

**FAIRFIELD PARK, STOTFOLD, BEDFORDSHIRE:
LATER PREHISTORIC SETTLEMENT
IN THE EASTERN CHILTERN**

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Contents

List of Figures	iv
List of Plates	vii
List of Tables	viii
Summary	x
Acknowledgements	xi
CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION	1
Site location and geology	1
Archaeological and historical background	1
Evaluation fieldwork	1
Excavation methodology.....	4
CHAPTER 2: THE ARCHAEOLOGICAL SEQUENCE	13
Introduction	13
Early prehistoric activity.....	13
Phase 1: late Bronze Age	13
Phase 2: early Iron Age	16
Phase 3: middle Iron Age	52
Phase 4: Romano-British period.....	53
Phase 5: medieval period?	56
Phase 6: medieval/post-medieval period	56
Radiocarbon dating.....	56
CHAPTER 3: MATERIAL CULTURE.....	61
Flint by <i>Rebecca Devaney</i>	61
Pottery based on a report by <i>Emily Edwards</i>	64
Fired clay by <i>Emily Edwards</i>	79
Worked bone by <i>Leigh Allen and Leo Webley</i>	81
Worked stone by <i>Ruth Shaffrey</i>	86
Jet by <i>Leo Webley</i>	92
Metalwork by <i>Leigh Allen and Leo Webley</i>	94
Slag by <i>Lynne Keys</i>	96
CHAPTER 4: OSTEOLOGICAL EVIDENCE.....	97
Human bone by <i>Annsophie Witkin</i>	97
Animal bone by <i>Matilda Holmes</i>	102
CHAPTER 5: ENVIRONMENTAL EVIDENCE	117
Charred plant remains by <i>Ruth Pelling</i>	117
Charcoal by <i>Gill Thompson and Robert Francis</i>	128
Pollen by <i>Sylvia Peglar</i>	130
Land snails by <i>Elizabeth Stafford</i>	133
Chemistry and magnetic susceptibility of soils and sediments by <i>John Crowther</i>	133
CHAPTER 6: DISCUSSION.....	137
The sequence of occupation at <i>Fairfield Park</i>	137
Late Bronze Age enclosure and burial.....	137
Iron Age settlement.....	139
BIBLIOGRAPHY	153
APPENDIX: PHOSPHATE AND MAGNETIC SUSCEPTIBILITY ANALYSIS by <i>John Crowther</i>	161
INDEX	169

List of Figures

CHAPTER 1

Figure 1.1	Site location.....	2
Figure 1.2	Geology of the area around the site.....	3
Figure 1.3	Location of excavation areas and areas of geophysical survey. Geophysical data used courtesy of GSB Propection Ltd	5
Figure 1.4	Evaluation trenches (numbered where mentioned in text).....	7
Figure 1.5	Plan of BCAS evaluation Trench 10 (Site C).....	8
Figure 1.6	Plan of BCAS evaluation Trench 22 and sections of Anglo-Saxon ditches	9
Figure 1.7	Site A. Plan showing all features, extent of modern disturbance and buried soil.....	10

CHAPTER 2

Figure 2.1	Site A. Phase 1: Late Bronze Age.....	14
Figure 2.2	Section of Enclosure I	16
Figure 2.3	Site A. Phase 2: Early Iron Age	17
Figure 2.4	Site A. Sequence of enclosures in north-western part of early Iron Age settlement.....	18
Figure 2.5	Site A. Location of detailed plans of Phase 2 settlement	19
Figure 2.6	Enclosure II and associated features	20
Figure 2.7	Section of Enclosures II, III and V	21
Figure 2.8	Enclosure IV and associated features	22
Figure 2.9	Enclosures V and VII and associated features	24
Figure 2.10	Enclosure VI and associated features	25
Figure 2.11	Gullies at eastern edge of site (other features not shown)	26
Figure 2.12	Structures 1, 2, 8, 20 and 29	28
Figure 2.13	Structures 3 and 4.....	29
Figure 2.14	Structures 5 and 6 and pit 4114.....	30
Figure 2.15	Structure 7 and associated features.....	31
Figure 2.16	Structures 10, 12 and 31.....	31
Figure 2.17	Structures 13–19, 21–28 and 32–33.....	33
Figure 2.18	Pit group at north-western edge of settlement.....	37
Figure 2.19	Pit group to east of settlement core	38
Figure 2.20	Pit group to south-east of settlement core	39
Figure 2.21	Sections from pit group to south-east of settlement core.....	40
Figure 2.22	Hollow 3545.....	41
Figure 2.23	Pit group at south-eastern edge of site.....	41
Figure 2.24	Gullies 3240 and 3870 and associated features	41
Figure 2.25	Site A. Distribution of pit types, Phase 2.....	42
Figure 2.26	Site B. Phases 1 and 2: Late Bronze Age and early Iron Age. Late Bronze Age features labelled in italics. See Fig. 2.27 for location of detailed plans.....	43
Figure 2.27	Site B. Location of detailed plans of Phase 2 settlement	44
Figure 2.28	Enclosure VIII (other features not shown).....	45
Figure 2.29	Structures 34 and 42–44	47
Figure 2.30	Structures 35, 38, 39 and 45.....	48
Figure 2.31	Structures 36 and 37 and associated features.....	49
Figure 2.32	Structures 40 and 41	50
Figure 2.33	Section of pit 2043	50
Figure 2.34	Site B. Distribution of pit types, Phase 2	51
Figure 2.35	Site A. Phase 3: middle Iron Age.....	53
Figure 2.36	Site A. Phases 4–6: Romano-British to post-medieval.....	54
Figure 2.37	Site B. Phases 4–6: Romano-British to post-medieval	55
Figure 2.38	Probability distributions of radiocarbon dates	58

