A Late Iron Age settlement at Haygrove Park, Bridgwater

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SUMMARY

Excavation by Context One Heritage and Archaeology at Haygrove Park, Bridgwater, has produced evidence of activity in the Early Bronze Age, the Late Iron Age, and into the Romano-British period, in an area where contemporary settlement is not well understood. The Early Bronze Age was represented by a single pit which may have been related to cremation practices. Late Iron Age settlement included at least three roundhouses, with a substantial ditched enclosure coming into being during the Late Iron Age and early Romano-British period.

INTRODUCTION

Context One Heritage and Archaeology (C1) carried out an archaeological excavation at Haygrove Park, Bridgwater, during the autumn of 2015 in advance of residential development. The archaeological work was funded by S. Notaro Ltd. A geophysical survey had previously identified a potential enclosure, linear features, and pits (Pre-Construct Geophysics 2010). A subsequent archaeological field evaluation (Cotswold Archaeology 2010) located features dating from the Late Neolithic to the Romano-British period, as well as

Fig. 1 Site Location

some post-medieval activity. C1 subsequently carried out targeted excavation over some of the most prominent geophysical anomalies.

BACKGROUND

The site (centred on NGR ST 28457 36189) is situated c. 1.5km to the west of the centre of Bridgwater on the southern fringes of the developed area (Fig. 1). Occupying c. 0.5ha, it sits at 16m above Ordnance Datum. The underlying geology is Mercia Mudstone Group - Mudstone and Halite-stone (BGS 2016). The soils are lightly acid loamy and clayey soils with impeded drainage (CSAIS 2016).

The site was situated within the area of the medieval hamlet of Haygrove which probably grew from a single farm from the 11th century onwards. Durleigh Road to the north follows the 18th-century turnpike of the Bridgwater Trust. No prehistoric, Romano-British or medieval activity was previously known in the immediate environs of the site, but a geophysical survey was carried out across an 8ha development area in 2010 by Pre-Construct Geophysics. This identified a possible enclosure, a number of pits, and further boundaries between Haygrove Farmhouse and Haygrove Manor (Pre-Construct Geophysics 2010). Subsequent evaluation, comprising sixteen sample trenches, located archaeological features and deposits in six of these trenches (Cotswold Archaeology 2010). This identified a Late Neolithic/Early Bronze Age pit c. 100m to the south-west of Haygrove Farmhouse, whilst a curvilinear gully was noted c. 40 to the west of the pit, with Iron Age ditches to the north. This area also produced evidence of a cobbled surface with Romano-British pottery (Cotswold Archaeology 2010).

METHODOLOGY

The excavation area covered just over 0.5ha (Fig. 2). The area was machine stripped, and archaeological features and deposits were recorded in accordance with the standard C1 methodology as set out in the post-excavation assessment report (Randall 2016). In the text, context numbers for cuts appear in square brackets, e.g. [1-004]; layer and fill numbers appear in standard brackets, e.g. (1-002). Features were also assigned a feature number which appears here prefaced with an 'F'. Detailed descriptions of the deposits and features are retained in the assessment report and site archive.

