

Late Prehistoric and Romano-British activity at Somerton Door, Somerton, Somerset

Simon Hughes and Paul Rainbird

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LATE PREHISTORIC AND ROMANO-BRITISH ACTIVITY AT SOMERTON DOOR, SOMERTON, SOMERSET

SIMON HUGHES AND PAUL RAINBIRD

with contributions by Wendy Carruthers and Mark Corney

SUMMARY

An archaeological trench evaluation was undertaken by AC archaeology in 2014 on land near Somerton Door. Features of Late Neolithic/Early Bronze Age, Middle Bronze Age, Late Bronze Age to Middle Iron Age and Romano-British date were identified and consisted of ditches, pits and postholes. The excavations aligned with geophysical survey indicated that settlement activity related to enclosures of Bronze Age and Romano-British date. Analysis of the plant macrofossils indicate the early use in the Bronze Age of a spelt type wheat and possible very early pre-Iron Age use of pea. A

small assemblage of late prehistoric and Roman pottery was also recovered.

INTRODUCTION

An archaeological trench evaluation on land at Somerton Door (centred on ST 474 303), was undertaken by AC archaeology during May and June 2014 on behalf of Lightsource Renewable Energy. The site lies approximately 2km north of Somerton, encompassing two arable fields and covers an area of 22.6ha, below Bradley Hill on ground that slopes down gradually towards the

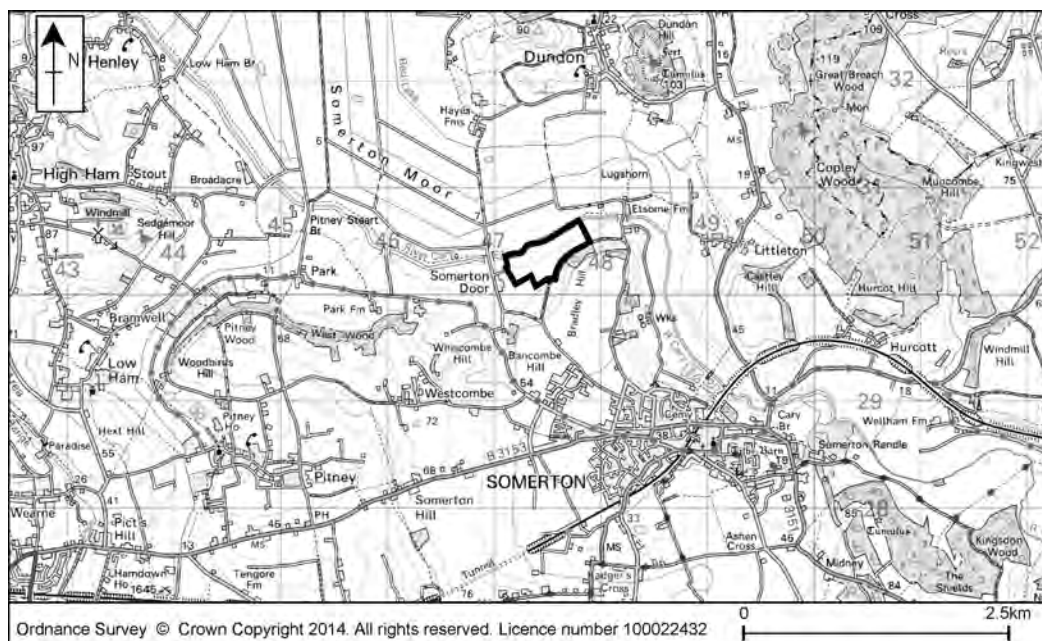
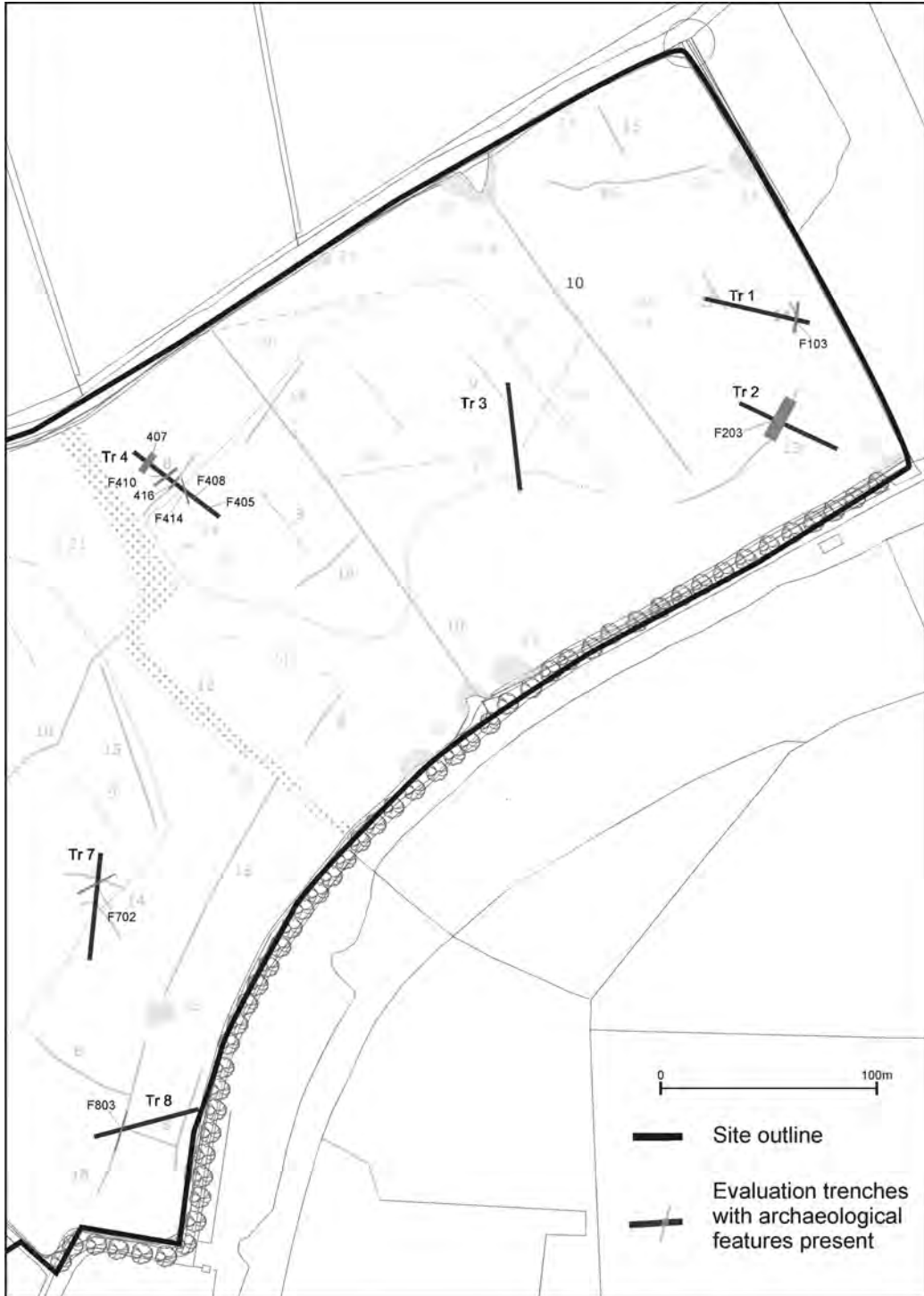


