handle end is a very short second row of six dots. All are very fine, but under magnification they vary in diameter from 0.1–0.35mm and in detailed shape from oval to round to sub-triangular. It is possible that these have been somewhat truncated by heavy wear/polishing. While this process might account for the total removal of some dots, ie those originally most shallow, the fact that there is no trace of dots anywhere else around the circumference, makes it unlikely that the extant stretch was ever part of a continuous dot row such as seen on most other metal vessels.

The handle is gently waisted in face view, expanding marginally less towards the bottom than the top. The curved sides are outlined by sets of five grooves, between which only a narrow hourglass-shaped panel remains plain. The grooves were originally formed as sinuous corrugations; the cycle of oscillation was not quite complete for the outermost ones. The top of each groove ends in a neat arch apparently undamaged by the reworking just above; the bases are obscured by the reattachment to the lower fixing. Sharp turns at top and bottom of the handle create short tabs which are riveted to the body. Currently both tabs turn inwards, but, as described above, the upper junction is incorrectly restored and the tab originally turned upwards after the handle met the body at the top of the top rib. The early illustration shows the handle to bell up a little from the upper fixing, before curving round to the lower one. However, this could already have been pushed in towards the body wall and our ideal reconstruction (Fig. 41) offers a more bulbous profile with a more horizontal top.

The lower fixings are all in situ, three rivets in a line, as is one of the upper rivets. All have lozenge-shaped washers inside and out, the former aligned vertically, the latter horizontally because of the confined space given by the tabs.

### Dimensions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Body</th>
<th>Present maximum height (rim to rib 4)</th>
<th>84mm</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Estimated original height</td>
<td>95mm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Diameter of rim</td>
<td>84–87mm (→85.5mm)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Diameter of neck (rib 14)</td>
<td>68.5–73mm (→70.5mm)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Diameter rib 12</td>
<td>72.3–73mm (→72.5mm)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Diameter carination (rib 11)</td>
<td>76.5–79mm (→77.5mm)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Diameter rib 8</td>
<td>72.5–73.5mm (→73.5mm)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Diameter rib 6</td>
<td>56–63.5mm (→66mm)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Diameter rib 5</td>
<td>41.5–42.5mm (→42mm)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Diameter rib 3</td>
<td>31.5–32.5mm (→32mm)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Diameter rib 2</td>
<td>19.5–21mm (→20mm)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Diameter rib 1</td>
<td>9.5–11mm (→10mm)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thickness</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thickness</td>
<td></td>
<td>0.3–0.5mm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thickness body (crack above carination)</td>
<td>0.1–0.15mm</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Weight</td>
<td></td>
<td>76.6g</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Handle</th>
<th>Maximum extant width of handle top</th>
<th>25.3mm</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Maximum extant width handle bottom</td>
<td>24.5mm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Minimum width</td>
<td>21.1mm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Surface length (excluding tabs)</td>
<td>c. 48mm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Thickness</td>
<td>0.1–0.2mm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Internal rivet-head diameters</td>
<td>c. 2.0mm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>External rivet-head diameters</td>
<td>c. 2.5mm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rivet lengths</td>
<td></td>
<td>c. 2.2–2.5mm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Measurable rivet washers: lengths</td>
<td>4.9–5.5mm</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>widths</td>
<td></td>
<td>3.5–4.2mm</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Composition

- **Body**: silver c. 10 %, copper 0.7 %, tin 0.2 %, antimony trace
- **Handle**: silver c. 25 %, copper 0.38 %, tin 0.082 %, nickel trace

(Hartmann 1982, 100 tables 6 & 7, Au 3113, 3114)
The overall form is rather squat, a near hemispherical lower body being surmounted by a concave necked upper part of lesser depth. The roundedness of the lower body is interrupted only by a neat small central omphalos. The profile of the carination is a little variable around the vessel. Where least damaged by denting, to the right of the handle, it appears as a fairly well defined angle; elsewhere the angularity, if originally present, has been smoothed. The neck profile is not an even curve; instead there is a tighter curve low down which generally creates a sloping shoulder down to the carination. Locally (opposite the handle) this is more accentuated by the hint of a crease separating shoulder from neck. Similarly at the top of the neck the curvature becomes stronger as it flares to the rim. The mouth stands at an angle of about 45°.

The handle is a ribbon of sheet metal, symmetrically waisted in face view with gracefully curved sides. The latter are each outlined by bands of three grooves which are in fact neat corrugations of the metal such that they appear in opposite relief on the underside. The handle edges are thin. In profile the handle has a rather slack curvature keeping it relatively close to the body wall. The two end tabs are turned sharply inwards to align with the respective parts of the wall for attachment. These sharp turns give rise to a straight fold which does not match the curve of the rim and carination respectively; hence, while the handle’s corners are set close to rim or carination, respectively, in the middle they are 2–3 mm adrift. The handle tabs have a straight end with rounded corners.

Attachment to the body is by means of a row of four rivets top and bottom, each rivet clamping a washer both internally and externally. The washers are of a consistent rather rounded diamond shape, but while those under the handle are all horizontally set because of the limited space available, on the inside of the vessel the lower row is horizontal and the upper aligned vertically. Visible rivet heads show minor cracks and irregularities around their lips, undoubtedly formed during clenching.

Two rows of dots have been punched from the outside immediately below the rim. The rows are not entirely parallel to the rim, and the dot spacing is not especially regular. There are 105 dots in the upper row and 95 or 96 in the lower row, being variably aligned with or staggered from the former. The dots cease at the handle and the rows curl up a fraction indicating that this decoration was executed after the handle was fixed.
Condition
Generally the vessel has retained its original shape with only minor disfigurements. However, while the ribbed parts have suffered limited denting due to their rigidity, the plain lower wall shows copious denting which becomes progressively worse lower down. The wall meets the flattish base in a rough and variable obtuse angle; immediately inside is a variably sharp groove before the neat concentric base ribs. It is considered that the ‘base angle’ and internal groove are largely the products of distortion, the body having been compressed a little at this point of the profile. However, since there is no evidence of gross distortion of the base itself (just minor dimpling of the central roundel), it would appear that its current very slightly convex form is original.

The rim exhibits minor crimping all round and there is a 35mm stretch with a more ragged indent.