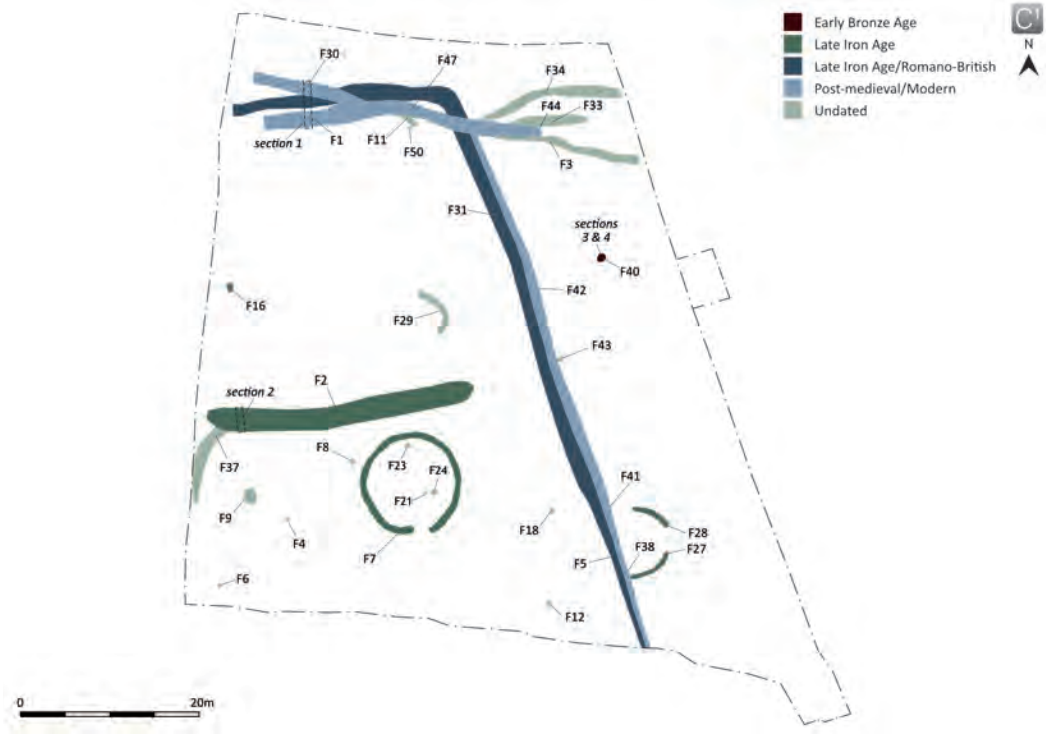

Fig. 2 Plan of features – phased

RESULTS

The topsoil was a soft dark grey silt with traces of clay measuring c. 0.30m thick with occasional gravels and modern debris. This generally overlay a subsoil of firm reddish brown silty clay with occasional gravels, c. 0.20m thick and overlying the natural firm red clay. A total of 33 archaeological features were excavated, one of which can be securely attributed to the Early Bronze Age (EBA), three to the Late Iron Age (LIA), and two to the Late Iron Age/Romano-British (LIA/RB) period (Fig. 2). Three of the ditches associated with the LIA and LIA/RB period corresponded with the previous geophysical survey, and two ditches had previously been noted during the evaluation (Cotswold Archaeology 2010). A further 24 excavated features contained no dateable material. In some cases, these had stratigraphic relationships which enabled them to be phased.

Early Bronze Age

This period was represented by a single pit, F40 [5-126]. Circular in plan and measuring 0.45m in diameter and 0.30m deep, the single original fill contained another cut [5-124] measuring 0.25m in diameter and 0.30m deep (Fig. 3), also containing a single fill. These fills were observed to contain flecks of what appeared to be calcined bone, and produced EBA pottery and all of the flint from the site.

Late Iron Age

The features which could be dated to the Late Iron Age consisted of one pit, one ditch, and two ring ditches. However, several features which contained no datable material probably also belong to this phase and are discussed here, together with ditches that may have originated in this phase but were subject to later recuts.

Pit F16 [4-113] was sub-circular and measured 0.75m in diameter and 0.19m deep. It contained a single fill yielding LIA pottery. Two ring ditches, F7 and F28 (examined in several interventions), also produced pottery of this period. F7 comprised a curvilinear cut with concave sides which varied in width from 0.42 to 0.63m, and from 0.10m to 0.26m in depth. A total of sixteen interventions were excavated and a single fill was observed in each section, except one which had two very similar fills. This ring ditch was c. 12m in diameter with a break, possibly indicating an entrance, to the

