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Extracted from the Proceedings of the Somerset Archaeological and Natural History Society for 2019.

Volume 163, 68-91.

Produced in Great Britain by Short Run Press, Exeter.

1SSN 0081-2056

ARCHAEOLOGICAL INVESTIGATIONS AT RIVERTON ROAD, PURITON, SOMERSET, 2017

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SUMMARY

Excavation in 2017 of two areas off Riverton Road, Puriton, exposed at least two enclosures of Middle to Late Iron Age date, probably used for settlement purposes. A number of linear features to the east probably represented elements of a contemporary field system, whilst an inhumation burial south of the enclosures appears to have been contemporary. Roman activity was represented by a small number of ditches, a probable cremation pit and a scatter of isolated pits.

INTRODUCTION

Between August and October 2017 Cotswold Archaeology (CA) carried out an archaeological excavation at land off Riverton Road, Puriton (centred on NGR: ST 31745 41672; Fig. 1). The work was commissioned by Taylor Wimpey and comprised the excavation of two areas (Area 1 and Area 2; Figs 2 and 3) targeted on zones of raised archaeological potential identified by earlier geophysical survey (WAA 2014a) and archaeological evaluation (WAA 2014b).

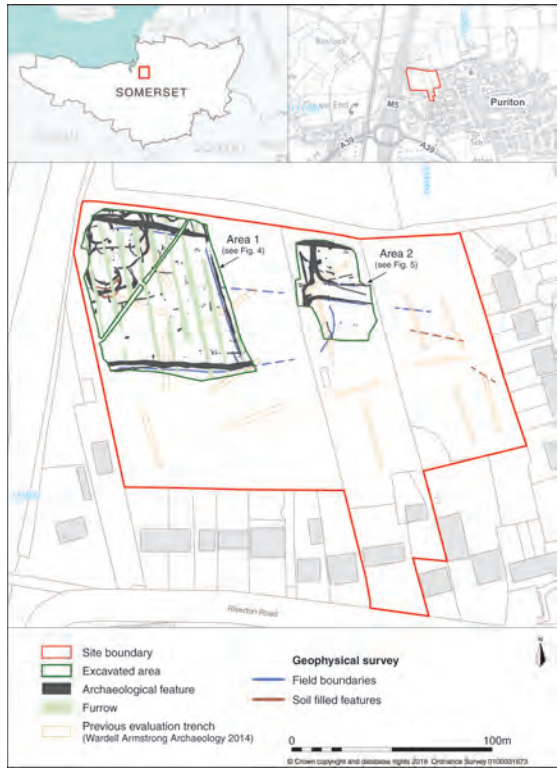

Fig. 1 Site location

Fig. 2 Area 1, looking north-west

The site was located in pasture fields on the north-west fringe of Puriton village, to the north of Riverton Road and east of the M5 motorway. It lay on land that gently rose from c. 13.5m above Ordnance Datum (aOD) in the north to c. 16.5m aOD in the south and was located approximately 600m north of King's Sedgemoor Drain, an artificial tributary of the River Parrett. The underlying geology of the area is mapped as mudstone of the Langport Member, Blue Lias and Charmouth Mudstone formations. No superficial deposits are recorded (BGS 2018).

Other than occasional chance finds of prehistoric material, the earliest known evidence of past activity in the area lies a short distance to the north of the site and comprises an Iron Age and Romano-British settlement primarily recorded as cropmarks although finds, predominantly Roman in addition to two pottery sherds of Durotrigian type, were recovered during excavation of a railway cutting in the 19th century (Somerset Historic Environment Record (SHER) 10702). A large Roman settlement and possible villa were briefly revealed during topsoil stripping for the construction of the M5, to the south-west of the site (SHER 192339). Features including stone paving and a wall foundation, along with three ditches, one of pre-Roman date, were exposed in an area measuring 100m north/south by 15m east/west, the site extending east and west of the motorway strip. Pottery including a single sherd of Late Iron Age type, and also samian, colour coated mortaria, and coarse greyware sherds were recovered.

The earliest documented reference to Puriton is believed to have been in the Glastonbury Abbey estate records of AD 854, which record '*three hides of land at Pirition*'. The place name *Pirition* is accepted by some as being Puriton, though this acceptance is not universal (Abrams 1996, 214). A settlement at Puriton was certainly in existence by the time of the Norman Conquest, as the Domesday survey of 1086 records Queen Edith owning '*six hides at Puriton*'. Further documentary evidence records a manor at Puriton from at least 1186-7, and records have shown that the wealth of the area has concentrated on arable farming (Dunning 2004). West of the M5 on the edge of the Polden Hills is the 12th-century motte-and-bailey castle of Down End, in a strategic position overlooking the River Parrett. Excavations in 1908 recovered Romano-British as well as early Norman material and it has been suggested that the site may have originated as a Roman fort which was subsequently adapted into the later complex (Burrow 1924), although no further evidence for this has been recovered. The adjoining settlement was called a vill in the early 13th century and a hamlet in 1280,

Fig. 3 Area 2, looking west

but in 1225 and later in the century it was a borough (Dunning 2004). North-east of the current village, earthworks identified in 1978 are possibly the remains of a deserted medieval settlement (SHER 617607; Ellis 1985). Remains include a field boundary, bank and a ditch or possible trackway, whilst artefactual evidence including building debris, 12th- to 14th-century pottery and a whetstone were recovered during water pipeline construction in the locality. St Michael's Church in Puriton contains elements of an earlier 13th-century tower (Pevsner 1958, 279) and the graveyard is noted as having been in use since the medieval period, indicating an associated settlement from at least this period (SHER 10709). The Riverton Road site sits within a larger landscape of known medieval and post-medieval ridge-and-furrow earthworks, with some fields exhibiting the typical medieval 'S-shaped' plough furrow pattern, the rest displaying straight narrow blocks.

A geophysical survey of the site undertaken by Wardell Armstrong Archaeology (WAA 2014a) identified a number of potential linear anomalies that were subsequently investigated during an archaeological evaluation (WAA 2014b). The results revealed that the linear anomalies represented former boundary ditches associated with a possible banjo enclosure of probable Late Iron Age/Early Romano-British date.

EXCAVATION RESULTS

The two excavation areas, encompassing approximately 2.8 hectares in total, were stripped of topsoil and subsoil by mechanical excavator with a toothless grading bucket, under archaeological supervision. All exposed archaeological features were hand-excavated to the base of archaeological stratigraphy, with discrete features half-sectioned and excavation slots positioned along linear features.

Archaeological features identified comprised ditches, pits, postholes, one cremation burial and one inhumation burial. Medieval plough furrows and modern ceramic drains were identified across the site. At times the plough furrows were partially hand excavated to expose earlier archaeological features. Much of the archaeology could be dated by artefactual remains and on the basis of spatial relationships. However, some features could not be dated on these criteria and remain undated. Three broad periods of activity were identified:

Middle to Late Iron Age

The majority of the features identified during the excavation could be assigned to the Middle to Late Iron Age based on pottery dating, though the site stratigraphy indicated that there were clearly a number of sub-phases