Figure 42 Ideal reconstruction of the Fritzdorf gold cup. Scale 67%. [cat. no. 3]

4. Gölenkamp, Kr. Grafschaft Bentheim, Niedersachsen, Germany
Private collection (Schloss Burgsteinfurt). Studied by kind permission of the owner whilst on loan to the Germanischen Nationalmuseum, Nürnberg.
Fig. 43, Colour Pl. 9

Context and circumstances
In 1840 a gold vessel was found during sand extraction on the Spöllberg at Gölenkamp. It had been placed as a cover on a ceramic vessel which does not survive (Fröhlich 1992). There had been eight burial mounds at Gölenkamp; mound 1 – considered to be the likely findspot for the cup – was dug into at some time before 1877 and about a third of it removed. A Dr. Müller completed the excavation in 1877, fully demolishing the mound. Mention was made of an urn beneath a large stone, charcoal and cremated bone.
Figure 43 Ideal reconstruction of the Gölenkamp gold cup. Scale 67%. [cat. no. 4]
### Description
A slightly convex base comprises a central roundel and six encircling ribs. The first five are of similar dimensions, up to 0.5mm in amplitude each, but the outermost one is larger, even when measured from the internal groove. The best reconstruction of the lower wall has it springing from outside the sixth rib initially at a wide angle, but rapidly and smoothly curving upwards. It meets the first rib in a crisp angle at about one-third of the height of the body. Three stout horizontal ribs alternate with boss rows and this is capped off with a band of four corrugations of similar amplitude to the basal ones. The stout ribs are all of neat hemispherical profile, but vary in detailed dimensions; average widths are between 9.5–10mm, while the height of the lowest rib, up to 3.8mm, contrasts with the other two, up to 2.5mm. The bosses are sub-conical and are also more consistent from row to row with typical diameters of 7mm in the uppermost and 8mm in the others. Because of the contracting circumference of the vessel the number of bosses accommodated falls from 54 at the top to 46 and then 41. They are mainly near-contiguous and one pair in the top row is particularly tightly set.

### Dimensions
- **Present height**: 114.5mm
- **Estimated original height**: 116.5mm
- **Diameter of mouth**: 147.2 x 152.2 (±149mm)
- **Diameter beneath lowest wall rib**: c. 112.5–114mm
- **Diameter outside outer base rib**: 53mm
- **Diameter of base roundel**: 15.5mm
- **Thickness at rim**: 0.4–0.5mm
- **Weight**: 255g

### Composition
Silver c. 24 %, copper 0.46 %, tin 0.077 %, nickel c. 0.03 % (Hartmann 1970, 108 table 14, Au 1756)

### Manufacture, wear
The angles flanking the stout body ribs have been given extra definition by punching from the outside – linear tool-marks can be seen. This appears to have been done at a late stage for the punching tends to impinge on the boss edges top and bottom.

The insides of the bosses have a ‘double-action’ profile with a deeper indent at the centre of the shallow cone. The deeper part is actually consistently off-centre downwards and this is very likely due to having been struck by an obliquely set narrower punch coming in from above the rim opposite. It is possible this was a secondary action to the initial basic formation of the conical bosses to give them better definition.

### Condition
Generally the body is in good condition, but it is suggested that the currently flattened base zone, containing up to seven corrugations, is a result of subsequent pressure. The micro-topography of the corrugations in this zone is rather erratic and some of the amplitudes between crest and furrow have been exaggerated by the compression of an overall curved profile into a flattened plane. Inside the smallest definite rib, there is an area of complex topography about 18mm in diameter (Hardmeyer and Bürgi 1975, 112 abb. 6; Bürgi and Könne 1975, pl. IX lower). Although it includes some roughly concentric raised rings, they bifurcate and have lateral spurs; on balance it is thought more likely that these have arisen from the compression of a plain well-domed surface.

There has also been a tiny amount of compression in the neck causing the narrowing of greater or lesser parts of two adjacent furrows. Slight undulations in the line of the rim, as seen in profile, are associated with buckling. There are other localised elements of damage that have disfigured and occasionally obliterated embossed features.

### Description
Since there is no evidence for a flat base, the lower body would have described a graceful parabolic curve interrupted just above the mid-point by a gentle, but distinct change of angle. This carination is in fact emphasised by a rib. Above, the neck has a gentle concave curve expanding towards a moderately out-turned mouth.

The convex basal roundel was enclosed by a zone of six small corrugations. These are now much distorted, but were probably fairly regular in their execution and spacing. Immediately above is a single row of 33 sub-conical bosses, each around 3.7mm in diameter and up to 0.8mm in relief. Their tops tend to be slightly flattened and one has been double-struck.

A single rib divides this lower boss row from a deep field comprising four panels of diagonal ribs. The latter are 2–3.5mm broad and form continuous corrugations within their near-rectangular frames. The vertical divisions between panels are broader ribs, 4–6.5mm wide and generally tapering downwards, and are further defined by small flanking furrows. The latter tend to have a shallow V-profile with a crease along the bottom.

Between these hatched panels and the carination a neatly cabled rib is underlined by three plain ribs and topped with a fourth. The individual ‘twists’ of the cable have a subtle S shape and are 3–3.5mm broad. Next, at the carination, there is a more pronounced rib with a row of bosses both above and below. The rib is rounded in profile where well preserved, 5.5mm broad and up to 2.3mm in relief. The flanking boss rows are different from one another: the lower one has 45 sub-conical bosses which are mostly contiguous, 5.5–6mm in diameter and up to 1.3mm high; the upper one has as many as 83 smaller hemispherical bosses, again contiguous, 4mm in diameter and at most 0.5mm in relief. The boss counts given include one and two respectively where damage has effectively erased bosses, as well as two unusually closely set in the lower row. There is also a double-struck boss there.

The neck is less complicated in design, the morphology being simply a continuous sequence of 12 corrugations.

---

5. Eschenz, Kanton Thurgau, Switzerland

Museum des Kantons Thurgau, Frauenfeld. Studied with the permission of Jost Bürgi whilst on loan to the Germanisches Nationalmuseum, Nürnberg.

Fig. 44, Colour Pl. 10

**Context and circumstances**

The gold vessel from Eschenz was found in 1916 during railway construction; it entered a private collection where it went unnoticed until 1974, when it was given to the Museum of the Canton of Thurgau (Menghin and Schauer 1983, 71). Hardmeyer and Bürgi (1975) noted that no accompanying objects had been observed. The Eschenz region is at the outflow of the Untersee into the upper Rhine.
However, the top two grooves have rows of punched dots along them and are a little narrower than the others, perhaps as a result of the punching having deepened the groove. Although fairly evenly spaced, the dots appear to have been individually punched with a circular, slightly domed tool point. Under magnification spacing is not especially regular and they are not especially well aligned. Dot positions in one row are not in phase with those in the other; indeed, while spacing is mainly between 4–4.5 dots per centimetre in the upper row, it is between 5–5.5 in the lower.

Finally, at the mouth is the only plain band on the whole vessel, around 10mm deep. At its base, immediately above the dotted grooves, there is an inconsistent and extremely light crease. The rim is flat-topped with minor facets. The metal at the neck is seen (through small tears) to be much thinner than at the rim.