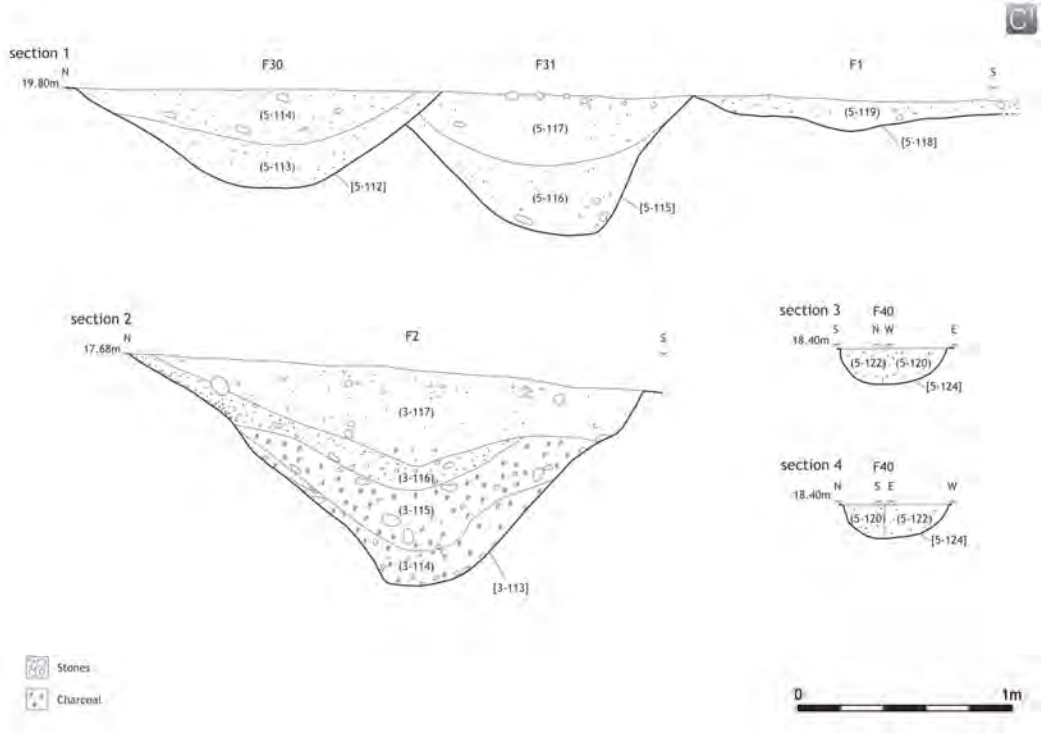

Fig. 3 Section drawings

south-south-east. Two undated features F23 [4-142] and F24 [2-142], lay within the circuit of this ring ditch. These were circular and sub-circular in plan, with concave sides, measured 0.52m and 0.72m in diameter, and 0.20m and 0.19m deep, respectively. Both may be contemporary with the ring ditch, possibly representing the remnants of a supporting ring of posts. Another ring ditch F28, containing LIA pottery, and undated gully F27 represent a second building. This structure was cut by LIA/RB ditch F5. A further curvilinear gully, F29 ([3-136] and [3-139]) was undated, but of similar form being between 0.75m to 0.85m wide and 0.18m to 0.13m deep. The position of the terminal ([3-136]) indicates a south-east facing entrance. A ring ditch which was observed in the evaluation (Cotswold Archaeology 2010) but, excavation of the area was unable to clearly ascertain the cut line as the area had been disturbed by animal burrowing. A small undated gully, F11 [4-135], in the northern part of the excavation may also represent a remnant of another ring ditch.

Ditch F2 ([3-103], [3-113] & [5-134]) was an east-west aligned cut with concave sides and a concave or sloping base. It varied between 2.00m to 2.48m wide and 0.97 to 2.01m deep, shallowing to 0.25m at the terminal (Fig. 3). It generally contained several silty clay fills with varying gravel inclusions. There was variation along the length, with differences between the basal and middle fills in different sections, which may suggest a complex history of filling and re-cutting. The fills in [3-103] were relatively even, indicative of episodes of filling, with a larger middle fill (3-107) appearing to have entered the ditch from the north side. The fills in [3-113] also appear to have entered from the northern, upslope, side. This may be indicative of a bank having been present originally along the northern side of the ditch. The middle and lower fills produced Late Iron Age pottery. An undated north-east to south-west linear F37 [3-120] measuring 0.85m wide and 0.58m deep extended from the western end of F2, and may represent an addition or extension, and is likely to date to this phase. The primary fill (3-121) appeared to have entered from the south-east side.

Late Iron Age/Romano-British

Two ditches can be dated to this phase. Seven interventions were excavated along the length of F31. It comprised an east-west linear which turned through a near right-angle and continued in a south-south-easterly direction. Ditch F5 continued the line of F31, and cut through the earlier ring ditch F27/28. F31 varied between 1.0m to 2.2m wide and 0.6m to 0.9m deep. The sides were variously straight, concave or irregular, and the base was flat, sloping or tapered. Three to four fills occurred in each section, comprising a range of silty clays with variable quantities of gravels, indicating a potentially complex history, although the fills appeared to be even and represent only a few episodes of apparently slow filling.

Late Iron Age pottery occurred in several of the lower fills, but LIA/RB pottery was recovered from primary fills (1-125), (4-117), and lower fill (1-126), indicating that the ditch was cut, or at least recut, in this later phase. Cut [4-116], in the middle part of the site, had a different profile from those recorded in the other interventions, but had been affected by the later cut of F42. However, context (4-120), originally recorded as a primary fill of F31 (Fig. 3), was in fact cut by F31 and was therefore the fill of an earlier feature. No datable material was recovered, but this linear must have been associated with an earlier phase. Groups of exclusively LIA pottery in some lower fills of F31 may therefore derive from disturbance of fills of an earlier feature which was broadly contemporary with the roundhouses.

