

APPENDIX 11: ASSESSMENT OF HUMAN BONE
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1. Introduction

- 1.1 Area 330 Zone 3 (specifically Northumberland Bottom ARC WNB 98) contained burials dating to the early Bronze Age and the Roman period. Excavation had revealed two beaker inhumations and also a small grave containing unburnt human bone from a neonate associated with a pottery vessel of Roman date. A small pit proved to contain the remains of another neonate.
- 1.2 Cremated human bone occurred in two contexts [316] (undated) and [2012] (associated with an early Bronze Age pottery vessel).

2. Methodology

- 2.1 The human skeletal material was scanned and assessed in accordance with the MoLSS Environmental Archaeology Manual (in preparation).
- 2.2 Preservation/bone condition, the rough percentage of completeness, general age (child/adult) and obvious pathology/sex were noted and these details are summarised in the table below. The data has been entered onto the MoLAS Oracle database for human bone and transferred to RLE Datasets.

3. Quantifications

Early Bronze Age

- 3.1 Double burial with beakers from Northumberland Bottom Area C (Figure 16, Plates 1 and 2). In addition skeletal material of an unburnt child burial was recovered from the grave fill.
- 3.2 An early Bronze Age cremation urn was recovered from the area to the north of Hazells Farm (Figure 5). The bone from this vessel had, however, almost totally disintegrated and it was not possible to study this material.

Late Bronze Age

- 3.3 A late Bronze age cremation was recovered from Area A/B at Northumberland Bottom (Figure 13). A nearby cremation was undated but may be from this period.

Late Iron Age – Early Roman

- 3.4 Disarticulated human bone (part of a cranium) was recovered from the fill of the 'ritual pit' [564] (Figure 10).
- 3.5 Cremated bone and a vessel were recovered from pit [232] (Figure 10).

Roman

- 3.6 Two neonate burials were recovered from Northumberland Bottom Area C (Figure 16).

4. Provenance

- 4.1 The two individuals buried with beakers were both adult. One was male, the other female (Plates 1 and 2). The grave fill also contained unburned human bone, probably a child [1069] (see table below). The bone in the beaker burials was in moderate condition. At least some metric data should be available on further analysis. Both skeletons were almost entirely complete.
- 4.2 Cremated bone occurred in two contexts [316] (Late Iron Age/Early Romano-British date, Cremation [232], Figure 10) and [2012] (Late Bronze Age date, Figure 13). The bone from the cremations is comminuted and unlikely to provide information on demography or pathology.
- 4.3 The Roman grave contained an immature skeleton, probably a neonate; the head was missing (Figure 16). A small pit nearby also contained a neonate [1037] (Figure 16). The Roman skeletal remains were also in a moderate state of bone preservation. The skeletons were more than 75% complete.
- 4.4 Disarticulated adult human bone was found in two contexts [565] (the large 'ritual' pit in the Late Iron Age/Early Romano British enclosure) (Figure 10) and fill [2163] of pit [2164] (Figure 13) (see table below).

5. Conservation

- 5.1 Under Schedule 11 of the CTRL act 1996 all human bone is to be reburied.

6. Comparative material

- 6.1 There are many examples of beaker burials in southern England including Thanet and the north coast of Kent but little of note has been published. The closest parallel for a double interment of the period comes from Chilbolton in Hampshire (Russell 1990). An Early Bronze Age inhumation was located as the (secondary) barrow burial at Whitehill Road (ARC WHR 99, Area 330 Zone1). This burial will provide good comparative material. Unfortunately other Bronze Age burials from the CTRL project tended to be comminuted cremations, with which little, beyond the estimated number of individuals, can be compared.
- 6.2 There are many Romano-British sites in southern England that have produced comparative material for child burial, even within a settlement. A local parallel is the occurrence of child burials found associated with Temple IV in the earlier excavations at Springhead (Penn 1960). Within the CTRL project two infant burials and a deposit of human bone were recovered from Thurnham Roman Villa (ARC THM 98). Within southern England settlement sites, where infant burial occurs, include Colchester, Verulamium and Winchester.