**Dimensions**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dimension</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Present height</td>
<td>111mm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Estimated original height</td>
<td>118mm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diameter of rim</td>
<td>110mm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diameter of neck</td>
<td>c. 90mm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diameter of carination</td>
<td>97–100mm (→98.5)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Present diameter of flattened base</td>
<td>43.5mm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diameter of rib encircling original base roundel</td>
<td>22mm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thickness of rim</td>
<td>0.8–0.9mm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Weight</td>
<td>136g</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Composition**

Silver 25 %, copper 0.45 %, tin 0.02 % (Hartmann 1982, 100 table 7, Au 4902)

**Manufacture, wear**

No evidence was noted.

**Context and circumstances**

The gold vessel portion from Lan ar Croaz was found in the mid-19th century and melted down soon afterwards; only a drawing of the portion survives (Eluère 1982, 102 fig 122). A gold spoon was discovered at the same time and acquired by the Bibliothèque Nationale. The find circumstances and exact provenance are far from clear (Briard 1965, 76), though Briard (1984, 223) notes that the find was made in 1840 'near' the tumulus of Le Roudoulu, and admits the possibility that the objects might have come from a burial.

**Condition**

Apparently the upper half of a two-part vessel. The depiction shows no obvious damage to this portion.

**Description**

The upper body had a smooth concave profile, the curvature evidently increasing towards a well out-turned rim. A row of close-set fine dots is shown immediately beneath the rim, presumably representing pointillé ornament. This is interrupted on the far side by a row of seven larger features which can be interpreted as rivet heads for securing a handle, as seen on some of the other metal cups. It is possible that these represent both rivets and washers, but if so the latter are small and seemingly round.

The bottom edge is apparently neatly fashioned and is angled inward relative to the main profile. The flange thereby created is deep enough to accommodate a row of rivet holes, 13 of which are depicted. The lower body would therefore have been a separate piece of metal joined immediately below a carination by rivets, a construction otherwise only known on the Saint-Adrien silver cup. Briard recognised the strong similarity between these two examples (1984, 134–6). The handle could have been a third separate component, riveted to the body at both ends. However, the analogy with Saint-Adrien allows an
alternative possibility in which the handle would have been a linear extension drawn out from one side of the lower body, thus requiring fixing only at its top end, close to the rim. That such a lower component could be achieved is demonstrated not only by the Saint-Adrien parallel, but also by the associated spoon or ladle at Ploumilliau itself (Eluère 1982, 103 fig. 123). Other than the obvious fact that its bowl is elliptical rather than round, this object would have closely resembled the form of the cup's lower body plus handle prior to assembly.

**Dimensions**
- Height of portion: c. 90mm
- Maximum diameter (rim): c. 110mm

**Manufacture, wear**
None known.

7. No provenance ('South Germany')
Private collection (Switzerland). Description and drawing based on Wamser and Gebhard 2001.

**Fig. 46**

**Context and circumstances**
This cup came to attention relatively recently when it was displayed in the Museum für Vor- und Frühgeschichte, Munich in 2002 in the context of a special exhibition, *Gold: Magic Mythos Macht*. At the time of writing it is in a private collection; its provenance is unknown but said to be South German.

**Condition**
There appears to be no loss, but there is a significant amount of buckling around the rim and part is crushed downward a little. The lower body also shows denting and a small degree of distortion, but the major part of the body appears to have suffered little damage.

**Description**
The lower body is strongly convex, curving in to a rounded base. If the base is flattened at all, this must be confined to the small central roundel which is encircled by concentric rilling, or corrugations. Approximately half-way up the vessel the profile angles at a moderate carination emphasised by a double corrugation with a third corrugation immediately above. The wall contracts gently and steadily to the neck, this part being occupied first by a shallow plain zone then by three more corrugations. Above, the body evidently flared strongly towards the rim, even allowing for some exaggeration caused by later pressure. Currently the rim, which is thin and simple, fluctuates around the horizontal.

The concentric corrugations already described with the addition of a single one a little below the carination divide the wall into four registers, three of which contain more elaborate decoration. The deep basal register has four broad vertical bands of vertical rills. These leave blank triangular fields in between as the body expands; each triangle is topped by a single horizontal rill. The register above is shallow and occupies the girth of the vessel. Positioned directly above each of the rilled bands below is an elongate oval motif, defined by a groove into which dots have been punched. The intervening gaps are filled with vertical rills, these therefore being offset from the comparable panels below.

The uppermost decorative register, from neck to rim, employs yet different motifs, but again utilising pointillé rows. Immediately under the rim are two delicate rows punched from the outside. Suspended from this are perhaps 16 pendant triangles, the double dot rows here being set in double grooves.

There is no evidence for a former handle.
Chapter 9: Catalogue of Early Bronze Age Precious Cups in North-West Europe

Dimensions
Present height c. 98mm
Maximum diameter (carination) c. 94mm
Weight c. 90g

Manufacture, wear
Nothing known.

SILVER CUPS

8. Brun Bras, Saint-Adrien, Côtes d’Armor, France
Fig. 47, colour Pl. 11

Context and circumstances
A number of fragments of a silver cup came from the tumulus of Brun-Bras, Saint-Adrien. The cup was restored sufficiently to obtain a profile (Briard 1984, 134 fig. 83 1–3, 225–6). The tumulus was excavated in 1974; it comprised a barrow with a central cairn over a wooden mortuary structure set in subsoil. Traces of a wooden box or coffin were found against the north wall; the cup is thought to have lain near the head of the corpse which had totally decayed. The grave assemblage included 20 flint arrowheads, a bronze flat axe and a dagger of which the hilt had been decorated with tiny gold nails; 5 small gold roundels (probably 6 originally) may have decorated the hilt or blade. A second dagger lay outside the coffin. A date of c. 2160–1920 cal. BC (at 2 sigma) was obtained from oak charcoal from the coffin or from the surviving lining of the mortuary structure; this may be a little early (Needham 2000b, 160).

Condition
Very corroded and fragmented vessel, now reconstructed; about 50% missing. More than half of the handle is also lacking; this is the upper part including the riveted fixing to the mouth.

Description
Enough survives to be confident of its shape and its construction from two portions. The lower body is hemispherical with no indication of any flattened area or omphalos, although this might conceivably be on a missing fragment. It terminates at a horizontal ‘rim’ which externally overlaps the upper body to allow riveting. At this junction the upper portion has an angled flange thus creating a moderate carination; the lower body projects just beyond the overlap.

The rivets are washer-less and are not entirely regular in spacing or alignment. They continue across the base of the...
handle which is a strip drawn out from the metal of the lower body. In profile the handle diverges slightly from the line of the body below; its shape is otherwise uncertain due to poor condition. One rivet emplacement appears to survive on a rim fragment where the handle would originally have been fixed.

The upper body has a continuously curving profile, accentuating towards a well flared mouth. Immediately below the simple rim is a row of very fine pointillé. Briard also mentions that there are traces of such decoration on the handle (1984, 225; also Clarke et al. 1985, 310), but the lay-out is not shown.