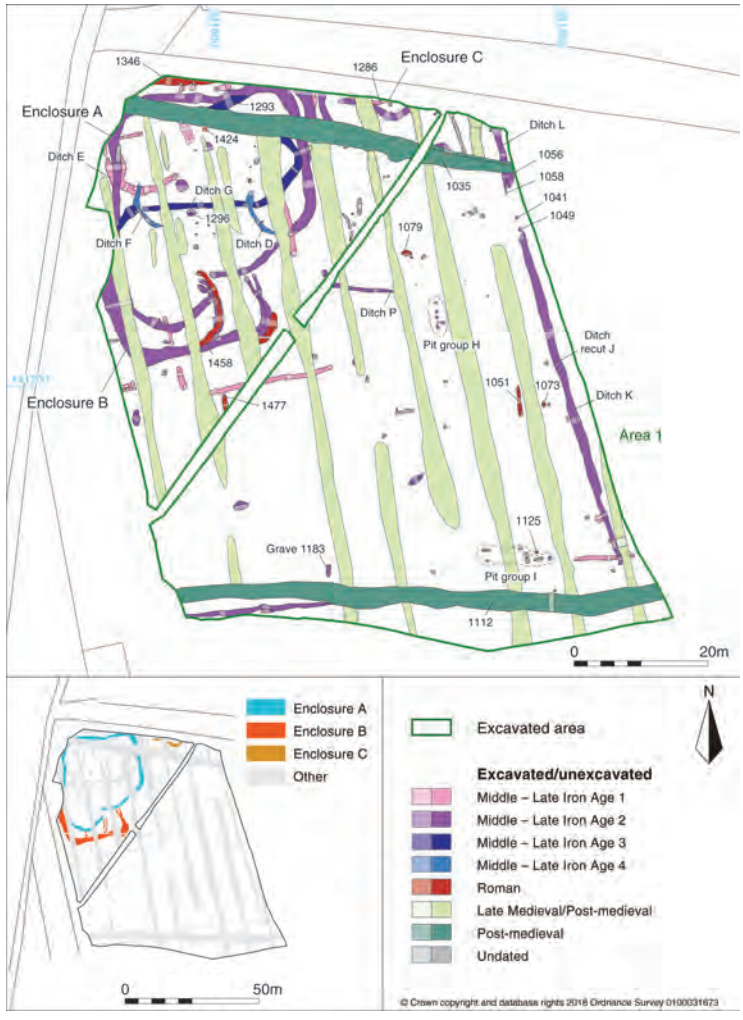

Fig. 4 Area 1 phased plan

within this overall period. Middle to Late Iron Age activity on site was mostly associated with a ditched enclosure complex located towards the north-west corner of Area 1 and an associated outlying field system. The earliest activity here was represented by Ditch E, which appeared to enclose a small, sub-circular area (Fig. 4), with further associated ditches and a series of north/south and east/west-aligned ditches to the south and east, representing land partition over a more extensive area. A number of pits towards the eastern edge of Area 1, and possibly further features in Area 2 (Fig. 5), may also have been associated with this phase of activity and it is likely that there were further ditches, though the presence of these has been masked by the digging and use of later ditches.

The second and most extensive phase of Middle to Late Iron Age activity was again concentrated towards the north-west corner of Area 1 and was dominated by two ditched enclosures (Enclosures A and B; Fig. 4) probably exploited for settlement purposes. Some stretches of the enclosure ditches corresponded to anomalies identified during the earlier geophysical survey. Enclosure A had an irregular, sub-oval plan enclosing an area of 34m (north/south) by 30m (east/west). Enclosure A ditches had moderately-sloping sides and flat bases and varied in width between 1.2m and 1.65m, with surviving depths between 0.15m and 0.35m. The enclosure ditches contained single fills from which significant quantities of Middle to Late Iron Age pottery were recovered. The

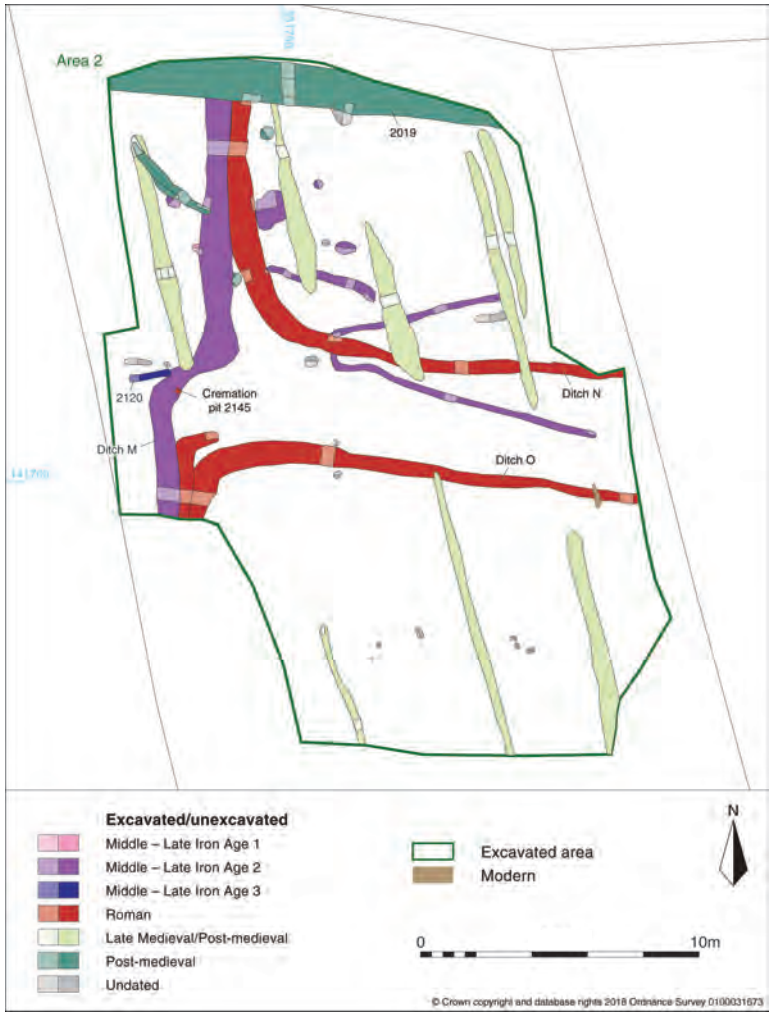

Fig. 5 Area 2 phased plan

westernmost north/south aligned ditch of Enclosure A truncated earlier Ditch E, though both features produced similarly dated pottery assemblages. Within Enclosure A were a number of pits and possible postholes, though no clear patterns could be observed, which mostly yielded small quantities of broadly dated late prehistoric pottery. Possible entrances to the enclosure were observed at the south, and south of these was a series of ditches, which appeared to form a feature – Enclosure B – external to Enclosure A. The ditches of the two enclosures ran in close proximity without intercutting, suggesting contemporaneity and the pottery from their fills was of the same date. Enclosure B extended beyond the limits of excavation and was only exposed south and south-west of Enclosure A. Some evidence of re-cutting was identified in the Enclosure B ditches.

At the northern edge of Area 1 was a further possible ditched enclosure; Enclosure C, which extended beyond the limits of excavation, potentially enclosing an area lying immediately north of the site. The southernmost Enclosure C ditch had steep sides and flat base and measured 0.9m wide by 0.35m deep. It truncated a shallower, earlier ditch [1286] and there was a suggestion that the later feature may have represented a recutting and extension of an earlier enclosure. Moderately large pottery assemblages of Middle to Late Iron Age date were recovered from the later ditch, whilst a single sherd of similarly dated material was recovered from

the earlier feature. Approximately north/south-aligned ditches at the east of Area 1 probably represented elements of an extensive field system contemporary with Enclosures A-C. Ditches K and J corresponded with a linear geophysical anomaly identified by the previous survey; the original cut, Ditch K, was up to 0.78m wide and 0.15m deep and was re-cut on its western side as Ditch J, which was up to 1.10m wide and 0.19m deep. There was a gap of approximately 7m before the alignment was continued (Ditch L) northwards and beyond the limit of excavation. A feature [1056] which lay immediately adjacent to the southern end of ditch L possibly represented an original ditch? cut, although it was much wider than ditches J/K to the south. As it did not continue to the north of a post-medieval ditch [1035] that had truncated it, it may have been an unrelated pit. Ditch L, however, does appear to correspond with re-cut Ditch J to the south and measured up to 0.93m wide by 0.21m deep. The gap between ditches J and L appeared to define an access route between different areas within the field system. Shallow postholes [1041, 1049, 1058?] may have represented part of an entrance structure. Pit group H to the west of Ditch J may have represented the remains of a fence line parallel to the field boundary ditches. Ditch P which lay perpendicular and to the west of Ditch J/K may also have formed part of the same field system, as may other ditches that have been assigned to the earlier period. Although the ditches just described have been assigned to a single stratigraphic sub-phase, the field system was probably used and modified during several such phases.

A number of linear features in Area 2 may also have represented contemporary elements of the field system, though the ditches in this area were rather more irregular. North/south aligned Ditch M had irregular sides and flat base and measured between 1.45m and 1.7m in width and 0.55m deep. It contained two silty fills from which pottery of late prehistoric date was retrieved. The function of Ditch M is unclear but could have represented part of the field system or acted as a boundary. A small number of pits in the area also appear to have been contemporary features.

