Iron Age settlement at Little Martin's Field, Brightwell-cum-Sotwell

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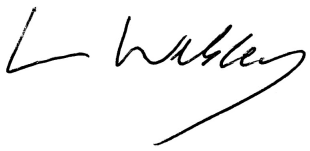
Signature:	

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Middle Bronze Age Urns and Middle Iron Age Settlement at Little Martin's Field, Brightwell-Cum-Sotwell – Figure and table lists

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MIDDLE BRONZE AGE URNS AND MIDDLE IRON AGE SETTLEMENT AT LITTLE MARTIN'S FIELD, BRIGHTWELL-CUM-SOTWELL

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SUMMARY

Excavation by Oxford Archaeology at Little Martin's Field, Brightwell-cum-Sotwell, uncovered two middle Bronze Age Deverel-Rimbury urns that had been buried in purpose-dug pits. The vessels contained no human remains but analogy with contemporary cremation burials and with similar features found within cremation cemeteries elsewhere suggests that they may represent cenotaphs or other deposits associated with funerary rites. Part of a middle Iron Age settlement was uncovered, comprising two possible roundhouse locations, a ditched enclosure and associated pits and postholes. A boundary ditch with several recuts was attributed to the Roman and/or Anglo-Saxon period.

INTRODUCTION

Oxford Archaeology undertook an excavation at Little Martin's Field, Brightwell-cum-Sotwell in advance of a proposed residential development. The work was commissioned by Kingerlee Homes Ltd in accordance with a condition attached to planning permission. The site comprised two adjacent pasture fields situated at the western end of the village, at NGR SU 5785 9115 (Fig. 1), and lay between 55m and 59m OD. The geology of the area is mapped as Upper Greensand Formation siltstone and sandstone. The extreme southern end of the site is at the interface with the Northmoor Sand and Gravel Member, a superficial deposit often described as the first gravel terrace.

An evaluation comprising 21 trial trenches was undertaken in 2017 and revealed evidence for middle Iron Age settlement in the southern part of both fields, including a possible roundhouse, as well as a few sherds of Roman and Anglo-Saxon pottery.[1] The excavation comprised two areas targeted on these features; Area 1 was located in the smaller, eastern field and encompassed some 0.14 ha and Area 2 lay within the western field and measured 0.37 ha in area (Figs 2-4).

This report includes summaries of the analyses of the artefacts and environmental evidence. The full specialist reports and accompanying data can be downloaded from the OA Library at https://library.thehumanjourney.net/. The excavation archive will be deposited with Oxfordshire County Museum Service under the accession code OXCMS:2018.169.

ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

The earliest archaeological evidence found within the village was a pear-shaped flint implement of Abbevillian type that was recovered from the terrace gravels 200 m east of the site, and a watching brief at Ebees Cottage, Bell Lane, uncovered a Neolithic pit, an undated boundary ditch and evidence for occupation and crop processing during the eleventh and twelfth centuries.[2]

The landscape around the site is rich in archaeological remains. Brightwell Barrow, a Bronze Age bowl barrow, is situated *c*. 750 m to the north, and fieldwaking in the vicinity of this monument has produced late Bronze Age and Iron Age pottery, along with worked flints and burnt flint. The site

[1] S. Leech, 'An Archaeological Evaluation at Little Martins Field, Land East of Waterman's Lane North East of Didcot Road, Brightwell-cum-Sotwell, Oxfordshire OX10 0RY' (2017), John Moore Heritage Services unpublished client report.

[2] J. Moore, 'An Archaeological Watching Brief at Ebees Cottage, Bell Lane, Brightwell-cum-Sotwell, Oxfordshire' (2009), John Moore Heritage Services unpublished client report, https://doi.org/10.5284/1009449.

is situated between the hillforts at Castle Hill, which lies 1.5 km to the north and was in use from the late Bronze Age until the Roman period, and Blewburton Hill, *c*. 6 km to the south-west and occupied during the fifth-sixth centuries BC with reuse and partial rebuilding during the first century BC.[3] The presence of a further hillfort at Cholsey Hill, *c.* 3.5 km to the south, has been postulated but not confirmed. Part of a middle Iron Age farmstead with a ring gully and associated pits and postholes has been excavated at Sherwood Farm, Mackney[4], and settlement features from the early, middle and late Iron Age have been found *c*. 1 km to the west of the site in excavations for the Chalgrove to East Ilsley gas pipeline.[5] During the late Iron Age, the hillfort at Castle Hill was superseded by a substantial oppidum at Dyke Hills, where the River Thame has its confluence with the River Thames.

A walled town subsequently developed during the Roman period at Dorchester-on-Thames, and the road from the town to Silchester passes N-S through the village, *c*. 210 m east of the site. Several Roman pottery scatters have been noted during fieldwalking to the north and north-west of the village. To the south of the village, pottery and coins of Magnentius and Decentius have been found at Mackney Court Farm, and a substantial Roman ditch was found at Sherwood Farm.[6] Roman settlement and burials were also found west of Brightwell-cum-Sotwell at the Chalgrove to East Ilsley gas pipeline.[7]

Early medieval activity has been recorded in the vicinity of the village church, including a bone object, probably a pin, recovered from a garden south of Brightwell Street, and two shallow gullies of probable early medieval date were found during an evaluation off Bell Lane.[8] The village developed during the medieval period through the amalgamation of the three medieval hamlets of Brightwell, Sotwell and Mackney, and features the twelfth-century church of St Agatha's as well as medieval and later listed buildings.

DISCUSSION

Middle Bronze Age Urns

Perhaps the most intrigue discoveries were a pair of Deverel-Rimbury urns that had evidently been deliberately placed in purpose-dug pits, *c*. 1.75m apart (2014 and 2105, Fig. 4). The upper parts of both vessels had been truncated by subsequent ploughing, but sufficient of each remained to be certain that they were devoid of deliberately-placed contents, the soil within them being identical with the general backfill of the respective pits. Vessels set into the ground in this way may have functioned as storage receptacles, with the mouth of the vessel at ground level, although due to truncation it was not possible to estimate the relative levels of the vessel and the contemporary ground surface. The absence of other evidence for domestic occupation may militate against this interpretation, however, and it is perhaps more likely that they represent less mundane practices, particularly since vessels of this type were commonly used as containers for cremation burials. Small cremation cemeteries of burials interred in Deverel-Rimbury urns have been excavated within the Middle and Upper Thames Valley at Burghfield (Berkshire), Shorncote (Gloucestershire), Standlake and Stanton Harcourt,[9] and

[3] T. Allen, K. Cramp, H. Lamdin-Whymark and L. Webley, *Castle Hill and its Landscape: Archaeological Investigations at the Wittenhams, Oxfordshire* (2010); D.W. Harding, *The Iron Age in the Upper Thames Basin* (1972).

[4] S. Crabb, 'New Barn, Sherwood Farm, Mackney, Wallingford, Oxfordshire' (2012), Thames Valley Archaeological Services unpublished client report, https://doi.org/10.5284/1019763.

[5] T. Wilson, *A Narrow View Across the Upper Thames Valley in Late Prehistoric and Roman Times*, BAR Brit Ser 467 (2008).

[6] Crabb, 'New Barn, Sherwood Farm'.

[7] Wilson, *A Narrow View*.

[8] J. Lewis, 'Land off Bell Lane, Brightwell-cum-Sotwell, Wallingford, Oxfordshire: an Archaeological Evaluation' (2010), Thames Valley Archaeological Services unpublished client report, http://tvas.co.uk/reports/pdf/BLB10-79ev.pdf.

[9] C.A. Butterworth and S.J. Lobb, *Excavations in the Burghfield Area, Berkshire* (1992); A. Barclay and H. Glass, with C. Parry, 'Excavation of Neolithic and Bronze Age Ring Ditches, Shorncote Quarry, Somerfield Keynes, Gloucestershire', *Transactions of Bristol and Gloucestershire Archaeological Society*, 113 (1995), pp. 21-60; D.N. Riley, 'A Late Bronze Age and early Iron Age site on Standlake Down, Oxon, *Oxoniensia*, 11/12

it is therefore possible that the features at Little Martin's Field were similarly funerary in character, although they certainly did not contain any human remains. It has been suggested that such instance may represent cenotaphs, perhaps for an individual whose body was not available for burial or was buried elsewhere.[10] Indeed, the frequently low weight of bone recovered from prehistoric cremation burials may indicate that burial of the cremated remains may have been relatively unimportant and that some or all of the remains may have been retained, distributed amongst the mourners, or disposed of in some other way.[11] If this were the case, then burial of a token quantity of bone, or even a vessel with no bone at all, may have been considered sufficient to satisfy the liturgical requirements of the funerary rite. Alternatively, the vessels may have had some other significance, perhaps as a dedication of vessels that had been used in the funerary rite, or they may have contained offerings such as liquids which have not survived. Whatever the precise significance of the deposition of the vessels, another possible example of this practice may be represented by cremation 6 within ring ditch 4 at Stanton Harcourt, which was recorded as a shallow pit that contained a small Bucket Urn 'but no bones'.[12] A similar interpretation could be posited for 'cremation burials' 146 and 123 at the early Bronze Age cremation cemetery at Mount Farm, Berinsfield, which comprised vessels that contained charcoal but no bone, while the token character of cremation deposits is amply demonstrated by burials 121 and 193 at the same site, which contained 1 g and 5 g of bone respectively.[13] Although the two features at Little Martin's Field are situated in an ostensibly isolated location, it is possible that it was selected because it held some significance for the community that is not readily apparent, or that it became a significant location because of the interment of these deposits. It is unlikely to be coincidental that they were buried within sight of the Brightwell Barrow, which is situated on a low hill *c*. 800 m to the north and, although unexcavated, is likely to date from the early Bronze Age and to have been a pre-existing feature of the landscape when they were inserted.

The better preserved vessel (SF 2) is notable for possession of a horseshoe-shaped handle, a feature that developed during the earlier Bronze Age Biconical Urn tradition and is comparable with examples on the so-called Ardleigh Urns found in middle Bronze Age cemeteries in East Anglia and elsewhere in southern Britain. The soil from within the vessel contained a small quantity of charred plant material, sufficient to indicate the cultivation of emmer or spelt wheat and probably barley in the vicinity.