Dimensions
- Reconstructed height: 122mm
- Reconstructed rim diameter: 106mm
- Reconstructed neck diameter: 70mm
- Reconstructed carination diameter: 86mm
- Thickness: c. 1mm

Manufacture, wear
Nothing known.

Context and circumstances
The tumulus at Saint-Fiacre-en-Melrand produced fragments of a silver vessel when excavated in 1897 (Aveneau de la Grancière 1898). The surviving plan is not very detailed (a schematic version is published by Needham 2000b, 173 fig 13). The tomb was a dry stone chamber covered by a granite slab; the wood-lined floor rested on a paved area laid on the old ground surface (Briard 1984, 292). Associated with the cup was a rich assemblage: a Vollgriffdolch (Rhône type), the blades of some nine more daggers, two bronze axes, two bronze arrowheads and an amber bracer-ornament, as well as a number of small gold-wire nails undoubtedly from a dagger hilt. No skeletal remains survived, but it has recently been suggested that these may represent accumulation from a few successive burials rather than a single grave group (Needham 2000b, 168–76).
Condition
The vessel is represented by a number of small fragments of sheet silver, virtually none joining one another; six larger ones are useful for reconstruction. Some fragments are thin without significant corrosion, others are thickened locally by lamination and extrusions. At the time of excavation, Aveneau de la Grancière (1898, 88, 93) thought the fragments to be bronze which had totally lost its patina. He attributed this to the action of fire despite the fact that no associated objects had been burnt. He noted that the fragments disintegrated at the slightest touch and were too broken up for reconstruction. Historically, whilst in the care of the Ashmolean Museum, they have been attached to a wooden core shaped to the form the cup was thought to take. However, renewed study suggests an alternative shape.

Description
The former reconstruction has a sub-conical lower body with rounded base, a sloped shoulder above a rounded carination, and a moderately flared upper body from neck to rim. The strong shoulder depended on a fragment with one edge turned through about 70° (and actually quite angular). However, there is another fragment with a much more subtle bend in profile, c. 30°, and the stronger bend is associated with a curvature far too tight to easily be accommodated at the carination. Assuming neither of these is distorted significantly, they come from different parts of the vessel and are best accommodated at carination and base respectively.

The longer profile springing from the strong bend representing the foot is convex and must belong to a sub-conical lower body. The best angle for the latter suggests that the base itself was raised internally, creating an omphalos. The lower wall rises thence in a gentle convex curve to a weak carination perhaps half-way up the profile. Very little of the carination itself survives, but the adjoining wall above is clearly concave. Contraction to the neck would have been limited before curving outward to a modestly flared mouth. Three fragments are likely to be rim sherds; that in the best condition thickens gradually towards the rim, although there is some minor lamination associated at the top. The flared mouth appears to have had marginal convexity. Away from the rim, the wall is of constant thickness.

There is no sign of a handle, but that could be due to the high degree of loss.

Dimensions
- Reconstructed height: c. 93mm
- Reconstructed rim diameter: c. 80mm
- Reconstructed neck diameter: c. 62mm
- Reconstructed carination diameter: c. 68mm
- Reconstructed foot diameter: c. 25mm
- Rim thickness (?corrosion thickened): 2.5mm
- Wall thickness: c. 1–1.5mm

Manufacture, wear
Nothing observed.

Figure 48 Ideal reconstruction of the Saint-Fiacre silver cup. Scale 67%. [cat. no. 9]
Chapter 9: Catalogue of Early Bronze Age Precious Cups in North-West Europe

AMBER CUPS

10. Clandon barrow, Martinstown, Dorset, England

Dorset County Museum, Dorchester.

Fig. 49

Context and circumstances

This amber vessel was found in 1882 in a barrow opened by Cunnington at Clandon (Winterborne St. Martin 31; Grinsell 1959). Drew and Piggott in their 1936 review of Cunnington's unpublished records note that his written account and his sketch do not always tally. The barrow stood 18½ feet (5.7m) high and Cunnington's trench struck a shallow flint 'cairn' at 7 feet (2.15m) down (Fig. 34). Scattered over this were a bronze dagger (of Gerloff's Armorico-British B, Cressingham type), a gold lozenge plaque, and a shale macehead with jet and gold stud fittings. The amber cup was in fragments, 'scattered amongst the flints and spread over a surface of two feet' (Cunnington's record, quoted in Drew and Piggott 1936, 19). An accessory cup was in scattered pieces beneath the cairn at a level still well above the old ground surface. A Collared Urn, crushed and resting on a 'thin stratum of ashes and small flints', was found 'at six feet from the centre surface and a foot from the flints' (ie a foot from the flint cairn). No human bone, cremated or otherwise, appears to have been recorded in any firm association with the amber cup and the other artifacts scattered over the cairn and this has invited comparison with other non-grave deposits of valuables at burial sites (Needham 1988a, 241; Woodward 2000, 105).

Condition

The surface is corroded to a very matt orangey-brown colour and appears lustreless under reflected light. Nevertheless, when light is shone through it from the inside the amber is still semi-translucent. There are small pock-scars, but otherwise the surface is largely smooth polished despite much fine crazing.

The sherds recovered represent roughly 75% of the original vessel and they survive in an early restoration. A significant portion of the upper body and rim is lacking and only two limited parts are filled in order to attach or secure the projecting rim sherds. There are also three tiny areas of infill on the upper body and three more, larger ones where sherds are missing in the more complete lower body. Some of these areas of infill are shown as unshaded zones in a pencil sketch in the Cunnington archive. This sketch would have been done by Cunnington's daughter, Alice, not long after excavation, showing that the current restoration is equally early, except for an extension to one of the upper pieces of infill to give added support to a rim sherd.

The early sketch shows two sherds apparently reaching the rim; this is also the case in the photograph in Abercromby's great corpus (Abercromby 1912, pl.LXII, 3a) and the 1936-published drawing (Drew and Piggott 1936, pl. II,3). One rim fragment, that bearing the upper stump of the handle, has since become detached. The second has also suffered attrition since these early depictions, such that virtually the whole of its top edge has been chipped to expose fresh amber.

Description

Shers are generally well aligned in the restoration and the restored diameter more-or-less correct. However, the attached rim sherd seems to be mis-positioned, being set both too high and tangentially skewed. Shallow flakes have been detached since excavation from either side of the join between the still mounted rim sherd and that below. Without dismantling, the relative position of the sherd can only be ascertained by reference to a diffuse internal bevel inside the neck. Other original sherds extend to 30mm above the carination before fracture and the best estimate regarding the near-rim sherd is that it would have extended a further 6mm. On this basis, with the lower body height unchanged at around 56mm, the overall height would be 92mm rather than the 100mm of the current restoration. The upper handle sherd, when attached to the restored vessel, was separated from the main profile by a piece of infill; it too possesses a thickening in profile which, when aligned with that on other neck sherds, confirms the lower overall height.

