

Prehistoric Settlement in the Lower Kennet Valley

**Excavations at Green Park (Reading Business Park)
Phase 3 and Moores Farm, Burghfield, Berkshire**

by

Adam Brossler, Fraser Brown, Erika Guttmann,
Elaine L Morris and Leo Webley

with contributions by

*Leigh Allen, Hugo Anderson-Whymark, Kayt Brown, Sandy Budden,
Bethan Charles, Kate Cramp, Elizabeth Huckerby, Ruth Pelling, Mark Robinson,
Robert Scaife, Ruth Shaffrey, Maisie Taylor, Jane Timby and Annsofie Witkin*

illustrations by

Oxford Archaeology Graphics Office

Oxford Archaeology

Thames Valley Landscapes Monograph No 37

2013

The publication of this volume was generously funded by
Prudential Property Investment Managers Ltd and Caversham Bridge Group

Published for Oxford Archaeology by Oxford University School of Archaeology
as part of the Thames Valley Landscapes Monograph Series

Designed by Oxford Archaeology Graphics Office

Edited by Paul Booth

This book is part of a series of monographs which can be bought from all good bookshops
and internet bookshops. For more information visit www.oxfordarchaeology.com

© 2013 Oxford Archaeology Ltd

Figures 1.1–4, 6.1 and 6.3 reproduced from the Ordnance Survey on behalf of the controller of
Her Majesty's Stationery Office, © Crown Copyright, AL100005569

Front cover: Extract from 'To pastures new' showing a late Bronze Age roundhouse; middle to late Bronze
Age ladle from Green Park; middle Bronze Age globular urn from Moores Farm; early Iron Age pit group
from Moores Farm; reconstruction of late Bronze Age weaving at Reading Business Park; middle Bronze
Age 'oven' at Moores Farm

Back cover: 'To pastures new' by Rosalyn Smith: reconstruction of late Bronze Age settlement at Green Park

ISBN 978-1-905905-29-4

Typeset by Production Line, Oxford

Printed in Great Britain by Berforts Information Press, Eynsham, Oxford

Contents

List of Figures	vii
List of Tables	ix
Summary	xi
Acknowledgements	xiii
Location of the archive	xiii

Chapter 1: Introduction

Introduction	1
Site location, geology and circumstances of excavation	1
Archaeological background	2
Survey work	2
Previous Green Park investigations	2
Other archaeological investigations	6
Fieldwork methods	6
Green Park 3	6
Moores Farm	6
Excavation procedures	6
Layout of the volume	8

Chapter 2: Green Park 3 – Early Prehistoric and Bronze Age activity

Archaeological sequence	9
Introduction	9
Early prehistoric activity	9
Middle to late Bronze Age	9
Artefacts	21
Flint <i>by Kate Cramp</i>	21
Bronze Age pottery <i>by Elaine L Morris</i>	24
Quern <i>by Ruth Shaffrey</i>	34
Shale bracelet <i>by Ruth Shaffrey</i>	35
Wood <i>by Maisie Taylor</i>	35
Osteological and environmental evidence	38
Human bone <i>by Annsofie Witkin</i>	38
Animal bone <i>by Bethan Charles</i>	39
Charred and waterlogged plant remains <i>by Ruth Pelling</i>	39
Pollen <i>by Elizabeth Huckerby</i>	40
Insects <i>by Mark Robinson</i>	43

Chapter 3: Green Park 3 – Iron Age, Roman and Post-Roman activity

Archaeological sequence	45
Middle to late Iron Age	45
Romano-British period	45
Late medieval to post-medieval period	47

Artefacts and osteological evidence	47
Iron Age pottery by <i>Elaine L Morris</i>	47
Roman artefacts by <i>Leigh Allen, Ruth Shaffrey and Jane Timby</i>	49
Late medieval to post-medieval artefacts by <i>Leigh Allen and Jane Timby</i>	50
Animal bone by <i>Bethan Charles</i>	50

Chapter 4: Moores Farm

Archaeological sequence	53
Introduction	53
Mesolithic	53
Middle Neolithic	53
Late Neolithic to early Bronze Age	53
Middle to late Bronze Age	53
Early Iron Age	65
Unphased prehistoric features	70
Later activity and alluvial layers	70
Artefacts	70
Flint by <i>Kate Cramp and Hugo Anderson-Whymark</i>	70
Neolithic and early Bronze Age pottery by <i>Sandy Budden and Elaine L Morris</i>	74
Middle and late Bronze Age pottery by <i>Elaine L Morris</i>	84
Early Iron Age pottery by <i>Kayt Brown</i>	92
Fired clay by <i>Sandy Budden</i>	97
Querns by <i>Ruth Shaffrey</i>	97
Osteological and environmental evidence	98
Animal bone by <i>Bethan Charles</i>	98
Charred and waterlogged plant remains by <i>Ruth Pelling</i>	99
Pollen by <i>Robert G Scaife</i>	99