Ditch F5 appeared to be a shallower and narrower continuation of the line of F31. It comprised a linear with concave sides and a concave or flat base, measuring 0.60m to 1.20m wide and 0.13m to 0.38m deep, with generally a single fill of brown clay silts with variable amounts of gravel inclusions. This feature produced exclusively LIA pottery, but it cut ring ditch F27/28. As the character of this portion of ditch is completely different, it may represent a late extension of the boundary arrangement and the finds may be residual.

In addition, there were several undated features. Some have already been discussed in relation to the Late Iron Age roundhouses. However, many of the other undated pits and postholes (F4, F6, F8, F9, F12, F18, F21, F23, F24, F38, F44 and F50) which were scattered across the excavation area, but situated more generally around roundhouse F7, are also likely to be of prehistoric date. These features were similar in size, shape, and depth, and had similar fills to the LIA and LIA/RB features described above. However, they produced no dateable artefacts, and there was no stratigraphic relationship between these features and those which could be assigned a date.

F34 was an east-west oriented linear at the northern end of the site, with the western end curving to the west-south-west. It had irregular sides and a concave base and dimensions of 0.87m wide and 0.29m deep, containing a single fill. F43 lay on the eastern side of F31/F5, observed as an irregular steep-sided cut with a flat base. It was not fully excavated but was at least 1.3m wide and 0.45 deep. It is unclear whether it represented the terminal of a linear (it did not appear to have been cut by F31/F5 to which it was adjacent), or a pit.

Post-medieval/Modern

A number of ditches (F1, F3, F30, F33, F41, F42) were post-medieval or modern in date. These were largely east-west aligned, variously producing post-medieval pottery and clay pipe fragments, and were broadly aligned between two corners of current field boundaries. A posthole F47 was cut into the fills of F1. It is however notable that the east-west aligned linears coincide with the western return of the northern boundary of the LIA/RB enclosure (F31), whilst F41 was aligned along the north-south linear F31/F5. It may be that the late prehistoric boundaries remained visible in the landscape for a considerable period of time leading to later features being aligned on them.

THE FINDS

The Pottery
Rachel Hall

A total of 216 sherds weighing 2,571g, were recovered from 31 layers. Excepting a single sherd of post-medieval stoneware, the assemblage ranges in date from the Early Bronze Age through to the Late Iron Age/Early Romano-British period. The sherds were all in an abraded condition ranging from fair to poor with an average sherd size of 11.90g. Full details are retained in the archive.

Early Bronze Age (2400-1500 BC)

A small amount of grog-tempered ware was recovered from pit F40. The sherds are handmade with an oxidized exterior and reduced interior. They have tooled and finger-pinched decoration. These are fragments from a collared urn (Fig. 4.1).

Late Iron Age (700 BC-AD 43)

The majority of the assemblage was identified as Late Iron Age in date due to form and fabric. The fabrics include sandy with sparse calcareous (leached limestone fragments) and rare iron oxide inclusions, sandy, grog-tempered and flint-tempered wares. The fabrics are probably all locally made. The assemblage is in a fair to abraded condition with many conjoining sherds.