Original stretches of profile across the carination are all broadly similar, with convex curve beneath and concave above, but they vary in detail. This variation alone might suggest that the cup was not lathe turned. Indeed, just to the left of the handle, the carination turns down slightly from the horizontal. The small flat base is neatly circular and surrounded by a slightly rounded angle; its plane is not quite parallel to that through the carination.

The basal stump of the handle survives on one side.
immediately beneath the carination, but projects at most 5mm before the fracture, which is 5mm thick. Virtually all of the handle/body junction is present (extant width 36mm), the underside being a graceful concave line terminating at an acute angle with the left-hand side. The opposite end is clipped by a fracture, the sherd beyond being missing. The upper handle stump is highly damaged and only a little of its upper surface is original. This projects from the body at an obtuse angle just 4mm below a strongly-tapered rim.

Opposite the handle and below the carination is a shallow crescentic notch which does not penetrate more than about half way through the wall (unlike a larger damage notch below). There is a fracture line running along this notch and part of the wall above is now a restored portion. At first sight the notch appeared to be the result of another misalignment of conjoining sherds. However, the original internal surfaces are flush and the notch would seem to be an integral feature of the cup, at least in its final phase.

The lower facet of the notch, where intact, has a very smooth surface with a crisp basal edge. Towards the left it has been progressively removed by a fracture showing resonance-shatter. The upper facet grades more smoothly into the profile above. The cup was obviously susceptible to breaking along this line because the wall was thinner. The notch may be a result of working out a flaw in the amber or a mistake during production. However, the fact that it is symmetrical and diametrically opposite the handle encourages the possibility that it is an intended part of the design. A tiny dimple, 4mm in diameter and half removed by cracking and spalling, lies 10mm below the intended part of the design. A tiny dimple, 4mm in diameter and half removed by cracking and spalling, lies 10mm below the intended part of the design. A tiny dimple, 4mm in diameter and half removed by cracking and spalling, lies 10mm below the intended part of the design. A tiny dimple, 4mm in diameter and half removed by cracking and spalling, lies 10mm below the intended part of the design. A tiny dimple, 4mm in diameter and half removed by cracking and spalling, lies 10mm below the intended part of the design. A tiny dimple, 4mm in diameter and half removed by cracking and spalling, lies 10mm below the intended part of the design. A tiny dimple, 4mm in diameter and half removed by cracking and spalling, lies 10mm below the intended part of the design. A tiny dimple, 4mm in diameter and half removed by cracking and spalling, lies 10mm below the intended part of the design.

The upper facet grades more smoothly into the profile above. A similar resonance-shatter runs along a hinge fracture on the lower side of an intriguing crescent shaped (unrestored) gap in the lower body. Most of this fracture is smooth and not far off perpendicular to the wall’s thickness, but the hinge scar has spalled a further 3–4mm from the exterior surface. The upper edge of this crescentic gap also features a narrow hinge scar, the two strongly suggestive of pressure exerted from above on one or two occasions. The two fractures converge into a single line which then runs vertically through the carination and upper body.

11. Hove barrow, West Sussex, England
Brighton & Hove Museums R 5643.1
Fig. 50, Colour Pl. 12

Context and circumstances
Some years before 1856 an approach road to Hove railway station was cut through a mound, but nothing was recorded at that point. There was further removal of earth in 1856 to make a garden; at the centre of the remnant mound and about 9 feet (2.75m) down an oak coffin was struck, aligned approximately E–W (Phillips 1856). All but a knot crumbled away. Within the earth contained in the coffin were found some fragments of ‘curious bone, apparently charred’; in the central area of the coffin were an amber cup, a stone battleaxe, a perforated whetstone and a dagger, ‘as if … they had rested on the breast of the body’ (according to one of the workmen). The coffin lay on natural yellow clay; the mound comprised ‘surface earth and rubbish thrown up together’. The remains of the bones, coffin and mound were carted off to the garden. All the first-hand information came to Phillips via the workmen and the clerk of works of the estate where the tumulus stood. The finds were presented to Brighton Museum by Baron Goldsmid. A radiocarbon date was subsequently obtained from the remaining coffin fragment of 3190 ± 46 BP; 1610–1310 cal BC at 2 sigma (BM-682).

Condition
The cup is generally in very good condition. The handle was broken in three places, probably at the time of excavation, and the central part would seem to have become entirely detached. This has been refixed, but some adjoining chips are missing. The rim has six detached chips, two of which survive reattached to the body. Of the others, one has left a fresh surface, but the others are matt, weathered and probably ancient. A small spall has been detached from the base just off-centre. Two linear fissures at oblique angles in the wall (visible externally and internally) peter out into solid amber and must be flaws in the raw material, but have not obviously led to any perforation of the wall.

Description
Most of the body is close to hemispherical in form and of constant thickness. However, the short upper body has different profiles inside and out for the groove band, neck and rim. The neck is hollowed and just 9mm deep. It is recessed relative to the band carrying grooves immediately below as is the lower body.
The groove band is thus around 1mm proud of the flanking surfaces and is 9mm deep, but the five ‘V’-section grooves have been inscribed close together so as to effectively create a corrugated profile on a miniature scale.

The rim is slightly out-turned, its lip having both a flat vertical exterior (3–3.5mm deep) and a flat narrow top (2–2.5mm wide). The wall thickens internally towards a pair of very diffuse horizontal bevels at the neck (approximately 8 and 13mm below rim), before belling out a little into the main vessel.

The handle contracts from the feet to the middle giving strongly curved sides, viewed face on. However, from the top view it can be seen that the sides are actually planar cut-lines, tapering from the body outwards. After the initial cut, the flat sides of the handle were further trimmed so as to angle them in slightly towards the internal edge; this lessened the trapezoidality of the cross-section. The interior is neatly hollowed and the handle of fairly constant thickness (5–6mm). The part of the body wall straddled by the handle is thicker than elsewhere being flush with the raised groove band. This under-handle zone is gently curved and meets the walls to either side in a diffuse bevel. The handle has groove decoration to match that around the girth, a set of five grooves outlining either side. At the feet, just before they join the vessel wall, the design is closed off by transverse double-grooves, scored rather more heavily. That on the underside splay into three grooves at one end, perhaps due to an error during the cutting. In places the end grooves overlap the side ones.