Middle Iron Age Settlement

The majority of the features were dated to the middle Iron Age and comprised a range of elements indicative of domestic settlement including pits, postholes, curvilinear gullies and part of an enclosure ditch. It was clear that only part of the settlement lay within the excavated area and that it was more extensive, particularly to the south, although its full extent is unknown. Broadly contemporary settlement had previously been recorded nearby at Sherwood Farm, Mackney, *c*. 1.2 km south of Little Martin's Field, and to the west within the easement of the Chalgrove to East Ilsley gas pipeline.[14] The latter project had also uncovered a larger area of settlement at Berrick Salome, and a large settled landscape had been revealed by aerial photography, geophysical survey and excavation around Hill Farm, Little Wittenham, 2 km to the north-west.[15] The distribution of features at Little Martin's Field suggested that the settlement may have been divided into areas of different character, dedicated

(1946/7), pp. 27-43; A. Hamlin, 'Excavation of Ring-Ditches and Other Sites at Stanton Harcourt', *Oxoniensia*, 28 (1963), pp. 1-19.

[10] J. I. McKinley, 'Cremation: Excavations, Analysis and Interpretation of Material from Cremation-related Deposits, in S. Tarlow and L. Nilsson Stutz (eds) *The Oxford Handbook of the Archaeology of Death and Burial* (2013), p. 153.

[11] Ibid., p. 154.

[12] Hamlin, 'Excavation of Ring-Ditches and Other Sites at Stanton Harcourt', p. 13.

[13] G. Lambrick, *Neolithic to Saxon Social and Environmental Change at Mount Farm, Berinsfield, Dorchester-on-Thames* (2010), p. 27.

[14] Crabb, 'New Barn, Sherwood Farm'; T. Wilson, *A Narrow View across the Upper Thames Valle in Late Prehistoric and Roman Times: Archaeological Excavations along the Chalgrove to East Ilsley Gas Pipeline* (2008).

[15] Allen *et al*., *Castle Hill and its Landscape*, pp. 129-144.

to different activities or used by different groups within the community, suggesting that it may have been comparable to the features around Hill Farm.

No definite evidence was identified for domestic buildings, but two curvilinear features (2312 and 2323) were recorded that may have been parts of penannular gullies surrounding roundhouse locations. Such gullies are often all that remains after the slighter elements of the building have been truncated by ploughing.[16] The roundhouse at Sherwood Farm and the buildings at both settlements along the gas pipeline were represented by a gully of this type, as were several buildings at Hill Farm, including one with a clearly defined internal post ring. The western structure (2312) lay toward the northern end of Area 2 and comprised a curving gully 16 m long and 0.3 m deep with a V-shaped profile. The southern part of the circuit was absent and may have been truncated by later ditches, several of which converged in this area. Gully 2323 was situated at the south-eastern limit of Area 1 and only a very small part lay within the excavation area. However, it had been recorded beyond this in Evaluation Trench 16, where its curving alignment was more clearly evident. The part of the feature within the excavation area was not excavated, but it was recorded in the evaluation trench as a curving gully 0.46 m wide and 0.32 m deep with steeply sloping sides and a concave base (16/11=16/08). Furthermore, evidence was found for a possible earlier phase (16/06) and a partial concentric gully outside it (16/04). The excavation area and evaluation trench only uncovered the southern part of the circuit, and as with gully 2312 it is possible that much of the feature had been destroyed by post-medieval ditches. The only possible evidence for structures associated with the gullies was a pair of postholes (91 and 92) that lay within the projected footprint of gully 2323. Both gullies may have had a projected diameter in the region of *c*. 20 m, although it is difficult to be certain since only a small part of the circuit of each survives and their shapes need not have been regular. This is rather large for a roundhouse – a national survey concluded that they typically measured up to 14 m, and none of the twelve certain and eight possible roundhouse gullies at Berrick Salome measured more than 17.4 m.[17] This suggests that they were probably ditches surrounding roundhouses rather than structural features representing the actual wall line. The dating evidence from both gullies was slightly problematic, as the pottery assemblages were small and of mixed date; although six sherds (35 g) of middle Iron Age pottery were recovered from ditch 2312 during the excavation, a sherd of Anglo-Saxon pottery was recorded in the evaluation, and ditch 16/08=16/11 produced two sherds of middle Iron Age pottery, two Roman sherds and one Anglo-Saxon.[18] It is therefore possible that the features are in fact later in date, but a middle Iron Age date is preferred here given the association with occupation features of that date and the similarity to better-dated examples elsewhere – both the recutting of gully 2323 and the concentric gully, for example, find parallels at Hill Farm.

The enclosure ditch (2321) was only partly exposed at the southern end of Area 2 and was L-shaped in plan, representing parts of the west and north sides of an enclosure that extended beyond the excavated area. Occupation features, comprising pits and postholes, were situated both within and beyond the area thus enclosed, and the enclosure is therefore likely to represent an element within the settlement rather than a ditch delimiting the settlement area, as, for example, at Mingies Ditch and Watkins Farm.[19] Similar rectilinear or polygonal arrangements of ditches enclosing areas within a settlement have been recorded in the vicinity at Hill Farm and Great Western Park, Didcot.[20] The area of pits and postholes beyond the enclosure ditch was delimited to the north by a fenceline (2322), which clearly defined this as a distinct area within the settlement. Fencelines are rarely observed on Iron Age settlements, most likely due to truncation of such shallow features by subsequent ploughing,

[16] T. Allen, D. Miles and S. Palmer, 'Iron Age buildings in the Upper Thames region', in B. Cunliffe and D. Miles (eds) *Aspects of the Iron Age in Central Southern Britain* (1984), p. 91.
[17] R. Pope, 'Roundhouses: 3000 years of prehistoric design', *Current Archaeology*, 222 (2008), p. 17; Wilson, *A Narrow View across the Upper Thames Valley*, p. 189.
[18] Leech, 'An Archaeological Evaluation at Little Martins Field', p. 10.
[19] T.G. Allen and M.A. Robinson, *The Prehistoric Landscape and Iron Age Enclosed Settlement at Mingies Ditch, Hardwick-with-Yelford, Oxon* (1993); T.G. Allen, *An Iron Age and Romano-British Enclosed Settlement at Watkins Farm, Northmoor, Oxon* (1990).
[20] Allen *et al*., *Castle Hill and its Landscape*, p. 134-6; C. Hayden, A. Simmonds, S. Lawrence, R. Masefield and K. Wheaton, *Great Western Park, Didcot, Oxfordshire: Phase 1 Excavations, 2010-2012* (forthcoming).

but their use has been widely inferred from the arrangement of surviving features.[21] The area immediately beyond the fence was devoid of features and penannular gully 2312, at the northern end of the site, was associated with a stack ring (2021) but lacked the pits and postholes that characterised the southern part of the excavation area.

The area of pits and postholes enclosed by fence 2322 does not appear to have extended into the eastern part of Area 2, where there was only a single, isolated pit (19/08), and no features were uncovered in the evaluation trenches between the two excavation areas, which would appear to indicate that the features in Area 1 represented a discrete focus of activity, separate from the enclosure and fenced area. This comprised penannular gully 2323 and a scatter of pits, as well as a possible four-post structure defined by postholes 97, 99 and 136 with the fourth corner absent.

The arrangement of the various elements that constituted the settlement, comprising the ditched enclosure, the fenced area, penannular gully 2312 and the focus in Area 1, clearly suggests a complex settlement with a deliberately planned layout, with zoning of specific activity areas. The putative roundhouse locations were situated a little over 80 m apart, and comparison with the results of the geophysical survey at Hill Farm or the clustering of pen-and-paddock settlements at Farmoor suggests that it was not unusual for domestic units to be situated in this way.[22] This may reflect the way the population viewed their position within the wider community, close enough to imply commonality but distant enough to express some level of independence, and contrasts with the apparently simple plan of the site at Sherwood Farm, which may be a discrete farmstead of a single roundhouse. There was not a sufficient quantity or range of artefactual material to recognise any distinctions in activities between the various areas of the settlement – although the concentration of pits within the fenced area may suggest a focus on storage, the pits within the ditched enclosure and in Area 1 were of identical form and the possible four-post structure also provides evidence for crop storage in the latter area. The pits, postholes and possible four-post structure in Area 1 may comprise infrastructure associated with the eastern roundhouse, whereas the western structure does not appear to possess such features, unless they lie beyond the excavation area. The enclosure ditch and fence may have been constructed to enclose livestock pens, but could alternatively have excluded livestock from areas where they would be a nuisance.

Evidence pertaining to the lifestyles of the Iron Age community was very limited. The pottery was presumably used in domestic activities such as storage and preparation and serving of food and drink, and the sandstone cobble that had been used as a pestle may derive from a similar context. Evidence for butchery practices was provided by marks on some of the cattle bones, which indicated that one jaw had been fairly delicately removed from the skull, possibly to extract the tongue, and a metacarpal had been split to access the marrow or to use the bone for tool manufacture, while a large mammal rib fragment exhibited cut marks along the shaft to cut the intercostal muscle. The animal bone assemblage was too small to provide much information regarding husbandry practices, other than to indicate that sheep and cattle were predominant and that pig and horse were also present. Evidence for the provisioning of this livestock is provided by penannular gully 2021, which was very shallow and measured only *c.* 3.5 m in diameter and is characteristic of a class of feature interpreted as enclosing stack rings for animal fodder.[23] Charred plant material was a ubiquitous inclusion in the soil samples, but only in small quantities, indicating that it derived from wind-blown material and piecemeal disposal of crop-processing debris that had been burnt for disposal. The chaff would seem to indicate small-scale crop processing and storage, largely in the glume, which is consistent with the prevalence and relatively small size of most of the storage pits. The crops represented include spelt, emmer and hulled barley, which is consistent with the evidence from the much larger assemblage at nearby Great Western Park, Didcot, although generally emmer had been replaced by spelt in the region by this time.[24] In the absence of evidence for specialisation, it must be concluded that the community practiced a mixed farming regime.

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[21] Eg. G.H. Lambrick and M.A. Robinson, *Iron Age and Roman Riverside Settlements at Farmoor, Oxfordshire* (1979), pp. 67-71.

[22] Allen *et al*., *Castle Hill and its Landscape*, fig. 5.2; Lambrick and Robinson, *Iron Age and Roman Riverside Settlements at Farmoor*, fig. 3.

[23] Allen *et al*., 'Iron Age buildings in the Upper Thames region', p. 91.

