

# Evolution of a Farming Community in the Upper Thames Valley

## Excavation of a Prehistoric, Roman and Post-Roman Landscape at Cotswold Community, Gloucestershire and Wiltshire

### *Volume 1: Site Narrative and Overview*

by Kelly Powell, Alex Smith and Granville Laws

with contributions by

*Leigh Allen, Steve Allen, Paul Backhouse, Paul Booth, Ceridwen Boston,  
Edward Biddulph, Paul Blinkhorn, Lisa Brown, Dana Challinor, Carl Champness,  
H E M Cool, Brian Dean, Anne Dodd, Steve Ford, Gill Hey, Lynne Keys,  
Hugo Lamdin-Whymark, David Mullin, Rebecca Nicholson, Richard Oram,  
Cynthia Poole, Steve Preston, Fiona Roe, Ruth Shaffrey, Wendy Smith,  
Elizabeth Stafford, Lena Strid, Andy Taylor, Andrew Weale*

Illustration and design by

*Magdalena Wachnik, Hannah Kennedy, Rosalyn Lorimer, Mark Gridley,  
Leo Heatley, Sarah Lucas, Julia Moxham, Peter Lorimer*

Oxford Archaeology

Thames Valley Landscapes Monograph No 31

2010

The publication of this volume has been generously funded by Wiltshire County Council

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 Alex Smith

This book is part of a series of monographs about the Thames Valley Landscapes which can be bought from all good bookshops and internet bookshops

For more information visit [www.oxfordarch.co.uk](http://www.oxfordarch.co.uk)

© 2010 Oxford Archaeology Ltd

Figure 1.3 reproduced from the Ordnance Survey on behalf of the controller of Her Majesty's Stationery Office, © Crown Copyright, AL 100005569

Figure 1.5 reproduced by kind permission under licence IPR/122-38CY British Geological Survey. © NERC 2010. All rights reserved

ISBN 978-1-905905-16-4

Typeset by Production Line, Oxford

Printed in Great Britain by Information Press, Eynsham, Oxfordshire

# Contents

List of Figures .....	xi
List of Tables .....	xv
Summary .....	xvii
Acknowledgements .....	xviii

## Chapter 1: Introduction *by Alex Smith*

PROJECT BACKGROUND .....	1
LOCATION AND GEOLOGY .....	2
ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND .....	2
SUMMARY OF SITE PHASING .....	3
Phase 1—Middle Neolithic (c 3400–3000 BC) .....	3
Phase 2—Late Neolithic/early Bronze Age (c 3000–1500 BC) .....	3
Phase 3—Middle Bronze Age (c 1500–1150 BC) .....	4
Phase 4—Late Bronze Age/early Iron Age (c 1150–550 BC) .....	7
Phase 5—Middle Iron Age (c 400–100 BC) .....	9
Phase 6—Middle – late Iron Age (c 300–1 BC) .....	9
Phase 7—Late Iron Age – early Roman (c 1–AD 125) .....	9
Phase 8—Mid Roman (c AD 125–250) .....	9
Phase 9—Late Roman (c AD 250–400) .....	10
Phase 10—Saxon (c 450–850) .....	10
Phase 11—Medieval and post-medieval .....	10
STRUCTURE OF THE PUBLICATION .....	10
LOCATION OF ARCHIVE .....	10

## Chapter 2: Pastures old—From Neolithic hunter-gatherers to Bronze Age and Iron Age farmers *by Kelly Powell*

INTRODUCTION .....	11
THE EARLIEST LANDSCAPE EXPLOITATION—MIDDLE NEOLITHIC (PHASE 1) .....	11
Pits .....	11
CLEARING THE LANDSCAPE—LATE NEOLITHIC-EARLY BRONZE AGE (PHASE 2) .....	17
Late Neolithic (Phase 2a) .....	17
Pits and tree-throw holes .....	17
Early Bronze Age (Phase 2b) .....	20
Pits and tree-throw holes .....	20
Groups .....	20
Pairs .....	22
Discrete features .....	22