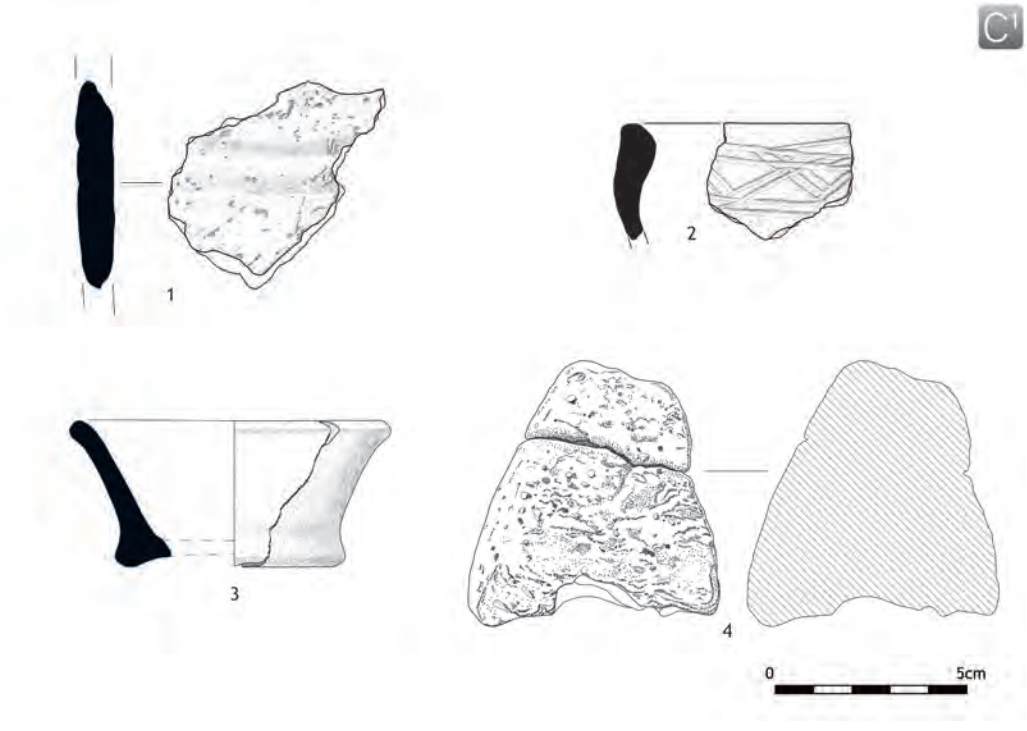

Fig. 4 Pottery and fired clay. 1. Early Bronze Age, collared urn; 2. Late Iron Age, miniature cup; 3. Late Iron Age, bowl with in-turned rim and incised cross hatching; 4. Triangular loomweight.

A near complete miniature cup (SF 7) was recovered from ditch F2 (3-104). It has an everted rim with a flat base in a sandy fabric (Fig. 4.2). The assemblage contains several bead rim jars from ditches F31, F2 and F5. These rounded bowls are indicative of this period. The sherds are largely plain with decoration comprising burnishing, and shallow cordoning under the rim or on the shoulder. One notable sherd was recovered from ditch F5 (4-129). It is well-finished, with an in-turned rim and incised cross-hatching pattern on the shoulder (Fig. 4.3). It is possibly from a higher-status vessel. A couple of rounded jars with countersunk handles were also recovered from ditches F2 (3-107) and F5 (4-110). This plain ware group of rounded bowls with internal residue on many of the sherds suggests that they were used as cooking vessels from a low-status settlement.

Late Iron Age/Early Romano-British (700 BC – AD 150)

A small number of harder fired sherds and greywares were also recovered from ditch F31. The plain nature of this small group, along with sandwich firing, dates the group to the Late Iron Age/Early Romano-British period. The greywares have a micaceous fabric and are from a thin-walled vessel, probably 1st century in date.

Post-Medieval (AD 1500-1799)

A single body sherd of stoneware dating to the post-medieval period was recovered from a modern ditch F1 (2-104).

Fired Clay
Rachel Hall

A small assemblage of fired clay was recovered from four features. Two conjoining fragments recovered from ditch F31 (5-116) form part of a loomweight, possibly triangular, dating to the Late Iron Age (Fig. 4.4). A small amount of fired clay was recovered from undated pit/posthole F38 (2-165). These fragments are medium walled with flat sides. They may form part of a vessel, possibly briquetage, or part of a mould.

The Flint
Richard Tabor

A total of 34 pieces of flint weighing 307g came from pit F40. Full methods and results are included in the archive. The results showed that 73.5% of the material was in optimal condition. Three pieces (8.8%) in poor condition had been exposed to heat. All of the material was fairly dark sepia in colour when held up to light with the exception of a single honey-coloured, more granular, flint.

Technology

The complete flakes show that squat products are predominant, with 46.2% having a breadth equal to or greater than the height. A further 23.1% have breadths only slightly less than the height. Typically, squat flakes are associated with broad butts, but in this case by far the greater portion of the assemblage fell within the fairly narrow range of between 1mm and 3mm breadth. However, only a single butt was narrower than 1mm which would be low for an earlier Neolithic group, for instance, at 4.8% of the assemblage. Two flake butts showing abrasion and a single rejuvenation flake are evidence for some core preparation, typically a Neolithic trait. Only one flake was a primary removal, and only three butts retained very small amounts of cortex, suggesting that core preparation took place at a distance from the place of deposition. All of three cores had three or more platforms and had scars which were predominantly due to the removal of short, broad flakes, consistent with the character of the flake assemblage.

Flakes with hinge fractures made up 50% of the 20 pieces which were classifiable. This is an unusually high percentage, but it would be unwise to draw conclusions from such a small assemblage. Comparison of Early Neolithic and Bronze Age sites in south Dorset showed an increase in the percentage of hinge fractures over time (Harding and Bellamy 1991, table 16). However, it is not a variable which is a reliable indicator of chronology, sometimes remaining proportionally consistent across Neolithic and Bronze Age phases on a single site (Edmonds and Bellamy 1991, table 77b).