**Dimensions**

**Body**
- Height: 65mm
- Diameter of rim: 87.5–89.5mm (extremes at c. 45° to one another)
- Thickness close to rim: c. 3mm
- Thickness at internal bevel: c. 7mm
- Thickness of base (centre): c. 6.5mm

**Handle**
- Depth of handle: 35mm
- Width of handle feet: 40mm (both)

**Manufacture, wear**

The flattened rim top conforms well to a plane, suggesting final grinding on a large flat block. Virtually all the exterior is extremely smooth and even, but the under-handle zone has slight undulations. There are numerous more-or-less circumferential fine striations on the lip, neck and just under the groove band, and others on the handle sides, but they are less evident on the lower body. This could be due to a finer finish or additional use-wear. Parts of the lower body retain vestiges of...
clawed tool-marks otherwise ground away; they are presumably relics from an earlier stage of coarse shaping. The inside of the vessel has diffuse but macroscopically visible scallop-like tool-marks on random alignments. Localised striations occur within the decorative grooves, being dependent on the detailed morphology of the pointed instrument used. The grooves do not follow a perfectly straight line and hence the space between any two varies from a sharp ridge to a narrow flat band. There is no obvious wear on the underside of the handle.

The body, although extremely well shaped, is not exactly circular; diameters vary between 87.5 and 89.5 mm. Taken in conjunction with the absence of any centering feature at the base, this argues for production by hand-turning rather than lathe-turning. The projection for the handle, being part of the same block, would anyway be an obstacle to continuous rotational trimming or grinding of the exterior surface.

To the right of the handle a short sharp vertical incision descends from the upper handle foot and partially intersects the ends of the grooves on the body. Given its position and alignment, it is highly likely to be a slight overcut into the body during final trimming of the right-hand side of the handle lug.

**SHALE CUPS**

**12. Wiltshire 1, England**
Salisbury & South Wiltshire Museum 191.

**Fig. 51**

**Context and circumstances**
Newall’s original publication of this pair of cups (nos 12 & 13; Newall 1927–29) made it clear that there was no record of their provenance. The assumption that they could have come from the Amesbury district relies entirely on that being the area of residence of the previous owner, Job Edwards. Without any documentation, the assumption that they were found near Amesbury, or indeed in the county, should be treated very circumspectly. No documented finds of precious cups come from so far inland in southern England.

It is intriguing that Edwards managed to obtain or excavate two unrecorded cups. It is extremely improbable that they would have come from two independent sites, in both cases being unreported finds. It might be inferred that these were either together in a single deposit, or that they were in two closely related contexts, recalling the two shale cups from two barrows on Broad Down, Farway (nos 14 & 15 below).

**Condition**
Restored, with missing portions filled; these include much of the upper body and a narrow strip running diagonally through lower body. Only about one-third of the rim is extant, but virtually the whole of the handle survives unbroken. In addition to the base of the handle, about one-sixth of the circumference of the carination remains (to its left). The main fractures and fissures on the body and base follow the bedding planes of the shale and it is probable that there has been some distortion of the vessel.

The internal surface is a little crazed but mainly in fair condition to show its original smooth-polished finish.

Figure 51 Ideal reconstruction of the Wiltshire 1 cup. Scale 67%.
[cat. no. 12]
Chapter 9: Catalogue of Early Bronze Age Precious Cups in North-West Europe

Description
The intact rim shows curvature varying between about 75 and 85mm diameter indicating an elliptic or asymmetric shape. The flatter side is alongside the stout handle, where there is no cracking from distortion. The loss of the greater part of the rim, however, makes it difficult to assess the degree to which non-circularity was original. Again, at the carination the wall immediately below the handle is less tightly curved than the segment alongside.

In profile the carination is moderate and crisp externally, sitting immediately above a groove band and running directly into the inner edges of the handle. However, this is not echoed in the inner profile which is instead a sinuous curve rising from a rounded bottom; this results in a thinner wall just above the carination than below. There is also a gentle thickening of the wall around the middle of the neck before it tapers to about 4mm at the rim. The rim itself is gently out-turned and is double-beaded externally due to an encircling groove in the middle. The top is rounded. The inner profile is not exactly concentric with the outer one, so the wall is thinner to one side of the lower body.

The base is flat inside the innermost groove at the foot of the wall. It is not co-planar with the rim, the planes diverging by around 3°.

The handle is a dominant feature on this cup, being large relative to the body. It also has some subtly curving lines. The sides, as seen from the top, are slightly concave rather than the more usual straight sides of a trapeze; moreover, they splay out to broad feet which run seamlessly into the curves of rim and carination respectively. The cross-section is markedly elliptical, modified by narrow flattened sides which are non-parallel. The outer surface becomes flat as it approaches and joins the rim, but retains its strong convexity at the lower body junction.

In addition to the single groove at the lip, the body carries six bands of horizontal grooves, the upper three comprising four grooves each, the lower three, three grooves each. The spacing of these bands is very deliberately unequal; in particular, the design leaves broader plain zones around the centre of the neck and on the lower part of the body above the foot grooves.

Triple-groove bands outline the sides of the handle and at the top they join a transverse double-groove in acute angles. The latter suspends a double-groove ‘V’ motif which neatly occupies the upper part of the reserved central field. Below, four horizontal grooves traverse the narrowest point.

Dimensions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Body</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Height</td>
<td>88.5mm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Depth of neck</td>
<td>41.5mm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Estimated diameter of rim</td>
<td>c. 80mm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Estimated diameter of carination</td>
<td>c. 73mm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diameter, innermost groove at base</td>
<td>18.3mm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thickness of rim (above base)</td>
<td>4-6mm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thickness of base</td>
<td>12.5mm</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Handle</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Minimum width of handle</td>
<td>19.5mm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Width of handle feet (reconstructed)</td>
<td>c. 56mm (upper), c. 52mm (lower)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Handle thickness</td>
<td>7.5mm</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Composition
Non-jet (Bussell et al. 1981, 31)

Manufacture, wear
There are no apparent wear traces on or above the base, but part of the surface is in extremely poor condition resulting in the disappearance of the basal grooves for half their circuit. The handle has possible wear in the form of a worn patch on the left side under-edge; opposite this on the right side is a slight notch which could have resulted from either differential wear or the working out of a flaw or mistake. Slight undulations in the bottom of the interior may be vestiges of original tool-marks rather than features of distortion, but generally it presents a well polished surface. The inside of the handle is also smooth-finished, but there are residual minor undulations. Groove profiles are neat but shallow V’s with rounded bases.

Context and circumstances
As above for no 12.

Condition
The whole of the lower body is present, but only about half of the upper body. Only a small part of the missing portion, which extends from under the handle well to the left, is restored. Fracture lines in the shale generally form an orthogonal pattern. The vessel is extremely distorted and, although the base itself retains circularity, even the lower body has become elliptical.

Figure 52 Ideal reconstruction of the ?Wiltshire 2 cup. Scale 67%. [cat. no. 13]
There are three fracture lines right across the handle, which is now restored. The base angle has spalled away around one third of its circumference.

**Description**
The base is neat and smooth, but (currently) not perfectly flat. There is a crisp angle to the lower wall which rises in a bowed profile of constant thickness to a weak carination externally. A gently concave neck then leads to a moderately flared mouth with a simple rounded rim. Internally the neck thickens to a neat but weak bevel (c. 13mm down), below which a steady curve runs all the way to the rounded bottom.