The third sub-phase was dominated by one feature in Area 1; Ditch G, a slightly sinuous feature that cut across the centre of Enclosure A, partly truncating the ditches at the east and west of the enclosure, before continuing beyond the western limit of excavation. The ditch was 0.75m wide and 0.1m deep, and although its actual function was unclear, it may have represented a simple sub-division of Enclosure A. A single linear feature [2120] in Area 2 has also been assigned to this phase as it stratigraphically post-dated the infilling of Ditch M, though no artefactual material was recovered to give an indication of actual date. The fourth sub-phase was represented by just two features in Area 1; curvilinear Ditches D and F, which have been assigned to this subdivision on stratigraphic grounds as they truncated earlier Ditch G. Ditch D survived to a depth of 0.1m and Ditch F to a depth of 0.2m and it was suggested in the field that they could represent the truncated remains of drip gullies of roundhouses, though this hypothesis is somewhat tentative given their fragmentary survival (due to significant truncation due to later agricultural activity) and lack of clearly associated features. Small amounts of pottery of Late Iron Age date were recovered from these features. No contemporary features were identified in Area 2.

Grave 1183 was identified near the south-western corner of Area 1. It was north/south orientated and measured 1.7m in length, 0.6m in width and 0.07m in depth. The grave contained the remains of a poorly-preserved adult skeleton (SK 1184) buried in supine position. No grave goods nor any other artefactual material were recovered from the burial, however, a sample of femur was submitted for radiocarbon dating and returned a date of 185-42 cal BC at 95.4% probability (SUERC-83707). This indicates a Middle to Late Iron Age date and confirms a broad contemporaneity with occupation of the enclosures, though it was not possible to equate the burial with a specific sub-phase.

Roman

The Roman period was represented by fewer features in each area. In Area 1 four isolated sub-circular pits [1073, 1079, 1125 and 1424] and a 2.5m long north-south aligned ditch [1477] yielded small quantities of pottery of Roman date. The function of these features remains unclear but suggests some sort of low level of activity during the Roman period within the western part of the excavation area. Features in undated Pit group I adjacent to pit [1125] could also have been contemporary. The presence of a small amount of Roman pottery in ditch [1458], which initially appeared to have been a re-cut of an Enclosure B ditch may indicate that the Late Iron Age enclosure was partially cleaned and reused in the Roman period, perhaps with a function other than settlement activity. At the north-west corner of Area 1, apparent east/west-aligned ditch [1346] also contained Roman material, though the exact form and function of this feature was unclear as it lay mostly beyond the limit of excavation. A further, approximately north/south-aligned, 5m long linear feature [1051], towards the east of Area 1 may also have had Roman origins as it contained small fragments of ceramic building material (CBM), though prehistoric pottery was also present.

A pair of parallel ditches (N and O) ran approximately east to west across the centre of Area 2, returning to

the north and south respectively and running beyond the limit of excavation to the north, south and east. These ditches had previously been detected by the geophysical survey, then sampled by the trial trenching (WAA 2014b) and had provisionally interpreted on morphological grounds as defining the lengthened entrance passageway of a possible banjo enclosure. Ditch N, which truncated earlier Ditch M, had steep sides and flat base, measured 0.95m in width and was 0.42m deep. It contained a single sedimentary fill from which several sherds of Roman pottery were recovered. Ditch O had moderately sloping sides and flat base and was 0.75-1.45m wide and 0.15-0.47m deep. Small amounts of pottery of Roman date were recovered from its single fill. Ditch O also appeared to have been partly recut as ditch [2062/2064] that truncated the eastern side of Ditch M. The spatial patterning of Ditches N and O, their similarity and pottery dating suggest that they were contemporary and could represent the two parallel east-west orientated flanking ditches of a trackway incorporated into a north/south field system that may have continued to the east and superseded the layout of the late prehistoric landscape. Sub-circular cremation pit [2145], which was cut into silted-up late prehistoric Ditch M, measured 0.42 to 0.46m across and survived to a depth of 0.07m. It had moderately sloping sides and an uneven base. Its single fill was rich in charcoal and burnt bone, indicating the probable presence of a cremation burial. A small amount of late prehistoric pottery was recovered from the fill of the cremation pit but probably represents residual material as the pit was cut into a backfilled Iron Age ditch and a fragmented iron brooch of mid- to late-1st-century AD date was found at the base of the feature. This has been interpreted as a possible grave good deliberately deposited with the cremated remains in the pit, though it could have been part of the attire of the deceased that was collected with the cremated remains. However, a sample of cremated bone submitted to radiocarbon dating, returned a date of 125-316 cal AD at 95.4% probability (125-255 cal AD at 93.6% probability) (SUERC-83708), indicating a likely 2nd- to 3rd-century date for the cremation and suggesting that if the brooch was associated with the deceased, it may have been an heirloom or curated artefact.

Medieval/post-medieval

A number of clearly post-Roman features were identified across Areas 1 and 2, which produced broadly contemporary finds assemblages. However, these features have been divided into two sub-phases on stratigraphic grounds; approximately north/south aligned plough furrows were clearly post-dated by broadly east/west-aligned ditches. Pottery recovered from a number of interventions into the plough furrows consistently indicated 16th- to 18th-century dates. Later activity comprised two substantial parallel east/west-orientated linear features; ditch [1112] to the south of Area 1 and ditch [1035] to the north, which appeared to continue into Area 2 as ditch [2019], the latter having been recut on at least one occasion. Before the current excavation these linear geophysical anomalies had been provisionally interpreted as prehistoric, but excavation demonstrated that they truncated the north/south-aligned furrows. A section excavated through ditch [1112] showed that it had steep sides and a flat base and measured 2.7m wide by 1m deep. A small assemblage of post-medieval pottery was recovered. Ditch [2019] in Area 2 had a V-shaped profile and was 2.85m wide by 0.9m deep. Its alignment continued as [1035] into Area 1. Ditches [1112] and [1035/2109] had clearly cut through the medieval/post-medieval plough furrows and most likely represented post-medieval field boundaries.

Undated

A number of features including shallow ditches and scatters of small pits or postholes were undated. In the north-western part of Area 1 a scatter of 13 undated pits and postholes and three segmented ditches were recorded. No dateable material was recovered from the fills of these features but given their proximity and similarity to dated features they could represent activity associated with the Late Iron Age enclosure complex. In the central and eastern part of Area 1 a number of ditches and ditch fragments, along with 33 pits and postholes were identified. No dateable material was retrieved from the fills of these features; some could have been associated with the late prehistoric enclosures and field system. Two ditch segments and a number of pits and postholes in Area 2 also remain undated.

THE FINDS

Pottery
Jacky Sommerville

The pottery assemblage totals 647 sherds (6,075g), the bulk of which is late prehistoric in date. Pottery was sorted by fabric (within context), and quantified according to sherd count/weight, vessel form/rim morphology and rim EVEs. Fabric codings, given in parenthesis in the text, have been devised for the purpose of this report and are summarised in Table 1. Where possible, Roman fabrics are matched with the National Roman Fabric Reference Collection (Tomber and Dore 1998). The total EVEs value is 3.56.

TABLE 1 POTTERY BY FABRIC AND AREA (* NATIONAL ROMAN FABRIC REFERENCE COLLECTION)

Period	Description	Code	Area 1		Area 2		Total		
		(NFRC Code in italics*)	Count	Weight (g)	Count	Weight (g)	Count	Weight (g)	EVEs
Prehistoric	Limestone-tempered	LS1	3	22	1	4	4	26	
	Fine limestone-tempered	LS2			1	10	1	10	
	Quartzite-tempered	QZT	2	2			2	2	
	Quartzite-and-sandstone tempered	QZTS	3	34			3	34	
Subtotal			8	58	2	*14*	*10*	*72*	
Late	Calcite-tempered	CAL	1	5	1	5	2	10	
prehistoric	Durotrigian	DUR	3	20			3	20	0.05
	Haematite coated	HAEM	1	1			1	1	
	Limestone-tempered	LS3	2	21	1	5	3	26	
	Fossiliferous limestone-tempered	LSF	18	115	22	135	40	250	0.21
	Mudstone/siltstone-tempered	MUD	3	1			3	1	
	Quartz-tempered	QZ	28	238	10	34	38	272	0.04
	Coarse quartz-tempered	QZC	59	401			59	401	0.13
	Quartz and clay pellets	QZCP	2	4	1	5	3	9	
	Quartz-and-limestone tempered	QZLS	3	34	9	25	12	59	
	Quartz-and-rock	QZRK	1	14	1	3	2	17	0.03
	Rock-tempered	RK	108	721	17	124	125	845	0.32
	Rock-and-shell tempered	RKSH	1	3			1	3	
	Shell-tempered	SH	1	7			1	7	
	Sandstone-tempered	SS	10	173	2	9	12	182	0.10
	South Western decorated ware (calcite-tempered)	SWCA	25	202			25	202	0.12