<i>The emergence of funerary monuments</i> .....	22
<i>Beaker graves</i> .....	24
<b>General Neolithic - early Bronze Age features</b> .....	25
<i>Phase 1 / 2 pits and tree-throw holes</i> .....	25
<i>Groups</i> .....	25
<i>Pairs</i> .....	26
<i>Discrete pits</i> .....	26
<i>Tree-throw holes</i> .....	27
<i>Phase 2 pits and tree-throw holes</i> .....	27
<i>Pairs</i> .....	27
<i>Discrete features</i> .....	27
<i>Timber circle? 9100</i> .....	27
<b>Discussion of the Neolithic and early Bronze Age activity</b> .....	29
<i>Middle Neolithic c 3400–3000 BC</i> .....	29
<i>Late Neolithic/early Bronze Age c 3000–1500 BC</i> .....	29
<i>Lifestyle and subsistence</i> .....	30
<i>Daily life—economy and exchange</i> .....	31
<i>Beyond the ordinary—structured deposition</i> .....	32
<i>Ritual and religion</i> .....	33
<b>SETTLEMENT GENESIS IN THE MIDDLE BRONZE AGE (PHASE 3)</b> .....	34
<b>Settlement Area 1: 1512–1400 BC (Phase 3a)</b> .....	35
<i>Enclosure 2986</i> .....	35
<i>Roundhouses 2531 and 2532</i> .....	35
<i>Waterhole 2146</i> .....	36
<i>Pits and postholes</i> .....	36
<i>Grave 2508</i> .....	36
<b>Settlement Area 2: 1412–1260 BC (Phase 3b)</b> .....	36
<i>Roundhouses/post-built structures</i> .....	36
<i>Waterhole 5018</i> .....	38
<i>Pits and postholes</i> .....	39
<b>Area 3: Pits and posthole alignments</b> .....	39
<i>Enclosure 3239—Ritual space?</i> .....	40
<b>Middle Bronze Age activity in the north</b> .....	42
<i>L-shaped Ditch 14273</i> .....	42
<i>Industrial activity—Hearth? 18304</i> .....	44
<b>Discussion of the middle Bronze Age landscape</b> .....	44
<i>Environment</i> .....	44
<i>Lifestyle and subsistence</i> .....	44
<i>Metalworking</i> .....	46
<i>Ritual and religion</i> .....	46
<b>EXPANSION AND CONSOLIDATION IN THE LATE BRONZE AGE - EARLY IRON AGE (PHASE 4)</b> .....	47
<b>Dividing the landscape—the pit alignment</b> .....	49
<b>Settlement Area 1</b> .....	50
<i>Eastern settlement area</i> .....	50
<i>Roundhouses</i> .....	50
<i>Fences and enclosures</i> .....	52
<i>Four-post and slot structures</i> .....	53

## Contents

<i>Cremation 18536</i> .....	54
<b>Western settlement area</b> .....	54
<i>Roundhouse 18149</i> .....	54
<i>Surrounding structures</i> .....	54
<b>Southern settlement area</b> .....	55
<i>Post-built structures 15978 and 20363</i> .....	55
<i>Waterhole 485</i> .....	56
<b>Settlement Area 2</b> .....	56
<i>Posthole alignments 5600 and 6067 and associated structures</i> .....	56
<i>Roundhouses 5648 and 6189</i> .....	56
<i>Associated structures</i> .....	58
<i>Pits</i> .....	58
<b>Settlement Area 3</b> .....	59
<i>Roundhouses</i> .....	60
<i>Other post-built structures</i> .....	60
<i>Pits and waterholes</i> .....	60
<b>Settlement Area 4</b> .....	61
<b>Main settlement—domestic area</b> .....	61
<i>Roundhouse complex 9830, 7209 and 8131</i> .....	61
<i>Isolated roundhouses</i> .....	64
<i>Four-post structures</i> .....	65
<i>Pits and waterholes</i> .....	65
<b>Northern zone—working area?</b> .....	66
<i>Semi-circular and sub-circular structures</i> .....	67
<i>Four-post structures</i> .....	67
<i>Other post-built structures</i> .....	67
<i>Fencelines</i> .....	67
<i>Slot structure</i> .....	68
<b>Eastern zone</b> .....	68
<i>Post-built structures</i> .....	68
<i>Four-post structures</i> .....	69
<i>Slot structures</i> .....	70
<i>Waterholes</i> .....	70
<i>Cattle burial 8587</i> .....	71
<b>Discussion of the late Bronze Age - early Iron Age landscape</b> .....	71
<i>Environment</i> .....	71
<i>Lifestyle and subsistence</i> .....	71
<i>Ritual and religion</i> .....	74
<b>THE MIDDLE IRON AGE LANDSCAPE AT COTSWOLD COMMUNITY (PHASE 5)</b> .....	74
<b>Roundhouse 4180 and associated features</b> .....	74
<b>Enclosure 8581</b> .....	78
<b>Eastern Complex</b> .....	78
<i>Roundhouses</i> .....	78
<i>Trackway T1003/T1006</i> .....	80
<i>Enclosure T1004/T1007</i> .....	80
<i>Development of the complex</i> .....	80
<b>Discussion of the middle Iron Age landscape</b> .....	80
<i>Environment</i> .....	81

<i>Settlement</i> . . . . .	81
<i>Lifestyle and subsistence</i> . . . . .	81
<i>Ritual and religion</i> . . . . .	82