[24] S. Boardman, 'Charred plant remains', in Hayden *et al*., *Great Western Park, Didcot.*

Roman/Anglo-Saxon Boundary

The date of gully 2314 and ditch 2315, which extended across Area 2 on parallel NW-SE alignments, was uncertain. The only dating evidence from these features comprised a sherd of late Roman colour-coated ware and sherds from an Anglo-Saxon globular jar/cooking pot that were recovered from the same fill of ditch 2315, as well as three fragments of tegula from another fill. It is possible either that the features were Anglo-Saxon with residual Roman inclusions or that the features were Roman and the Anglo-Saxon sherd intrusive. No other features of either date were found, although a Roman sherd and an Anglo-Saxon sherd were recovered from post-medieval ditch 145. Evidence from these periods has proved similarly slight at other investigations in the village, comprising single sherds of Roman pottery at Ebees Cottage and Bell Lane and two possibly Anglo-Saxon gullies at the latter site.[25] The ditch had been recut several times, indicating that it may represent a significant boundary with considerable longevity. It is similar in appearance and alignment to an undated ditch at Ebees Cottage, *c*. 600 m east of Little Martin's Field, suggesting that they may form elements of a landscape comprising boundaries thus aligned. The co-occurrence of Roman and Saxon material could suggest that the ditch defined a long-lived boundary with a period of use that spanned the two periods and is not without parallel – early Saxon pottery has been recorded within the upper fills of enclosure ditches at a Roman settlement at Sutton Courtenay and a sunken-featured building at Wallingford contained an assemblage of late Roman and early Saxon domestic objects including pottery, bone needles and a well-preserved bone comb that is thought to be of fifth-century date.[26] These sites provide rare examples of evidence for continuity between these periods, and their coincidence within a short distance of the Roman town at Dorchester-on-Thames may be associated with the continued importance of the town, which appears to have continued in some form and went on to be appointed see of the bishopric of the Kingdom of Wessex.[27]

EXCAVATION RESULTS

Middle Bronze Age

Two features (2014, 2103) at the southern end of Area 2 appeared to have been deliberately dug as settings to hold individual urns. Both features had been truncated by later ploughing, as a result of which only the lower part of the vessels survived. Pit 2014 was the shallower of the two, surviving to a depth of only 0.04 m. It contained the lower part of a vessel of indeterminate form, but whose large diameter suggests a Bucket or Barrel Urn of substantial size (SF 1, Fig. 6). Pit 2103 was situated only 1.75 m north of pit 2014 and was better preserved, with a depth of 0.25 m, as a result of which a greater proportion of the vessel survived, represented by the base and lower section, a few rim sherds and a section of the upper wall (SF 2, Fig. 6). Analysis of the soil within the urn concluded that it represented the backfill of the pit and that the vessel contained no deliberately placed material (Cook, below). Other than the urns, no artefactual material was recovered from either feature.

Bronze Age-Early Iron Age

Ditch 144 was located in Area 1 and was exposed for a total distance of 11 m on a NW-SE orientation, the south-eastern end having been completely removed by post-medieval ditch 145 (Fig. 3). The north-western end curved towards the north before ending in a rounded terminal. A posthole (142) was cut into the fills of the terminal and may represent the insertion of a post to mark the end of the feature when it had largely silted up and become difficult to discern. The ditch was 1.2 m wide and 0.5 m deep, and it was noted that the fills were rather paler than those of the later features. A

[25] Moore, 'An Archaeological Watching Brief at Ebees Cottage', p. 6; Lewis, 'Land off Bell Lane', p. 2.
[26] P. Booth and C. Poole, 'Bridge Farm, Sutton Courtenay, Oxfordshire: Archaeological Post-excavation assessment report' (2017), Oxford Archaeology unpublished client report; OAU, 'Wallingford Rowing Club, Mongewell, Oxfordshire' (1998), Oxford Archaeological Unit unpublished evaluation report.
[27] W.A. Morrison, *A Synthesis of Antiquarian Observations and Archaeological Excavation at Dorchester-on-Thames, Oxfordshire* (2009), pp. 47-55.

single sherd that was recovered from the upper fill could only be dated broadly to the Bronze Age or early Iron Age on the basis of its flint temper.

Middle Iron Age

Area 1 (Fig. 3). Middle Iron Age activity in this area was represented by a total of eight pits and at least twelve postholes, as well as three features (89, 97, 99) that were intermediate between the two categories and part of a possible penannular gully. The features were generally situated in the southern half of the excavation area, with only tree-throw holes to the north. The pits could be divided into three categories on the basis of their size and profile, comprising two large pits (81, 91), a group of four smaller features (30, 78, 131, 14/08) and two very shallow pits (6, 13). The fills of these features comprised deposits of fairly homogenous mid- and dark-grey silty clay, and even in the few pits in which more than one fill was divided these represented slight gradations of such material rather than clearly defined episodes of infilling.

Neither of the two larger pits produced an artefactual material and it is not certain whether they were in fact Iron Age in date, particularly since they were notably different in size and shape from the more securely dated pits. Both had steep sides, although pit 81 had a flat base whereas pit 91 comprised a narrower shaft with a concave base. Pit 81 (Fig. 5, section 24) was situated in the central part of the excavation area and measured 2.05m in diameter and 0.82m deep. It was filled by a sequence of four deposits of grey silty clay (82-85) and the only artefactual material was a flint flake from the uppermost fill (85). Pit 91 (Fig. 5, section 26) lay at the eastern edge of the excavation area, and was cut by post-medieval ditch 145. It was slightly larger than pit 81, measuring 2.2 m in diameter at the surface and 1.2 m deep, although the diameter narrowed rapidly with depth to a typical diameter of *c.* 1 m. The lower half was filled by layers of grey clay (109-114), including a discrete deposit of sandstone pieces (112), above which was a dark layer of charred or organic material (108). Further clay layers occupied the remainder of the feature. No artefactual material was present.

Pits 30, 78, 131 and 14/08 (which was excavated during the evaluation stage) measured 0.25-0.50 m deep and were all distinguished by slightly undercut sides. Pits 30 and 14/08 each contained a single fill, and pit 78 two fills, but pit 131 (Fig. 5, section 34) had a slightly more complex sequence, comprising a thin primary silt (135), a main fill (132) and two thinner upper layers (133, 134). Fill 132 yielded a few pieces of pottery and animal bone, as well as some heat-discoloured stones that had evidently been used as pot-boilers. Artefactual material from this group of pits was otherwise limited to twelve sherds from pit 14/08 and some crumb-sixed fragments of pottery from pit 30.

The shallower pits 6 and 13 measured 0.8 m and 1.7 m in diameter respectively but were each only 0.15 m deep.

The postholes could not be resolved into any coherent structures, but the concentration of most of these feature in the south-western part of the excavation area suggested that they represented a building of some sort in this location. The only direct relationship between a posthole and a pit was represented by posthole 136, which was dug into the centre of pit 131 – if this was deliberate it may have been intended to mark the location of the back-filled pit. It is alternatively possible that the arrangement of posthole 136 and the nearby postholes 97 and 99 represented three elements of a four-post storage structure with dimensions of 1.75 x 1.15 m, although the putative fourth corner was absent. A group of three undated postholes to the north of the main distribution (12, 18, 20) may also have been part of the settlement, but this was not certain.

An unexcavated gully (2323) at the southern edge of the excavation area may be part of a possible penannular gully (16/11) that was recorded in evaluation trench 16 (Fig. 3). The feature was represented in the evaluation by a curving gully 0.46 m wide and 0.32 m deep with steeply sloping sides and a concave base. Undated postholes 92 and 94 may have lain within the area thus enclosed.

Area 2 (Fig. 4). Middle Iron Age features were distributed throughout the excavation area, but with a notable concentration toward the south; part of a probable enclosure ditch (2321) was exposed at the southern end of the site, adjacent to which was an area of pits and postholes that were delimited to the north by a fenceline (2322), beyond which lay very few contemporary features, although a curvilinear ditch (2312) lay in this area.

Ditch 2321 was L-shaped as exposed within the excavation area, extending for *c.* 9m from the southern baulk then turning sharply toward east and following a somewhat sinuous alignment for 37 m before continuing beyond the limit of the excavation. Three phases of the ditch were identified, extending on slightly variant alignments. The two earliest phases comprised a steep-sided ditch that was 1.3 m wide and 0.46 m deep (2162, Fig. 5, section 2030) and a shallower feature with a more concave profile and a greatest depth of 0.30 m (2193). Due to the similarity of their fills it was not possible to determine which of these iterations of the ditch was the earlier. The third and final phase comprised a shallow ditch up to 0.26 m deep (2195) that followed the most sinuous alignment and cut across both the earlier ditches. The ditch produced 42 sherds (288 g) of pottery, representing almost 17% of the site total, but with a low average sherd weight of 7 g, typical of prehistoric ditch assemblages. The pottery is almost entirely body sherds. A single sherd of a type J2 jar is a typical middle Iron Age form, but a J3 type could be as late as the early first century BC. A small quantity of animal bone was recovered from the ditch, as well as a pestle and some burnt stone. The area enclosed by the ditch contained four pits (2164, 2166, 2281, 2283) and a posthole (2199), and an additional pit (2294) was exposed beneath the ditch. In addition to pit 2294, the ditch cut pits 2164 and 2281 and posthole 2199, indicating that they pre-dated at least one phase of the boundary. Pit 2164 was very shallow, with a depth of only 0.12 m, but pit 2166 was a little more substantial, measuring 0.34 m deep, and contained a dump of burnt stone, of which 14 kg was recovered from the excavated half. Pits 2281 and 2283 were not excavated but were noted to contain a significant quantity of pot boilers.

Immediately north of ditch 2321 lay a concentration of pits and postholes that were delimited to the north by fenceline 2322, situated *c.* 23 m from the ditch. The fenceline extended into the excavation from the eastern baulk on a WNW-ESE alignment and extended for at least 14 m, encompassing six postholes. It was not certain whether this represented the full original extent of the boundary or whether further postholes had been lost to plough-truncation. No return defining the eastern limit of the associated activity was positively identified; it is possible that postholes south of the easternmost element of the fenceline (posthole 2225) may represent such a boundary, but no definite alignment could be defined.