The handle is a fairly thin ribbon of near rectangular section with slight bowing of the external face. In profile it describes less than a semi-circle. From the top it exhibits a near trapezoid shape.

The body has a single band of four grooves placed immediately beneath the carination. While three of these grooves continue uninterrupted beneath the handle, the uppermost one butts up to its thin, ungrooved sides. The face of the handle is totally framed by groove bands just inside the edges. Four grooves outline the curved sides and three cross at top and bottom; the latter join the inner three of the sides to form an enclosure of waisted rectangular shape.

**Dimensions**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Body</strong></th>
<th>Present height</th>
<th>90–96mm</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Estimated original height</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>92–93mm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rim diameter</td>
<td>c. 60 x 105mm (→82mm)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neck diameter</td>
<td>c. 44 x 91mm (→67–68mm)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Carination diameter</td>
<td>52 x 91.5mm (→72mm)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Base diameter</td>
<td>25mm</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rim thickness</td>
<td>c. 2mm</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thickness at internal bevel</td>
<td>4–5mm</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minimum thickness of neck</td>
<td>3–3.5mm</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thickness of carination</td>
<td>4.5–5.5mm</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thickness of base</td>
<td>3.5mm</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| **Handle**     | Width of handle feet | 33 (upper), 34mm (lower) |
|----------------|----------------------|
| Minimum handle width | 25.7mm |

**Composition**
Non-jet (Bussell *et al.* 1981, 13)

**Manufacture, wear**
Despite the extensive hairline cracking, much of the surface presents a polished sheen. No wear traces were noted on the body or the underside of the handle, which is in poor condition. The angles between the inner handle surface and the wall are for the most part very crisp, showing good attention to finishing the perforation.

**Context and circumstances**
Two shale cups were found in barrows on Broad Down, Farway (barrows 53 and 61). The first was found in 1868 during excavations instigated by the Devonshire Association for the Advancement of Science, Literature and Art (Kirwan 1868). Kirwan’s account describes a barrow thrown up over a pyre; the cup was found immediately above a central cremation deposit of burnt bone on a bed of charcoal, itself on top of an area of flint paving with signs of in situ burning; beneath was the old ground surface which appeared to have been dug away by a few inches to level the pyre site (Kirwan 1868, 307, fig. 1). There were no other finds.

**Condition**
The cup is complete, but highly distorted from lateral pressure in the ground. The basal boss is still perfectly circular due to its rigid structure, but the body becomes progressively more elliptical towards the rim. That this is not the original shape is indicated by the eccentric position of the handle, situated on neither of the axes of the ellipse. Unsurprisingly the vessel is extensively cracked, yet none of the fissures have opened up significantly. The dominant ones follow the bedding planes of the material, vertical or steeply diagonal on the vessel, but there is also a finer web of crazing in patches. One large portion extending from the rim to below the carination is entirely isolated by a major crack and has probably been detached in the past and restored.

**Description**
The base is domed with no flat area at all and the profile curves upwards towards the maximum girth which is gently rounded.
rather than carinated. Above the belly, there is a small constriction emphasised by the slightest of creases, before the neck expands modestly outwards to the rim. The inner profile mirrors the outer one for virtually the whole depth and the wall only becomes thicker at the very base.

The rim undulates a little, although perhaps partly due to the distortion. It has a flattish top with rounded angles internally and externally. On the inside it is emphasised by a single horizontal groove, from which hang 16 pendant V-motifs, each comprising a double groove. Four sets of body grooves decorate the exterior and, although widely spaced, they are not evenly spaced. The band at the belly comprises four grooves, those above (at rim) and below (on the lower body) comprise three, while that encircling the base roundel has just two. The upper two bands butt up to the feet of the handle and one groove from each set continues onto the side of the handle as a single linking groove. Adjacent grooves at top and bottom respectively just run out onto the handle side, while the basal belly groove continues across thereby defining the handle base. The outer face of the handle has a simple double groove outlining the curved sides for their whole length.

The handle is strap like, but of swollen rectangular section and is relatively slack in profile. In face view it is gently waisted and broader at the top than the bottom.

### Dimensions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Body</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Height (maximum)</td>
<td>90 mm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rim diameter</td>
<td>71.2 x 88.3 (≈80 mm)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neck diameter</td>
<td>57 x 70.5 (≈64 mm)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Belly diameter</td>
<td>62.4 x 70.8 mm (≈66.5 mm)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diameter of top basal groove</td>
<td>24.0 x 24.0 mm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thickness at rim</td>
<td>3.8 mm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thickness of walls</td>
<td>4.4 mm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thickness of base</td>
<td>8.5 mm</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Handle</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Handle depth</td>
<td>41 mm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Width of handle feet</td>
<td>27 mm (upper), 24 mm (lower)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minimum handle width</td>
<td>16.7 mm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minimum handle thickness</td>
<td>6.5 mm</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Manufacture, wear

Despite the extensive cracking, the intervening surfaces retain a beautiful high polish. Where striations are discernible, they tend to be very fine, although there are some coarser ones under the handle and elsewhere. Inside the lower body rotary grinding marks are clear, but these change to a vertical orientation inside the belly and up to the mouth. There is a whitish stain (rather than accretion) inside the base that has linear elements aligned with the grain – presumably reflecting differential absorption.

The decorative grooves generally have broad V profiles with rounded bases, but the internal ones seem crisper and also bear traces of whitish material (?soil or deliberate infill). There is the slight suggestion of greater rounding of the under edges of the handle on either side at the top which might reflect wear from, for example, thong suspension.

### Condition

Most of the vessel is present, but about 20% of the rim is lacking. Damage to the rim seems to have occurred between Kirwan's 1870 publication and that of Hutchinson (1880, 136–7). The whole surface is extremely laminated on a horizontal plane giving a fragile appearance. Very small patches of polished surface survive. Like Farway cup 1 the shape changes from circular in the lower body to elliptical at the mouth, but the degree of distortion is considerably less on this cup. This time the handle lines up with the long axis of the ellipse. The rim lies on a plane rather skewed to that of base and shoulder, this likely to be due to differential shrinkage. There is a crack across the handle high up; some chips have become detached and are missing at one end.

### Description

Although the base is a small circle defined by a distinct if obtuse angle, it is very slightly convex rather than perfectly flat. This should not be due to alteration given that the lower body seems to have escaped distortion. It is possible that there was an encircling groove round the base, but condition precludes...
certainty.

The wall rises in a graceful convex curve with the slightest inflection at the middle creating a weak carination; above is a small contraction into the gently hollowed neck. The mouth appears to have been moderately expanded and tapers to a thin rounded rim. Internally the profile is smoothly sinuous from the rounded base to the mouth, and this gives rise to some variation in wall thickness, slightly thicker towards the base and marginally thinner low in the neck.