---

**Specialist Summaries**

<b>FINDS AND ENVIRONMENTAL EVIDENCE FROM PREHISTORIC PHASES</b> . . . . .	<b>83</b>
<b>Early prehistoric pottery</b> by David Mullin . . . . .	<b>83</b>
<b>Late prehistoric pottery</b> by Lisa Brown . . . . .	<b>84</b>
<b>Late Bronze Age/early Iron Age</b> . . . . .	<b>84</b>
<b>Middle Iron Age</b> . . . . .	<b>87</b>
<b>Worked flint</b> by Hugo Lamdin-Whymark . . . . .	<b>88</b>
<b>Worked stone</b> by Fiona Roe and Ruth Shaffrey . . . . .	<b>90</b>
<b>Burnt stone</b> by Kelly Powell . . . . .	<b>92</b>
<b>The structural fired clay and clay objects</b> by Cynthia Poole . . . . .	<b>92</b>
<b>Charred plant remains</b> by Wendy Smith . . . . .	<b>93</b>
<b>Middle Neolithic/early Bronze Age</b> . . . . .	<b>93</b>
<b>Middle Bronze Age/middle Iron Age</b> . . . . .	<b>93</b>
<b>Charcoal</b> by Dana Challinor . . . . .	<b>94</b>
<b>Neolithic/early Bronze Age</b> . . . . .	<b>94</b>
<b>Middle/late Bronze Age</b> . . . . .	<b>94</b>
<b>Middle Iron Age</b> . . . . .	<b>94</b>
<b>Animal bone</b> by Lena Strid . . . . .	<b>94</b>
<b>Special animal deposits</b> . . . . .	<b>95</b>
<b>Shell</b> by Kelly Powell and Rebecca Nicholson . . . . .	<b>96</b>
<b>Human skeletal remains</b> by Brian Dean and Ceridwen Boston . . . . .	<b>96</b>
<b>Late Neolithic/early Bronze Age</b> . . . . .	<b>96</b>
<b>Middle Bronze Age</b> . . . . .	<b>96</b>
<b>Middle Iron Age</b> . . . . .	<b>96</b>

---

**Chapter 3:**

**In the shadow of Corinium—the later Iron Age to late Roman period**

*by Alex Smith and Kelly Powell*

<b>INTRODUCTION</b> . . . . .	<b>99</b>
<b>THE ORIGINS OF SETTLEMENT NUCLEATION IN THE MIDDLE - LATE IRON AGE (PHASE 6)</b> . . . . .	<b>99</b>
<b>Settlement</b> . . . . .	<b>99</b>
<b>Roundhouse structures 11951, 19985 and 19986</b> . . . . .	<b>99</b>
<b>Waterholes, pits and gullies in the settlement area</b> . . . . .	<b>103</b>
<b>Palisaded enclosures</b> . . . . .	<b>106</b>
<b>Features within the palisaded enclosure</b> . . . . .	<b>107</b>
<b>Discussion of mid - late Iron Age developments (Phase 6)</b> . . . . .	<b>107</b>
<b>Nature of the settlement</b> . . . . .	<b>108</b>
<b>Economy and status</b> . . . . .	<b>109</b>

<b>ENCLOSING THE SETTLEMENT—LATE IRON AGE - EARLY ROMAN DEVELOPMENTS</b>	
<b>(PHASE 7)</b> .....	109
Settlement enclosure 19999 .....	110
The eastern boundary—posthole alignment 16059 .....	113
Central enclosure 14280 .....	113
A possible domestic zone and evidence for buildings .....	113
Internal divisions within the settlement .....	114
Waterholes and pits in the settlement enclosure .....	115
<i>Main body of pits/waterholes to the west and south</i> .....	115
<i>Pits in the northern part of the enclosure</i> .....	115
<i>Pits associated with possible domestic focus</i> .....	115
<i>Waterholes/pits associated with enclosure 19999</i> .....	116
Trackway and industrial area to the north of settlement enclosure 19999 .....	116
Pits south of enclosure 19999 .....	117
Discussion of the late Iron Age – early Roman settlement (Phase 7) .....	117
<i>Character and economy of the settlement</i> .....	118
<b>SETTLEMENT AND LANDSCAPE REORGANISATION IN THE MIDDLE ROMAN</b>	
<b>PERIOD (PHASE 8)</b> .....	119
Phase 8a: Trackways and enclosure modification (c 2nd century AD) .....	119
<i>Western trackway 5869</i> .....	119
<i>Eastern trackway 17615</i> .....	120
<i>Settlement enclosure ditches 20000 and 20087</i> .....	122
Phase 8b: Large-scale settlement reorganisation (c mid 2nd - mid/late 3rd century AD) .....	123
<i>Northern enclosures and waterholes</i> .....	123
<i>Enclosing the main settlement</i> .....	125
<i>Major internal boundaries and trackways</i> .....	126
Zones within the settlement .....	126
<i>North-west zone—Agricultural/working area</i> .....	126
<i>South-west zone—stock management?</i> .....	128
<i>North-eastern zone—storage and transit?</i> .....	132
<i>South-eastern zone—a domestic focus</i> .....	134
Outside of the settlement—dividing the landscape .....	135
<i>Southern boundary</i> .....	135
<i>Eastern field system</i> .....	136
<i>'Liminal' burials</i> .....	136
Discussion of the mid Roman settlement (Phase 8) .....	138
<i>Early 2nd century developments—the trackways</i> .....	138
<i>Settlement transformation in the mid 2nd century AD</i> .....	139
<i>Social structure and economic regime</i> .....	142
<i>The farmstead within the local settlement pattern</i> .....	142
<b>THE LATE ROMAN FARMSTEAD (PHASE 9)</b> .....	146
The re-use and remodelling of settlement enclosure 17590 .....	146
Smaller enclosures within the settlement .....	146
<i>Enclosure 20006</i> .....	146
<i>Enclosure 20007</i> .....	147
<i>Enclosure 17601</i> .....	147
The domestic focus .....	147
<i>Domestic zone boundaries</i> .....	147