The area between the ditch and fenceline contained a total of 15 pits and 15 postholes. The pits were mostly situated close to the ditch, apart from pit 2133, an extremely slight feature only 0.06 m deep that lay in a slightly isolated location further north, and intersecting pits 2233 and 2235, which were situated between the postholes of fenceline 2322. Pits 2135 (Fig. 5, section 2025), 2137, 2189 and 2210 were all quite alike, with steep sides and flat bases, and measured 0.8-1.3 m in diameter and 0.3-0.5 m deep. Pit 19/08, which was situated in an isolated location east of the main concentration and was excavated during the evaluation stage, was similar, as was pit 2157, although the latter had a more irregular profile with a concave base. Pits 2153, 2155, 2168 and 2212, by contrast, were all shallow features no more than 0.2 m deep. Pit 2187 was intermediate in depth and atypically wide, measuring 2.4 x 2.1 m and 0.3 m deep. Pit 2287 was not excavated. The only instance of intercutting pits was provided by pits 2187 and 2189, the former being the earlier feature. Artefactual assemblages from the pits were typically limited to small quantities of pottery and animal bone, the latter including a complete, though fragmented cattle skull and foot bone and scapula fragments from pit 2157, although it is not possible to be certain whether these came from an individual animal. A possible clip or hook of copper alloy was recovered from pit 2212, in addition to which 2.2 kg of burnt stone was recovered from pit 2187 and 1.7 kg from pit 2157. The largest pottery assemblage was a collection of 21 sherds (500 g) from pit 2137, which includes two basal sherds and the only examples of a J3 jar and a hemispherical bowl, along with other highly burnished or smoothed sandy wares. The high-shouldered, bead-rim J3 jar in particular suggests the pit was filled during the later middle or late Iron Age. A short segment of curving gully (2313), 4m long and up to 0.37 m deep, was also situated in this area, but its function was unclear. The postholes in this area, none of which contained artefactual material, did not form any definite structures, although it is possible that postholes 2185, 2220 and 2223 represented three corners of a four-post structure measuring *c*. 2.5 x 2.5 m.

There were no contemporary features in the area immediately north of fenceline 2322, although a small group of undated features, cut by post-medieval boundary ditches, was situated *c.* 25 m further north and included a pit (2150) that contained an assemblage of fired clay from a wattle structure. Toward the northern end of the excavation area lay curving ditch 2312, which extended for *c.* 16 m and was 0.3 m deep with a V-shaped profile (Fig. 5, section 2067). The western end was

truncated by Roman/Anglo-Saxon ditch 2315 and the eastern end extended beyond the edge of the excavation area. A mere six sherds (35 g) of pottery was recovered, and a sherd of Anglo-Saxon pottery was recovered during the evaluation. A much smaller curving feature (2021) was situated to the north, comprising a gully 0.1 m deep with a projected diameter of only *c.* 3.5 m, and is similar to features found on Iron Age settlements elsewhere but produced no artefactual dating evidence.

Roman/Anglo-Saxon Period
Area 2 was crossed by ditch 2315, which was not well dated but has been attributed broadly to the Roman/Anglo-Saxon period, although a later date is possible. The feature was aligned NW-SE and continued beyond the limits of the excavation area in both directions. It measured 4.4-5.9 m wide and 0.45-0.6 m deep, but this width evidently derived from a rather narrower ditch that had been recut repeatedly on slightly variant alignments. The fills of the various iterations were very similar and it was consequently difficult to distinguish them, but there appeared to be at least four phases, with widths that varied from 1.2 m to more than 2.2 m. A mixed assemblage of pottery comprising a sherd of late Roman colour-coated ware and sherds from an Anglo-Saxon globular jar/cooking pot was recovered from a single fill, as well as three fragments of tegula.

Ditch 2314 ran alongside ditch 2315 and is likely to represent another iteration of the same boundary. It was 0.6 m wide and up to 0.3 m deep, and yielded no artefactual material.

Post-medieval Period
The excavation areas were crossed by two post-medieval boundary ditches that extended on adjacent east-west alignments (145=2316 and 146=2317), each of which exhibited evidence for having been recut on at least three occasions. Ditch 2320 branched off ditch 2317 and extended south across Area 2, continuing beyond the southern boundary of the excavation area. The ditches cut earlier features and contained tile, clay tobacco pipe and metalwork indicating an eighteenth or nineteenth century date.

PREHISTORIC POTTERY by LISA BROWN

The prehistoric pottery assemblage numbers 254 sherds weighing 4,786 g. Most of the material dates to the middle to late Iron Age, and combines typical traits of assemblages of this period in the Upper Thames Valley and across southern Britain generally – a preference for sandy fabrics, grey/black surfaces, and sinuous and rounded vessel profiles. Additionally, however, two partially preserved middle Bronze Age urns were recovered from highly truncated, but apparently purpose-dug features in the southern part of Area 2. The pottery is in a generally fragmentary condition, with at least half of the collection recorded as highly abraded. The average sherd weight (ASW) of just over 10 g is typical for an Iron Age settlement site assemblage.

Middle Bronze Age Pottery
Two partial and damaged middle Bronze Age vessels were recovered from features in Area 2. There was no cremated bone or any artefacts associated with either vessel, and the survival of the lower part of the vessel in both cases indicates that they were not inverted in the manner of many Bronze Age cinerary urns.

Pit 2014 yielded the complete basal and undecorated lower wall sections of a vessel of indeterminate form, but a 260 mm diameter indicates this was probably a Bucket or Barrel Urn of substantial size (SF 1, Fig. 6). The fabric (F1) is a lightly sanded, slightly micaceous clay with sparse red iron oxides incorporating abundant black and white angular calcined flint up to 4 mm in size.

The vessel from pit 2103 was more complete than SF1, with an entire base and lower section, a few rim sherds, and a section of the upper wall preserved (SF 2, Fig. 6). The fabric resembles that of SF1 and sufficient survives to determine that the vessel is a Barrel Urn decorated with applied vertical clay ribs rising to form a loop resembling a horseshoe-shaped handle, linked to an applied horizontal cordon. Both the cordons and the ‘handle’ are elaborated with fingernail-impressed decoration.

This ‘horseshoe’ handle feature is found on vessels of the slightly earlier Bronze Age Biconical Urn tradition. The so-called Ardleigh Urns found in middle Bronze Age cemeteries in East

Anglia and elsewhere in southern Britain borrowed elements from Biconical Urns with horseshoe handles.[28] As the tradition developed during the middle Bronze Age, the initially predominant grog temper was gradually replaced by inclusions of burnt crushed flint, vessels evolved more of a barrel shape, and fingertip-impressed decoration and applied ribs or cordons appeared. The fingertip impressions could be applied all over the body of the vessel or restricted to the rim top and/or applied cordons. Fingertip-impressed vertical ribs are also a characteristic of the Wiltshire South Lodge urns.[29] The Little Martin's Field urn lacks the profuse fingertip decoration on the body that typifies many Ardleigh type urns, but the vertical ribs and horseshoe-shaped looped cordons show some affinity with this and the South Lodge tradition.

The cordons on these large vessels may have been multifunctional. They are certainly decorative, but the vertical ribs also help to strengthen the weak points of large coil-made vessels and the horizontal cordons would have facilitated lifting and general handling. The vessels are often found inverted over cremated remains in pits, but domestic variants of Deverel-Rimbury urns are found in field boundary ditches, as at Green Park, Reading Business Park and from ditches and pits at Great Western Park, Didcot.[30]

Iron Age Pottery

The main component of the prehistoric assemblage, amounting to 186 sherds weighing 1,947 g, is dated to the middle Iron Age, middle to late Iron Age, or indeterminate Iron Age. Seven Iron Age fabrics within three ware groups were distinguished. Quartz sand fabrics dominate by a wide margin, and most of the five sub-classes contain glauconite. A fabric represented by only six sherds is characterised by abundant inclusions of powdery red iron oxides, which may be natural inclusions in the potting clay. Another six sherds contain fossil shell inclusions. The small numbers of sherds prohibit meaningful statistical or distribution analysis, but the fabrics generally reflect the underlying geology of the site, which is mapped as Upper Greensand Formation siltstone and sandstone. The glauconite minerals in the sandy clays derive from eroded Greensand rock.

There are few Iron Age sherds that are diagnostic of vessel form, and none of the pottery is decorated. Even some rim sherds are too small to determine vessel type. Nonetheless it was possible to classify three basic vessel forms – ovoid jars with either an upstanding flattened rim (J1), short everted rim (J2) or beaded rim (J3), a hemispherical bowl with a simple rim, and a straight-sided jar (saucepan pot). One of the ovoid jars with a beaded rim has a very high rounded shoulder, typical of shapes that proliferated during the later stages of the middle Iron Age and into the first century AD.

Discussion

The decorated Deverel-Rimbury urn with a derivative horseshoe handle is noteworthy in its affinities with Ardleigh and South Lodge Urns. The fact that these vessels lacked any cinerary remains does not mean that they had no funerary associations (see Discussion above). However, Deverel-Rimbury urns are also found in domestic settings, where they may have been used for storage.

The Iron Age assemblage, although small and fragmentary, clearly lacks any early Iron Age component. The rounded shapes with smoothed or burnished surfaces and the predominance of glauconitic sandy fabrics indicate that the entire group dates to the middle and/or late Iron Age. The site lies a short distance to the east of Great Western Park, Didcot, and south of the Iron Age hillfort of Castle Hill and there are similarities in the middle Iron Age pottery collections from these sites. Some of the components of the Little Martin's Field fabrics resemble those from these two settlements, most notably glauconite, calcareous and marl inclusions, and occasional fine fossil

[28] F.H. Erith and I. Longworth, 'A Bronze Age Urnfield on Vinces Farm, Ardleigh, Essex', *Proc Prehist Soc*, 26 (1960), pp. 178-92.

[29] J. Barrett, R. Bradley and M. Green, *Landscapes, Monuments and Society: the Prehistory of Cranborne Chase* (1991); A.H.L.F. Pitt Rivers, *Excavations in Cranborne Chase Vol 4* (1898).

[30] E.L. Morris, 'Later Prehistoric Pottery', in A. Brossler, R. Early and C. Allen, *Green Park (Reading Business Park): Phase 2 Excavations 1995 – Neolithic and Bronze Age* (2004), p. 78; L. Brown, 'Prehistoric Pottery', in C. Hayden, A. Simmonds, S. Lawrence, R. Masefield and K. Wheaton, *Great Western Park, Didcot, Oxfordshire: Phase 1 Excavations, 2010-2012* (forthcoming).

shell.[31] The rare ferruginous fabric has a direct parallel at Didcot, so the vessels in this fabric may have been produced at the same site/s, and clearly from similar raw materials. Further afield, similar fabrics and ovoid and hemispherical forms are identified in the middle Iron Age pottery assemblages at sites including Gravelly Guy and Cresswell Field, Yarnton.[32] However, the size, character and condition of the Little Martin's Field collection precludes intensive comparative analysis.