CHAPTER 3

Figure 3.1	Worked flint.....	65
Figure 3.2	Pottery, nos 1–24	72

List of Figures

Figure 3.3	Pottery, nos 25–36	73
Figure 3.4	Pottery, nos 37–61	74
Figure 3.5	Pottery, nos 62–81	75
Figure 3.6	Pottery, nos 82–112.....	76
Figure 3.7	Site A. Distribution of pottery by excavated slot	77
Figure 3.8	Site B. Distribution of pottery by excavated slot.....	78
Figure 3.9	Fired clay.....	80
Figure 3.10	Site A. Distribution of structural fired clay and smithing hearth bottoms	82
Figure 3.11	Site A. Distribution of weaving equipment	83
Figure 3.12	Worked bone and antler.....	86
Figure 3.13	Site A. Distribution of worked bone objects and dress accessories.....	87
Figure 3.14	Worked stone.....	88
Figure 3.15	Rotary querns	90
Figure 3.16	Site A. Distribution of querns.....	92
Figure 3.17	Dress accessories	93
Figure 3.18	Copper alloy involuted pin from Ludford, Lincolnshire. Drawn by Stephen Crummy. Reproduced courtesy of the British Museum.....	94
Figure 3.19	Metal tools.....	95

CHAPTER 4

Figure 4.1	Site A. Distribution of human remains and articulated animal burials.....	98
Figure 4.2	Animal bone. Fragment representation in order of expected preservation (restricted count)	103
Figure 4.3	Animal bone. Fragment representation by carcass part (restricted count), Phase 2	104
Figure 4.4	Animal bone. Species representation at Sites A and B (NISP), Phase 2	105
Figure 4.5	Animal bone. % of species recovered by feature (NISP), Phase 2	106
Figure 4.6	Animal bone. Proportion of loose teeth by feature type.....	107
Figure 4.7	Animal bone. Fragment representation (restricted count) by site, Phase 2.....	107
Figure 4.8	Sheep/goat fusion data, Phase 2	109
Figure 4.9	Sheep/goat tooth wear, Phase 2.....	109
Figure 4.10	Cattle fusion data, Phase 2.....	110
Figure 4.11	Cattle tooth wear, Phase 2	111
Figure 4.12	Pig fusion data, Phase 2.....	111
Figure 4.13	Pig tooth wear, Phase 2	111
Figure 4.14	Dog fusion data, Phase 2	112
Figure 4.15	Site A. Distribution of animal bone	113
Figure 4.16	Site A. Distribution of animal carcass parts.....	114
Figure 4.17	Site B. Distribution of animal bone.....	115

CHAPTER 5

Figure 5.1	Site A. Location of environmental samples	118
Figure 5.2	Relative proportions of grain, chaff and weed seeds in samples with > 50 items	125
Figure 5.3	Log ¹⁰ of the ratio of hulled wheat grain to glumes against the percentage of grain to grain and weed seeds.....	126
Figure 5.4	Percentage of weed seeds to grain plotted against the percentage of large weed seeds (from all weed seeds)	126
Figure 5.5	Site A. Phosphate survey results	134
Figure 5.6	Site A. Magnetic susceptibility survey results.....	135
Figure 5.7	Areas referred to in discussion of phosphate and magnetic susceptibility surveys	136