Chapter 5: The Middle to Late Bronze Age ceramic transition in the Lower Kennet Valley and beyond by *Elaine L Morris*

Introduction	103
Pottery traditions	103
Middle Bronze Age	103
Late Bronze Age	105
Post-Deverel-Rimbury (PDR)	106
The evidence: pots and dates	107
The Lower Kennet Valley	107
The Thames Valley: Berkshire, Oxfordshire, Surrey and Middlesex	109
Wessex: the chalkland landscapes of Berkshire, Wiltshire, Hampshire, Dorset and Sussex	111
Back to the Lower Kennet Valley: Green Park 1–3 and Moores Farm	114
Transitional later Bronze Age (TLBA) pottery	114
The future	114

Chapter 6: Prehistoric Settlement at Green Park and Moores Farm – an overview

Introduction	117
Land and water	117
Early prehistoric communities	117
Mesolithic	117

Contents

Early Neolithic	118
Middle Neolithic to early Bronze Age	119
Later Bronze Age settlement and farming	121
Middle Bronze Age settlement at Green Park 3 and Moores Farm	121
Waterholes: use and decommissioning	122
Interpreting the field systems of the Green Park/Moores Farm landscape	123
The development of later Bronze Age settlement in the Green Park/Moores Farm landscape and beyond	126
Early Iron Age settlement shift	129
The end of prehistory	129
Bibliography	131
Index	137

List of Figures

Chapter 1

1.1	Location of sites	1
1.2	Cropmark evidence (after Gates 1975) and other archaeological investigations in the Green Park/Moores Farm area. Mapping of cropmarks does not extend eastwards of the SU 70 easting	2
1.3	Green Park: areas of archaeological fieldwork	4
1.4	Green Park: areas of watching brief	5
1.5	Moores Farm: areas of archaeological fieldwork	7

Chapter 2

2.1	Plan of all features, showing excavated interventions.	10
2.2	Middle to late Bronze Age features.	11
2.3	Distribution of finds from middle to late Bronze Age features	12
2.4	Waterhole 2690	14
2.5	Detail of timber structure within waterhole 2690, facing north, showing timbers 2770, 2774, 2790 and 2791 and ladle 2807. Scale: 0.2m.	15
2.6	Timber structure within waterhole 2690 after further excavation, facing north. Scale: 1m.	15
2.7	Waterhole 3091	16
2.8	Wooden vessel 3255 within waterhole 3091, facing north. Scale: 0.2m.	17
2.9	Waterhole 3201; inset shows wooden bowl from Wessex Archaeology evaluation	18
2.10	Waterhole 2373	19
2.11	Waterhole 3263	19
2.12	Probability distributions of radiocarbon dates from Bronze Age waterholes	20
2.13	Probability distributions of radiocarbon dates: model providing an estimate for the duration of waterhole activity	21
2.14	Probability distribution providing an estimate for the length of time over which the waterholes were constructed	21
2.15	Burial 222.	21
2.16	Worked flint	23
2.17	Bronze Age pottery, nos 1–6.	31
2.18	Bronze Age pottery, nos 7–12.	32
2.19	Bronze Age pottery, nos 13–24.	33
2.20	Shale bracelet fragment.	35
2.21	Wooden objects.	37
2.22	Wooden ladle 2807.	38
2.23	Bronze Age waterhole 3091: percentage pollen diagram	41

Chapter 3

3.1	Middle to late Iron Age and Romano-British features.	46
3.2	Roman vessel containing cremated animal bone from ditch 3259, Wessex Archaeology evaluation	48
3.3	Post-medieval and modern features.	48
3.4	Iron Age pottery.	50

Chapter 4

4.1	Mesolithic and Neolithic features	54
4.2	Middle Bronze Age features. Waterholes are labelled in italics	55
4.3	Middle Bronze Age features in Areas 8 and 16.	56
4.4	Features in Area 9	57
4.5	Features in Area 13	58
4.6	Features in Area 14	59
4.7	Sections of middle Bronze Age pits	60