ROMAN POTTERY by EDWARD BIDDULPH

Two sherds of Roman pottery were recovered. Fill 2078 of ditch 2315 contained an abraded sherd (5 g) in an oxidised fine sandy fabric with traces of a dark brown colour-coat (OA fabric F60). The piece may be from the Oxford industry, but the fabric is a little sandier than the industry's standard red/brown colour-coated ware (OA fabric F51) allows, and so another source is possible. However, a late Roman date for the piece, which was found with Saxon pottery, is likely. Post-medieval ditch 145 contained a body sherd (3g) of Oxford sandy white ware (OA fabric W22). No form could be identified, but the fabric was manufactured from the second to fourth century AD.[33]

ANGLO-SAXON POTTERY by JOHN COTTER

Five sherds of Anglo-Saxon pottery weighing 80 g were recovered. These represent two separate handmade vessels in organic-tempered ware which came from two features. Ditch 2315 yielded four very fresh sherds (77g) from a single vessel, comprising two groups of joining sherds including a rim and joining shoulder sherd, and two large joining body sherds. These provide a near-complete vessel profile from a slightly squat globular jar/cooking pot with a plain everted or cavetto rim. The rim diameter is *c*. 160 mm (10% surviving circumference) while the maximum body diameter is *c*. 210 mm. The lower wall curves downwards and inwards towards the missing base. Such very simple vessel forms are ubiquitous in Anglo-Saxon pottery assemblages. The external surface of the vessel is roughly finished and uneven, almost facetted, but with a deliberate, if patchy, burnish. The internal surface is also very roughly finished, with numerous roughly horizontal wiping marks and many random marks besides. The external surface and rim are clearly sooted from use during cooking while the interior is quite clean. A single small body sherd (3 g) came from post-medieval ditch 145. The high proportion of glauconite present in this sherd might suggest an alternative (prehistoric) date, but since the more complete vessel from ditch 2315 also contains quite a bit of this, the later dating seems the more likely.

Organic-tempered ware (sometimes called chaff- or grass-tempered ware) is widespread throughout the Thames Valley where it mainly dates from the early to middle Anglo-Saxon period (*c*. fifth to eighth century). Large assemblages of this period, with a large element of organic-tempered wares, have been excavated at other sites in Oxfordshire including Eynsham Abbey and Barrow Hills, Radley, to name only the largest.[34] Four sherds of organic-tempered Anglo-Saxon pottery were also recovered from the evaluation stage.[35]

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[31] E. Edwards, 'Prehistoric Pottery', in T. Allen, K. Cramp, H. Lamdin-Whymark and L. Webley, *Castle Hill and its Landscape; Archaeological Investigations at the Wittenhams, Oxfordshire* (2010), pp. 48 and 55; Brown, 'Prehistoric Pottery'.

[32] D. Duncan, G. Lambrick and A. Barclay, 'Final Bronze Age to middle Iron Age Pottery', in G.H. Lambrick and T.G. Allen, Gravelly Guy, *Stanton Harcourt Oxfordshire: The Development of a Prehistoric and Romano-British Community* (2004), pp. 264-7; P. Booth, P, 'Iron Age Pottery', in G. Hey, P. Booth and J. Timby, *Yarnton: Iron Age and Romano-British Settlement and Landscape* (2011), pp. 348-365.

[33] C.J. Young, *The Roman Pottery Industry of the Oxford Region* (1977), p. 97.

[34] P. Blinkhorn, 'The Pottery', in A. Hardy, A. Dodd and G.D. Keevill, *Aelfric's Abbey: Excavations at Eynsham Abbey, Oxfordshire, 1989-92* (2003), pp. 159-206; P. Blinkhorn, 'Anglo-Saxon pottery' in R. Chambers and E. McAdam, *Excavations at Barrow Hills, Radley, Oxfordshire, 1983-5. Vol. 2: The Romano-British Cemetery and Anglo-Saxon Settlement* (2007), pp. 229-247.

[35] J. Timby, 'Pottery', in Leech, 'An Archaeological Evaluation at Little Martins Field', p. 19.

FIRED CLAY by CYNTHIA POOLE

A large quantity of fired clay was recovered, amounting to 1852 fragments (5,562 g), most of which (98%) came from sieved samples from just two contexts in pit 2150. All the diagnostic material was characterised by wattle impressions on the back face of fragments, comprising over 400 wattle impressions that occurred singly and in multiple groups. Where several occurred on a single fragment it was clear that these consisted of rods interwoven around upright sails. Several sails formed adjacent pairs, and not all the rods regularly alternated around sails, but often adjacent rods passed the same side of the sail. Nearly all the impressions were roundwood, though a few split or squared impressions were noted. Two larger poles may have formed part of the framework to which the smaller wattles were attached. The size of the wattles is consistent with those found in daub associated with oven structures rather than buildings, although the latter cannot be entirely discounted.[36] The size and shape of pit 2150 is compatible with simple Roman ovens, though no *in situ* burning was noted at the time of excavation. However, burning has been observed in some cases to occur only around the rims of the features, which could be easily truncated by later cultivation.[37] The association of large quantities of charcoal or carbonized plant remains supports the possibility of the feature being a small oven base. The wattle-supported structure may have formed a suspended floor, possibly for use as a drying floor for crop processing.

CERAMIC BUILDING MATERIAL by CYNTHIA POOLE

Nine pieces of Roman tile (551 g) were recovered, made in a variety of orange-red sandy fabrics containing varying quantities and grades of quartz sand. Abrasion is light or absent suggesting the tile was incorporated relatively quickly into deposits following disuse and was not subsequently disturbed or reworked to any great extent. Tegula was the most common form recovered (four fragments, 464g). They measured 20-24mm thick and two lower corner fragments had both flange and lower cutaway surviving. The flanges included rounded and rectangular profiles, measuring 23-28 mm wide and 48-52 mm high. The cutaways were both of the same D16 type, which Warry suggests is a late form dating from the mid third to fourth century.[38] The single fragment of imbrex (31g) measured 17 mm thick and was only slightly curved suggesting a fairly angular profile. A fragment of thick tile made in fabric G and measuring *c*. 37 mm thick is probably a fragment of brick.

WORKED STONE by RUTH SHAFFREY

A single stone artefact was recovered from middle Iron Age ditch 2321. It is a quartzitic sandstone cobble that was broken in antiquity. The cobble was waterworn subsequent to breakage and was then used as a pestle, with one whole rounded end battered where it has been used as a hammerstone/pounder. It measured 68 mm high x 53 mm x 48 mm.

METAL OBJECTS by IAN SCOTT

A possible clip or hook of copper alloy (SF 7) was recovered from the fill of middle Iron Age pit 2212. It is a small, flat, tongue-shaped fragment, rounded at the narrower end and broken off at the wider end which is also bent at a right angle. The piece measures 12 mm x 7 mm.

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[36] B. Cunliffe and C. Poole, *Danebury: an Iron Age Hillfort in Hampshire Vol. 4 The Excavations, 1979-1988: the Site* (1991), p. 141.
[37] Cunliffe and Poole, *The Danebury Environs Roman Programme*, p. 94.
[38] P. Warry, *Tegulae: Manufacture, Typology and Use in Roman Britain* (2006).

WORKED FLINT by MICHAEL DONNELLY

The excavation yielded a small assemblage of 34 struck flints, which were largely recovered as residual finds in later features. Overall, the assemblage was chronologically mixed and very sparse in its nature, probably representing material accumulated from several flint-using episodes spanning at least two thousand years. Formal tools are absent and the solitary core recovered was largely undiagnostic. Several core dressing pieces as well as a retouched blade and other blade forms indicate an early prehistoric component and some of the flakes from the assemblage are typically later prehistoric in character. The flints were in good condition; 53.57% were fresh, 28.57 displayed light edge damage and only 17.86% were moderately damaged with no heavily damaged or rolled pieces. The flint either displayed light or no cortication, with a limited range of cortex types including chalk, thermal and weathered surfaces. This suggests largely locally-gathered flint that had suffered little from post-depositional agencies. The only potentially contemporary assemblage came from Bronze Age-early Iron Age ditch 144 and consisted of three pieces, comprising a multiplatform flake core, a flake and a piece of indeterminate waste. The core more typifies Neolithic industries but could conceivably be Bronze Age in date, while the other two pieces were wholly undiagnostic.

ANIMAL BONE by MARTYN ALLEN

A total of 348 animal bone specimens were recovered during hand excavation (Table 1) and a further 108 g from environmental samples. The majority derived from middle Iron Age and post-medieval features, while a small number were recovered from Roman/Anglo-Saxon ditch 2314 and undated and natural features. The following report focusses on the middle Iron Age remains, although the small sample size limits interpretation.

Middle Iron Age features produced 175 animal bone specimens. These were predominantly of cattle and sheep/goats. No remains of goat were positively identified and most are assumed to derive from sheep. Many of the large and medium mammal size long bone, rib and vertebrae fragments also probably derive from cattle and sheep. Pig, horse, and dog were each represented by a handful of specimens. Just under one-third of the middle Iron Age assemblage consisted of unidentifiable fragments, showing that some degree of post-depositional breakage had impacted upon the remains, though the assemblage was generally well preserved.

Pit 2157 was perhaps the most notable feature, as it contained a complete (though fragmented) cattle skull, along with foot bones and scapula fragments. The horncores of this animal were particularly short, measuring 114 mm along the outer curve, which corresponds with the 'short horn' type.[39] An environmental sample from this feature also contained a large number of vole and frog bones, plus several bones of common shrew, as well as a red deer upper molar, representing the only specimen from a large wild mammal in the middle Iron Age assemblage. Frogs and voles are both predated by shrews and it seems likely that the microfaunal remains in this feature had accumulated as a result of shrew activity.

Cattle remains were mostly from adult animals, though an unfused distal radius was recovered and an unfused distal tibia derived from animals aged *c*. 42 months old and *c*. 24 months old respectively. A cattle mandible and a lower third molar were from animals aged around 6–8 years old. Butchery marks were represented by a mandible that exhibited knife cuts on the lateral ramus near the condyle, indicating that the jaw had been fairly delicately removed from the skull, possibly to extract the tongue, a metacarpal that had been axially split through the shaft, presumably to access the bone marrow or to use the bone for tool manufacture, and a large mammal rib fragment that exhibited cut marks along the shaft to cut the intercostal muscle.