Fig. 1 Location of site



Fig. 2 Location of trenches and archaeological features in relation to geophysical survey anomalies

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River Cary between 27m and 9m aOD (Fig. 1). The underlying solid geology comprises Mudstone and Halite-stone of the Mercia Mudstone Group, which is overlain by superficial deposits of clay, silt, sand and gravel alluvium (British Geological Survey 2017).

The site had been subject to geophysical survey which identified a series of principally linear anomalies across the site (Richardson 2014). A series of straight linear anomalies were considered to relate to former medieval and post-medieval agricultural boundaries, these were confirmed during the evaluation and are not discussed further here. Full trench descriptions and analytical reports (Hughes 2014; Hughes and Rainbird 2015) are available through the Archaeology Data Service (<http://archaeologydataservice.ac.uk/archives/view/greylit/browse.cfm>) and a summary of the significant findings is provided here.

RESULTS

Introduction

The evaluation comprised the machine-excavation of 17 trenches totalling 850m in length, with each trench measuring 2.2m wide (Fig. 2). The trenches were positioned to test features identified by the geophysical survey results, as well as to provide sampled coverage of 'blank' areas and, with the exception of Trench 3, archaeological features or deposits were present in all of the trenches.

The layer Sequence

The layer sequence across the site can be split between the upslope area to the southeast and the low-lying area adjacent to the River Cary to the northwest. Those trenches to the southeast generally contained sequences of colluvial subsoil and ploughsoil measuring approximately 0.6m thick over the natural subsoil, with evidence of plough truncation of archaeological features.

The trenches adjacent to the River Cary (4, 5, 6, 9 and 17) contained more complex layer sequences. For example, in Trench 17 the alluvial natural subsoil was overlain by two layers of buried soil (1717 and 1704), with 1704 comprising a deposit reflecting wet to waterlogged conditions. These were overlain by alluvial clay deposit 1716, the profile of which is likely to represent an infilled palaeo-channel of the River Cary. The buried soil layers are also cut by three ditches (F1708, F1710 and F1712) with the lowest lying ditch, F1708, overlain by peat. Finds of

Iron Age pottery from ditch F1712 suggest that the peat formed around this date. Above the peat is a clear horizon of alluvial clays from which a single sherd of Roman Samian pottery was recovered. The full sequence sits beneath an agricultural subsoil and ploughsoil.

Late Neolithic/Early Bronze Age

The earliest dated feature in the site is pit F1203 in Trench 12 which was the most recent of three features as it cut ditch F1212 and probable linear F1201, which was itself cut by gully terminal F1207 (Fig. 3). Pit F1203 was oval measuring 0.8m long, 0.6m wide and 0.14m deep. It contained a charcoal-rich fill (1204) with a fragment of cremated human bone, worked flint and a sherd of prehistoric pottery. A fragment of hazelnut shell was dated to 2191-1977 cal BC (SUERC-60193). The sherd of pottery is a tiny scrap 2mm x 3mm with no diagnostic features, but in a sandy fabric typical of Late Bronze Age to Middle Iron Age pottery from elsewhere on the site (see below), and is probably intrusive in this context. None of the earlier features contained datable finds.

Middle Bronze Age

Evidence for Middle Bronze Age (MBA) activity on the site came from two widely separated trenches (6 and 13) and an assemblage of worked flint from across the site. In Trench 6, close to the river, a collection of pit features (F612 and 622-7) and a curving ditch (F619) may be dated by proximity to pit or posthole F614 (Figs 4-5). Pit F614 measured 0.19m in diameter and 0.12m deep. It contained a fill (615) with abundant charcoal inclusions which allowed for the identification of cereals and legumes and was radiocarbon dated to the MBA (1415-1260 cal BC).

Ditch F1311, in Trench 13, measured 0.68m wide and 0.31m deep with a 'V-shaped' profile (Fig. 5a). It contained two sherds of MBA pottery.

Late Bronze Age to Middle Iron Age (Fig. 6)

Features dated no more closely than Late Bronze Age through to Middle Iron Age based on pottery finds were identified in six widely separated trenches (2, 4, 6, 9, 16 and 17). Ditch F203, in Trench 2, corresponded with the location of the targeted linear anomaly interpreted from the geophysics and measured 6.4m wide and 0.44m deep and contained seven sherds of pottery, worked flint and animal bone. A modern field drain cuts the fills of this feature and its interpretation is difficult, but it