Tools

Retouch occurred on just three pieces, two of which were identified as piercers, both with single points on one side. A notch produced by local, moderately fine direct pressure flaking had utilized the otherwise unretouched edge to form a point on one. On the other, denticulation towards the proximal end had formed the point. No retouch was visible on the only blade in the assemblage, but it showed traces of wear along one edge.

Assessment of the assemblage

The generally good condition of the assemblage and the similar character of the material in all but one piece would allow that most of it had been generated over the course of a single, short episode. The generally squat flake form, consistent with the scars on three very similar cores provides corroboration. Squat flakes are generally associated with the Bronze Age (Harding and

TABLE 1 PLANT MACROFOSSIL DATA

		Sample	1	2	3	4	5	6	11	9	10	7	8
		Context	5-120	5-121	5-122	5-123	5-125	5-116	3-133	3-106	2-160	2-140	2-116
		Cut	F40	F40	F40	F40	F40	F31	F31	F2	F27	F7	F7
		Feature	Pit	Pit	Pit	Pit	Pit	Ditch	Ditch	Ditch	Ditch	Ditch	Ditch
		Period	EBA	EBA	EBA	EBA	EBA	IA / RB	IA / RB	LIA	LIA	LIA	LIA
		Flot vol. (ml)	6	20	9	6	2	2	1	25	2	1	1
Taxa	Item	Common name											
Stellaria graminea	seed	Lesser stitchwort							1				
Chenopodiaceae spp.	seed	Goosefoot family						1					
Persicaria cf. maculosa	seed	Redshank						1					
Malva sp.	seed	Mallow						1					
cf. Poaceae sp.	seed	Grass family							1				
cf. *Raphanus sativus*	capsule	Wild radish								1			
Eleocharis palustris	seed	Common spike-rush						1		3			
Cyperaceae sp.	seed	Sedge family						1					
Poaceae indet.	seed	Grass family						2	2				
Triticum sp.	grain	Wheat						2		2		1	
cf. *Triticum* sp.	grain	Wheat				1							
Triticum dicoccum / spelta	glume base	Emmer / spelt wheat						1					
cf. Cereale sp.	grain	Cereal indet.								1			
Indet.	seed					1							

Bellamy 1991, 87), although the low percentage of butts with widths exceeding 4mm might imply production earlier in that period. The low frequency of recognisable tools, retouch and wear suggest that flint was readily available and was treated as disposable despite the site's location away from chalk geology.

The Clay Pipes
Rachel Hall

Three fragments were recovered from context (1-118) of post-medieval ditch F30. Two are stem fragments and a third is an incomplete bowl, all dating to the post-medieval period.

The Slag
Clare Randall

Two fragments of slag weighing 124g were recovered from a single fill of Late Iron Age ditch F2 (3-107). The fragments were 75mm and 35mm in width. The structure was porous with numerous bubbles and cavities in a hard but brittle matrix which was slate grey-green and pink-brown and red in hue. There are iron oxide patches apparent. The unbroken surface has a rounded and sub-angular nodular appearance, whilst the exposed rounded cavities have either a matt or glassy appearance. This appears to be a metalworking residue with a high iron content, possibly from late in the smelting process.

The Animal Bone
Clare Randall

The animal bone assemblage consisted of a handful of relatively poorly preserved fragments. Two fragments of cattle bone, a piece of humerus and a small fragment of mandible, were recovered from posthole F4 (1-104). Three poorly preserved fragments of cattle tooth from posthole F6 (1-106) probably relate to a single tooth from an adult animal. Neither posthole is dated but may well be of prehistoric date. With only three fragments the material is unrepresentative, and given the condition of the bone, larger cattle bones may reflect differential preservation.

The Plant Macrofossils and Charred Wood
Alys Vaughan-Williams

Material from eleven bulk samples were analysed from contexts dated from the Early Bronze Age to Romano-British periods. The samples came from pits and ditches, and presented charred material with occasional modern desiccated seeds.