Sheep/goats included adult and juvenile and a neonatal humerus. Unfused pelvis and distal tibia specimens were recovered from ditch 2321. It is uncertain if these were from the same animal, but if so it would not have been older than five months when it died. One sheep/goat mandible was estimated to have been between one and two years old at death.

[39] N. Sykes and R. Symmons, 'Sexing Cattle Horn-cores: Problems and Progress', *International Journal of Osteoarchaeology* 17.5 (2007), pp. 514-523.

Pigs included a proximal radius and distal tibia that were unfused, and therefore derived from animals aged *c*. 15 months and *c*. 24 months when slaughtered. This fairly young culling age is supported by the analysis of two mandibles.

Horse specimens comprised two incisors, metatarsal and metacarpal fragments recovered from ditch 2321, all from a skeletally mature animal.

CHARRED PLANT REMAINS by SHARON COOK

Twenty bulk soil samples were collected during excavation and following assessment sixteen were selected for analysis for charred plant remains. The samples produced generally small flots with little charred material, accompanied by fine modern roots and occasional modern seeds and insects (Tables 2 and 3). The charcoal is generally small in size with some external encrustation which varies between samples, while the cereal grain is in generally poor condition with a clinkered appearance, although occasional better preserved grains are present.

Middle Bronze Age pit 2103 contained only a small amount of charred material, in generally poor condition, and likely to represent the backfill of the pit rather than the contents of vessel SF 2. The remains indicated the cultivation of emmer or spelt and probably barley.

Samples from middle Iron Age pits 30, 131, 2137, 2157 and 2166 included a mixture of cereals, represented by grain (mainly wheat with smaller quantities of barley (*Hordeum* sp. including an example of *Hordeum* cf. *vulgare*) and oats (*Avena* sp.) as well as cereal chaff. These were accompanied by smaller seeds from uncultivated plants, many of which may have grown as weeds within the crops. Oat/brome (*Avena*/*Bromus*), vetches, cleavers (*Galium aparine*) and mayweed (*Tripleurospermum* sp.) as well as grasses (Poaceae) and various members of the daisy family (Asteraceae) are commonly observed within assemblages of this type and date.[40] Rushes (*Juncus* sp.) and sedges (*Carex* sp.) are generally indicative of damp conditions but they are present in small numbers and may just reflect plants growing around the edges of fields close to damper contexts such as ditches. Glume wheat chaff frequently forms the largest part of charred assemblages on Iron Age sites as a result of the frequent practice of storing grains in the glume.[41] In addition, smaller quantities of wheat/barley and oat awns as well as rachis internode fragments are present. It is likely that that this material is waste from crop processing activities such as threshing or dehusking. Experiments have shown that straw remains and rachis internodes are under-represented after charring compared with glume wheat chaff and cereal grains, so it is possible that this assemblage represents early crop processing waste.[42] Unfortunately, the glume base fragments are on the whole not further identifiable although occasional fragments bear some of the identifying characteristics of spelt wheat (*Triticum spelta*). It is likely that the majority of the wheat on this site is spelt since in the south and east of Britain this was the most common cultivar during the Iron Age and Roman periods.[43] A single large legume was identified from pit 2137 but is insufficient to ascertain if these were also grown as a crop.

In contrast to the pit fills, posthole 2220 is extremely rich in charred remains despite the original soil sample being only five litres. The sample comes from the postpipe and the material extracted comprised large amounts of chaff and cereal grain, predominantly wheat (*Triticum* sp.) and barley (*Hordeum* sp.), together with small numbers of seeds from uncultivated plants. Glume bases from emmer or spelt (*T. dicoccum*/*spelta*) suggest that the indeterminate grains are likely to be mainly of these types. It is unusual to find such a quantity of non-wood charred material within a posthole

[40] G. Campbell, R. Pelling and V. Straker 'A Review of Macroscopic Plant Remains Studies in Southern England' (forthcoming), English Heritage Res Rep; K. Parks, 'Iron Age and Roman Arable Practice in the East of England' (2012), Phd Thesis, University of Leicester.

[41] G.C. Hillman, 'Reconstructing Crop Husbandry Practices from Charred Remains of Crops', in R. Mercer (ed.) *Farming Practice in British Prehistory* (1981), pp. 123–162; M. K. Jones, 'Archaeobotany Beyond Subsistence Reconstruction, in G.W.W. Barker and C. Gamble (eds), *Beyond Domestication in Prehistoric Europe* (1985), pp. 107-128.

[42] S. Boardman and G.E.M. Jones, 'Experiments on the Effects of Charring on Cereal Plant Components', *Journal of Archaeological Science* 17(1) (1990), pp. 1-12.

[43] M. van der Veen, *Crop Husbandry Regimes: An Archaeobotanical Study of Farming in Northern England 1000BC-AD500* (1992).

and the inference must be that this is material from within or related to the structure, assuming that the feature is indeed a posthole.

OTHER FINDS by ANDREW SIMMONDS

Other finds include 249 fragments (33,819 g) of burnt stone, mostly from middle Iron Age deposits, and a fragment of tap slag weighing 63 g from ditch 2315. A single piece of clay tobacco pipe stem and medieval and post-medieval tile and metalwork were recovered from post-medieval boundary ditches and the ploughsoil, including an unstratified cut half of a silver short-cross penny (AD 1180-1267).

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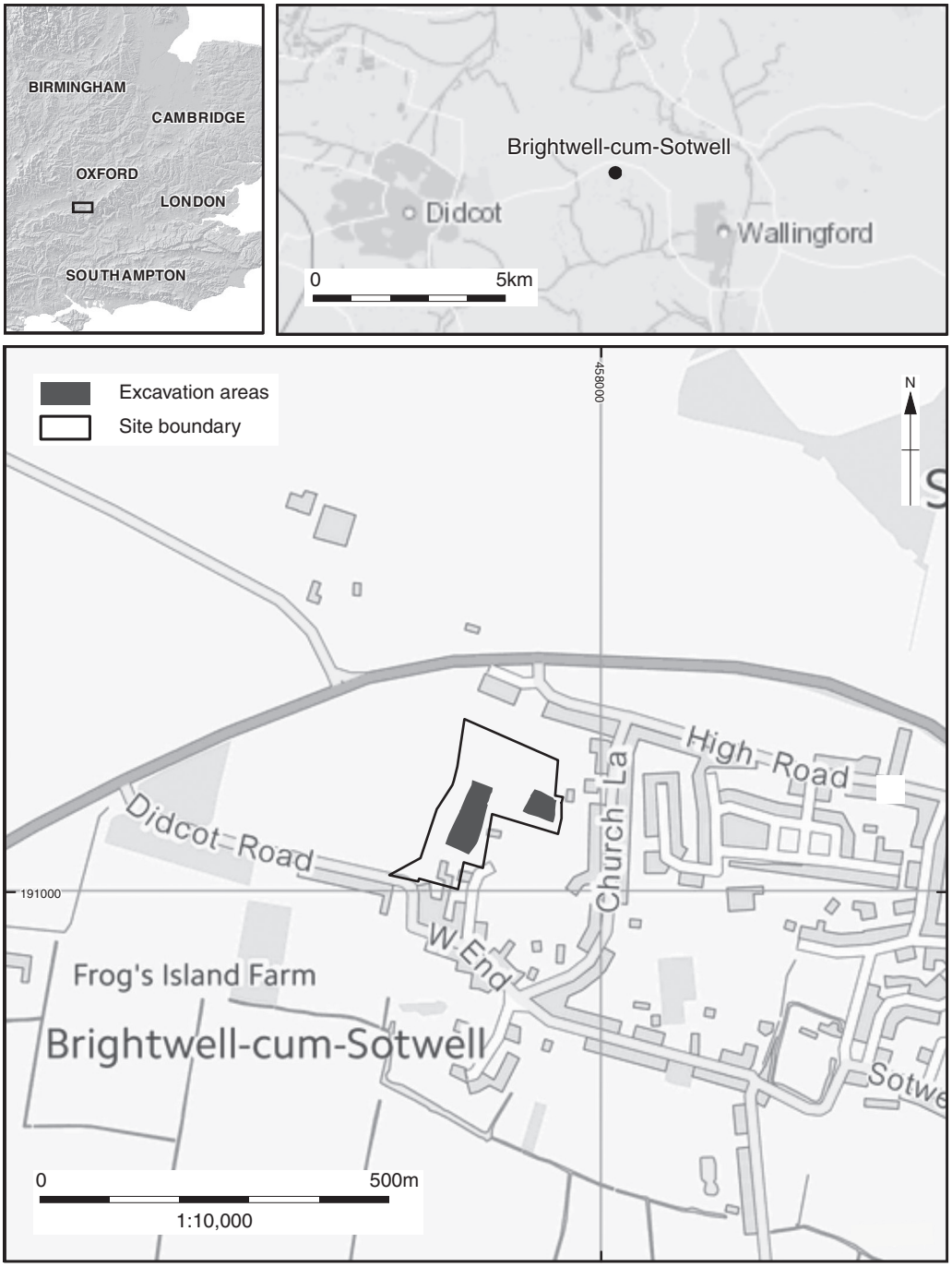