	South Western decorated ware (sandstone-tempered)	SWSA	231	2901	5	18	236	2919	2.23
	South Western decorated (shell-tempered)	SWSH	1	9			1	9	
Subtotal			*498*	*4870*	*69*	*363*	*567*	*5233*	*3.23*
Roman	Buff-firing	BUF	2	5			2	5	
	Medium greyware	GW1	5	81			5	81	0.14
	Sandy greyware	GW2	3	32			3	32	
	Fine oxidized	OX1	7	39	4	3	11	42	0.02
	Sandy oxidized	OX2			2	10	2	10	
	Oxford Red-slipped ware	*OXF RS*	1	3			1	3	
	Central Gaulish samian	*LEZ SA2*			2	0.4	2	0.4	
	South Gaulish samian	*LGF SA*			1	0.6	1	0.6	
Subtotal			*18*	*160*	*9*	*14*	*27*	*174*	*0.16*
Medieval	Ham Green glazed ware	HAM			1	24	1	24	
	Quartz and rock	QZRKM	1	17			1	17	0.03
	Rock-tempered	RKM			1	11	1	11	
	White-firing glazed ware	WFG	1	26			1	26	
Subtotal			*2*	*43*	*2*	*35*	*4*	*78*	*0.03*
Post-medieval	Frechen stoneware	FRE	1	22			1	22	0.09
	Glazed earthenware	GRE	20	301	15	110	35	411	
	North Devon gravel-tempered	NDG	1	3	1	58	2	61	0.05
	Westerwald stoneware	WES			1	24	1	24	
Subtotal			*22*	*326*	*17*	*192*	*39*	*518*	*0.14*
Grand total			548	5457	99	618	647	6075	3.56

Prehistoric

Ten unfeatured bodysherds (72g) are broadly attributable to the prehistoric period in the absence of indications of vessel form and/or decoration. These handmade fabrics have been tempered with limestone (LS1, LS2), quartzite (QZT) or quartzite and sandstone (QZTS).

LS1	Sparse limestone, 1-6mm. Soft fired. Uneven fracture.
LS2	Sparse limestone, 0.5-1mm. Soft fired. Uneven fracture.
QZT	Sparse quartzite, 0.5-2mm. Soft fired. Hackly fracture.
QZTS	Sparse quartzite, 1-4mm; sparse sandstone, 1-3mm. Soft fired. Hackly fracture.

Late Prehistoric (Iron Age)

Pottery from this date range totals 567 sherds (5,233g) in a range of fabrics (below and Table 1). Features producing the largest amounts of late prehistoric pottery are Enclosures A (98 sherds, 17%) and C (69 sherds, 12%). The most common types are South Western Decorated wares (c. 60% by weight – SWCA, SWSA, SWSH) and handmade fabrics featuring various rock inclusions (c. 17% – RK, RKSH, QZRK, the former being predominant). Thin sectioning, or other fabric analysis required to identify the rock types, was not undertaken.

South Western Decorated wares

South Western Decorated wares are the most common type (Table 1), in variants tempered with sandstone (SWSA, Peacock's Group 2, 93.3% by weight), calcite (SWCA, Peacock's Group 3, 6.5%) and shell (SWSH, Peacock's Group 4, <1%) (Peacock 1969). Group 2 is found across Somerset and Group 3 in the Mendip region. Sources for the latter two groups are thought to be Old Red Sandstone and limestone from the Mendip Hills (ibid., 46-8).

Rimsherds represent 23 vessels (EVEs value 2.35), although some are too fragmentary for classification. The vessel form series from Cadbury Castle, c. 32km south-east of Puriton, (Williams and Woodward 2000, 325–46) was used to establish comparanda. Of the identifiable forms, most are saucepan pots (five, Cadbury Type PB1, e.g. Fig. 6.1) and barrel jars (eight, including Cadbury Types PA1 and PA3). All but one of the saucepan pots feature at least one scored horizontal band beneath the rim. The barrel jars were more extensively ornamented, the scored decoration occurring on two vessels as curvilinear lines with hatched/cross-hatched zones inside (Figs 6.3 and 7.4),

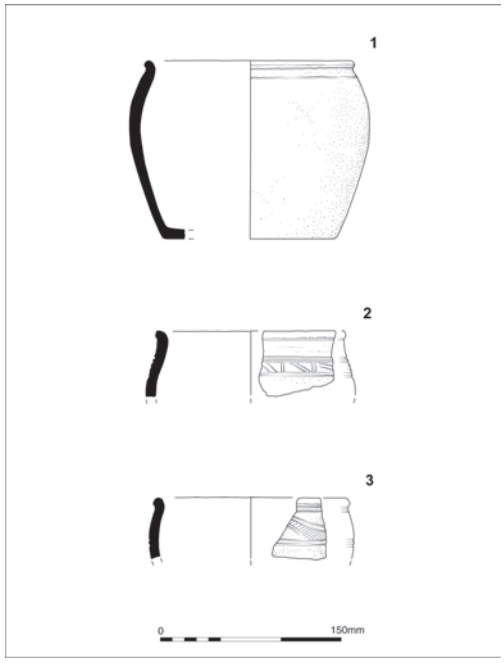

Fig. 6 Iron Age Pottery

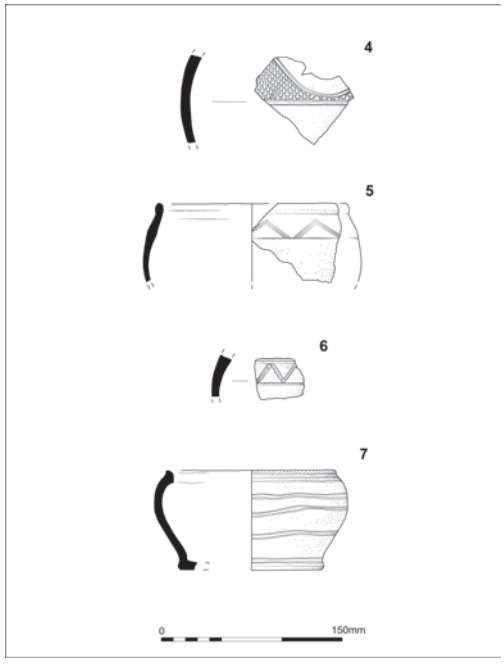

Fig. 7 Iron Age Pottery

and one with triangles below the rim, with a horizontal band beneath (Fig. 7.5). Only one shouldered bowl with an upright neck was recorded (Ra. 9) – Cadbury Type BD6 'Glastonbury ware bowl'. This was decorated with bands of horizontal scoring on the shoulder and beneath the girth. A rim sherd from a slack-shouldered vessel from ditch [1458] has a band of geometric decoration (Fig. 6.2) and a bodysherd from Enclosure B features chevrons incorporating circles just above the shoulder (Fig. 7.6). A neckless shouldered bowl with a bead rim, Ra. 8 from Enclosure A (which does not closely correspond to any of the Cadbury Types) has a series of twin horizontal bands on the body and diagonal scoring on the rim top (Fig. 7.7). Decorated base sherds from five vessels in fabric SDSA mostly feature one or two scored bands just inside the edge, and one also has cross-hatched zones.

Illustration catalogue

1	Ditch 1293, fill 1294, Ra. 7 – saucepan pot in fabric SWSA.
2	Ditch 1458, fill 1457 – slack-shouldered vessel in fabric SWSA.
3	Enclosure C, fill 1256 – barrel jar in fabric SWSA.
4	Enclosure C, fill 1256 – bodysherd with cross-hatched zone in fabric SWSA.
5	Enclosure C, fill 1257 – barrel jar in fabric SWSA.
6	Enclosure B, fill 1480 – bodysherd with chevron/circle decoration in fabric SWSA.
7	Enclosure A, fill 1377, Ra. 8 – neckless shouldered bowl in fabric SWSA.

Saucepan pots and barrel jars (the former often decorated) were common forms at Glastonbury Lake Village (Bulleid 1917, 504) and amongst the South Western Decorated wares from Middle to Late Iron Age deposits (Middle Cadbury) at Cadbury Castle, although at the latter site most are in the shell-tempered variant, Peacock's Group 4 (Woodward 2000, 30). According to Peacock (1969, 46) decorated bases are a feature of Group 2 vessels and a number are known from Glastonbury Lake Village, c. 20km east of Puriton (Bulleid 1917, 512-5), and Meare Village East, c. 13km to the east (Rouillard 1987, figs 5.21, 5.26). South Western Decorated ware with the type of curvilinear and geometric decoration seen at Puriton is thought to date from the 3rd/2nd century BC until the 1st century BC (Cunliffe 2005, 108). It is not clear whether or not it continued into the 1st century AD in Somerset (ibid., 108; Quinnell forthcoming).