7. Potential for further work

- 7.1 The human skeletal material recovered from this zone has good potential to inform on the CTRL research aims:

Farming communities (2000–100 BC)

- *Determine spatial organisation of the landscape in terms of settlement location in relation to fields, pasture, woodland, enclosed areas and ways of moving between these*
- *Ritual and ceremonial use of the landscape*

7.2 Bronze Age burials are typically placed in areas of high visibility, usually to be seen from both the associated settlement (perhaps within 0.5km) and any nearby routeway. The burials perhaps indicate the presence of both these associated features in the vicinities of Hazells Farm and Northumberland Bottom. In addition the beakers and cremation urns place the contexts of the individuals and, perhaps, the direction of the local influences (eastward rather than westward). As a result the burials have good contexts from which further research can be directed. They can be compared with the nearby, unexcavated, Neolithic Mortuary enclosure at Tollgate; the (secondary) barrow burial at Whitehill Road (ARC WHR 99, Area 330 Zone1); and the potential barrow and the early Bronze Age Collared Urn from Cobham Golf Course (ARC CGC 98 Area 330 Zone 5).

7.3 Disarticulated human bone is not uncommonly found on Late Iron Age/Early Roman sites and may be partly connected to a general absence of burial grounds for this date; perhaps indicating a different burial rite than inhumation/cremation. It is also not uncommon to find Roman neonate burials on settlement sites, as the Romans did not, generally, consider infants to be worthy of full and proper burial in cemeteries.

7.4 Cremated human bone occurred in two contexts [316] and [2012]. Given that all cremation burials are only samples of the body interred (Jackie McKinley pers. comm.) the “samples” here were rather small in quantity. Any subsequent discussion of the site ought to consider possible locations of the original cremation pyres.

Further work

7.5 The inhumation beaker burials are extremely important due to their relative completeness and potential for pathology study. The sex of these individuals has already been determined (one male and one female). The presence of the beaker pottery gives a reasonably good date for the double burial.

7.6 The Northumberland Bottom burials are of great importance due to the paucity of publications in this area for this date. As a consequence of this rarity, it is recommended that these two skeletons be analysed and recorded to publication level. Analysis of bone for stable chemical isotopes and DNA, both human and that of pathological organisms, ought to be considered, even though it is possible they would not produce significant results, in order to maximise any information that can be gathered from these individuals. Any information would add to the corpus of knowledge for human populations during this period.

7.7 Similarly, the Romano-British burial (s) ought to be analysed for completion, especially as they can be compared with other Roman neonate burials found on the project.

7.8 It is felt that little more can be accomplished for the cremation burials although, obviously, with regard to minimum number of individuals present they need to be included in the discussion in the report from the analysis phase. The same is true of the disarticulated bone.

7.9 Therefore further work should include:

- DNA analysis, stable chemical isotope analysis (using two teeth from each individual which would be returned) and recording of the skeletons
- Data input
- Writing the report

8 Bibliography

Penn W S 1960 Springhead: Temples III and IV *Arch. Cant.* **74** 113-140

Russell A 1990 Two beaker burials from Chilbolton, Hampshire *Proceedings of the Prehistoric Society* **56** 153-172

Table 1: ARC WNB 98 Assessment of Human Bone, Inhumations

Context	Context type	Period	Preservation (high/ medium/ low)	Completeness %	Age	Comments (pathology noted/sex)
1070	Burial	EBA	medium	90	adult	male,
1203	Burial	EBA	medium	90	adult	female,
1069	Burial	EBA	low	10	child	?
1037	Burial	UN	medium	90	neonate	?
1190	Burial	RO	medium	75	neonate	?

Table 2: ARC WNB 98 Assessment of Human Bone, Cremated Bone

Context	Context type	Period	Weight	Identifiable fragments	Colour	Minimum no of individuals
316	Cremation	UN	25g	none	white	?
2012	Cremation	LBA	50g	none	white	?