TABLE 2 CHARCOAL DATA

Sample number	Context no.	Feature	Period	Flot vol. (ml)	Taxa (quantity)	Weight (grams)	Comments
1	5-120	Pit	EBA	6	*Quercus* (70)	0.891	3mm
2	5-121	Pit	EBA	20	*Quercus* (9)	0.267	Vitreous, 10mm
3	5-122	Pit	EBA	9	*Quercus* (15) *cf. Quercus* (4)	0.070 0.009	3mm
4	5-123	Pit	EBA	6	*Viburnum* (3) *Quercus* (1)	0.008 0.034	3mm 5mm
5	5-125	Pit	EBA	2	*Corylus avellana* (1)	0.112	
6	5-116	Ditch	IA/RB	2	-		
7	2-140	Ditch	LIA	1	-		
8	2-116	Ditch	LIA	1	-		
9	3-106	Ditch	LIA	25	*Quercus* (9) *Cf. Euonymus europaeus* (3) *Corylus avellana* (1)	0.939 0.017 0.933	Quercus max 12mm, some showing iron discolouration, some O vitreous, occ .v. sm twig Corylus 5mm Euonymus 5mm
10	2-160	Ditch	LIA	2	-		
11	3-133	Ditch	IA/RB	1	-		

Plant Macrofossils (Table 1)

Five samples from EBA Pit F40 contained a poorly preserved possible wheat grain (*cf. Triticum* sp.) and an unidentifiable seed. Full details of methods and results are retained in the archive. Nomenclature follows Stace (1997). Samples from LIA ditch F2, and ring ditches F7 and F27 included one wheat grain from (2-140), F7. Occasional wheat grains came from (3-106), ditch F2 with seeds of damp habitat taxa common spike-rush *(Eleocharis palustris*), and tentatively identified wild radish (*cf. Raphanus sativus*).

Two contexts (5-116) and (3-133) in LIA/RB ditch F31 produced a small but moderately diverse assemblage, with a couple of wheat grains, and one emmer/spelt wheat glume base (*Triticum dicoccum/spelta*). Occasional seeds included the common spike-rush of damp habitats, ruderal/waste ground redshank (*Persicaria cf. maculosa*), and lesser stitchwort (*Stellaria graminea*), and seeds from the Chenopodiaceae and Poaceae family.

Wheat is commonly found on Bronze Age sites, and is often poorly preserved, whilst wheat is not unexpected in LIA contexts. Common spike-rush indicates nearby damp ground as it occurs alongside streams and brooks, which are abundant in the area. Wild radish is an occasional presence on LIA sites and could have been consumed.

Spelt and emmer wheat are consistent with a LIA/RB date, although emmer is considered to be a contaminant in the LIA and Roman periods. The spike-rush as a crop contaminant suggests arable production beside waterways, whilst other seeds are typical arable weeds.

The Charcoal (Table 2)

Full details of methods and results are retained in the archive. Nomenclature follows Stace (1997). EBA pit F40 and LIA ditch F2 produced 152 fragments.

The five samples from EBA Pit F40 presented mainly *Quercus* (oak) fragments with *Viburnum* (wayfaring tree/guelder rose) and one fragment of *Corylus avellana* (hazel). All the fragments were small, generally <5mm with occasional larger (10mm) fragments. Occasional vitreous fragments were also noted.

Fragments of *Quercus* charcoal dominated the LIA context (3-106) ditch F2 assemblage, with a maximum length of 12mm. *Euonymus europaeus* (spindle tree) and *Corylus avellana* also occurred, with fragments up to 5mm long. Some of the fragments showed iron discolouration, and vitreous fragments were also present.

Oak burns slowly and steadily with little ash, can reach and sustain high temperatures, and was used in hearths, furnaces and cremations, as well as to make charcoal. However, preservation was good in this assemblage despite the small fragment size, and not typical of being exposed to extremely high temperatures for extended periods. Oak woodland would have been common. Wayfaring tree/guelder rose and hazel are common hedgerow and woodland margin taxa. These, as well as oak, were often coppiced in later prehistory although there is no clear evidence of this here. Whilst selection for a particular purpose is not demonstrated here, it may be simply a reflection of local availability.

DISCUSSION

A single feature was assigned to the Early Bronze Age, pit F40. This pit produced twelve sherds of Early Bronze Age collared urn and all of the prehistoric flint recovered. White flecks of what appeared to be calcined bone were noted during excavation, but no bone was recovered from the environmental samples. The charred plant material and wood comprised largely oak, with hedge species and a wheat grain. There was no evidence of high temperature burning of the oak which would be expected in a cremation deposit, so the mix of species might indicate a domestic origin rather than a funerary purpose. A Late Neolithic/Early Bronze Age pit was examined during the evaluation c. 60m to the east (Cotswold Archaeology 2010). That pit contained a single fill and two fragments of Late Neolithic/EBA pottery. It appears that there was a dispersed area of activity during this period.