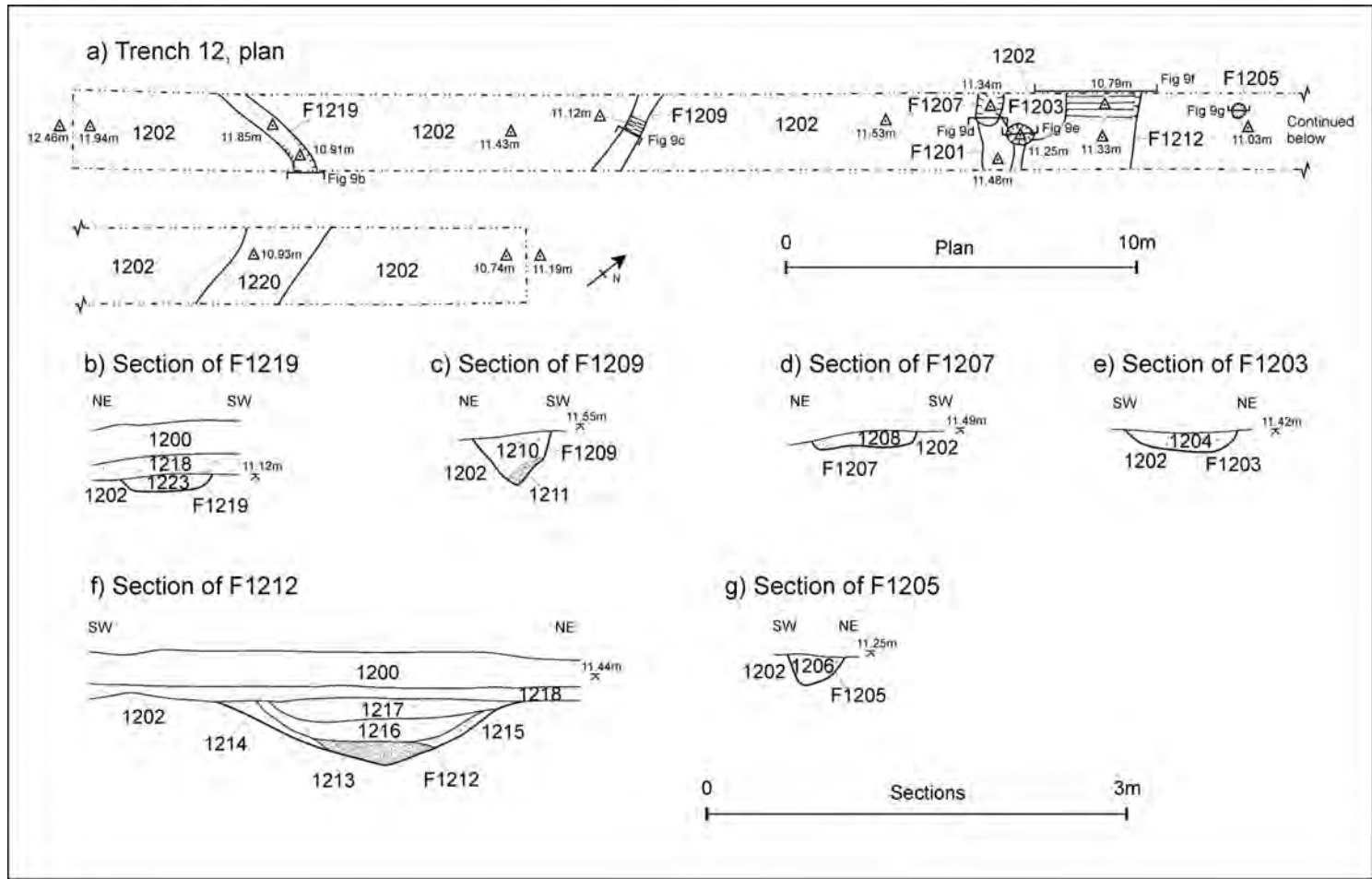


Fig. 3 Trench 12, plan and sections

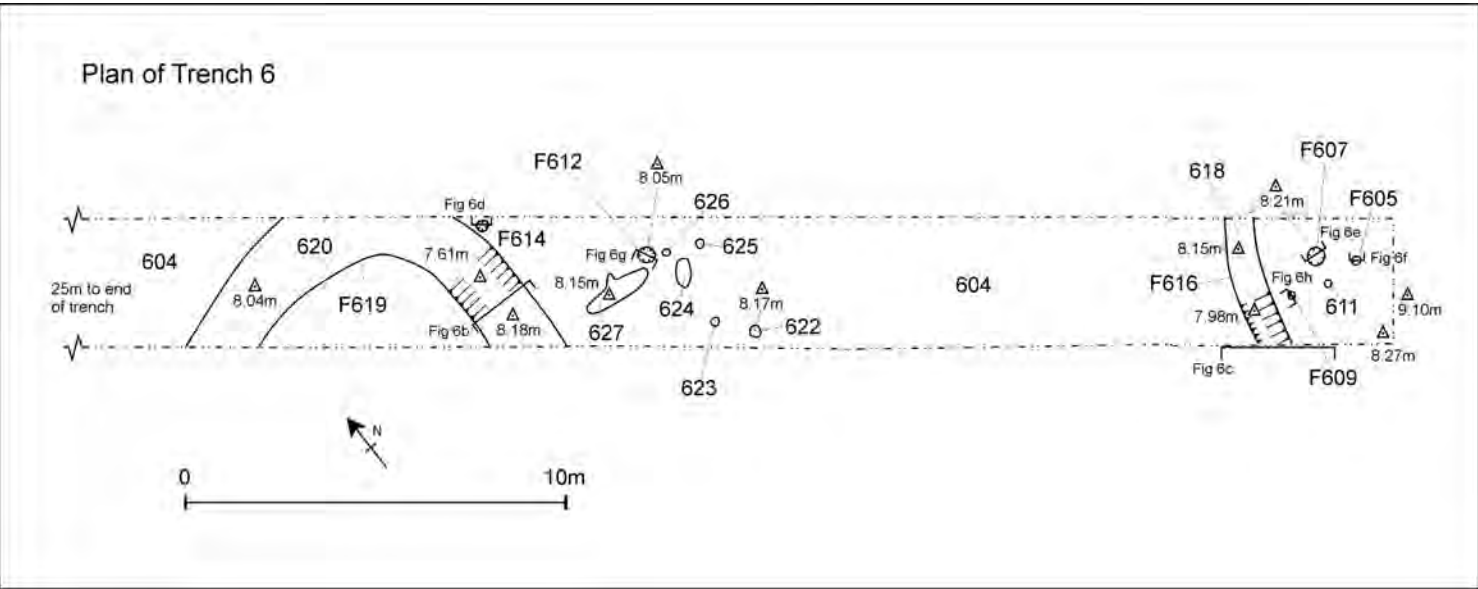


Fig. 4 Trench 6, plan

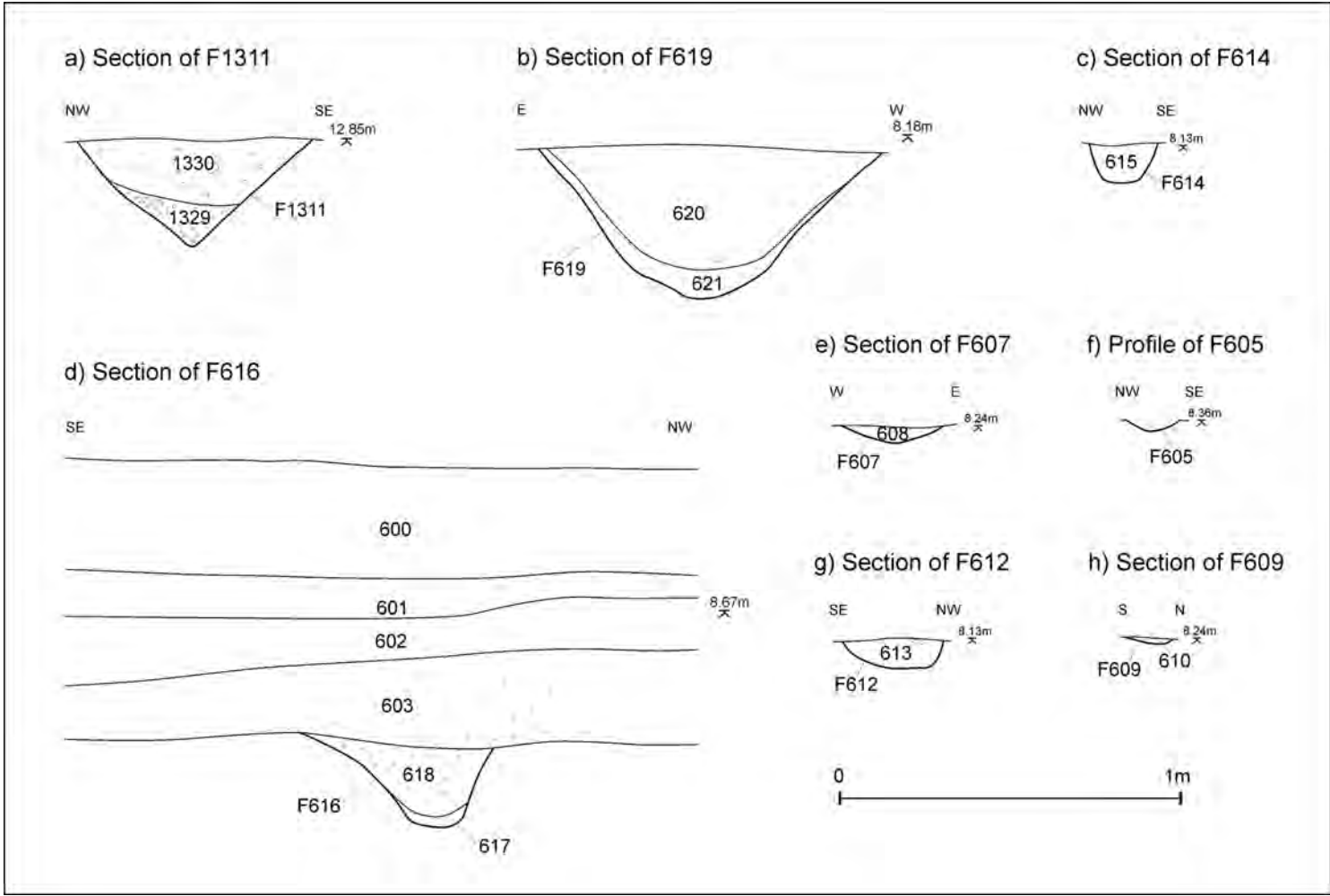


Fig. 5 Trench 6, sections

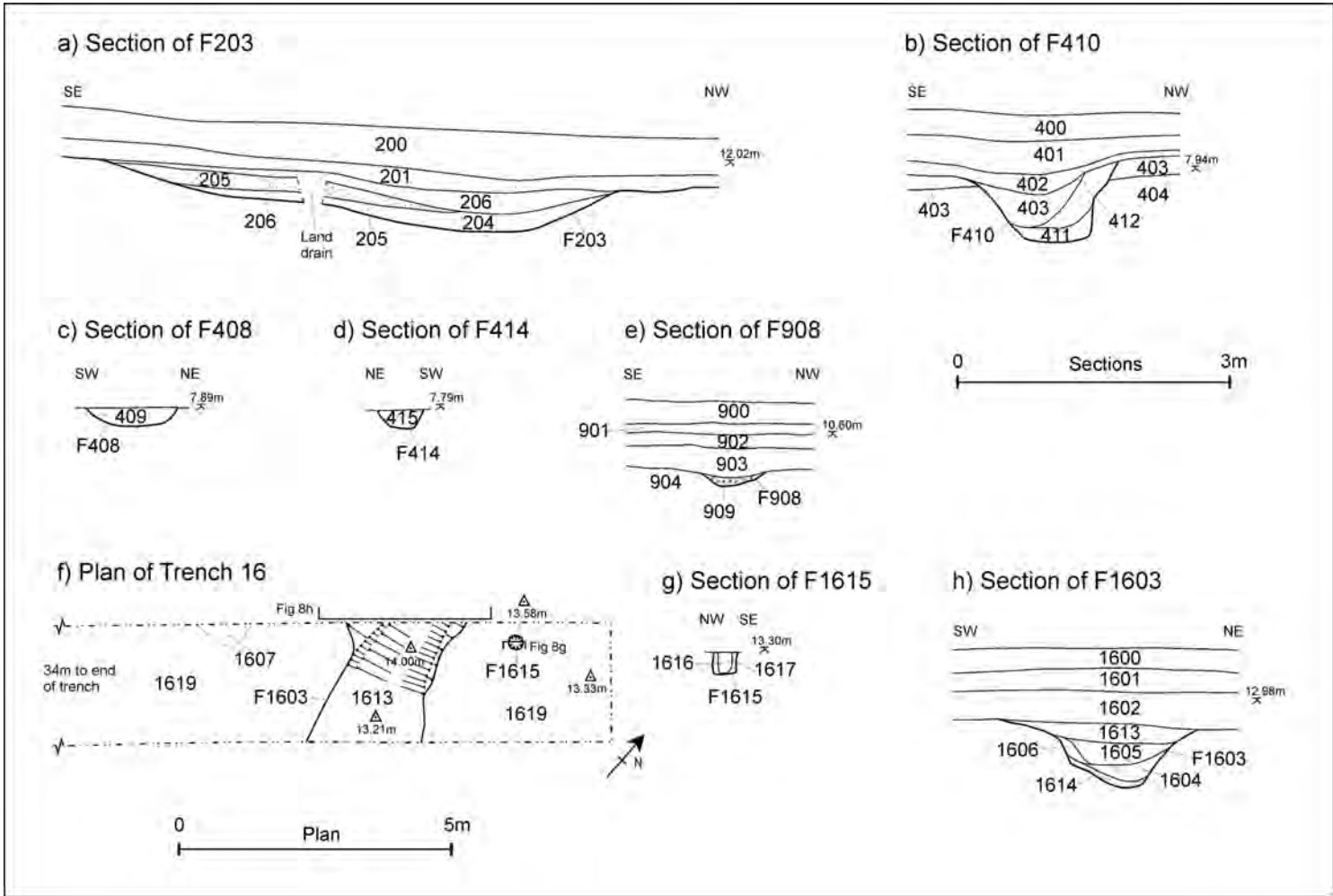


Fig. 6 Late Bronze Age to Middle Iron Age features

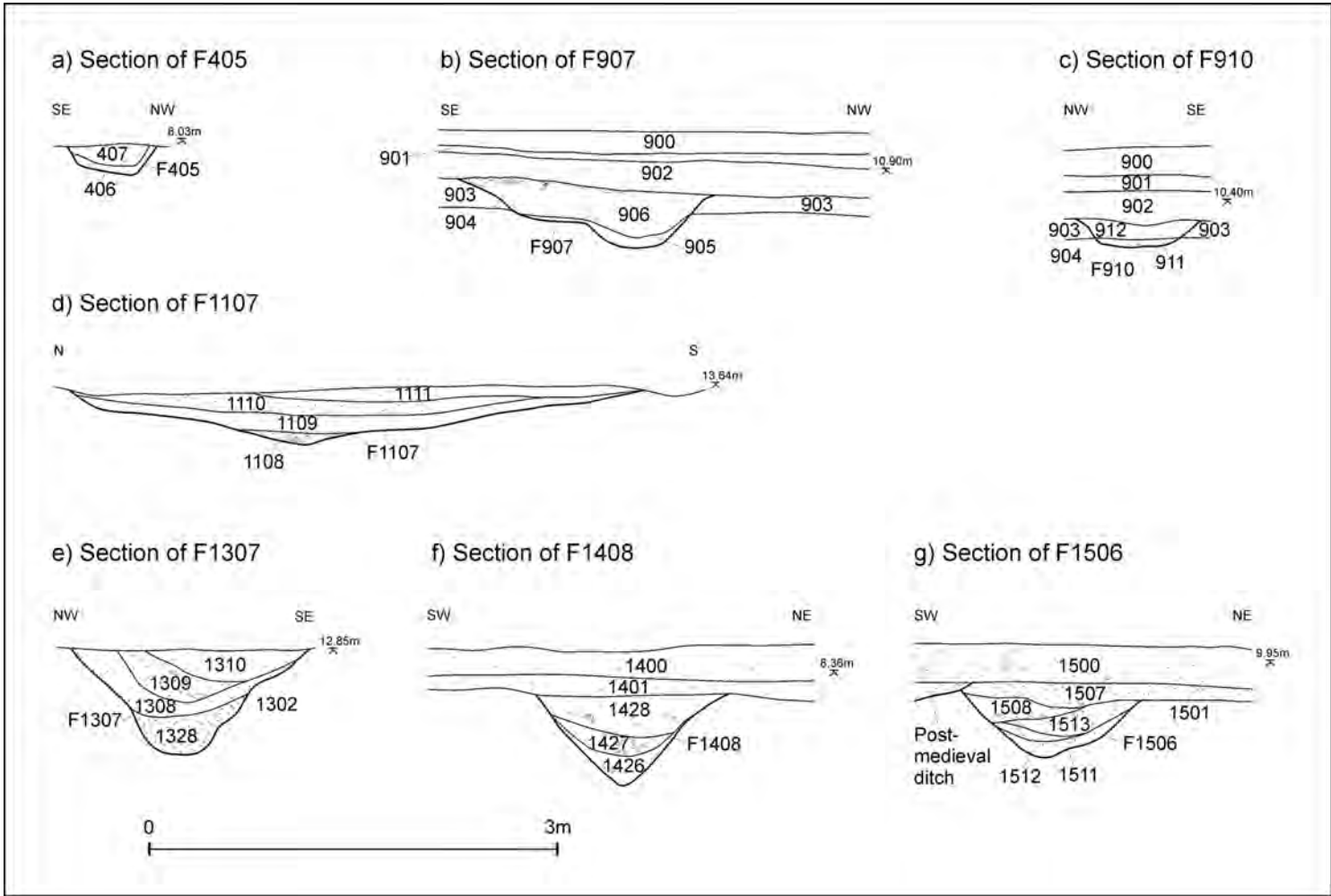


Fig. 7 Romano-British features

may also relate to drainage. In Trench 4 two ditches (F410 and F414) and two probable ditches (416 and 417) all cut through buried soil layer 403 and were sealed by alluvial clays (402 and 401). These all contained similar fills, with pottery recovered from the fills of ditch F410. Pit F405, located towards the southeast end of the trench contained 34 sherds of pottery. Gully F616, in Trench 6, was curving in plan and contained a sherd of Iron Age pottery and to its southeast were four discrete