<i>Structures within the domestic zone</i> . . . . .	150
<i>Well, ditches and pits within the domestic zone</i> . . . . .	152
<b>Outlying settlement areas</b> . . . . .	155
<i>Northern zone</i> . . . . .	155
<i>Western zone</i> . . . . .	156
<i>Southern enclosures</i> . . . . .	156
<b>The wider landscape in the late Roman period</b> . . . . .	157
<b>Dealing with the dead—the late Roman cemetery and other burials</b> . . . . .	157
<i>Northern cemetery group</i> . . . . .	157
<i>Southern cemetery group</i> . . . . .	161
<i>Other burials</i> . . . . .	162
<b>Discussion of the late Roman farmstead (Phase 9)</b> . . . . .	164
<i>Burial practices</i> . . . . .	165
<i>Site economy and reorganisation of the local landscape</i> . . . . .	165
<i>The late Roman farmstead within the wider community</i> . . . . .	165
<b>Abandonment of the late Roman farmstead</b> . . . . .	166

---

## Specialist Summaries

<b>FINDS AND ENVIRONMENTAL EVIDENCE FROM THE LATE IRON AGE AND ROMAN PHASES</b> . . . . .	167
<b>Late Iron Age and Roman pottery</b> <i>by Edward Biddulph</i> . . . . .	167
<b>Coins</b> <i>by Paul Booth</i> . . . . .	169
<b>Small Finds</b> <i>by Kelly Powell</i> . . . . .	171
<b><i>Dress accessories and toilet implements</i></b> . . . . .	171
<b><i>Military fittings and weaponry</i></b> . . . . .	174
<b><i>Equine objects</i></b> . . . . .	175
<b><i>Tools</i></b> . . . . .	175
<b><i>Household objects</i></b> . . . . .	177
<b>Worked stone querns and whetstones</b> <i>by Ruth Shaffrey</i> . . . . .	177
<b>Vessel glass</b> <i>by H E M Cool</i> . . . . .	178
<b>Window glass</b> <i>by H E M Cool</i> . . . . .	179
<b>Buildings and structural material</b> <i>by Kelly Powell</i> . . . . .	180
<b>Ceramic building material</b> <i>by Cynthia Poole</i> . . . . .	180
<b>Structural worked stone</b> <i>by Ruth Shaffrey</i> . . . . .	180
<b>Fired clay</b> <i>by Cynthia Poole</i> . . . . .	181
<b>Burnt stone</b> <i>by Kelly Powell</i> . . . . .	182
<b>The iron slag and industrial waste</b> <i>by Lynne Keys and Kelly Powell</i> . . . . .	183
<b>Worked wood</b> <i>by Steve Allen</i> . . . . .	183
<b>Charcoal</b> <i>by Dana Challinor</i> . . . . .	184
<b>Charred plant remains</b> <i>by Wendy Smith</i> . . . . .	184
<b>Animal bone</b> <i>by Lena Strid</i> . . . . .	185
<b>Land and freshwater mollusca</b> <i>by Carl Champness and Elizabeth Stafford</i> . . . . .	186
<b>Marine shell</b> <i>by Kelly Powell and Rebecca Nicholson</i> . . . . .	186
<b>Human remains: Osteological summary</b> <i>by Brian Dean and Ceridwen Boston</i> . . . . .	187
<b>Grave goods</b> <i>by Kelly Powell</i> . . . . .	187

---

**Chapter 4:**

**The post-Roman landscape—Saxon buildings to post-medieval field systems**

*by Anne Dodd and Kelly Powell*

INTRODUCTION.....	189
SAXON ACTIVITY (PHASE 10) .....	189
Area 1 .....	189
<i>Post-built structures</i> .....	189
<i>Pits and waterholes</i> .....	192
<i>Grave 2477</i> .....	195
<i>Grave 10764</i> .....	195
Area 2 .....	196
Area 3—Structure 9435 .....	198
LATER MEDIEVAL AND POST-MEDIEVAL ACTIVITY (PHASE 11).....	200
Field system.....	200
DISCUSSION OF THE POST-ROMAN ACTIVITY.....	202
Dating .....	202
The nature of the activity .....	202
Area 1 .....	202
Area 2 .....	203
Area 3— <i>Timber ‘hall’ 9435</i> .....	204
The wider context of the site in the mid to late Saxon period .....	204

---

**Specialist Summaries**

FINDS AND ENVIRONMENTAL EVIDENCE FROM THE POST-ROMAN PHASE .....	206
Pottery <i>by Paul Blinkhorn</i> .....	206
<i>Early/middle Saxon</i> .....	206
<i>Medieval and later</i> .....	207
Small finds <i>by Kelly Powell</i> .....	207
Fired clay <i>by Cynthia Poole</i> .....	207
Worked stone <i>by Ruth Shaffrey</i> .....	209
Animal bone <i>by Lena Strid</i> .....	209
Human remains <i>by Brian Dean and Ceridwen Boston</i> .....	209