Rock tempered and other fabrics

The rock-tempered sherds were not concentrated in any particular feature or feature type. A proportion presents in a very coarse fabric, undecorated and with inclusions prominent on both surfaces. Rimsherds from only five vessels were present. One is from a poorly-made jar with straight sides. The rest are too fragmentary for classification and their rim types are varied. Identifiable forms include two Durotrigian ware Brailsford Type 4 bead-rimmed jars (Brailsford 1958, 116) including one from Enclosure B, barrel jars in fabrics QZ and QZC, a bucket-shaped jar in fabric LSF and, a large storage jar with a flat rim in fabric SS. Durotrigian ware began production in Dorset in the mid 1st century BC (Holbrook and Bidwell 1991, 90)

Fabric descriptions

CAL	Abundant calcite, 1-2mm. Soft fired. Uneven fracture. Unburnished.
LS3	Sparse to common limestone, 0.5-6mm. Soft to medium fired. Hackly fracture.
LSF	Sparse to common fossiliferous limestone, 1-5mm. Soft fired. Hackly fracture.
MUD	Sparse mudstone, 1-3mm. Soft fired. Uneven fracture.
QZ	Abundant quartz, 0.5-1mm. Soft fired. Even fracture.
QZC	Abundant quartz, 0.5-3mm. Medium fired. Hackly fracture.
QZCP	Sparse quartz, 0.5-1mm; sparse clay pellets, 1-3mm. Soft fired. Uneven fracture.
QZLS	Common quartz, 0.5-1mm; sparse limestone, 1-3mm. Soft fired. Even fracture.
QZRK	Common quartz, 0.5-1mm; sparse rock, 1-3mm. Soft fired. Even fracture.
RK	Common rock, 1-5 mm. Soft to medium fired. Uneven fracture.
RKSH	Common rock, 1-3mm; sparse shell 1-4mm. Soft fired. Uneven fracture.
SH	Sparse to common shell, 0.5-4mm. Soft fired. Uneven fracture.
SA	Common quartz, 0.5-1mm; sparse sandstone, 1-6mm. Medium fired. Even fracture.
SWCA	Defined in Peacock 1969 (Group 3).
SWSA	Defined in Peacock 1969 (Group 2).
SWSH	Defined in Peacock 1969 (Group 4).

Roman

A total of 27 sherds (174g) of well broken-up Roman pottery was recorded, mostly comprising courseware's of probable local manufacture and broad Romano-British date (Table 1). Only eleven sherds were stratified

in deposits of Roman date, and all but two are unfeatured bodysherds. A sherd of Oxford red-slipped ware (OXF RS), manufactured from the mid 3rd to 4th centuries (Young 1977, 123-4) was retrieved from pit [1424]. Continental imports are represented by three crumbs (totalling 1g) of Gaulish samian (LEZ SA2, LGF SA).

Medieval

Medieval pottery totals four sherds (78g) (Table 1). A rimsherd from a jar with a developed, everted rim in fabric RKM was recovered from ditch [2011]. The remaining sherds, of Ham Green (HG), and unsourced fabrics QZRKM and WFG, were retrieved from subsoil deposits.

Post-medieval

Pottery from this period totals 39 sherds (518g) (Table 1), mostly from plough furrows or subsoil. Most common are glazed earthenwares (GRE), most likely from local sources. Also represented are North Devon gravel-tempered ware (NDG) and two German imports – Frechen and Westerwald stonewares (FRE, WES).

Metalwork
Katie Marsden

A small assemblage of metal items, comprising eight iron and two copper alloy, were hand recovered from nine deposits. The items were recovered from a range of deposit types, including ditches (40%) and a cremation burial (30%). The group is well fragmented and difficult to date or identify for the most part. The exception is Ra. 3, an iron brooch recovered from cremation burial 2145 (fill 2146), described below. This item was subjected to cleaning by specialist conservator Pieta Greaves which facilitated identification.

1. Ra. 3. Iron brooch. Unusual form with rolled over head and thick bow, which possibly had a central ridge, of Mackreth's 'Durotrigan' Group 8b (2011, pl. 102, c.f. 6962). A mid 1st-2nd-century AD date is suggested based on other examples. Cremation burial 2145 (fill 2146).

Other finds
Jacky Sommerville

Flint

A total of 19 worked flints (67g) was recovered, mostly from Iron Age ditches and subsoil. There are no indications that any of the lithics represent stratified Iron Age material, so all is likely to be residual. Condition, in terms of edge damage and rolling, supports this. This small assemblage comprises ten flakes, two blades, a core rejuvenation flake, four multi-platform flake cores and two retouched flakes. The presence of the blades and core rejuvenation flake, in addition to one flake displaying evidence of 'soft' hammer percussion suggests that the flints include a proportion of probable Early Neolithic material.

Ceramic Building Material

A total of 14 fragments (390g) of ceramic building material was recovered. One (0.3g) from Period 2 pit [1073] is too small for dating or classification. The remainder is of post-medieval/modern date and includes flat roof tile and a perforated brick.

Fired Clay

Introduction

A total of 340 fragments (1,874g) of fired/burnt clay was recovered. Almost all are orange or buff in colour, many with a grey/black core, and a small number are brown/black. Most fragments are soft-fired. The fabric is variable – most pieces feature calcitic/calcareous inclusions (26%), iron oxides (15%), organic material (15%) or no visible inclusions (36%). The majority of fragments are amorphous and their original form and/or function cannot be ascertained.

Daub

Five fragments from Iron Age ditch 1382 (Ditch E), Iron Age Enclosure C and Roman ditch 1359 (=1346) display probable wattle impressions, enabling them to be identified as burnt daub.

Ceramic object

A perforated fragment (240g) from Iron Age Enclosure A is part of a loomweight of probable pyramidal or triangular type, which is consistent with Iron Age dating.

Glass

One glass item was retrieved – a plano-convex fragment in cobalt blue coloured glass (Ra. 6) from Iron Age ditch [1179]. The estimated diameter is c. 19mm.

A set of glass gaming pieces was included in the grave goods accompanying a Late Iron Age cremation burial at Welwyn Garden City, Hertfordshire. These are plano-convex in shape and made of blue, green, yellow or white glass with multiple inset spirals mostly

in white, purple or green (www.britishmuseum.org/collection). They do not compare closely with Ra. 6 due to the decoration and their more bulbous form.

The closest comparanda are glass gaming counters of Roman date, known in a variety of colours from sites including Heybridge, Essex (Compton *et al*. 2015), Colchester, Essex (Crummy 1983, 92-3) and South Shields Roman Fort, Tyne and Wear (Allason-Jones and Miket 1984, 276-8). These were most common during the late 1st and 2nd centuries, after which bone counters became more prolific (Cool *et al*. 1995, 1555).

ENVIRONMENTAL EVIDENCE

Human remains

Sharon Clough

Middle-Late Iron Age - Skeletal Remains

A single supine, slightly flexed, adult inhumation was recovered from a shallow grave with no associated grave goods. It was radiocarbon dated to the Middle-Late Iron Age (185-42 cal BC at 94.5% probability) (SUERC-83707) and no associated features were identified.

Analysis and recording were undertaken according to the guidelines by Brickley and McKinley 2004, updated 2017 by Mitchell and Brickley, and Mays *et al.* 2004, updated 2018. Details of methodology are in the archive.

The teeth were fully erupted and developed, but there was very little dental attrition. A small fragment of the auricular surface had a fresh appearance. These observations indicate a younger adult, over 18 years but less than 30 years.

The femoral head and scapula glenoid fossa measurements were in the male range. Further, the occipital protuberance had a slight raised area and the anterior mandible was deep and thick. These traits are more commonly found on male individuals. However, due to the lack of definite traits this is a tentative assessment.

Only about 25% of the skeleton remained, with fragments coming from the feet and legs, pelvis, arms and hands, cervical vertebra and skull. All the teeth were present but all were loose without the alveolar. The bone surface was eroded and patchy obscuring observation of some areas (grade 3).

Where the joints could be observed they were unaffected by joint degeneration, including the cervical vertebrae bodies. This is in line with a younger age for the individual, since joint disease increases with age. The superior acetabulum (hip joint) on the right had a lip of bone, or slight change to the joint perimeter. The femoral head had a small growth of osteophytes on the fovea capita. This indicates pressure on the hip joint, perhaps from excessive use of the femur in a superior angle.