features (F605, F607, F609 and 611) that represented probable post and stakeholes. Pit F908 was partially exposed in Trench 9. It contained a single charcoal-rich fill (909) and 22 sherds of pottery and a piece of cremated human bone.

In Trench 16, a ditch (F1603), probable pit (1607) and posthole (F1615) were sealed by a buried soil (1602). Ditch F1603 continued in Trench 12 (1220), and measured 1.38m wide and 0.7m deep and contained 16 sherds of pottery and nine fragments of animal bone. Posthole F1615 contained a piece of perforated worked bone, a fragment from a shale object and four sherds of pottery. Possible pit 1607 was not excavated but three sherds of pottery were recovered from its surface.

Romano-British (Fig. 7)

Features dating to the Romano-British (R-B) period were recorded in six trenches (9, 10, 11 and 13-15). A large curvilinear anomaly targeted by trenches 13-15 (F1307, F1408 and F1506) measured up to 1.75m wide and 0.66m deep and is dated by a single sherd of R-B pottery, but it also contained three sherds of prehistoric pottery and two pieces of worked flint.

Ditch F907 in Trench 9 measured 1.88m wide and 0.42m deep contained 19 sherds of R-B pottery. Ditch F910, may be contemporary, but two sherds of prehistoric pottery were recovered from upper fill 912 and are considered to be residual in this context.

Ditch F1107, in Trench 11, corresponded with the location of the east to west aligned broad linear feature interpreted from the geophysical survey and also located, but not excavated, in Trench 10 (1008). It measured 4.25m wide and 0.39m deep and contained eight sherds of R-B pottery along with 54 sherds of prehistoric pottery, six fragments of cremated human bone, a fragment of animal bone and pieces of worked flint.