4.8	Plans and sections of middle Bronze Age ‘ovens’	61
4.9	Middle Bronze Age ‘oven’ 2242, facing south. Scale: 0.5m	62
4.10	Middle Bronze Age ‘oven’ 2359, facing south. Scale: 0.5m	62
4.11	Sections of middle Bronze Age waterholes	63
4.12	Early Iron Age features	64
4.13	Early Iron Age features in Area 16	66
4.14	Pit group 2042	67
4.15	Early Iron Age pit group 2042, facing south. Scale: 1m	67
4.16	Sections of early Iron Age pits	68
4.17	Early Iron Age features in Area 12	68
4.18	Mesolithic flint assemblage: length/breadth ratio of broken and intact flints	72
4.19	Mesolithic flint assemblage: length/breadth ratio by context	72
4.20	Proportion of broken and intact flints	73
4.21	Mesolithic flint assemblage: proportion of broken and intact flints by context	73
4.22	Mesolithic flint assemblage: platform edge abrasion by context	73
4.23	Mesolithic flint assemblage: length/breadth ratio of flints with and without platform edge abrasion	73
4.24	Mesolithic flint assemblage: butt types by context	73
4.25	Mesolithic flint assemblage: length, breadth and butt type	74
4.26	Mesolithic flint assemblage: hammer mode by context	74
4.27	Mesolithic flint assemblage: termination type by context	74
4.28	Mesolithic flint assemblage: dorsal cortex extent by context	74
4.29	Mesolithic flint assemblage: flake type by context	74
4.30	Worked flint	77
4.31	Neolithic pottery, nos 1–2	82
4.32	Neolithic and early Bronze Age pottery, nos 3–9	83
4.33	Middle Bronze Age pottery, nos 1–11	89
4.34	Middle Bronze Age pottery, nos 12–19	90
4.35	Middle Bronze Age pottery, nos 20–24	91
4.36	Early Iron Age pottery, nos 1–7	94
4.37	Early Iron Age pottery, nos 8–14	95
4.38	Early Iron Age pottery, nos 15–18	96
4.39	Middle Bronze Age waterhole 824: percentage pollen diagram	101

Chapter 6

6.1	Excavated prehistoric and Romano-British sites in the Lower Kennet Valley mentioned in Chapter 6. 1: Aldermaston Wharf; 2: Amner’s Farm, Burghfield; 3: Anslow’s Cottages; 4: Beenham; 5: Brimpton; 6: Cod’s Hill; 7: Crane Wharf, Reading; 8: Cunning Man, Burghfield; 9: Diddenham Manor Farm, Grazeley; 10: Englefield; 11: Field Farm, Burghfield; 12: Field Farm, Sulhamstead; 13: Hartley Court Farm, Shinfield; 14: Haywards Farm, Theale; 15: Heron’s House, Burghfield; 16: Knight’s Farm, Burghfield; 17: Little Lea Park; 18: Marshall’s Hill, Reading; 19: Meales Farm, Sulhamstead; 20: Pingewood; 21: Reading Football Club; 22: Reading Sewage Treatment Works; 23: Shortheath Lane, Sulhamstead; 24: Southcote; 25: Sulham; 26: Theale Ballast Hole; 27: Ufton Nervet (Allen and Allen 1997); 28: Ufton Nervet (Manning 1974); 29: Wickhams Field, Burghfield	118
6.2	C-shaped ring ditch, Reading Sewage Treatment Works	120
6.3	The Green Park/Moores Farm landscape in the later Bronze Age	124-5
6.4	Pottery assemblages from later Bronze Age sites in the Lower Kennet Valley, quantification by numbers of sherds	127

List of Tables

Chapter 2

2.1	Summary of Bronze Age ditches	9
2.2	The dynamics of deposition in the Bronze Age waterholes	13
2.3	Radiocarbon dates from Bronze Age waterholes. Dates calibrated using OxCal v3.5 (Bronk Ramsay 2000) and the data of Stuiver et al. (1998)	20
2.4	Results of chi-squared test on radiocarbon dates from Bronze Age waterholes	20
2.5	Worked flint	22
2.6	Quantification of Bronze Age pottery by fabric	24
2.7	Correlation of fabric and form types for middle and late Bronze Age pottery by frequency of occurrences/vessels. * = perforated	25
2.8	Occurrences of middle and late Bronze Age vessels by fabric within contemporary contexts (example in parentheses also represented in previous context)	28-9
2.9	Occurrences of middle and late Bronze Age vessels by form within contemporary contexts (number in parentheses also represented in previous context)	30
2.10	Wood from Bronze Age waterholes	36
2.11	Animal bone from middle to late Bronze Age contexts	39
2.12	Charred plant remains from Bronze Age waterholes	39
2.13	Waterlogged plant remains from Bronze Age waterholes	40
2.14	Insect remains from Bronze Age waterholes. + = present; ++ = several; A = aquatic	42

Chapter 3

3.1	Summary of Iron Age ditches	45
3.2	Summary of Roman ditches	45
3.3	Quantification of Iron Age pottery by fabric	49
3.4	Quantification of Roman pottery by fabric	50
3.5	Animal bone from Iron Age and later contexts	51