---

BIBLIOGRAPHY.....	211
-------------------	-----

INDEX .....	219
-------------	-----



# List of Figures

## CHAPTER 1

1.1	Site location	1
1.2	Aerial photograph of area prior to excavation showing location of cropmarks, looking east (© Crown copyright)	4
1.3	Location of site in relation to other archaeological work in the immediate vicinity	5
1.4	Aerial photograph of excavations in 1999-2000, looking west (© Crown copyright)	6
1.5	Geology of the area around Cotswold Community	7
1.6	Cotswold Community in relation to local cropmarks	8

## CHAPTER 2

2.1	Overview of prehistoric phases (1-5) at Cotswold Community	12
2.2	Outline of middle Neolithic phase (Phase 1)	13
2.3	Detail of middle Neolithic activity	14
2.4	Middle Neolithic pit group 8697/8700/8701 and associated finds	14
2.5	Photograph of paired middle Neolithic pits 8666 and 8668	15
2.6	Outline of late Neolithic/early Bronze Age phase (Phase 2)	15
2.7	Detail of late Neolithic activity (Phase 2a): southern features	16
2.8	Detail of late Neolithic activity (Phase 2a): northern features	17
2.9	Section through late Neolithic pit 8376 with cremation 8377	19
2.10	Detail of early Bronze Age activity (Phase 2b): southern features	19
2.11	Detail of early Bronze Age activity (Phase 2b): northern features	20
2.12	Early Bronze Age pit group 9120 / 9121 / 9122	21
2.13	Early Bronze Age ring ditches 4944 and 16072	23
2.14	Reconstruction of barrow 4944	24
2.15	Beaker Grave 9551	24
2.16	Detail of remaining Neolithic/early Bronze Age activity (Phases 1/2 and 2)	26
2.17	Timber circle? 9100 and artist's reconstruction	28
2.18	Outline of middle Bronze Age phase (Phase 3)	34
2.19	Middle Bronze Age settlement Area 1	35
2.20	Photograph and section through waterhole 2146	36
2.21	Middle Bronze Age settlement Area 2	37
2.22	Photograph of roundhouses 5330 and 5331	37
2.23	Photograph and plan of waterhole 5018/5763/5764	38
2.24	Middle Bronze Age Area 3	39
2.25	Enclosure 3239 and associated features	40
2.26	Photograph of middle Bronze Age burial 3175	41
2.27	Sections through middle Bronze Age pits 2004 and 3237	42
2.28	Photograph of cattle burial 2048	42
2.29	Detail of middle Bronze Age ditch 14273	43
2.30	Section through hearth or pit 18304 and Bronze Age fired clay axe mould	44
2.31	Outline of late Bronze Age/early Iron Age phase (phase 4)	47
2.32	Late Bronze Age/early Iron Age pit alignment 3333	48
2.33	Photographs and section of the pit alignment	49
2.34	Late Bronze Age/early Iron Age settlement Area: 1: eastern zone	51
2.35	Section through waterhole 460	53
2.36	Late Bronze Age/early Iron Age settlement Area 1: western zone	54
2.37	Late Bronze Age/early Iron Age settlement Area 1: southern zone	55
2.38	Late Bronze Age/early Iron Age settlement Area 2	57
2.39	Detail of roundhouse 5648 showing finds distribution	58

2.40	Late Bronze Age/early Iron Age settlement Area 3	59
2.41	Section through waterhole 4757	61
2.42	Late Bronze Age/early Iron Age settlement Area 4: domestic focus	62
2.43	Photograph of paired roundhouses 9830 and 7209	63
2.44	Section through well 10047 and waterholes 7605/7575	64
2.45	Photograph of four-post structure 8269	65
2.46	Late Bronze Age/early Iron Age settlement Area 4: northern zone	66
2.47	Late Bronze Age/early Iron Age settlement Area 4: eastern zone	69
2.48	Sections through waterholes 7737, 9485, 9248 and 9188	70
2.49	Artist's reconstruction of late Bronze Age / early Iron Age pit alignment	72
2.50	Artist's reconstruction of roundhouse	73
2.51	Outline of middle Iron Age phase (Phase 5)	75
2.52	Detail of middle Iron Age phase	76
2.53	Roundhouse 4180 and associated features	77
2.54	Eastern middle Iron Age complex excavated by TVAS	79
2.55	Middle Neolithic to middle Bronze Age pottery from Cotswold Community	83
2.56	Middle Neolithic to middle Bronze Age pottery from Cotswold Community	85
2.57	Late Bronze Age/early Iron Age pottery from Cotswold Community	86
2.58	Middle Iron Age pottery from Cotswold Community	88
2.59	Worked flint from Cotswold Community	89
2.60	Axe SF 790	91