THE FINDS by Mark Corney

Introduction

A small assemblage of prehistoric and Roman pottery was recovered and is discussed here along with a small worked bone object and a piece of worked shale. The assemblage of 60 pieces of worked flint is generally of Bronze Age type and along with the very small amount of fragmentary bone remains are not discussed further here. For all finds and detailed specialist reports see Hughes and Rainbird (2015).

Prehistoric and Romano-British pottery

Introduction

A total of 206 sherds of pottery weighing 668g was recovered. Of this total the majority, 174 sherds, are of prehistoric date and the remaining 32 are Romano-British. The prehistoric assemblage comprises mainly small body sherds with an average sherd weight of 3.2g. The small and fragmented nature of the assemblage is insufficient to allow quantification beyond fabric and form.

Prehistoric

The prehistoric assemblage is highly fragmentary comprising mainly very small sherds often less than 1g in weight. The majority of the assemblage comprises body sherds and typologically there are very few diagnostic sherds; only three rims are present (Figs 8.1 to 8.3). The fabric range and limited diagnostic sherds all point to a Late Bronze Age/Early Iron Age to Middle Iron Age date for the majority of the assemblage. Two small groups, contexts 1330 and 1604, are in a sandy grog tempered fabric, with a rim from 1604 which suggest a Middle Bronze Age date.

Date and discussion

Middle Bronze Age activity is represented by a small group of sherds from fill 1604 (ditch F1603) and fill 1330 (ditch F1311). These are thick walled vessels, probably jars.

The range of fabrics and limited diagnostic features of the majority of the sherds point to a date range from the Late Bronze Age/Early Iron Age to the Middle Iron Age; greater precision is not possible. All of the fabrics can be paralleled with other south Somerset assemblages, most notably that from South Cadbury hillfort (Barrett *et al.* 2000; Woodward 2000) and the South Cadbury Environs Project (Tabor *pers. comm.*). The lack

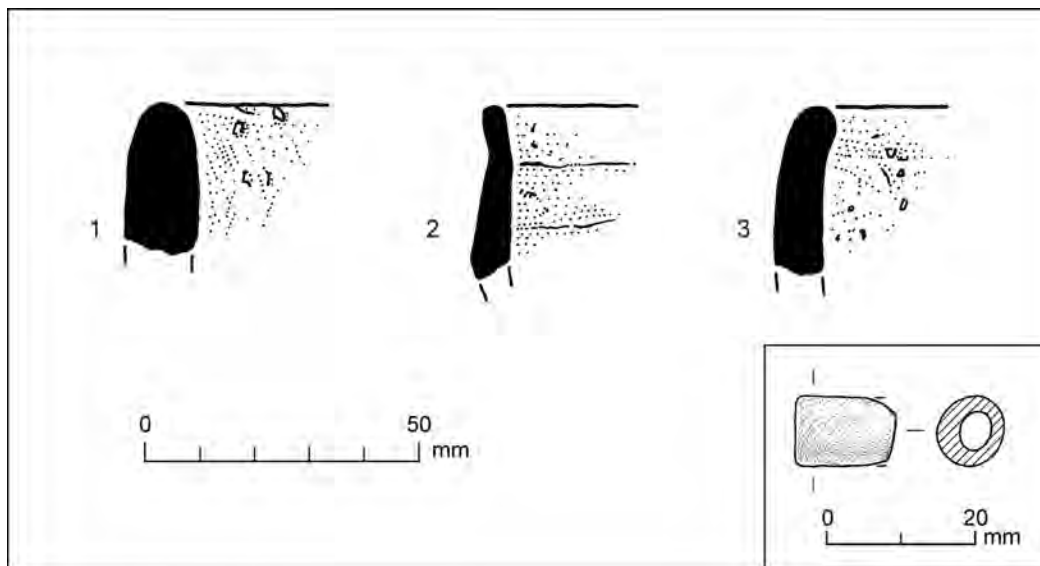


Fig. 8 Prehistoric pottery rim types. 1:1604. Plain square profile rim from a jar of indeterminate form. Middle Bronze Age. 2: 205. Rim of tripartite jar. South Cadbury type JB (Woodward 2000). Late Bronze Age/Early Iron Age. 3: 903. Plain rounded rim from saucepan pot type vessel. Middle Iron Age. Inset: Bone bead from context 1616 (All drawn by Jane Read)

of 'Durotrigian' and South-Western 'Glastonbury' type forms and fabrics strongly points to a cessation of activity before the Late Iron Age.

Romano-British

A small Romano-British assemblage was recovered comprising 32 sherds weighing 126g from three overlying deposit contexts (100, 1601 and 1715) and four secure contexts (906, 1110, 1319 and 1508). The assemblage is largely unremarkable and no sherds are illustrated.

Six fabrics are present (abbreviations refer to Tomber and Dore, 1998 with additions):

South Gaulish La Graufesenque Samian (LGF SA)
 Central Gaulish Lezoux Samian (LEZ SA2)
 Micaceous Grey Ware
 New Forest Colour Coated Ware (NFCC)
 South East Dorset Black Burnished Ware (SEDBB)
 Sand tempered wares; both reduced and oxidised (STR and STO)

The small assemblage is predominantly later Roman in date. Earlier Roman diagnostic sherds comprise two small worn and abraded Samian

vessels: a possible Drag. 27 footring (LGF SA) of 1st century date from 1601 and a rim from a 2nd century Drag. 36 from 1715 (LEZ SA2). The Micaceous Grey Ware has no diagnostic sherds and is dated to the 1st to 3rd centuries.

The remaining diagnostic sherds are of later Roman date and include a New Forest Colour Coated closed form dated c. 270–370 and 12 sherds of South East Dorset Black Burnished Ware including a rim from a drop flange bowl dated c. 270+ (fill 906, ditch F907). Two everted rims in a local sandy fabric (STR and STO) can be broadly dated to the 3rd or 4th century.

Worked shale and bone from posthole F1615

An incomplete object of worked and polished shale measures 18mm by 18mm and is 3.5mm thick. It has a curving and a straight edge surviving. The curved side is carefully chamfered to a sharp edge and the straight side is gently rounded. No exact parallel has been found for the object, however the context is of Iron Age date and the use of shale at this period is widely attested (Fitzpatrick 2008, 141).

A single piece of incomplete worked bone measuring 13mm long and 9mm in diameter is pierced longitudinally with an ovoid hole

measuring 4mm by 5mm and probably used as a bead (Fig. 8, inset). One end has been neatly sawn, the other end is missing and the full length is unknown. The object has been burnt to a point where the bone has become calcined. Beads of bone are rare and difficult to date on purely typological criteria. The pottery from the posthole can be dated to the Early or Middle Iron Age. Bone beads of Iron Age date are known from the Glastonbury and Meare Lake Villages (Bulleid and Gray 1917; Gray 1966).