The teeth were free of decay, consistent with the young age of the individual, since it increases with age; there was only a very small amount of calculus on the lingual aspect of the lower first incisors and some of the molar teeth. These are common areas to develop calculus where food accumulates and is not as easily dislodged.

In the Middle-Late Iron Age the universal preference was for burial in a crouched position (and no grave goods) and also a notable characteristic was the head directed to the north (Whimster 1981). This suggests a common burial rite across England in the Iron Age from 4th-3rd centuries BC through to the 1st AD. The burial at Riverton Road, Puriton, appears to be consistent with this practice. The location near the ditches reflects a practice which continues into the Roman period where burials are located near boundary ditches, apparently at the edge of the cultivated land. Despite the fragmentary remains it was possible to estimate the age and sex of the individual as young adult male with evidence for a physically active life.

Roman - Cremated bone

A single un-urned cremation burial which has been assigned to Roman period was recovered from the top of a ditch. The total weight was 418.2g of white cremated bone.

Burial 2145 contained bone 2146-50. The total weight was 418.2g, of which 11g were identified as animal bone. The fragments were a good size, with many identifiable elements. The colour was mostly white indicating good pyre technology.

The burial was excavated in quadrants with the west and south quarters containing the small find artefacts, and the west the most cremated bone (Tables 2 and 3).

TABLE 2 WEIGHT OF CREMATED HUMAN BONE IDENTIFIED BY SKELETAL AREA

Area	Skull (g)	Axial (g)	Upper Limb (g)	Lower limb (g)	Unidentified Limb (g)	Unidentified (g)
Sample 2	15.5	1.3	0.1	0	9.3	4.5
Sample 3	45	0	0.4	0	32.8	29.1
Sample 4	30.6	2.6	0	0	14.7	3.1
Sample 5	10.7	0	0	0	4.4	7.3
Total	101.8	3.9	0.5	0	61.2	44

TABLE 3 WEIGHT OF CREMATED BONE BY SIEVE FRACTION

Context	Sample Number	Details	Total Weight of Cremated Bone	<10mm (g)	10-5mm (g)	5-2mm (g)
2146	2	South	51.5	27.1	24.4	0
2147	3	West	224.8	105.9	110.2	8.7
2148	4	North	85.4	45.3	40.1	0
2149	5	East	48.3	20	26.7	1.6
Total			410	198.3	201.4	10.3

Pig (*Sus scrofa*) was identified, but other species may have been present. Not all animal bone will have been extracted from the smaller fraction sizes due to the small size of the fragments. The inclusion of animal bone on the pyre is fairly common and occurs in 10-50% of Roman cremation burials (McKinley 2006) and is commonly pig or sheep.

The bone was well-cremated, mostly white or greyish white. The small bones (phalanges), extremities and less fatty areas were all fully oxidised, so it included the parts which are prone to poorer cremation. This indicates good pyre technology; the temperature of the pyre achieved over 800°C for a sufficient amount of time (McKinley 2008).

The large fragment sizes enabled better identification of elements. All areas of the body were represented, but as commonly found, the spongy bone parts (mostly axial and epiphyses) were absent. Skull was the most frequently identified element, but this is more to do with the ease by which it can identified due to the unique nature of the cranial vault. Separating upper limb and lower limb was not generally possible; the long bone fragments were smaller and less diagnostic. Tooth roots and fragments of phalanges were identified. Despite the large cranial parts, the elements needed for sex estimation were not present. The cranial vault was thin and the sutures were sharp, generally indicating a younger adult age range.

The cremated bone deposit dates to the early Roman period (SUERC-83708). Burial following cremation was common in this period, but not so frequently found in the South West. Similar apparently isolated cremation burials have been identified at Camel Hill (Wessex Archaeology 1993) and Lyde Road, Yeovil (Clelland 2011), although at the latter the bone did not survive. Single burials are frequently found on rural sites (McKinley 2008); un-urned burials are common and the majority will have been originally deposited in an organic container. The quantity of bone included in the deposit in the Roman period was highly variable (*ibid*.) and in this instance was between a third and quarter of the expected total weight. The white colour of the bone indicating full oxidation is consistent with the majority of Roman burials and data from rural sites has shown no consistent pattern with regards to colour of bone, whereas urned burials from towns have shown a higher proportion with less-oxidised bones compared to un-urned ones. The resultant colour may reflect ease of access to wood and/or whether it was family or professional *ustores* (corpse-burner) tending the pyre.

Animal bone

Matilda Holmes

Methodology

Bones were identified using the author's reference collection. Due to anatomical similarities between sheep and goat, bones of this type were assigned to the category 'sheep/ goat', unless a definite identification (Zeder and Lapham 2010; Zeder and Pilaar 2010) could be made. A method for rapidly recording animal bones was adopted based on Davis (1992) where only 'countable' fragments were recorded. 'Countable' fragments are those which contained at least half the epiphysis or metaphysis (the ends) of any long bone, scapula, phalanx, and vertebra; the acetabulum of the pelvis; tuber calcis of the calcaneus; and the astragalus where over half was present. The zygomatic arch and occipital areas of the skull were recorded if present, as were mandibles with teeth and loose mandibular teeth. All other fragments were, where possible, categorised according to the relative size of the animal represented (micro – rat/vole size; small – cat/rabbit size; medium – sheep/pig/dog size; or large – cattle/horse size).

Tooth wear and eruption were recorded using guidelines from Grant (1982) and Payne (1973), as were bone fusion, metrical data (von den Driesch 1976), anatomy, side, zone (Serjeantson 1996) and any evidence of pathological changes, butchery (Lauwerier 1988) and working. The condition of bones was noted on a scale of 0-5, where 0 is fresh bone and 5, the bone is falling apart (Lyman 1994, 355). Other taphonomic factors were also recorded, including the incidence of burning, gnawing, recent breakage and refitted fragments. All fragments were recorded, although articulated or associated fragments

TABLE 4 CONDITION AND TAPHONOMIC FACTORS AFFECTING THE HAND-COLLECTED ASSEMBLAGE IDENTIFIED TO TAXA AND/ OR ELEMENT. TEETH INCLUDED WHERE STATED

Condition	N	Taphonomy	N
Fresh		Refit	7=41
Very good	2	Fresh break	42
Good	47	Gnawed	33
Fair	81	Loose mandibular teeth*	19
Poor	1	Teeth in mandibles*	47
Very poor		Butchery	5
Total	131	Burning**	11

**deciduous and permanent 4th premolar and molars; **including unidentified fragments H= hand collected;*

were entered as a count of 1, so they did not bias the relative frequency of species present. No sieved samples were made available, which may lead to a negative bias in the number and variety of small mammals, fish and bird bones recorded in the assemblage.
Bones were only included in analysis if they came from features that could be securely dated. Quantification used a count of all fragments (NISP – number of identified specimens). Mortality profiles were constructed based on tooth eruption and wear of mandibles and loose third molars (Hambleton 1999) and bone fusion (O'Connor 2003).

Taphonomy and Condition

Bones were in fair to good condition (Table 4), although the presence of fresh breaks, refitted fragments and broken mandibles suggests that they were friable upon excavation. The fairly low number of loose teeth indicates that there was minimal post-depositional movement, although the presence of canid gnawing suggests that bones were not always buried immediately following discard but were available for dogs to chew.

Very few butchery marks were observed; all came from cattle bones and were consistent with skinning, jointing and disarticulation of the carcass. All burnt bone fragments came from isolated contexts and were a mixture of burnt and calcined material. There were no large deposits consistent with the emptying of a hearth or deposit of a cremation. Several deposits (contexts 1199, 1307 and 1211) had grey concretions attached to the surface of the bone, consistent with their disposal with cess-like material. A single associated bone group was identified from a perinatal lamb metatarsal and pelvis in Ditch 1396 (context 1397).

TABLE 5 SPECIES REPRESENTATION (NISP) OF HAND COLLECTED ASSEMBLAGE.