CHAPTER 6

Figure 6.1	Location of early-middle Iron Age sites mentioned in the text.....	140
Figure 6.2	Comparison of layouts of early Iron Age settlements at Sites A and B.....	142
Figure 6.3	House size (eaves-gully diameter) at Fairfield Park compared to other early and middle Iron Age settlements in the region. 'Other sites' include Groveland Way (Steadman forthcoming) and Salford (Dawson 2006), Beds., Bancroft (Williams and Zeepvat 1994) and Pennyland (Williams 1993), Bucks., and Wendens Ambo, Essex (Hodder 1982); combined total 49 houses	144

Figure 6.4	Location of clay-lined 'cooking pits' within roundhouses at ten sites in southern England	145
Figure 6.5	Orientations of roundhouse entrances and four-post structures (eastern side) at Fairfield Park.....	145
Figure 6.6	Relative proportions (by weight) of pottery and animal bone in pit and ditch contexts.....	148
Figure 6.7	Comparison of artefact assemblages from Sites A and B.....	151

APPENDIX

Figure A1.1	Scatterplot of relationship between phosphate-P and LOI for all of the samples of feature fills	162
Figure A1.2	Scatterplot of relationship between χ (labelled 'magnetic susceptibility') and χ_{conv} ('MSconv') for all of feature fills.....	163
Figure A1.3	Scatterplot of relationship between χ (labelled 'magnetic susceptibility') and phosphate-P for all samples of feature fills.....	164

List of Plates

CHAPTER 1

- Plate 1.1 Location of excavation areas and areas of geophysical survey in relation to topography. Geophysical data used courtesy of GSB Prospection Ltd..... 6

CHAPTER 2

- Plate 2.1 Site A during the 2002 season of excavation, looking east. Enclosure I can be seen in the foreground, with Enclosure III (under excavation) beyond. The view in the background stretches across the valley of the Pix Brook to the hill beyond..... 15
- Plate 2.2 Enclosure III, southern terminal end of ditch looking west..... 21
- Plate 2.3 Clay-lined 'cooking pit' 4565, showing burnt cobbles and quern fragments at base. Scale: 1m..... 34
- Plate 2.4 Flat-based pit 4666. Scale: 1m..... 35
- Plate 2.5 Pit 5189 and burial 5144, looking north. Scale: 1m..... 35
- Plate 2.6 Site B under excavation, looking north. The Romano-British trackway can be seen in front of the two excavators; behind them lies the curving ditch of Enclosure VIII. The background shows the view towards Stotfold in the valley of the River Ivel..... 46
- Plate 2.7 Pit 2043. Scale: 1m..... 52

CHAPTER 3

- Plate 3.1 Decorated bowl from pit 2043..... 66
- Plate 3.2 Sheep/goat metatarsal weaving tools from pit 484..... 84
- Plate 3.3 Sheep/goat metacarpal weaving tools from pit 484..... 85

CHAPTER 4

- Plate 4.1 Left parietal (480) endocranial surface, showing a depressed circular peri-mortem fracture..... 101
- Plate 4.2 Left femur (3068) posterior surface, polished distal end of the shaft..... 101

List of Tables

CHAPTER 1

Table 1.1	Summary of fieldwork events	4
-----------	-----------------------------------	---

CHAPTER 2

Table 2.1	Summary of Enclosure 1	15
Table 2.2	Phase 1 pits and postholes, Site A	16
Table 2.3	Pit row 3530. Pits listed in sequence from north-west to south-east.....	23
Table 2.4	Roundhouses, Site A.....	27
Table 2.5	Four-post structures, Site A.....	31
Table 2.6	Clay-lined 'cooking' pits, Site A	34
Table 2.7	Bell-shaped pits, Site A	36
Table 2.8	Roundhouses, Site B	46
Table 2.9	Four-post structures, Site B	50
Table 2.10	Bell-shaped pits, Site B.....	52
Table 2.11	Flat-based pits, Site B.....	53
Table 2.12	Radiocarbon dates	57

CHAPTER 3

Table 3.1	Summary of worked flint by excavation area.....	62
Table 3.2	Summary of metrical analysis of worked flint.....	62
Table 3.3	Quantification of pottery by ceramic phase.....	66
Table 3.4	Mean sherd weights from different feature types	66
Table 3.5	Pottery fabrics	67
Table 3.6	Late Bronze Age and late Bronze Age/early Iron Age pottery fabrics	68
Table 3.7	Early Iron Age and early or middle Iron Age pottery fabrics.....	68
Table 3.8	Middle Iron Age pottery fabrics	70
Table 3.9	'Loomweights' or oven bricks	79
Table 3.10	Summary of structural and amorphous fired clay	81
Table 3.11	Querns from early to middle Iron Age sites in the region around Fairfield Park.....	91
Table 3.12	Smithing hearth bottoms.....	96
Table 3.13	Summary of slag (other than smithing hearth bottoms) from Phase 2 features.....	96