Late Iron Age activity was represented by at least three roundhouses, all represented by ring ditches. The largest of these, F7, was c. 12m in diameter with a typically south-south-east facing entrance. To the north, part of another ring ditch, F29, was undated but had its entrance on a similar alignment. Whilst the full plan could not be ascertained, it appeared to be slightly smaller. Another roundhouse, with a south-east facing entrance, was represented by ring ditches F27 and F28, and had a probable diameter of c. 8m.

Ditch F2, running east-west between roundhouses F7 and F29 was of the same ceramic phase, although there was no direct stratigraphic relationship between the features. The chronological resolution of the individual structures is not great enough to elucidate the contemporary layout of the space. If the roundhouses were contemporary, ditch F2 could have provided a division between plots containing buildings. If the roundhouses were not contemporary with each other, a slightly shifting settlement might be indicated. If F2 was later, it may have overlapped with the main phase of a substantial enclosure which came into existence in the next phase.

After the abandonment of roundhouse F27/28, ditch F5 was cut through it. This phase has been dated as Late Iron Age/Romano-British, which supplements evidence of Romano-British use of the area as discovered during

the earlier evaluation (Cotswold Archaeology 2010). Ditch F5 appears to be a continuation or recut of F31, which comprised a substantial boundary. F31 turns to the west in the northern part of the site and appears to create an enclosure, although the entire plan was not seen. Whilst F31 could only be securely dated to the Late Iron Age/Romano-British period, there is compelling evidence that it had a precursor on a similar, but slightly offset, alignment, and which may have been more closely associated with the roundhouse settlement. Rectilinear (settlement) enclosures were common during the later Iron Age (cf. Moore 2006). However, the ditches may also represent part of a wider system of land division.

The information available about the site economy or subsistence is limited; the animal bone comprised a handful of undated fragments of livestock species. However, both wood charcoal and charred plant parts imply that the site had a similar arable and pastoral agricultural base as other contemporary local sites. A limited presence of wheat grains and plant parts affirm an arable element, with common spike-rush in both LIA and LIA/RB contexts hinting at the use of damp ground for crop production. The current line of the Durleigh Brook runs west-east, c. 60m to the south of the excavated area, which suggests that crops were being produced in the immediate area. The pottery of this phase was largely of general domestic origin and used for cooking, but there was also evidence of access to slightly higher status pottery. Small scale metalworking is also attested by the small amount of iron slag in LIA ditch F2, and a single loomweight suggests some degree of textile working.

There is limited, well understood contemporary settlement in the Bridgwater area; archaeological features of this date were apparently absent along this part of the M5 corridor (Dawson *et al.* 2003, 45), although there are various potentially LIA enclosures to the south of the Durleigh Brook and around North Petherton known from aerial photographs. Indications of similar settlements occur more distantly. Substantial ditches of the LIA/RB were identified at Knowle Hill, Bawdrip (Hughes 2009), but the nature of the activity remains unclear. A ditch of similar date at Westonzoyland, in a low-lying but well-drained location, is also likely to have represented a boundary of an enclosure (Miles and Miles 1969). An apparent Late Iron Age settlement included a roundhouse gully at Alstone Road, West Huntspill (Heslop and Langdon 1995). A ditched enclosure surrounding apparent ring ditches dating to the LIA/RB was excavated on the line of the Cannington Bypass (Hart 2016). Haygrove Park is therefore a helpful addition to the understanding of the distribution of occupation in this low-lying part of Somerset in the later Iron Age.

The data relating to site economy are limited at best but make some contribution. There are very few plant macrofossil or faunal assemblages from this area of Somerset. More substantial Late Iron Age faunal assemblages elsewhere in Somerset tend to be sheep-dominated, as is the case in southern Britain more generally (Randall 2010; Hambleton 1999; 2008). At Westonzoyland, cattle and sheep/goat were most abundant (Miles and Miles 1969, 42). However, the small assemblage from Alstone Road, Huntspill was likely dominated by cattle (Heslop and Langdon 1995, 92), and it is possible that the lower lying, wet clay soils of the area were more suited to cattle husbandry.

CONCLUSION

This excavation has revealed evidence of activity in the Early Bronze Age, and settlement in the Late Iron Age continuing into the Romano-British period. The single EBA pit was most likely associated with domestic activity. The Late Iron Age settlement included at least three roundhouses. The settlement was subdivided with ditches, which may imply individual plots or enclosures with individual houses or buildings serving other purposes, although the chronological resolution was not available to understand the sequence of development. Later, the area was remodelled with the creation of a substantial ditched enclosure which probably continued into the Romano-British period, and which may have remained visible until relatively recent times. This was a typical, small scale settlement, reliant on pastoral and arable agriculture and some craft production, but which persisted and was remodelled over perhaps a number of generations.

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