Taxa	N
Cattle	99
Sheep/ goat	97
Sheep	2
Pig	16
Horse	16
Dog	3
Roe deer	1
Deer	1
Corvid	1
Total Identified	238
Unidentified mammal	97
Large mammal	407
Medium mammal	314
Bird	3
Total	818

H= hand collected; S= samples

The Assemblage

Cattle and sheep/goat bones were recorded in similar numbers (Table 5), followed by pig and horse, then a few bones of dog, roe deer and corvid (crow family). The assemblage fits well with other settlement sites (Hambleton 2008), although the number of sheep/goat bones is at the lower end of the scale, similar to that observed at Claydon Pike, Gloucestershire (Table 6). Despite the similar proportions of cattle and sheep bones, beef would have made the greatest contribution to the meat diet, followed by lamb, occasionally supplemented with pork. The number of horse bones is high, but not unusually so (Table 6), and it is likely that they were also eaten.

TABLE 6 CONTEMPORARY SITES FROM SOMERSET AND GLOUCESTERSHIRE, DATA TAKEN FROM HAMBLETON 2008.

Site	County	Phase	Site Type	N	Cattle	Sheep/ goat	Pig	Horse	
Cadbury Castle	Somerset	MIA	hillfort	2904	19	64	17		3
Claydon Pike	Gloucestershire	MIA	settlement	554	49	47	5		22
Cannards Grave	Somerset	MIA	settlement	525	33	60	7		7
Cadbury Castle	Somerset	MIA-LIA	hillfort	933	95	4	1		0
Uley Bury	Gloucestershire	MIA-LIA	hillfort	1082	35	47	18		0
Meare Village West	Somerset	MIA-LIA	settlement	1822	24	63	13		1
Hallen	Gloucestershire	MIA-LIA	settlement	1947	41	55	4		7
Guiting Power	Gloucestershire	MIA-LIA	settlement	273	29	69	2		5
Puriton	Somerset	MIA-LIA	settlement	214	46	46	7		7
Duntisbourne Grove	Gloucestershire	LIA	enclosure	550	63	15	23		5
Middle Duntis-bourne	Gloucestershire	LIA	enclosure	873	32	30	38		0
Cadbury Castle	Somerset	LIA	hillfort	3105	19	55	26		1
Meare Village West	Somerset	LIA	settlement	1487	28	57	15		4
Meare Village East	Somerset	LIA	settlement	1063	16	67	17		2

N= Total number cattle, sheep/ goat and pig bones, all species numbers are given as a % proportion of N

TABLE 7 SPECIES REPRESENTATION BY ANATOMICAL ELEMENT (FRAGMENT COUNT)

Element	Cattle	Sheep/ goat	Pig	Equid
Horn core + frontal	3			
Occipital	1			
Zygomatic	1			
Maxilla		2	1	
Loose maxillary tooth	17	18	2	3
Mandible	3	17		1
Loose mandibular tooth	16	19	4	3
1st cervical vertebra				1
2nd cervical vertebra	1			1
Cervical vertebra	2			
Thoracic vertebra		1		
Lumber vertebra		1		
Vertebra	1			1
Scapula	2	3		
Humerus	6	2	1	
Radius	3	4	1	2
Radius + ulna				1
Ulna	1	1		
Carpal	1	1		1
3rd carpal	1			
Pelvis	4	5		
Femur	2	2		
Tibia	1	2	2	
Astragalus	1	2		
Calcaneus	5	3		
Tarsal	7	1		
Metacarpal	4	3		
Metatarsal	9	6		
4th metatarsal			1	
Metapodial		1		
1st phalanx	5	4	3	
2nd phalanx	2	1	1	1
3rd phalanx				1
Total	99	99	16	16

Cattle and sheep/goat bones come from all parts of the body (Table 7), suggesting that whole animals were killed, processed and consumed on site. There is an apparent over-representation of sheep/goat mandibles, with twelve of the 17 coming from the main phase of Iron Age occupation, but not from any particular feature or group. Pig and horse bones were less common, but also came from all parts of the carcass.

Cattle were generally culled in early adulthood, at prime meat age, with three of the five mandibles at wear stages F and G (Table 8) consistent with intermediate and late culls in the fusion data (Table 9). Older animals were evident from both sources of mortality data that would have been used for milk, traction and/or breeding. Sheep/goats were more likely to be immature when culled, with half of the fourteen mandibles suitable for ageing coming from animals at wear stage C, and a large cull of animals at the intermediate fusion stage. These would have been animals that were bred specifically for meat. The remainder of sheep were culled as adults and elderly animals, suggesting a gradual cull as required of mature sheep and those that were used for small-scale secondary products such as milk or wool. A small amount of fusion data was available for pigs, indicating that all were juvenile when killed (Table 9). Very porous bones of cattle, sheep/goat and pig were also observed, and cattle mandible at wear stage B, which would have come from a young calf, suggesting that all domesticates were bred in the area. The only sexing evidence came from the pelvis of a cow.

Despite the relatively small assemblage, there were several pathological bones. A cattle metacarpal and first phalanx had wear and tear consistent with old age or use for traction, as did a horse first phalanx, while

TABLE 8 TOOTH WEAR DATA FOR CATTLE AND SHEEP/ GOAT

Stage	Cattle	Sheep/ goat
A		
B	1	
C		7
D		
E		3
F	1	
G	2	1
GH		2
H	1	
I		1

a vertebra had signs of osteoarthritis on the articular surface again consistent with an age-related pathology. Two sheep/goat mandibles had malocclusion of the fourth premolar and first molar, and one had stage 2 periodontal disease (Levitan 1985), while another displayed overcrowding of the fourth premolar and first molar. A pig fourth metatarsal had been broken and subsequently re-healed.

Summary

Beef would have been most commonly eaten by those living at the site, followed by lamb. The diet would have been supplemented with pork and maybe horse on occasion. It is likely that cattle, sheep/goats and pigs were bred, raised, culled, processed and consumed on site, and while all domesticates were used for meat, some cattle and sheep/goats were also utilised for secondary products.

Wood Charcoal
Sheila Boardman

Introduction and methods

Three samples from different quadrants of Roman cremation burial 2145 had sufficient charcoal for analysis. The main aim was to identity the wood(s) used in the cremation pyre. The wood charcoal was extracted and analysed using standard techniques (e.g. Hather 2000; Gale and Cutler 2000; Schweingruber 1990). All identified fragments were greater than 2mm in size. Most of the available charcoal (in the flots and residues) for all samples was identified. A Leica GZ6 microscope (with x10-x40 magnifications) and Lomo Biolam-Metam P1 metallurgical microscope (with up to x400 magnification) were used for the identifications. Plant nomenclature follows Stace (2010).

Results and Discussion

Three taxa were identified in the feature 2145 samples: *Quercus* spp., oak (*Q. robur* L., *Q. petraea*, or their hybrids); *Corylus avellana* L., hazel and *Ilex aquifolium* L., holly (Table 10).

TABLE 9 FUSION DATA

	Cattle			Sheep/ goat			Pig		
Stage	*U*	*F*	*%*	*U*	*F*	*%*	*U*	*F*	*%*
Neonatal		10	100	1	4	80		1	100
Early		19	100	4	11	73		5	100
Intermediate	1	3	75	3	3	50	1		0
Late	2	2	50	1	5	83	1		0
Final		6	100	2	2	50			
Total	3	40		11	25		2	6	

TABLE 10 CHARCOAL IDENTIFICATIONS

Period		Roman		
Feature		Cremation deposit 2145		
Sample No.		2	3	4
Period		Roman	Roman	Roman
Soil volume (litres)		3	5	5
Fagaceae				
Quercus	oak	9s	16hs	
Betulaceae				
Corylus avellana L.	hazel	10	2	
Aquifoliaceae				
Ilex aquifolium L.	holly	1	32	40
Total fragments		20	50	40

Key: Counts include: h - heartwood; s - sapwood. NB. Many hazel and holly fragments were curved

The main taxon appears to be holly (*Ilex aquifolium*). This accounts for around two-thirds of the identified fragments and seems to be represented wholly or largely by timber remains. Some fragments had slightly curved growth rings but no smaller diameter roundwood was seen. Holly charcoal was present in all three samples, and this was the sole taxon in sample 4, so holly is presumed to have been one of the main pyre constituents. In general, holly charcoal was well preserved.

Next most common in terms of numbers of fragments was oak (*Quercus*) charcoal. Only timber fragments were (again) seen and many of these were vitrified or not well preserved. A few fragments of oak sapwood and heartwood were present but maturity could not be assessed for most fragments, due to their poor condition. Smaller quantities of hazel (*Corylus avellana*) charcoal were present in two samples (2 and 3). No definite hazel roundwood was seen but curved growth rings on some fragments may point to larger roundwood or immature timber.