CHAPTER 4

Table 4.1	Summary of cremated bone	98
Table 4.2	Summary of disarticulated human remains.....	100
Table 4.3	Faunal species representation (fragment count)	102
Table 4.4	Articulated animal skeletons from Phase 2 pits	105
Table 4.5	Faunal species representation from selected Iron Age assemblages in southern England (fragment counts).....	108
Table 4.6	Faunal species representation using other methods (Phase 2).....	108
Table 4.7	Sheep/goat fusion data (Phase 2)	109
Table 4.8	Sheep/goat heights (Teichert 1974).....	110
Table 4.9	Cattle fusion data (Phase 2).....	110
Table 4.10	Cattle heights (Fock 1966)	111
Table 4.11	Pig fusion data (Phase 2).....	111
Table 4.12	Horse fusion data (Phase 2)	111
Table 4.13	Horse heights (Keiswalter 1888)	112
Table 4.14	Dog fusion data (Phase 2)	112

CHAPTER 5

Table 5.1	Charred Plant Remains: summary of components of samples with >50 items.....	119
Table 5.2	Charred Plant Remains from Phase 2	120

List of Tables

Table 5.3	Charred plant remains from Phase 5	124
Table 5.4	Charcoal. Taxonomic composition of the assemblages	129
Table 5.5	Summary of palynological samples	131
Table 5.6	Results of palynological assessments as percentages of total terrestrial pollen and spores	132
Table 5.7	Molluscan assemblages	133

CHAPTER 6

Table 6.1	Summary of the long-term use of the hilltop	138
Table 6.2	Radiocarbon determinations post-dating 1100 BC from un-urned cremation burials in south-east England	139
Table 6.3	Roundhouses containing clay-lined 'cooking' pits from southern England.....	144
Table 6.4	Vertical location of selected artefact types from Phase 2 pits containing more than one fill	147
Table 6.5	Summary of main patterns in artefact and bone deposition at Fairfield Park.....	151

APPENDIX

Table A1.1	Chemistry and magnetic susceptibility of soils and sediments. Summary data for control samples: topsoil, subsoil and natural	161
Table A1.2	Chemistry and magnetic susceptibility of soils and sediments. Summary data for all samples of feature fills	161
Table A1.3	Pearson product-moment correlation coefficients (r) for relationships between the various soil properties for all samples of feature fills	162
Table A1.4	Chemistry and magnetic susceptibility of soils and sediments. Comparison of summary data for samples of feature fills from the north-western settlement area and from other areas	165
Table A1.5	Chemistry and magnetic susceptibility of soils and sediments. Summary data for samples from different feature types within the north-western settlement area.....	165
Table A1.6	Chemistry and magnetic susceptibility of soils and sediments. Summary data for samples of feature fills from specific areas outside the north-western settlement area	166

Summary

This volume reports upon the excavation of late Bronze Age to middle Iron Age remains at Fairfield Park, Stotfold, Bedfordshire, by Oxford Archaeology in 2002–3. The excavations took place at two separate locations (Sites A and B) within the grounds of the former Fairfield Hospital, which lies on a prominent hilltop. The earliest features at Site A were datable to the late Bronze Age and included a large, apparently empty enclosure and an adjacent cluster of pits. Three late Bronze Age cremation burials also occurred, one at Site A and two at Site B. After a possible hiatus in occupation, substantial settlements were laid out at both sites in the latter stages of the early Iron Age, around the 5th-4th centuries BC. Features at both settlements included small enclosures, roundhouses, four-post structures and numerous storage pits. There was some limited continuity of occupation into the middle Iron Age at Site B. Post-Iron Age activity was limited to agricultural use of the hilltop.

The site is significant as it represents one of the first large-scale modern excavations of early Iron Age settlement remains within the region. Extensive assemblages of artefacts and faunal remains were recovered, along with good environmental evidence. A number of unusual artefacts occurred, including pottery with unique forms of decoration, a group of atypically early rotary querns, a set of 49 bone weaving tools from a single pit, and a range of metal objects including an involuted pin with coral studs. Human remains and articulated animal skeletons had been deposited in several of the pits. The richness of the data is such that detailed analyses have been possible of spatial patterning both within and between the two settlements.

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The archive

The finds, paper records and digital archive are to be deposited at Bedford Museum (accession code BEDFM.2002.98). The archive includes all records made on site; evaluation and watching brief reports; post-excavation assessment reports; original versions of the final artefact, bone and environmental reports; pottery and animal bone databases; pottery recording sheets; human bone recording sheets; full radiocarbon results; and digital CAD plans of the site.