Despite its poor surface condition, it would seem that the body was decorated with only one set of grooves, a band of four immediately beneath the carination. Because of the crescentic shape given to the handle feet, it was possible for the craftsman to continue the middle pair of grooves onto the external face of the handle; with a subtle change in direction they sweep round and upwards to outline the sides.

With the bowed feet and a pronounced waist, the handle has a strongly peltate shape in face view. In profile it is more-or-less semi-circular and in cross-section sub-rectangular with well bowed faces; the sides are fairly flat and taper out as they reach the feet.

**Dimensions**

**Body**
- Average present height: c. 82mm
- Estimated original height: c. 85mm
- Rim diameter: 73.5 x 81mm (→ 77.5mm)
- Neck diameter: 60 x 70mm (→ 65mm)
- Carination diameter: 67.5 x 72 (→ 69.5mm)
- Lower body diameter (12mm from base): 45 x 45mm
- Base diameter: 20 x 20mm
- Thickness at rim: 2mm
- Thickness of walls: 4–7mm
- Thickness of base: 7mm

**Handle**
- Handle depth: 37mm
- Width of handle feet: c. 35mm (both)
- Minimum handle width: 12.5mm
- Minimum handle thickness: 6.5mm

**Manufacture, wear**

Condition is too poor for fine evidence to survive. However, in the neck immediately to the right of the handle is a set of three short parallel strokes set diagonally which may be ancient tool marks.

**SHALE or WOODEN CUP**

16. Stoborough 'King Barrow', Dorset, England

Lost (in Richard Gough's possession around 1787). Description and drawing based on Hutchins 1774 and Gough 1786 (account also fully given in Ashbee 1960, 86)

**Fig. 55**

**Context and circumstances**

The possible shale cup from King Barrow, Stoborough (formerly Stowborough), was found when a 100 ft wide (30.75m) and 12 ft high (3.7m) barrow was opened in 1767 during construction of a turnpike road. It entered the possession of R. Gough later in the 18th century and is now lost. The first published account was by Hutchins (1774) where the cup is figured as an imagined reconstruction. The drawing which appears in Gough (1786) shows the cup in its broken and distorted state. At the time the cup was described as being made of wood and Hutchins favoured oak. By the date of Hutchins' third edition (1861) it was 'formerly in the possession of Mr Gough' (current authors' italics) and by the time Clift (1908) pronounces it to be 'a lathe-turned cup of Kimmeridge shale' its whereabouts was unknown. Its reassessment as shale (for example by a Dr. Wake Smart, mentioned in Kirwan's account of the first Farway vessel (1868, 299) when it had already vanished from view, is probably surmise, but may be correct.

The burial context of the cup is fairly well described for the time: central in the mound, it comprised an enormous oak trunk coffin about 10 ft long (3.1m) and 4 ft (1.25m) wide, resting on the old ground surface and covered by a turf mound, 'in some of which the heath was not perished'. The skeletal remains were
The Ringlemere Cup: Precious Cups and the Beginning of the Channel Bronze Age

Chapter 9: Catalogue of Early Bronze Age Precious Cups in North-West Europe

Chapter 9: Catalogue of Early Bronze Age Precious Cups in North-West Europe

partial, ‘unburnt, black and soft … and all had been wrapped up in a large covering, composed of several skins, some as thin as parchments, others much thicker, especially where the hair remained, which shewed they were deer skins.’ The material was well enough preserved for ‘seams and stitches’ to be visible and it was thought to have wrapped around the body ‘several times’. Inside ‘the bones were compressed flat in a lump, and cemented together by a glutinous matter, perhaps the moisture of the body. On unfolding the wrapper, a disagreeable smell was perceived, such as is usual at the first opening of a vault’ (Hutchins 1774).

The vessel was found at the south-east end, perhaps near the head, but no skull was identified. The only other grave good was a small piece of ‘gold lace’ which remains a puzzle. This was published by Bury Palliser in her History of Lace (1911, 4, fig 1). It was accepted by her as gold lace ‘of the old lozenge pattern, that most ancient and universal of all designs, again found depicted on the coats of ancient Danes, where the borders are edged with an open or net-work of the same pattern.’ It was blackened when found but the original account is firm that ‘bits of wire plainly appeared in it’. It is hard to find an Early Bronze Age gold type that matches the description given, but another possibility is that this was a highly eroded thin bronze object, so eaten in an acidic environment that it appeared as ‘lacework’. Despite this difficulty, there can be little doubt that the burial described conforms to Early Bronze Age traditions.

Condition

One of two early drawings (Gough 1786) shows the vessel apparently realistically and incomplete in the upper body (Fig. 55 centre); around 70% of the vessel is depicted. Even Hutchins had acknowledged that it was ‘much broken’ (1774, 25). There is also surface spalling in evidence which had clearly disrupted the decoration locally and there are hints of distortion; indeed, it was described as ‘compressed’ and the dimensions of the mouth given as 3 inches by 2.

Description

The following description and our own reconstruction drawing (Fig. 55) are based on Gough’s 1786 engraving, rather than the earliest published drawing, in Hutchins 1774, which shows a complete and perfect looking vessel and may be taken to be a hypothetical restoration of its original form. The illustration given by Gerloff (1975, pl. 57P) is a more embellished rendering of the latter.

The lower body is near to hemispherical with no indication for any flattening of the base. About halfway up the vessel it expands into a protuberant carination, which is met above by a concave upper body. The dimensions given in the early accounts suggest that the rim and carination would have had similar diameters and the mouth was thus lightly flared.

The upper body is shown covered with twenty horizontal lines, described as "hatched" and made "with a graving tool" (Hutchins), while similar grooves on the lower body are separated into panels (?four quadrants) and instead aligned vertically to diagonally. At the vertical panel junction shown, the lines to the left are vertical and to the right, diagonal. This could actually be a natural consequence of starting the decoration at a panel boundary and keeping each line roughly parallel to the previous one. As they progressed round the quarter sphere, the lines would thus become more and more skewed to the vertical (see Fig. 55).

There is no suggestion in the early accounts that the cup had a handle, but Gough’s depiction shows a curious discontinuity in the line of the carination immediately above the panel junction in the lower decoration; the lower design actually projects a little higher here before being interrupted by a broad and thin break. This surface seems to overlap and be situated in front of the broken edges of the upper body and gives every impression of being the stump of a missing handle. That the handle is not otherwise in evidence would be explained by the trapezoid gap in the upper body at this point.

Dimensions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dimension</th>
<th>Measurement</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Reported height</td>
<td>'two inches'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Estimated original height</td>
<td>c. 55mm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reported rim diameter</td>
<td>'three inches by two' (→ c.65mm)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wall thickness (? upper body, where broken)</td>
<td>'two tenths of an inch', c. 5 mm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Width of possible handle stump</td>
<td>7.9mm</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Composition


Manufacture, wear

Nothing known.