Chapter 4

4.1	Summary of field system ditches	58
4.2	Summary of middle Bronze Age pits	59
4.3	Radiocarbon dates from early Iron Age pit group 2042. Dates calibrated using OxCal v3.10 (Bronk Ramsey 2005) and atmospheric data from Reimer <i>et al.</i> (2004)	64
4.4	Summary of early Iron Age pits, excluding pit group 2042	65
4.5	Worked flint	71
4.6	Worked flint from Mesolithic contexts	72
4.7	Quantification of Neolithic and early Bronze Age pottery by pottery date	78
4.8	Quantification of Neolithic and early Bronze Age pottery by fabric	79
4.9	Quantification of middle to late Bronze Age pottery by fabric	84
4.10	Middle to late Bronze Age pottery, quantification of sherds from each fabric type that have one or both surfaces missing	84
4.11	Middle to late Bronze Age pottery, quantification of vessel forms	85
4.12	Middle to late Bronze Age pottery, quantification of decoration types	86
4.13	Quantification of early Iron Age pottery by fabric	92
4.14	Early Iron Age pottery, correlation of fabric group and vessel class by rim count	93
4.15	Early Iron Age pottery, correlation of fabric group and decoration type by number of vessels	93
4.16	Saddle querns and rubbers	98
4.17	Animal bone. * = possibly intrusive. ** = 57 bones from a single skeleton	99
4.18	Charred and waterlogged plant remains. MBA: middle Bronze Age; EIA: early Iron Age	99

Chapter 5

5.1	Radiocarbon dating of middle and late Bronze Age pottery in south-central England	107
-----	---	-----

Summary

This volume presents the results of two excavations on the gravel terraces of the Lower Kennet Valley: the third phase of work at Green Park (Reading Business Park) and excavations nearby at Moores Farm, Burghfield, Berkshire. The Green Park excavations uncovered a field system and occupation features dating to the middle to late Bronze Age. Five waterholes or wells were distributed across the field system, the waterlogged fills of which preserved wooden revetment structures and valuable environmental evidence. The pottery assemblages from the waterholes are of significant interest for our understanding of the middle to late Bronze Age transition in the region. Later activity included middle to late Iron Age boundaries, a late Iron Age cremation burial, a Romano-British field

system and post-medieval trackways. The Moores Farm excavations revealed occupation from the Mesolithic, Neolithic, middle Bronze Age and early Iron Age. The middle Bronze Age settlement included pits, ovens and possible post structures, and was again situated within a contemporary field system dotted with waterholes. As well as discussing these two individual sites, the volume provides an overview of all of the work to date in the Green Park Farm/Reading Business Park area (previously reported in Moore and Jennings 1992 and Brossler *et al.* 2004), exploring the development of this important prehistoric landscape. It is argued that significant changes in the inhabitation of this landscape between the middle and late Bronze Age can now be identified.

Acknowledgements

Oxford Archaeology would like to thank Prupim (originally Prudential Property Investment Managers Ltd) for funding the work at Green Park 3, and Caversham Restoration Ltd (originally the Caversham Bridge Group) for funding the work at Moores Farm. We would like to thank, in particular, Kevin Ashman at Prupim, and Lee Montague and Tony Butler at the Caversham Bridge Group.

The archaeology services of West Berkshire and Wokingham District Councils are thanked for their advice and curatorial role. Rob Bourne of Babtie also provided valuable advice. Richard Bradley and Duncan Coe are thanked for helpful comments on the draft report text.

This volume has had a long genesis and is the culmination of many people's work. The Green Park 3 excavations were managed by Greg Pugh and Richard Brown, and the Moores Farm excavations by Tim Allen. The contribution of all the OA

site staff is acknowledged here. Those who have played a significant role in managing the post-excavation work and writing interim reports include Carol Allen, Angela Boyle, Philippa Bradley and Grace Jones among others. The draft excavation report was completed in 2008. Subsequent revision of the text has been on a limited scale; it has included some updating of references, but not substantive reworking of discussion to take account of very recent work. Peter Marshall of English Heritage is thanked for advice on the radiocarbon dating programme at Green Park 3. The Biology Department of Lancaster University is thanked for the use of laboratory facilities for the analysis of the Moores Farm charred plant remains. The final versions of the illustrations were produced by Julia Collins, Markus Dylewski and Magdalena Wachnik. The finds were illustrated by Adam Parsons

Location of the Archive

The finds and records from the Green Park 3 excavations have been deposited with Reading Museum under the accession code REDMG.2000.88, and

those from Moores Farm with West Berkshire Museum (Newbury) under the accession code NEBYM.1998.63.