Holly, oak and hazel are widely represented in prehistoric and Romano British period charcoal assemblages from southern Britain (Smith 2002), but it is unusual to see larger quantities of holly in cremation-related deposits. Holly is fast burning and does not produce as much heat as oak or hazel, but can be burned green (Edlin 1949), which may have been a consideration here, as may have been the tree's symbolism. Holly seems to have been widely associated with ritual activities in the past, from those of Celtic Druids, to those of the Romans (Saturnalia festivals) and Christians (particularly Christmas) (Hora 1981; Gale and Cutler 2000, 139). Based on charcoal evidence from other Romano-British period sites in south-west England (Smith 2002), holly, oak and hazel were probably all growing fairly locally during this period, and this may have been the main reason they were used in the cremation here.

Charred Plant remains
Sarah F. Wyles

Introduction and methods

A series of ten environmental samples were taken from a range of Middle-Late Iron Age, Roman and undated features with the intention of recovering cremated material and environmental evidence of industrial or domestic activity on the site. The samples were processed by standard flotation procedures (CA 2012).

Identifications of plant macrofossils are noted in Table 11, following nomenclature of Stace (1997) for wild plants, and traditional nomenclature, as provided by Zohary *et al.* (2012) for cereals.

TABLE 11 CHARRED PLANT REMAINS TABLE

Feature	Context	Sample	Vol (L)	Flot size (ml)	Roots %	Grain	Chaff	Cereal Notes	Charred Other	Other Notes
Middle-Late Iron Age										
Enclosure A - ditch										
1407	1408	9	20	120	75	**	*	Hulled wheat + barley grain frags, glume base frags inc. emmer	**	Rumex, ? Vicia/faba, tuber frag
Enclosure C - curvilinear ditches										
1232	1233	7	20	120	75	**	*	Hulled wheat + barley grain frags, spikelet fork + glume base frags inc. emmer	*	Bromus, Vicia/ Lathyrus
1255	1257	8	20	120	75	**	*	Hulled wheat + barley grain frags, glume base frags	**	Bromus, Vicia faba, Vicia/ Lathyrus, Polygonum
Roman										
Pit										
1169	1171	6	20	100	75	**	*	Hulled wheat grain frags, glume base frags	*	Vicia/Lathyrus
Cremation related deposits										
2145	2146, quad 1	2	3	15	50	-	-	-	-	-
	2147, quad 2	3	5	75	60	*	-	Indet. grain frag	-	-
	2148, quad 3	4	5	50	35	-	-	-	*	Arrhenatherum tuber frag
	2149, quad 4	5	2	15	40	-	-	-	-	-
Ditch										
1458	1459	10	20	100	75	*	-	Barley grain frags	*	Vicia/ Lathyrus, ? Vicia faba, Bromus
Undated										
Pit										
2151	2150	1	5	20	50	-	-	-	-	-

*Key: * = 1–4 items; ** = 5–19 items; *** = 20–49 items; ****= 50–99 items; ***** = >100 items*

Middle-Late Iron Age

Enclosure A

The moderately small quantity of charred plant remains recovered from Enclosure A included barley grain and hulled wheat, emmer or spelt (*Triticum dicoccum/ spelta*), grain and glume base fragments. A few of the chaff elements were identifiable as being those of emmer wheat (*Triticum dicoccum*). The other remains included seeds of docks (*Rumex* sp.) and possible celtic bean (*Vicia faba*), and tuber fragments.

Enclosure C

The samples taken from this enclosure contained moderately low levels of charred remains. The cereal remains included barley grain and hulled wheat grain, spikelet fork and glume base fragments. Again, a number of the chaff elements were identifiable as being those of emmer wheat. The weed seeds include those of brome grass (*Bromus* sp.), vetch/wild pea (*Vicia/Lathyrus* sp.), knotgrass (*Polygonum aviculare*) and celtic bean. The weed seeds are those of species typical of grassland, field margins and arable environments.

Roman

Pit

The small quantity of charred remains recovered from pit 1169 included hulled wheat grain and glume base fragments and seeds of vetch/wild pea.

Cremation-related deposit

Cremation-related deposit 2145 contained a few charred plant remains, including indeterminate grain fragments and a false oat-grass (*Arrhenatherum elatius var. bulbosum*) tuber fragment. Tubers, in particular those of false oat-grass, are often recovered from cremation-related deposits (Godwin 1984; Robinson 1988) and it is thought that some of these tubers and stems may represent material uprooted while creating a fire break around the cremation site and then used as tinder (Stevens 2008a).

Ditch

A few charred remains were recorded from ditch 1458, including barley grain fragments and seeds of vetch/ wild pea, possible celtic bean and brome grass.

Undated

Pit

No charred plant remains were observed in sample 1 from pit 2151.

Summary

The Middle-Late Iron Age assemblages appear to be indicative of a rural settlement with domestic activities, including crop processing taking place in the vicinity. A similar picture with the addition of some funerary activity is suggested for the Roman period from the samples. Although spelt wheat is generally the predominant wheat species during the Late Iron Age and Romano-British periods in Southern Britain (Greig 1991, remains of emmer wheat were also recorded, occasionally in relatively high numbers, along with those from spelt wheat within other Iron Age and Roman assemblages from nearby sites such as Steart Point (Wyles 2017), Huntworth (Stevens 2008b) and Aller (Simmons 2012), and sites in the wider vicinity such as RNAS Yeovilton (Pelling 2005), Banwell Moor North Somerset Levels (Jones 2000) and Avonmouth (Ritchie *et al.* 2007).

DISCUSSION

The bulk of evidence for occupation of the site dates to the Middle to Late Iron Age period and four broad sub-phases of activity have been identified. Although the pottery assemblage from the site has been analysed it has not been possible to further refine the overall dating of the later prehistoric activity. The main focus of activity throughout the Middle to Late Iron Age period was towards the north-west corner of Area 1, where the earliest phase of occupation was represented by a small enclosure, which was superseded during a secondary and major phase of activity by a more complex sequence of enclosures. The pottery assemblage suggests domestic occupation, whilst limited environmental data indicates that some cereal processing was taking place on or near the site. Faunal remains indicate that cattle, sheep, pigs and even horses were raised in the local area and their meat consumed by the occupants of the settlement. A burial at the edge of the area of occupation is consistent with funerary practices in the area in the Middle to Late Iron Age, whilst field systems to the east of the areas of occupation were probably utilised throughout the later prehistoric period.

Occupation of the site maybe associated with that of the cropmark site immediately to the north, though this has not been systematically excavated and finds recovered in the vicinity indicate a slightly later date.

Further afield, analysis of the pottery assemblage has shown parallels with material from Cadbury Castle, Glastonbury Lake Village and Meare Village East, indicating some level of trading between the site and other settlements in the region, with pottery fabrics indicating sources of raw material in the area of the Mendips.

The area of occupation appears to have been largely abandoned during the Roman period and the limited evidence suggests there may have been modification of the field system, though given the relatively small areas investigated, it is possible that rather than there being significant changes at this time, there were just shifts in areas of activity. The focus of occupation possibly moved northwards to the area of the cropmark site or eastwards following the continuation of the ditches recorded in Area 2, indicating a continuity between later prehistory and the Roman period rather than abandonment. The placement of a cremation burial in the 2nd to 3rd century in a silted-up field boundary ditch does, however, indicate that were more significant changes in landscape use at some time during the Roman period. Unfortunately the limited evidence has not permitted any clear patterns of Roman activity to be identified.

There was little evidence of post-Roman activity with only four sherds of pottery and no clear features indicating a medieval presence, though the plough furrows recorded in both areas may have had medieval origins. The furrows were not finally infilled until the early post-medieval and subsequent to this, major field boundary ditches were excavated at the north and south of the site, indicating re-use and re-alignment of the landscape, possibly associated with 18th- or 19th-century enclosure.

Overall, the findings from the site are of regional importance, particularly for the Middle to Late Iron Age period, and they have added to a growing body of evidence for occupation in this area of Somerset during later prehistory.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Cotswold Archaeology is grateful to Taylor Wimpey for funding the excavation and the post excavation work, including this report. Steven Membery and Tanya James monitored the work on behalf of Somerset County Council. Fieldwork was undertaken by Jonathan Orellana assisted by George Gandham, Josh Nowlan, Victoria Parsons, Parris Stubbings, Tina Tapply and Edoardo Vigo. The illustrations were prepared by Esther Escudero. The fieldwork was managed by Derek Evans and the post-excavation programme was managed by Sarah Cobain and Peter Boyer.

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