### CHAPTER 3

3.1	Overview of later Iron Age and Roman phases (6–9) at Cotswold Community	100
3.2	Detail of later Iron Age and Roman settlement (composite phases 6–9)	101
3.3	Topography of the 2003 excavation area incorporating the Iron Age-Roman nucleated settlement	102
3.4	Outline of middle-late Iron Age phase (Phase 6)	103
3.5	Detail of middle-late Iron Age settlement and enclosure	104
3.6	Middle-late Iron Age roundhouses	105
3.7	Section through waterhole complex 10420/10426/10434	106
3.8	Photograph showing postholes of palisade enclosure 17600	107
3.9	Artist's reconstruction of middle-late Iron Age settlement	108
3.10	Outline of late Iron Age-early Roman phase (Phase 7)	110
3.11	Detail of late Iron Age-early Roman settlement	111
3.12	Sections through enclosures 19999 and 14280	112
3.13	Detail of sunken-featured building 12053	114
3.14	Section through waterhole 10495	116
3.15	Outline of mid Roman phase (Phase 8)	120
3.16	2nd century settlement enclosure modifications (Phase 8a)	121
3.17	Mid Roman settlement redevelopment (Phase 8b)	124
3.18	Stone-lined gully 20128	125
3.19	North-west zone—Industrial/working area	127
3.20	Corn dryer 14400 and associated features	127
3.21	Photograph of corn dryer 14400	128
3.22	South-west zone—stock management?	129
3.23	Features in the south-west zone: Waterhole 11739, corn dryer 11486 and stack ring 11904	130
3.24	Photograph of stone layer 11891 in waterhole complex 11739/11760	131
3.25	Photograph of corn dryer 11486	131
3.26	North-east zone—storage and transit?	132
3.27	South-east zone—domestic focus	133
3.28	Photograph of articulated horse leg from pit 13491	134
3.29	Photograph of articulated sheep burial from pit 12781	135
3.30	Early-mid Roman burials	137
3.31	Artist's reconstruction of middle Roman settlement	139
3.32	Roman settlement and landscape around Cotswold Community	140

*List of Figures*

3.33	Outline of late Roman phase (Phase 9) . . . . .	144
3.34	Detail of late Roman settlement . . . . .	145
3.35	Photograph of wall foundation (13561) . . . . .	146
3.36	Domestic zone within the late Roman settlement . . . . .	148
3.37	Section through northern domestic boundary ditch 20348 and surface 12906 . . . . .	149
3.38	Photograph of metallated surface 12906 looking south-west . . . . .	149
3.39	Late Roman buildings 14291 and 20336 . . . . .	150
3.40	Photograph of building 14291 looking south-west . . . . .	151
3.41	Photograph of building 20336 looking west . . . . .	152
3.42	Photograph of stone structure 12481 looking north . . . . .	152
3.43	Sections through late Roman well 17264 . . . . .	152
3.44	Photograph of late Roman well 17264 . . . . .	153
3.45	Photograph of tile within late Roman well 17264 . . . . .	154
3.46	Section of waterhole 14526 . . . . .	156
3.47	Excavation of late Roman cemetery . . . . .	158
3.48	Late Roman cemetery . . . . .	159
3.49	Photograph of skeleton 10562 (grave 10561) . . . . .	160
3.50	Graves 10463, 10509 and 10724 . . . . .	160
3.51	Photograph of skeleton 10467 (grave 10466) . . . . .	161
3.52	Photograph of southern cemetery group . . . . .	161
3.53	Photograph of skeleton 10511 (grave 10509) . . . . .	162
3.54	Grave 10921 and skeleton 10635 . . . . .	163
3.55	Late Iron Age – Roman pottery from Cotswold Community . . . . .	168
3.56	Dress Accessories and toilet implements from Cotswold Community . . . . .	172
3.57	Dress Accessories and toilet implements from Cotswold Community . . . . .	173
3.58	Military fittings from Cotswold Community . . . . .	174
3.59	Tools from Cotswold Community . . . . .	176
3.60	Household objects from Cotswold Community . . . . .	177
3.61	Quern 2264 . . . . .	177
3.62	Vessel glass from Cotswold Community . . . . .	179
3.63	Roman structural stone . . . . .	181
3.64	Late Iron Age-Roman fired clay objects from Cotswold Community . . . . .	182

CHAPTER 4

4.1	Overview of Saxon phase (10) at Cotswold Community . . . . .	190
4.2	Detail of Area 1 . . . . .	191
4.3	Structure 2533 . . . . .	192
4.4	Structures 2987 and 3875 . . . . .	193
4.5	Structure 2905 . . . . .	194
4.6	Structure 2906 . . . . .	194
4.7	Plan and section of waterhole 2507 and grave 2477 . . . . .	195
4.8	Grave 10764 . . . . .	195
4.9	Detail of Area 2 . . . . .	196
4.10	Structure 6560 . . . . .	197
4.11	Potential entrance structure 7080 . . . . .	197
4.12	Outline section of waterhole 6267/6272/6282/5529 . . . . .	198
4.13	Structure 9435 . . . . .	199
4.14	Medieval/post-medieval furrow and field boundaries . . . . .	201
4.15	Early/middle Saxon organic-tempered vessel from waterhole 2507 . . . . .	206
4.16	Saxon loomweights . . . . .	208



