

# Cirencester before Corinium

## Excavations at Kingshill North, Cirencester, Gloucestershire

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Front cover: Beaker from grave and ring-ditch group, 8454 (photograph and drawing by Magdalena Wachnik)

Back cover: Dog skeleton from Middle Iron Age pit 8851

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## Summary

An excavation by Oxford Archaeology in 2008 at Kingshill North, to the north-east of Cirencester, Gloucestershire, uncovered evidence for prehistoric occupation. The earliest evidence comprised storage pits dating to the late Neolithic period. Some of the features contained Grooved Ware pottery decorated with exceptionally rare 'lattice lozenge' motifs, pig bones suggestive of feasting, bone pins and awls, worked flint imported from some distance, and fragments of Cornish axe heads. The pit groups point to a community able to mobilise a wide range of resources and dispose of them in a highly visible way. The fieldwork uncovered two Beaker burials, one enclosed by a ring-ditch. The isotopes from the individuals indicate that they were not local; one individual came from the chalklands of eastern or southern England, the other was from a more south-westerly chalkland region. As such they fit within an emerging picture of population mobility. Another inhumation grave, dated to the middle Bronze Age, was also recorded. More storage pits were dug during the middle Iron Age. These were filled with

domestic waste, but there was evidence of structured deposits in the form of crow or rook and dog burials. The late Iron Age settlement comprised a sequence of ditches which formed boundaries or enclosures and surrounded structures and pits. These were set within a pastoral landscape and areas of grassland and meadows. Three human burials, all interred in ditches, were also recorded. The settlement was within the territory of the Dobunni, whose centre was at nearby Bagendon, but the inhabitants of Kingshill North did not benefit materially from the proximity, and their focus remained local. The settlement was abandoned by the late 1st century AD, before or coincident with the establishment of the Roman town of Corinium Dobunorum, although agricultural activity continued to a limited extent through the Roman period, and there was a single cremation burial dated between the late 1st and mid 3rd century AD. The medieval and post-medieval periods were represented by an agricultural landscape of field boundaries and drainage features.



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by Georgina Slater, and prepared final versions of all the figures. The authors are grateful to Jane Randle for permission to reproduce the aerial photograph shown in Figure 3.

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