PLANT MACROFOSSILS by Wendy Carruthers

Introduction

Environmental samples were taken from a selection of features and of the six samples assessed sample 1 (Trench 12; fill 1204 from pit F1203) and sample 4 (Trench 6; fill 615 from posthole F614) were found to have frequent identifiable charred plant remains (Whitton 2014). The following is a summary of results presented more fully in Carruthers (2015).

Discussion

Sample 1, context 1204, pit F1203

A large amount of hazelnut shell (*Corylus avellana*) was recovered weighing 6.11g in total. Using a figure of 0.42g per charred whole nut (shell only) this amounts to only a handful of nuts, possibly about 15 nuts. The quantity is sufficient, however, to demonstrate that the nuts were probably deliberately charred and deposited in the pit. Two poorly preserved encrusted emmer/spelt wheat grains (*Triticum dicoccum/spelta*) were also present in the sample. A Late Neolithic/Early Bronze Age radiocarbon date was returned from a hazelnut shell.

Sample 4, context 615, posthole F614

A small sample of soil (1.5 litres) from a posthole in Trench 6 produced 64 cereal grains, six of which were more typical of emmer wheat (*Triticum cf. dicoccum*) and four of which were more robust spelt-type grains (*Triticum cf. spelta*). A further 34 grains could not be identified beyond emmer/spelt and the remaining indeterminate cereal fragments were equivalent to 20 cereal grains.

In addition to the cereal remains several large-seeded pulses were recovered including two Celtic beans (*Vicia faba* var. *minor*), a large rounded vetch or pea (*Vicia/Pisum* sp.) and several fragments

equivalent to at least nine vetch, pea or bean seeds (*Pisum/Vicia/Lathyrus* sp.). No hila were preserved on these pulses so it was not possible to arrive at more certain identifications.

Two seeds from sheep's sorrel (*Rumex acetosella*) were the only wild plants represented. Its presence amongst the cereals and pulses was probably as a crop contaminant. The local sandy soils would have suited this species so it is likely that the crops were grown locally.

In order to date the feature a spelt-type grain (*Triticum cf. spelta*) was submitted for radiocarbon dating; a Middle Bronze Age date was returned. Although the identification of hulled wheat grains to species level is unreliable the presence of spelt in the sample was confirmed by the recovery of three glume bases. Spelt wheat began to replace emmer wheat during the MBA to LBA, apparently moving into the country from the southeast, possibly along the Thames Valley (Hey and Robinson 2011). Radiocarbon dating of early spelt wheat remains is important to help track the movement of this 'new' cereal into the British Isles, so the Somerton Door date is of great interest. Spelt wheat has previously been recovered from a MBA site in South-West England but it was only starting to reach the region, so the timing of its arrival is important. At Trethellan Farm, Newquay, Cornwall, six spelt glume bases were present amongst large numbers of hulled and naked barley grains, with smaller numbers of hulled wheat grains (Straker 1991). Unfortunately radiocarbon dating techniques had not developed to the extent that glume bases could be dated in the 1990s. Celtic beans were also recovered from Trethellan Farm and they have been found on a number of MBA and later sites across southern England. Peas, however, have not been identified with certainty until the Iron Age, but this could be because well-preserved peas retaining their hila are scarce.

RADIOCARBON DATING

Suitable material was selected for radiocarbon dating from each of the two samples selected for detailed plant macrofossil analyses. The AMS radiocarbon date results are given in Table 1. Calibration of the results has been performed using the data set published by Reimer *et al.* (2013) and performed using the program OxCal4 (www.flaha.ox.ac.uk).

TABLE 1 – RADIOCARBON DATING RESULTS (CALIBRATED TO 95.4% PROBABILITY)

Material	Context	Lab no.	Result BP	δC13 (‰)	Cal BC
<i>Corylus avellana</i>	Fill (1204) of F1203	SUERC-60193	3683±27	-25.7	2191-1977
<i>Triticum spelta</i>	Fill (615) of F614	SUERC-59134	3070±29	-24.1	1415-1260

DISCUSSION

Late Neolithic/Early Bronze Age

The cluster of features in Trench 12 are dated by a radiocarbon date on charred hazelnut shell from pit F1203. Considered together, the plant remains and a single fragment of cremated human bone, the fill of the pit appears to be an example of structured deposition where a mix of items, some potentially lost to degradation, has been deliberately deposited (Thomas 1999). The pit was at the centre of a cluster of features, ditches or pits, which may relate to settlement activity, but were clean except for a few worked flints and pits of this type are occasionally used to mark the abandonment of a site (Pollard 2001). In South-West England these pits are generally regarded as being of comparatively small size (Pollard and Healy 2008). This interpretation of the pit is based on the fact that it is the last in a sequence of features, and is preferred to that which would regard it as a cremation-related deposit, formed by the collection of material from a funerary pyre. However, this latter interpretation cannot be fully discounted as food items have been found associated with a cremation elsewhere in Somerset at Wick Lane, Norton Fitzwarren; here several small fragments of hazelnut shell and a few indeterminate wheat grains (*Triticum* sp.) were found in and around two Early Bronze Age cremation urns (Carruthers 2013).

Middle Bronze Age

Evidence for Middle Bronze Age (MBA) activity on the site came from two widely separated trenches, 6 and 13, and the spread of worked flint from across the site. In Trench 6, close to the river, a collection of pit features may be dated by proximity to pit F614. A spelt-type grain (*Triticum* cf. *spelta*) was radiocarbon dated to the MBA (1415-1260 cal BC; SUERC-59134), which places the presence of this 'new' type of wheat as among the earliest in the region, although consistent with dates from elsewhere in southern Britain (Carruthers 2015). Of the pulses from the pit only the possible

identification of pea (*Pisum* sp.) is of note in a pre-Iron Age feature. It is possible, however, that the remains are those of vetch (*Vicia* sp.) or bean (*Lathyrus* sp.), which would be consistent with a MBA date. The interpretation of the geophysical results does not provide any further indication to the activity in this area which appears, from the plant macrofossil and palaeoenvironmental evidence, to be domestic in nature.

The only other feature on the site of probable MBA date is ditch F1311, in Trench 13, which forms part of a semi-circular linear anomaly positioned on level ground above the River Cary. This may represent part of an enclosure, cut by a curvilinear feature of Romano-British date, although no associated features were identified. Land division, including farmstead enclosures, is typically thought to have been becoming commonplace in the MBA, but it is not well-attested in Somerset outside of Exmoor. At Shapwick, in lowland Somerset, plant macrofossil and palaeoenvironmental evidence found that agriculture was being established for the first time during this period (Gerrard and Aston 2007; Aston and Gerrard 2013).