# List of Tables

## CHAPTER 2

2.1	Detail of Phase 1 pits	11
2.2	Detail of Phase 2a pits	18
2.3	Detail of Phase 2b pits	18
2.4	Detail of phase 2 and 1 / 2 pits	25
2.5	Detail of four-post structures in Phase 4, Area 1	53
2.6	Detail of slot structures in Phase 4, Area 1	54
2.7	Detail of four-post structures Phase 4, Area 4—domestic area	65
2.8	Detail of four-post structures in Phase 4, Area 4—northern zone	67
2.9	Detail of fencelines in Phase 4, Area 4—northern zone	68
2.10	Detail of two-post features in Phase 4, Area 4—northern zone	68
2.11	Detail of Phase 5 linear features	78
2.12	Early prehistoric features containing struck flint	88
2.13	Animal bone by phase	95

## CHAPTER 3

3.1	Summary of funerary data for northern cemetery group	158
3.2	Summary of funerary data for southern cemetery group	161
3.3	Summary of burial practices of other late Roman burials	163
3.4	Percentages of ware groups by phase	167
3.5	Percentages of vessel classes by phase	167
3.6	Quantification of coins by identified date range	169
3.7	Comparison of key later Roman periods of coin loss	170
3.8	The Roman vessel glass by colour and site period (fragment count)	178
3.9	Animal bone from Phase 6 to 9	185



# Summary

Oxford Archaeology undertook a series of archaeological investigations between June 1999 and April 2004 on a gravel terrace site north of Cotswold Community School on the border between Gloucestershire and Wiltshire. This volume presents the results of this work, along with the results of excavations carried out by Thames Valley Archaeological Services (TVAS) between 2005 and 2008 on the periphery of the main site. The excavations covered an area totalling *c* 37 hectares and revealed evidence of occupation from the middle Neolithic right through to the Saxon period.

The middle Neolithic (*c* 3400–3000 BC) activity comprised a maximum of 13 pits within an area of six hectares, considered to represent occupation ‘events’ within a wider cycle of temporary occupation by mobile pastoralists. Environmental evidence suggests this economy may have been based on cattle and was set in an open landscape, with oak-hazel woodland available for exploitation nearby. During the late Neolithic/early Bronze Age (*c* 3000–1500 BC) activity of a similar nature continued, with occupation debris found in scattered pits and tree-throw holes, though covering a wider area than previously. However, during this time ceremonial monuments appeared on the site, potentially indicating longer durations of occupation, and changes in social organisation.

A dramatic change was seen at Cotswold Community from the early to middle Bronze Ages (*c* 1500–1150 BC), most notably by the development of sedentary settlements incorporating post-built roundhouses, waterholes and a possible ritual enclosure with a single inhumation burial. Important evidence for metal working was also found in the form of a palstave mould. Environmental evidence suggests arable agriculture was not adopted on the site to any significant degree and it is likely that it remained predominantly pastoral.

During the late Bronze Age/early Iron Age (*c* 1150–550 BC) activity extended across the excavated area, comprising a series of shifting settlements incorporating roundhouses, waterholes and pits, along with the presence of four-post structures generally thought to represent raised grain stores. One of the most remarkable features in this phase, and on the site as a whole, was a pit alignment consisting of two staggered lines of pits extending over 500 m. This may have indicated increased perceptions of landscape definition and territory at this time. Overall the evidence seems to suggest a continuation of pastoral farming along with some small scale arable, and relatively short-lived settlements.

In marked contrast to the preceding phase very little middle Iron Age (*c* 400–100 BC) activity was found on the site, with just four roundhouses in two discrete areas. Agricultural patterns from the preceding phase continued, including diversification of animal species and consolidation of landscape clearance. Evidence for arable production increased but remained small in scale.

At some point in the middle to late Iron Age (*c* 300–1 BC), the landscape underwent a dramatic reorganisation, with a focus of nucleated settlement concentrated on a higher area of gravel terrace in the north, where it remained until the late Roman period. The earliest settlement here comprised a small area of open domestic occupation immediately south of a substantial palisaded enclosure. The scant evidence for economic activities suggests a primarily pastoral regime. The late Iron Age–early Roman period (*c* AD 1–125) saw a major transformation, with earlier domestic buildings and stockades dismantled and a new, much more substantial enclosure created, within which were pits/waterholes, animal pens and a single possible roundhouse and a sunken-floored building. This phase of settlement continued the predominantly pastoral economy of the middle-late Iron Age, although cattle now become more dominant than sheep.

The middle Roman period (2nd–3rd century AD) was the most intensive phase of activity, with major upheaval and landscape reorganisation. Two north-south aligned trackways were constructed, followed by the eventual formalisation of specific ‘zones’ within the well planned and maintained settlement. The evidence suggests that cereal cultivation was starting to play a more important role in the site’s economy, with a variety of paddocks and arable fields to the north and east.