Figure 1: Site locations

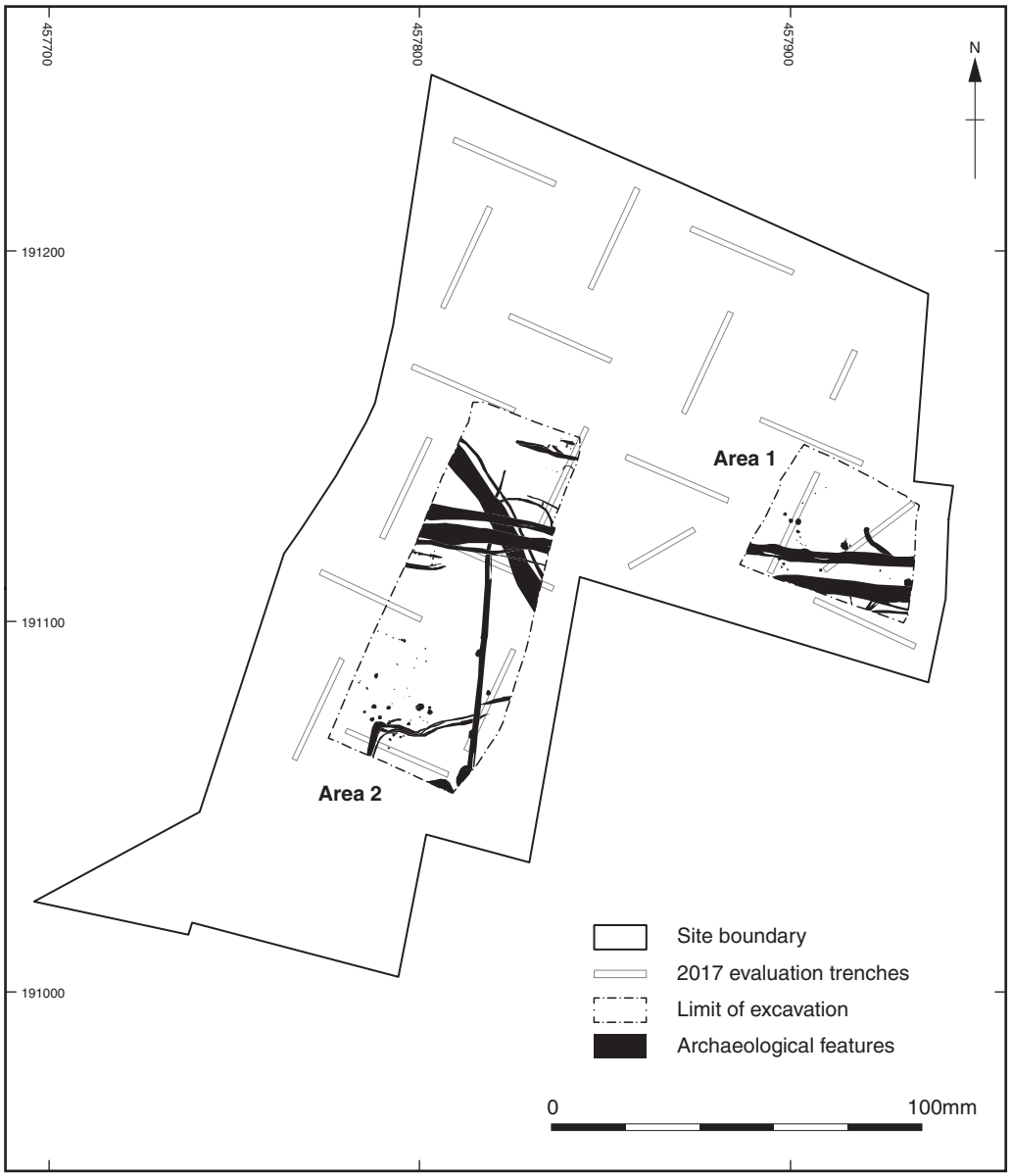

Figure 2: Plan of excavation areas

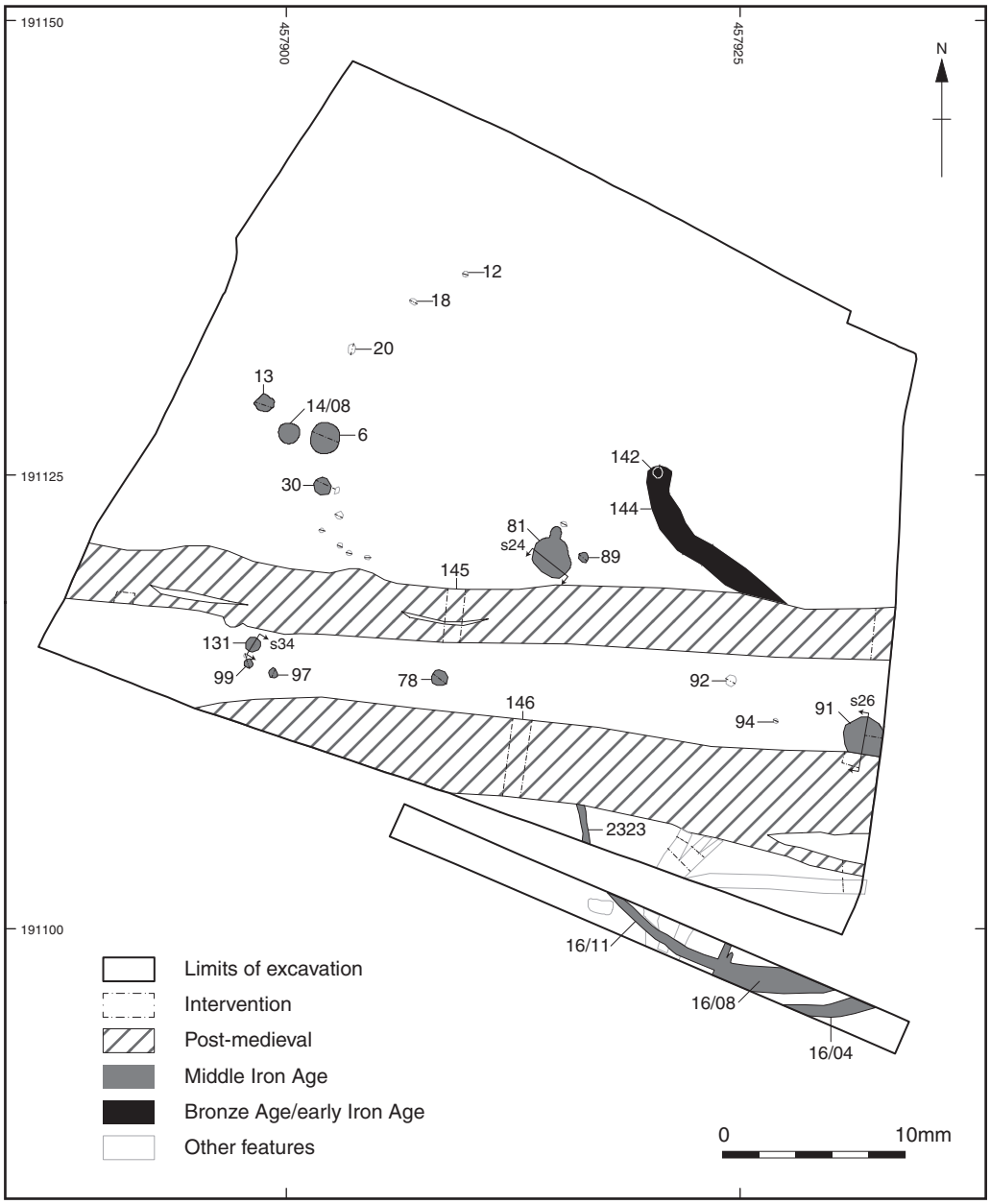

Figure 3: Plan of Area 1 and Evaluation Trench 16

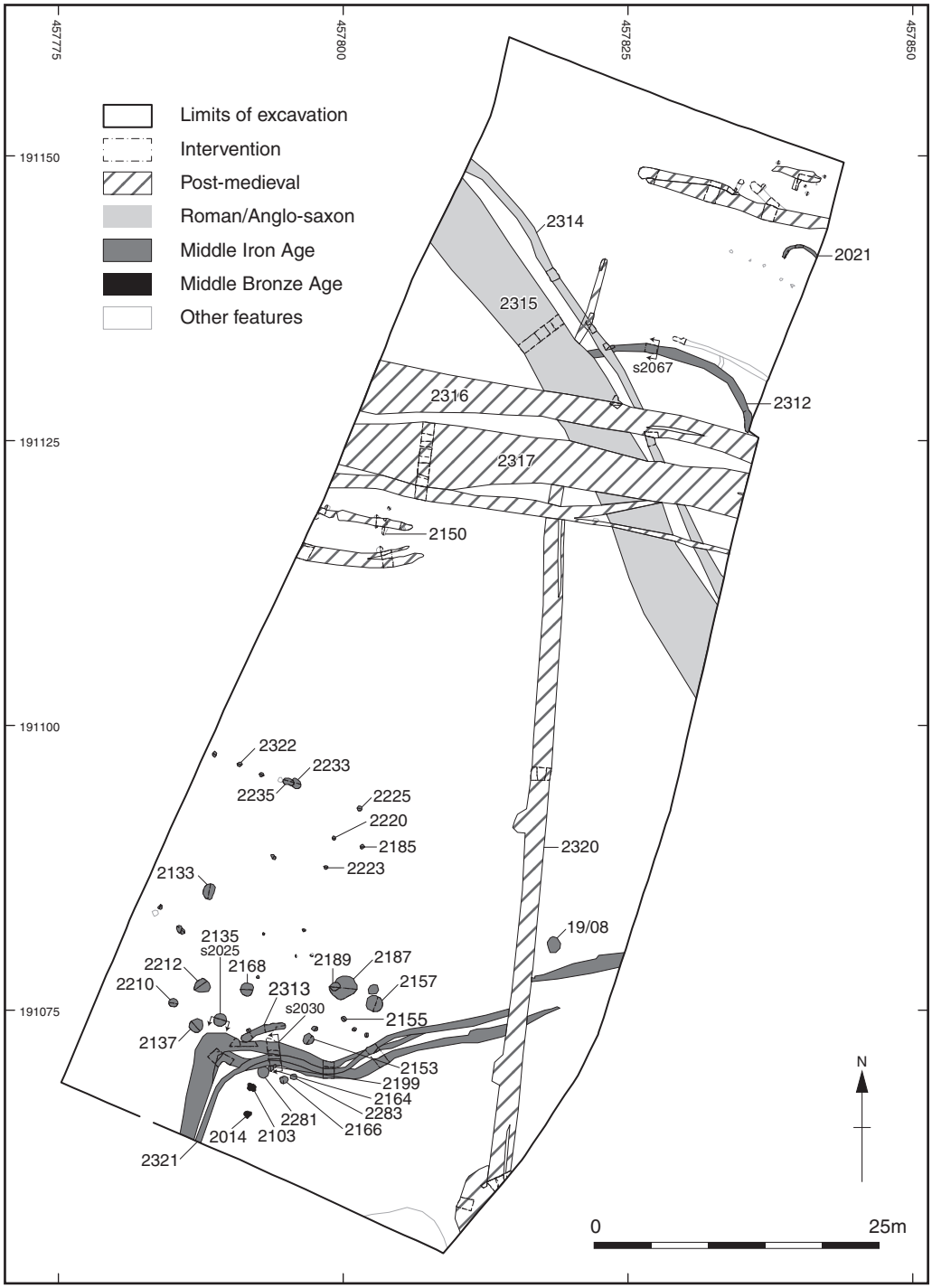

Figure 4: Plan of Area 2

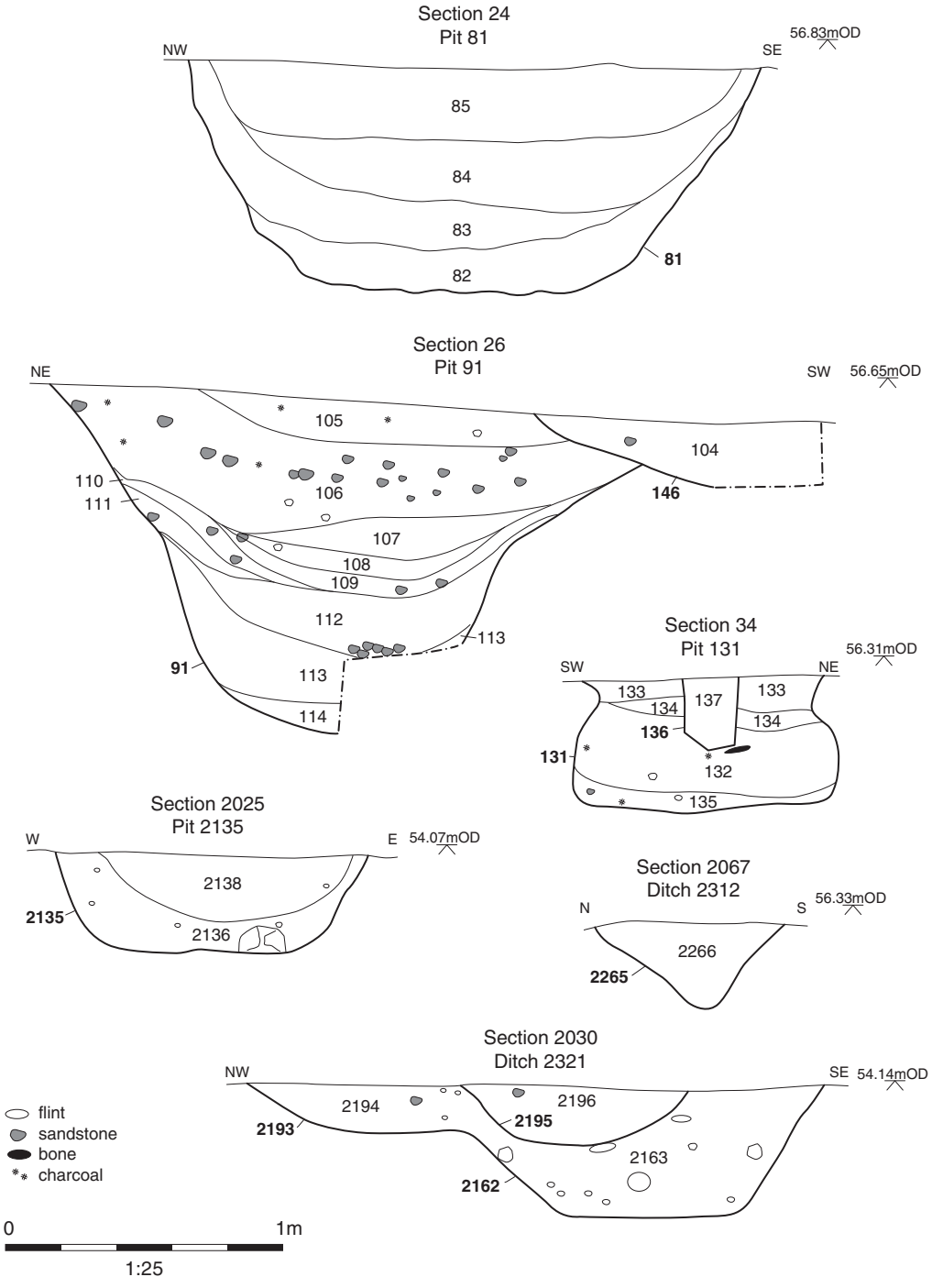

Figure 5: Sections of selected features

Figure 6: Deverel-Rimbury urns SF1 and SF2

Middle Bronze Age Urns and Middle Iron Age Settlement at Little Martin's Field, Brightwell-Cum-Sotwell – Tables

Table 1: Quantification of animal bone by period

Taxa	Middle Iron Age	Roman/Anglo-Saxon	Post-medieval	Total
Cattle	22	1	22	45
Sheep/goat	23	1	24	48
Goat			5	5
Pig	8		5	13
Horse	4		8	12
Dog	1		2	3
Cat			1	1
Large mammal	36	2	19	57
Medium	28	9	34	71
Unidentified	53		40	93
Total	175	13	160	348

Table 2: Summary of charred plant remains from Area 1

Sample No		1	2	3	4	5	6
Context No		31	33	93	132	130	129
Feature		30	32	92	131	144	144
Description		Fill of pit	Fill of posthole	Fill of posthole	Fill of pit	Fill of ditch	Fill of ditch
Date		MIA	MIA	MIA	MIA	BA/EIA	BA/EIA
Volume (L)		40	1	10	30	25	30
Flot Volume (ml)		60	3	50	30	15	5
Flot Analysed		100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
Charcoal							
	>4mm	**		***	**		
	2-4mm	***		***	***	*	
Cereal grain							
Triticum sp.	wheat	11#		1#	17#		
cf Triticum sp.	cf. wheat	2#	1#		3#		
Hordeum sp.	barley				3#		
cf Hordeum sp.	cf. barley				1#		
Avena sp.	oat	4#			11#		
Avena/Bromus	oat/brome	29#			26#		
Cerealia	indet cereal	55#	1#	4#	53#		
Chaff							
Triticum dicoccum/spelta	emmer/spelt glume base	434#	1#		380#		
Triticum/Hordeum	rachis fragments	9#	1#		15#		
Triticum/Hordeum sp.	wheat/barley awns	**			**		
Triticum sp.	wheat awns	*			*		
Avena sp.	oat awns	***			***		
Avena sp.	oat floret fragment	2#					
Cerealia	indet detached embryos	13			3		
Fruit, Nutshell etc							
Indet	Indet nutshell/fruitstone fragment	1#					
Wild Species							
Fabaceae	pea family (small)	7#			1#		
Vicia/Lathyrus sp. >2 mm	vetch/vetchling/tare etc	5#	1#		4#		
Vicia/Lathyrus sp. <2 mm	vetch/vetchling/tare etc	23#			17#		
Rumex sp.	docks	2#		4#	9#		
Rumex acetosella	sheep's sorrel	4#					

Sample No		1	2	3	4	5	6
Context No		31	33	93	132	130	129
Stellaria media	common chickweed		1#				
Chenopodium album	goosefoot			1			
Montia fontana	blinks	3#			2		
Galium aparine	cleavers	9#					
Veronica hederifolia	ivy-leaved speedwell	3#					
Teucrium sp.	germander				1		
Asteraceae	daisy family	11#					
Anthemis cotula	stinking chamomile			1#	1		
Leucanthemum/Tripleurospermum sp.	oxeye daisies/mayweed	31#					
Juncus sp.	rushes	5#			7#		