The Somerset HER lists ten sites of MBA date within 2km of the site, however, the majority of these are undated cropmarks. To the north of the River Cary a barrow and other Bronze Age finds are noted from Dundon Hillfort (Somerset HER nos 53759 and 53760) and a scatter of worked flint to the west of Dundon village (no. 15194).

Late Bronze Age to Middle Iron Age

Evidence for Late Bronze Age to Middle Iron Age (LBA/MIA) activity was found from features across the site. The broad dating of the pottery means that it is not possible to provide a more nuanced chronologically-derived interpretation; this is general problem in the South West (Fitzpatrick 2008, 125). The evidence indicates that settlement was present. In Trench 6 narrow curving gully F616 and the adjacent cluster of postholes and stakeholes probably represent some form of structural remains, most probably a roundhouse. In Trench 16

ditch F1603, probable pit 1607 and posthole F1615 were all sealed by a buried soil and are LBA/MIA in date. The presence of a well-defined posthole indicates the potential for a building in this part of the site also. Finds including pottery and animal bone as well as the possible bone bead may indicate settlement activity. Fragments of undiagnostic cremated bone were also recovered from posthole F1615. It may be noted here that small fragments of cremated human bone were recovered from a number of features across the site and residually in overlying deposits indicating that some form of funerary activity was being undertaken in the vicinity of the site, although much of this is undated.

Ditch F1712, in Trench 17, contained LBA/MIA pottery, and neighbouring ditches (F1708 and F1710) may also be of comparable date. These ditches extended parallel to the River Cary and were infilled with water-lain deposits and then overlain by the formation of a peat deposit (1703). These and the ditches present in Trench 4 may represent field boundaries.

Dundon Hillfort, mentioned above, dominates the skyline to the north of the site and is the key site representing Iron Age occupation in the local vicinity. Forming a westward extension to the ridge to the south of the site is Westwood Hillfort (Somerset HER no. 54484) and settlement pre-dating Littleton Roman Villa to the east of the site, makes up the known Iron Age settlement within 2 km of the site as represented by the Somerset HER. Above the site to the south the late Romano-British farmstead on Bradley Hill was established on the site of Iron Age activity which consisted of a few pits and evidence of domestic occupation in the form of loom weights (Leech 1981). The Somerton Door Iron Age deposits, at the base of a hill, are indicative of a probable small-scale farmstead and associated agricultural activity during this period.

Romano-British

The large curvilinear anomaly targeted in trenches 13-15 is a probable enclosure of Romano-British (R-B) date and has an estimated diameter of 135m, although the full circuit was not identified. The R-B pottery sherd from the upper fill may date the abandonment rather than the construction of the enclosure. A small number of probable pit features (F1305, 1303-4, 1405-7) were exposed that would be internal to the enclosure. The position of the enclosure on low-lying land at the base of a slope indicates a probable domestic rather than defensive function, but the largely sterile nature of the

deposits argues against intense settlement activity.

A broad curving linear anomaly targeted by trenches 10 and 11 comprised a wide shallow possible ditch or erosion hollow (F1107/1008). The recovery of a broad range of finds, including pottery and animal bone, associated with a dark charcoal-rich fill indicated that this is the location of further, unspecified, R-B occupation on the site.

Small ditch F910 in Trench 9 contained two sherds of prehistoric pottery, but the feature cuts the buried soil (903) indicating that these sherds may be residual in this context and the feature is more likely to be R-B in date. Ditch F907, in Trench 9, contained R-B pottery and with ditch F910, perhaps represent field boundaries.

The evidence from the pottery indicates a distinct break in the use of the site from the Middle Iron Age through to the R-B, which makes the site distinct from many rural sites in Somerset where a continuation in use from the Iron Age through the transition to the R-B period is a common feature (Holbrook 2011). The pottery shows that the majority of the R-B activity on the site was in the later part of this period, dating to the 3rd and 4th centuries AD, although the nature of this activity, other than agricultural, is not clear. At Huntworth, on the floodplain of the River Parrett 18km to the west, excavations revealed a sequence of Iron Age through to R-B activity, although there it is proposed that the settlement was continuous, with little change in what was essentially a native settlement pattern (Powell *et al.* 2008).

The site lies in an area containing villa and other farming settlements. Approximately 1km to the south is Bancombe Hill Villa where foundations for a building were excavated in the 1960s and a subsequent geophysical survey confirmed the arrangement of a substantial structure (Somerset HER no. 54486). To the northwest is the putative location (based on historic records) of Lugshorn Villa (Somerset HER no. 54483) and to the east are Littleton and Compton Dundon villa sites (Somerset HER nos 53764 and 53765). On elevated ground approximately 400m to the southeast of the site is the Bradley Hill farmstead. Here, three stone buildings, comprising two dwellings and a farm building, dating to the 4th to 5th centuries AD and a cemetery containing at least 55 burials have been recorded (Somerset HER no. 18782; Leech 1981); although the burials have been shown to continue well into the post-Roman period (Gerrard 2011). Roger Leech (1981) proposed that the area of lower ground occupied by the current site could

have been within the estate of the Bradley Hill farmstead which would have allowed its residents access to the varied resources beside the River Cary.

It is possible, given the later R-B dating of the Bradley Hill farmstead that late R-B period flooding of the lower ground beside the Cary may have prompted a move to the higher ground, and the establishment of the farmstead there, in the middle of the 4th century. At Huntworth it was suggested that the main settlement was already located on higher ground and free from the fear of flooding, with the agricultural activities located on the lower ground subsidiary to the main domestic activities (Powell *et al.* 2008); such a pattern may also best fit the evidence at Somerton Door. This would indicate that an earlier farmstead may be present on the higher ground in the vicinity of the Bradley Hill farmstead.

Late Romano-British/Post-Roman

The trenches adjacent to the River Cary (4, 5, 6, 9 and 17) contained complex layer sequences which indicate that following peat growth in a boggy riverside location there was an influx of alluvial clays which is indicative of flooding of this part of the site in the late R-B to post-Roman period. This is a phenomenon recognised elsewhere in the Levels and is regarded as an indication that the management of the low-lying parts of Somerset for settlement and agricultural purposes during the R-B period was failing and allowed the flooding of previously productive land (Rippon 2006).

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Environment Service Primary Reference Number for this project is 32515.

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