The final Roman phase (later 3rd and 4th centuries), saw a further reorganisation, though the overall impression is that of continuity in terms of site function, economy and status. Domestic evidence became more visible with the appearance of stone footed buildings and a complex well structure. In addition there was a small cemetery and a number of scattered graves. Occupation of the farm is thought to have ceased during the later 4th century.

Following abandonment of the Roman settlement, human activity once more moved south in the early medieval period (*c* AD 450–850), with features located in three main areas. These comprised a series of post-built structures, pits, waterholes and a fenceline. It is not thought that

these represent a significant focus for domestic occupation, but instead were a group of agricultural structures. Two isolated burials were also identified as Anglo-Saxon, radiocarbon dated to the

late 6th and 7th centuries. At some point following the abandonment of the Saxon features the site was extensively ploughed leaving the remains of ridge and furrow.

## Acknowledgements

The Cotswold Community project has drawn on the involvement and support of numerous people who have made contributions over many years. We would particularly like to thank Hills Group in supporting the project so generously through the years, and especially Alan Mackenzie who played an active role in overseeing the fieldwork stages—his cooperation, patience and forbearance in the face of increasingly complex archaeology was crucial to the success of this project. Other staff at Hills we would like to thank include John Wheeler, Andrew Liddle, Terry Pagett and Rob MacGready.

On the curatorial side, the Gloucestershire Planning Authority was represented by Charles Parry and the Wiltshire Planning Authority by Roy Canham during the fieldwork stages of the project. Their assistance and depth of knowledge proved exceptionally valuable to our understanding of the site and is very much appreciated. The work of Stephen Reed, Senior Valuer at Wiltshire County Council is acknowledged, while the aerial photographs taken of the excavation areas by Damian Grady at English Heritage are also much appreciated. The entire post-excavation process was generously funded by Wiltshire County Council and the curatorial assistance of Melanie Pomeroy-Kellinger and financial monitoring by John Price is gratefully acknowledged. Their obvious enthusiasm for the project has been of great help throughout the post-excavation programme.

The fieldwork stages of the project were directed by Gill Hey, who also provided considerable academic input, helping us to understand the nature of the site. Steven Weaver also co-directed the final phase of excavation. Granville Laws managed all phases of the excavation on-site and was supported by a number of supervisors including Jim Mumford, Tim Haines and Guy Cockin. The burials were excavated on site under supervision of Ceri Boston. A project of this scale included large numbers of excavation, geomatics and finds staff whose fine efforts are gratefully acknowledged. This staff included Robin Bashford, Matt Bradley, Ian Cook,

Jonathan Tierney, Clare Gerson, Paula Malone, Emily Glass, Rose Grant, Jane Phimester, Chris Richardson, Georgina Machugh, Victoria Kwiatkowska, Chris Swales, Nick Pankhurst, Daniel Watkeys, Dawn Casey, Gerry Thacker, Tamsin Turner, Leo Heatley, Marc Storey, Adam Stone, Matthew Pocock, Nick Croxson, Mark Littlewood, Jessica Tibber, Matthew Copley, Rebecca Peacock, Emily Edwards, Kate Brady, Imogen Binding, Anne Kilgour, Laila Sikking, Mike Sims, David Paterson, Sarah Connor, Tavis Walker, Michael Wood, Ruth Hatfield, Sarah Henley, Lucy Offord, Gareth Rees, Dan Wheeler, Diana Mahoney, Paul Murray, Mercedes Planas, Jody Morris, Bryan Matthews, Anna Browne Ribeiro, George Anelay, Oliver Brown, Peter Crawley, Claire Guest, Kate Guest, Sean Jackson, Sue Wintersgill, M Lewis, Helen Macquarrie, L Ogorman, Adheem Malik, David Patterson, Mark Peters, G Price, Wayne Sawtell, Andy Scarrot, Adam Stone, Tuba Demirel, Claire Sampson, Luke Howarth, Rachel Scales, Nasreen Mohammad, Mohammad, Martin Greaney, Evangelia Kappa, Anne Kilgour, Marta Perez, Mark Littlewood, Kris Poole, Steve Laurie-Lynch, Graham Walton, Bob Bailey and Kay Proctor. Many thanks also go to Mark Maillard who provided his metal detecting expertise. Mark has worked with Oxford Archaeology over many years and his assistance is greatly appreciated.

The post-excavation programme was managed by Alex Smith with Kelly Powell, with the finds and environmental departments being managed by Leigh Allen and Rebecca Nicholson respectively. The archives have been managed by Nicola Scott and the publication production managed by Paul Backhouse. This stage of the project drew upon the wisdom and skills of a number of people apart from those credited, and in particular the authors wish to thank Paul Booth, Chris Hayden and Professor Richard Bradley for reading and providing invaluable comments on the text. We would also like to thank Christina Cheung who undertook Stable Isotope Analysis of the Roman skeletons as part of her MSc thesis at University of Reading.