Carex sp.	sedges				3#		
Poaceae	grass seeds (various)	18#			25#		
Other							
Indet.	seed/fruit	10#		4#	11#		
# Majority fragmented, vitrified or missing some external indicators. *1-5, **5-25, ***25-50, ****50-100, *****100+							

Table 3: Summary of charred plant remains from Area 2

Sample No		2000	2001	2002	2004	2005	2008	2011	2012
Context No		2158	2159	2182	2222	2208	2167	2293	2104
Feature		2157	2157	2157	2220	2137	2166	2312	2103
Description		Fill of pit	Fill of pit	Fill of pit	Fill of posthole	Fill of pit	Fill of pit	Fill of ditch	Fill of pot SF 2
Date		MIA	MIA	MIA	MIA	MIA	MIA	MIA	MBA
Volume (L)		40	20	40	5	40	35	40	5
Flot Volume (ml)		100	30	50	30	60	50	50	8
Flot Analysed		100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
Charcoal									
	>4mm	**	**	**	**		*	***	
	2-4mm	***	***	***	***	***	***	***	*
Cereal grain									
Triticum sp.	wheat	2#	4#	6#	17#	21#	3#	1#	2#
cf Triticum sp.	cf. wheat	8#		4#	18#	18#		1#	
Hordeum sp.	barley				6#	20#			
cf Hordeum sp.	cf. barley	1#	2#	1#	5#	14#	1#		1#
Avena sp.	oat				2	1			
Avena/Bromus	oat/brome	5#		3#	5#	1#	2#		
Cerealia	indet cereal	12#	10#	46#	183#	59#	12#	11#	2#
Chaff									
Triticum dicoccum/spelta	emmer/spelt glume base	154#	52#	36#	191#	28#	156#	3#	4#
Triticum/Hordeum	rachis fragments	2#				2#	3#	15#	
Cerealia	indet detatched embryos	2		1	15	15	2		
Avena sp.	oat awns	***				***	**		

Sample No		2000	2001	2002	2004	2005	2008	2011	2012
Context No		2158	2159	2182	2222	2208	2167	2293	2104
Fruit, Nutshell etc									
Fabaceae >4mm	pea/bean					1			
Corylus avellana	hazelnut shell	1#						2#	
Wild Species									
Vicia/Lathyrus sp. >2 mm	vetch/vetchling/tare etc			1	2#	11#			
Vicia/Lathyrus sp. <2 mm	vetch/vetchling/tare etc	2#		5#	1#	43#	12#	3#	1#
Medicago sp.	medicks					1#			
Rumex sp.	docks				2#	1#		1	
Stellaria media	common chickweed								1#
Amarantheceae	goosefoot family			1#		1#			
Chenopodium album	goosefoot				1#	2	3		
Galium aparine	cleavers	2					2		
Asteraceae	daisy family					6#		1#	1#
Anthemis cotula	stinking chamomile	2	1	2		2			1
Leucanthemum/Tripleurospermum sp.	oxeye daisies/mayweed						1#		
Sambucus nigra	elder					1			
cf Allium sp.	cf onion	1#							
Juncus sp.	rushes	1				1	1		
Cyperaceae	sedge family	1							
Isolepsis setacea	bristle club-rush	1		1			3#		
Poaceae	grass seeds (various)	4	2#	2		3#	5#		
Other									
Indet.	seed/fruit	2#			1#	7#	2#	3#	2#
Indet	coleoptiles	1#	1#						

Majority fragmented, vitrified or missing some external indicators. *1-5, **5-25, ***25-50, ****50-100, *****100+

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